

**MEDIA COVERAGE OF SMEs IN NIGERIA:  
THE IMPERATIVE FOR NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

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## ABSTRACT

Anchored on three theories of the press (agenda setting, social responsibility and development media), this study examined the volume of coverage and the extent of prominence given to Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigerian print media and the implication for national development. While content analysis is used as the research design, purposive sampling method was used to select two Nigeria's most popular newspapers (*Punch* and *Guardian*), and two magazines (*The News* and *Tell*) respectively. The same method was used to select a total of 1,728 editions of the two newspapers and 576 editions of the two magazines for study. Together, a total of 2,304 editions of the newspapers and magazines between 1997 and 2009 were content analysed. Coding schedule was designed for the recording of identified variables while five open-ended questions were administered to 60 respondents selected by quota sampling from among the six designated research population groupings. Since the research methodology is qualitative in nature and procedure, the researcher employed the use of statistical program for social scientists (SPSS) to record and analyse the data. Frequency tables and charts were used to illustrate the findings. The study's findings showed that both newspapers and magazines in Nigeria did not give sufficient coverage and prominence to SMEs and related activities to the extent it can foster employment generation, poverty reduction and overall national development. Particularly, the study revealed that the media paid less attention to reporting Nigerian women participation in SMEs activities despite their significant population and potentials; a reason for their vulnerability to poverty. To reposition the media for optimal performance, the study among others, suggested that the media industry be recapitalised for self-sustenance while the government provides enabling environment for general economic growth and also, establish true community media to cater for development information needs of Nigeria's sharply divergent rural-urban populace.

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## QUOTES

*“Information is power. Without it, there can be no accountability. The more people who possess it, the more power are distributed. The degree to which the media is independent is the degree to which it can perform an effective watchdog function over the conduct of public affairs”- Pope Jeremy (1996)*

*“When the press is free, it may be good or bad, but certainly without freedom, it can't be anything but bad”- Albert Camus (1954)*

*“There can be no liberty for a community which lacks the information by which to detect lies”- Walter Lippmann (1927)*

## CHAPTER ONE

### Background to the Study

#### 1.1. Introduction

One of the major tenets of development media theory as outlined by McQuail (2010) is that the media must give priority in news and information to carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy. This principle is based on the understanding that there is a symbiotic relationship between the media and development. Development journalism has been defined as the brand of journalism that focuses on the transformation of the society through public education and mass mobilisation of citizens for active participation in health improvement strategy, poverty reduction, gender equality, infrastructural development, economic empowerment, environmental sustenance, human rights and good governance. The economic development and socio-political stability of any society are predicated upon the policies and programs put in place by the political class while the business group on the other hand translates the economic policy into actual products and services, which determine the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. The media on its part report on the comments and views of the people about the activities of government and non-governmental institutions. It is these reports that form the major ingredients in the formulation of public policies by the government. According to Oboh (2004, p.37), it is meaningless to discuss any social institution such as mass media as though it operates in isolation. The media are central to the provision of ideas and images which people use to interpret and understand a great deal of their everyday experience.

Beyond the four traditional functions of mass media (information, education, entertainment, and surveillance), the mass media have had thrust upon it new responsibilities of increasing understanding of development issues; build up a solidarity in a common effort; and enlarge the capacity of the people to take charge of their own development needs (McBride et al., 1981 cited by Lanahun, 2008). The

media are also known to possess the power and the tools to bring issues to the public domain through its information dissemination and reportorial functions otherwise known as agenda setting power. It is based on this role that Folarin (2005, p.95) remarks that mass media predetermine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a given society. This goes to show that issues not raised by the media or brought up in the public domain rarely form part of the agenda for public discourse. Audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, they also learn how much importance should be attached to an issue from the emphasis the media place on it. The problems of poverty and under- development have constituted a major global concern among the governments of the developed and developing nations of which Nigeria is one. This is because these nations are unable to provide basic necessities of life such as food, shelter; health care delivery, portable water and qualitative education. It has also been observed by environmental and development experts that most of the socio-ecological problems experienced in many parts of the world such as air, water and soil pollutions, ethnic, cultural and gender conflicts have their roots deep into poverty. Over the years, both local and international media have highlighted this pitiable condition and called for the assistance of the international organisations and agencies in form of financial aids and development assistance so as to lift them up from the cesspit of biting poverty and improve their development status. In response to the media build-up was the year 2000 United Nations Summit that gave birth to the eight interdependent development goals otherwise referred to as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

According to Oboh (2004, p. 26), the degree of poverty in a nation is a picture of her economic status which also determines how a nation is perceived by other nations of the world. Media reporting in general and development reporting in particular remains an indispensable function of the press. The mass media owes the public an explanation on the reasons for Nigeria's consistent poverty as a nation despite her abundant human and material resources. The press is also expected to offer reasons for while women are being discriminated against politically, economically and culturally giving that this important segment of the society works two-thirds of the

total work hours in the world but get paid for only one-tenth hence; they own mere one-hundredth of the property in the world (Bhasin, 1992). The UNDFW (2001) also noted that women constitute two-thirds of the 876 adults world-wide who cannot read or write; similarly, 60 percent of the 77 million children not attending school or dropouts are girls. Although women are strong and capable of making significant contributions to the overall development of the nation unfortunately, the process of development has in-turn marginalized them thus, making them the most vulnerable in the event of socio-economic crises.

Within the last decade, there have also been press reports on heightened social problems resulting from years of inequality and disproportionate distribution of national resources among the different ethnic groups that constitute Nigeria. These have confirmed the fact that the press is vested with the responsibility and the power to bring to the public domain issues relevant to the wellbeing and development of the nation and its population. The news and information media are believed to constitute indispensable mediators between the government and the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual public by moulding and directing public opinion while mobilising the people to acknowledge and accept fresh ideas and modern techniques that can guarantee national development without creating unnecessary ethnic and cultural friction.

Although the press has contributed significantly to Nigeria's political emancipation and has also played frontline roles in the various phases of her economic planning before independent till date. However, it is not clear whether Nigerian press, in its reports has given adequate attention and prominence to Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (SMEs) as engine of economic growth and instrument of poverty alleviation such that the citizenry, investors, financial institutions and other relevant agencies can be mobilised in support of the policy. This is why the study "media coverage of SMEs in Nigeria: the imperative for national development" on one hand seeks to discover the extent to which the Nigerian media have given prominence and attention in their coverage to SMEs growth and on the other examines how the media coverage of SMEs has contributed to national development in Nigeria.



The press report on SMEs actually became prominent in the late 1999 when the newly inaugurated democratic government under President Olusegun Obasanjo unfolded his economic transformation agenda which included the establishment of Small and Medium Scale Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). To also give the policy a legal backing, he initiated a bill that made it compulsory for all the 82 banks operating in Nigeria then to set aside ten percent of their annual profits after tax as loans towards SMEs development.

Since the policy came into being, not many studies (if any) of this magnitude have been carried out on the impacts of the Nigerian media in enhancing the growth of SMEs with a view to jump-starting the economy from its stagnancy. This study therefore serves to investigate the degree of media involvement in propagating the gospel of economic recovery, poverty alleviation and job creation through SMEs, identify the various impediments to the development communication process; and explore alternative strategies by which the press can be repositioned to achieve positive development goals. This chapter is structured into different sub-sections which include background to the study, statement of the problem, aims of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and scope of study, limitation of study, significance of study and clarification of terms.

## **1.2 An Overview of the Study**

The mass media and national development collaborate in nation building. This relationship which has been accepted by the different authorities of mass communication is derived from the age-long traditional role of the media as catalyst of change. It is against this background that Awolowo (1981, p.10), Oseni (1998, p.6) and Adelabu (2011, p.62) observe that mass media and good governance have inseparable link.

The concept of governance has lent itself to various definitions and interpretations. There are views from the government and academics as well as perspectives from organisations such as World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United State Agency for International Development (USAID). In a generic sense of the word, governance means the task of running a government or any appropriate entity (Adepoju and Adelabu, 2011). The British Council however, observed that governance is a broader notion than the government. It therefore sees governance as a process whereby elements in society wield power, authority and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life and social upliftment.

The World Bank (1997) cited in Tejumaye and Adelabu (2011, p.64) reasoned that “governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s socio-economic resources”. Going by that definition, three distinct characteristics of governance were identified which include the type of political regime, the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a nation’s economic and social resources for development; and the capacity of government to design, formulate, implement policies and discharge functions.

For a government to exercise its authority and control while discharging the roles identified above, there has to be a means of information sharing between the government and the citizens. According to Jeremy (1966, p.16), “Information is power. Without it, there can be no accountability. The more people who possess it, the more power are distributed”. The extent to which the media is free to conduct its business professionally is the degree to which it can successfully carry out efficient watchdog function over the management of public affairs. This is the point where the mass media become pertinent. That perception also formed the basis of Idemudia (2008, p.132), that “it is only in a democratic environment as practiced in most civilised nations and in Nigeria today that can foster the best media practice which promotes plurality of ideas and opinion”. In contemporary society, the press has come to occupy a central position by determining the social formations and constructing social reality through information management and dissemination.

However, it is noteworthy that the media which will be socially responsible and contribute significantly to socio-economic advancement of any state must enjoy some measure of freedom. The freedom of the press implies the right to gather, process, transmit and publish news anywhere without fetters. Freedom of the press is a derivative of the fundamental right constituted by freedom of information. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) further asserts this freedom by stressing that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, seek, receive and communicate information and ideas through any medium”. For the press to be free, it has to be independent of governmental, political or economic control (Marina 2008, p.14). The press provides a feedback process for the government and the people. It is through the media that reactions to government policies and public opinion are conveyed to enable the government tailor its policies to the needs and desires of the people. Most government’s economic reform programs usually ended up a failure apparently due to some intervening social factors manifesting in form of lack of probity and accountability in governance, ethnic and political considerations, misplaced socio-economic priority, policy inconsistencies and a range of professional and official misconducts in the private and public sectors of the economy (Tomori and Akanno 1999, p.502). The media’s responsibility as the nation’s watchdog therefore, is to clearly ferret out every underhand deals among the political and business groups as well as bring to light and analyse harmful behaviours among the citizens which are capable of compromising the democratic principles and constitute potential threat to development.

Communication scholars, Curran (1977) and Chibnall (1980) have established that the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period when the press became crystallised as an instrument of social control with lasting consequences for the development of modern society. The complexity accompanying the modern society has necessitated a paradigm shift from the old press traditions of inequality in information dissemination to a more all-encompassing and proactive investigation of current issues and development-oriented reporting (Glasser and Ettema 2009; Aucoin 2005).

While justifying the emerging role of the media as development carrier, the Department for International Development (DFID) observed that since after the Second World War, international development has tightened the loose thread between policy, governance, health, education, poverty, infrastructure, economics and human rights. It added that development sector especially in most developing nations in time past had suffered terribly from lack of scrutiny by the press. Previously, the press were used to only reporting corrupt practices in the economy perhaps by mentioning the name of ring leaders but would neither conduct further investigation to discover other collaborators most of who usually disappeared and mixed up with the crowd of people who will later be seen as ‘saints’ nor would they evaluate and analyse the implications of such fraudulent act on the living standard of the people and do follow-up stories until the culprits are brought to book. For instance, Asekome (2008) observed that each year, the governments at the various levels often come up with huge “budgets of hope” promising a number of developmental projects. Surprisingly, the press that assisted in publicising and analysing such heart-warming budgets oftentimes remains silent when the political class fails to implement and translate the budgets to real development. It was Lippmann (1997, p.36) who, while underscoring the expected role of the media in poverty reduction, observed that “there can be no liberty for a community which lacks the information by which to detect lies”. This observation must have been based on what Awolowo (1981, p.107) described as politics of raising peoples hope on nothing. Cases of abandoned projects for which the government, in most cases, had paid more than 75% of its total cost are still at various levels of completion and have become monument of national shame in every state of the federation. Under the emerging social responsibility of the media, the press is duty- bound to do special reports on such projects. This is different from the traditional news reporting style of 5W+H. The development media which function in the tradition of social responsibility and development media theories focus on development and that is why it is perceived as a combination of traditional reporting, crafty investigation and analytical interpretation with strong ability to scrutinize every issue of public

importance to discover who is responsible for what and why. This definitely requires extensive study and will take the reporter some time, money and exceptional professional skill to dig deeper and wider.

As transparency and accountability cannot be divorced from sustainable development so are development journalism and investigative journalism interrelated (Edeani, 1993, p.126). In the opinion of Kunezik (1998) cited by Edeani(1993), development journalism is the kind of journalism which pays sustained attention to the coverage of ideas, policies, programs and activities dealing directly with the improvement of people's lives. An important assumption underlying the notion of development journalism is that the approach to news gathering and reporting is based on the mindset that development is a desirable objective and that the media, whether public or private must be socially responsible to the society where it operates. This is contrary to the traditional western-oriented journalism which believed that news reporter should not take any stand but only presents the fact as it unfolds while the audience is allowed to freely make up his mind. The Nigerian press may have scored high mark on 'truth', 'accuracy' and 'objectivity' in reporting government activities and democratic process, but its competence in development reporting that affects about 75% of the nation's population is somehow in doubt (Asekome, 2008, p.286).

The development journalism which is believed to interlink with social responsibility and the development participant theories is expected to give adequate coverage of government policies and programs especially, those that can immediately translate to national development by reducing poverty and its attendant social problems to the barest minimum. It is noteworthy that the international community and their development agencies are of great concern about the high level of economic woes bedevilling most developing nations for which substantial resources have been committed. For example, United Kingdom alone in year 2010 committed £13 billion to assist developing nations on developmental projects (DFID, 2011). Daily Mail (August 12, 2013) reported that since gaining its independence in 1960, Nigeria has received a sum of \$400 billion (£257 billion) in aids which is six times greater than

what United States pumped into post world war European reconstruction project yet, there is nothing to show for it. Despite the yearly subventions from international development agencies, the level of socio-economic development and excruciating poverty are still intolerably high. For example, Edeani (1993) observed that there were rural development projects sponsored by the international agencies in Nigeria that broke down shortly after commissioning.

Bhatia and Campbell (1998) and World Bank (2004) observe that technically sound policy may fail if the intended beneficiaries are shielded from the full understanding of the expected benefits. Similar situation occurred in Nigeria when the World Health Organisation (WHO) Polio immunization project failed woefully in the Muslim dominated northern Nigeria because the exercise was taken for granted as such, adequate publicity was not done to educate the people. Some illiterate Muslim clerics took advantage of that information gap to misinform their fellow devotees that the polio inoculation was an American government's grand design to decimate the Muslim population so that the Christians who are minority in the North can hijack political power from the present leaders who are mostly Muslims. Again in December 2011, the Federal government of Nigeria attempted a failed deregulation of the downstream sector of the oil industry which would have provided more revenues for the governments at the various levels to build modern infrastructural facilities and upgrade the existing ones. But the whole exercise came to a halt due to strong resistance from the opposition parties, labour union and members of the civil society.

The above mentioned cases are some of government's failed programs not because they are not good but because they were carried out without appropriate strategic communication that could educate the people and mobilise for the supports of the intended rural populace. Against this background, the government and the development agencies have realised the imperative need of development communication as a catalyst to any of its development policies and programs. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) is one of such economic transforming

instruments that has immense capability of employment generation, poverty reduction and sustainable rural development. For the policy to achieve this goal, the role of the media in SMEs development according to Staphenust, (2000, p.1) and Soola, (2003, p.25) must not be limited to mere awareness creation but must include advocacy role of sensitising and mobilising the citizenry to avail themselves of the windows of opportunity that SMEs provide and also to make government and policy makers accountable to the people at every stage of its implementation.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The problems of poverty and underdevelopment have in the last two decades become an intractable problem among the governments of developing nations of Latin America, Asia and Africa which constitute about two third of world population (World Bank,2006). The United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations have, through bilateral and multilateral institutions such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided development assistance to improve the development status of the affected nations but without much success as their poverty index is still intolerably high. Although Africa as a continent appears to be most vulnerable yet this study will be focused on Nigeria.

According to the UNFPA 2010 reports, Nigeria with an estimated population of 167 million is the world's most populated community of black race and it accounts for about one fifth of sub-Sahara Africa's population. It is the most populous country in Africa and is the seventh most populated nation in the world. About 25 percent of Nigerians are city dwellers while the 75 percent reside in the rural communities that spread across the country. As one of the world's fastest growing population, Nigeria has a land area of 923,768km<sup>2</sup> extending from Guinea Coast of the Atlantic Ocean to the border of Sahara in the North. As a country, Nigeria is blessed with diverse climatic vegetation and geographic zones mostly characterized by a huge variety of natural resources in liquid and solid form which are evenly spread across the 36 states (Idachaba, 1985) cited in Orobosa 2008, p. 96).

The issue of poverty however, presents a case of paradox in Nigeria. Although the country is abundantly rich in land, human and natural resources, about 75percent of her people including women, youths and children residing in the rural communities still live below poverty line (Oshewolo 2010, p.266). An oil rich state, with her 2.5 million barrel per day, Nigeria ranks as Africa's largest oil producing nation and the 6<sup>th</sup> position in the world. Apart from oil, Nigeria also has a large deposit of gas about 8.0 billion cubic feet per day (BCFD) which is adjudged to be greater in quantity than oil (*This Day Live, July 23, 2013*). Since her oil discovery in the early 1970s till 2005, Nigeria had earned over N3.2trillion from oil exploration (World Bank, 2008). This figure rose between 2009 and 2010 when she realized US\$196billion within four years (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Besides oil and gas, Nigeria has 37 other solid mineral deposits (yet to be explored) in commercial quantity (FOS, 2009). According to Adeleke (2009, p.1), Nigeria is blessed with excellent climatic condition with sunshine the year round, vast tracts of unspoiled nature ranging from tropical forests, magnificent parks, waterfalls, unique wildlife, beautiful rivers, beaches and isolated rocky hills. Its unique cultural attractions include many national museums, ancient slave sites, palaces and shrines, well-preserved local customs and rich varieties of handcrafts (Fakiyesi, 2008).

In spite of these huge resources that are capable of generating abundant wealth, Nigeria is still surprisingly, included among the 50 countries of the World where poverty level is still unreasonably high (CBN Brief, 2002). According to the statistics released by the World Bank and the IMF, Nigeria ranked 152<sup>nd</sup> among the 187 countries with the lowest Human Development Index (HDI), 54<sup>th</sup> among 77 other developing nations where poverty level remains high and upward swinging(UNDP, 1998, p.26; Sanni, 2003, p.10). The Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (2012) also reports that the number of people living with poverty in Nigeria has risen from 54.7percent in 2004 to 60.9 percent in 2010 translating to 112 million poverty-infested Nigerians despite the government's claim of 7.6 percent economic growth rate. *The Punch* newspaper Wednesday, July16, 2008 reported that 24 million Nigerian youths were



jobless while 1.6 million out of 16 million employed youths were under-employed (National Manpower Board, 2008; Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The report also added that “the life expectancy is pegged at 50.1 while infant mortality rate is 112 per 1000 births; adult literacy is 59.5 percent, while access to clean water was set at 50 percent”. *The Mail* in its (2013) survey offered a fresh perspective to Nigeria’s poverty spread. According to the on-line newspaper report, “more than 70 per cent of Nigerians live below the poverty line of £1.29 a day”, this is approximately N335 per day which, according to UNDP barely provides for a quarter of nutritional requirements of a healthy living.

Development experts have also discovered fresh perspectives of geographic locality and gender concern to the issue of poverty and its attendant social and economic implications on Nigerians. With her current population of about 167 million, 80.2 million that is 49% are females. Of this aggregate, 60% that is 52.6million live in the rural communities where they are subjected to hard labor without corresponding reward (Ngeri-Nwagha, 1996; Aigbokhan, 2000; British Council, 2012). Also, about 38 percent of Nigeria’s 80.2 million (women and girls) lack formal education while only 4 percent have higher education (Agu, 2007). The mounting poverty level among the women has also heightened the social problems ever witnessed in Nigeria, with more women becoming prostitutes, hard drug carriers, child traffickers and electronic fraudsters among others. A glance at the gender profile in relation to development indicator in Nigeria presents a lamentable state of most women. They constitute the greater percentage of the poor in the society (60%), they form the greatest proportion of the unskilled labor in all the economic sectors; they are the most vulnerable in times of crises, above all, they lack the requisite educational and technical skills that could make them contribute to the socio-economic and political development of the state (Owolabi and O’Neill, 2013b).

The state of infrastructural facilities in the rural communities is reportedly bad. Most of the roads are not motorable, with few modern schools and ill-equipped hospitals without personnel; everything is said to depict a picture of lack of government presence. The general effect of this socio-economic crisis is mass rural-urban

migration that engenders mass un-employment with its attendant social ills such as armed robbery, contract assassination, drug abuse, raping, prostitution, teenage abortion, ritual killing, advance-fee-fraud, kidnapping and terrorism among others. All these, partly contributed to making Nigeria unsafe for both the rich and the poor.

In view of the above circumstances, many people have had cause to ask the reasons for Nigeria's poverty in the midst of plenty. Contemporary development thinkers and indeed, international development agencies have reasoned that poverty in Nigeria is a product of bad governance (UNDP, 2000; World Bank, 2003; NHDR, 2004). According to Igbatayo and Igbinedion (2008, p.6), the prolonged 28 years of military rule characterized by epidemic thievery from the national treasury, political instability and ill-conceived policies had crippled the economy and reversed all the early post-independent economic and development gains. Between 1970 and 1999, about 27 poverty alleviation programs were initiated by each succeeding administrations with the intention of minimizing the level of poverty (Odigie and Orobosa 2008, p.26). Despite several billions of funds expended on the projects, they could still not address the issue of biting poverty and economic stagnation. The failure of these programs according to Akpoveta (2006, p.211) and Ochonogor (2006, p.117) was due to heightened corruption, lack of continuity, absence of support from the grassroots and particularly, inadequate communication between the government and the people who were supposed to benefit from the programs. Corruption which is viewed by scholars as the abuse of public office has become a global phenomenon in both developed and developing nations of the world with evidences abound of its ability to hinder or slow down the pace of development in any nation. Although, the degree of corruption varies from nation to nation, it is indirectly proportional to the level of accountability and openness of the machinery of government. In Nigeria, corruption has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the national life. For example, Democracy Monitor and Transparency International in their 2011 Corruption Perception Index rated Nigeria as the 28<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country out of 47 countries surveyed; and 134<sup>th</sup> out of 178

countries studied worldwide. Similarly, the Social-Economic Rights and Accountability Projects (2013, p.6) notes in its corruption perception index,

“Transparency International ranked Nigeria as the 144th most corrupt country among the 177 studied in the world. In 2012, Nigeria was ranked as the 124th most corrupt nation among the less than 170 countries studied. The survey gave Nigeria as an example of countries where oil resources are only available to very small elite”

Although each succeeding government in Nigeria claimed to be fighting corruption, but the more efforts directed at it, the pervasive, dynamic and destructive it has been. Corruption is believed to be antithetical to development. The aforementioned statistics therefore explains the reason for Nigeria’s heightened poverty and stagnated development. Over the years, large sum of public fund meant for infrastructural development and poverty reduction programs have ended up in private accounts of some public officers. On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2012, a former state Governor in Nigeria was found guilty by Southwark Crown Court London and was jailed for 13 years for money laundering and embezzlement of about US\$ 250 million besides housing estates and luxury cars (*Vanguard Newspaper*, 2012). The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) recently discovered about \$1.3 billion fraud perpetrated by some government officials in collaboration with some oil companies in Nigeria. In another development, the United States Secretary of state, John Kerry submitted a damning report about the state of corruption in Nigeria to the Congress. The contemptuous report alleged that “Nigeria lost about N1.067 trillion (\$6.8 billion) to” what it calls “endemic corruption and entrenched inefficiency”. These are just few cases out of many others involving public servants and political office holders who diverted public fund into their private account locally and internationally.

This is the deplorable situation Nigerians have had to contend with before the advent of President Obasanjo’s government on May 29, 1999. In his determination to immediately tackle the issue of poverty in line with the United Nation’s stated MDGs, Obasanjo came up with his government’s economic blueprints. One of the policies that incidentally form the kernel of this research is the development of

Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) which the Central Bank of Nigeria has defined as “any enterprise with a minimum asset base of N1million and maximum asset base of N200million, excluding land and working capital and with staff strength of between 10 and 300.”

Besides, Obasanjo recognized that to checkmate the incessant malfeasance in governance, it will take strong political resolve demonstrated by good governance that is constantly open to public enquiry and is accountable to the people. Governance as an instrument of administrative order, authority and control presupposes that, to effectively and profitably exercise authority, there has to be means of information sharing between the government and the citizenries. This is where the role of mass media becomes pertinent, to drum up support for good policies and programs on one hand and on the other, sensitize the public to the misdemeanors of any political leader, fuel campaign for reform and in extreme cases, influence outright democratic change of government.

Within the last two decades, Nigerian press has grown in capability and efficiency. Like their counterparts in the developing nations, it parades an array of highly skilled journalists, and latest sophisticated equipment that can facilitate quick information gathering, processing and dissemination. Besides, the number of media houses has increased greatly. Nigeria presently has 152 radio stations, 116 television stations and 40 cable network stations, 143 newspapers and 25 magazines operating (Wogu, 2006, p.6).The advent of internet technology as well as social media have further strengthened the power of traditional media to carry out its new responsibilities. The enhanced awareness of the new role of the media in development has been demonstrated by the current steep rise in the use of information technology even in the rural communities. This development is consistent with the established position that the media can cause attitudinal change and by so doing, ensure socio-economic transformation. Given the above perspective, it is only expected that Nigerian media will freely assume its responsibilities in the new democratic dispensation as the government declared and demonstrated its commitment to transparency, accountability, poverty alleviation and national development through its new policy.

For any government to succeed in its business, it must see the media as dependable ally. The media as ubiquitous watchdog must carry out surveillance role in the society thereby enhancing probity and accountability in the running of government affairs. In carrying out its enlightenment function, the media must maintain constant flow of information vital for formulation and implementation of development –based policies. Good decisions, according to Aina (2004, p.61) are products of quality information at the disposal of the users (government or entrepreneurs). The media, through its persuasive power could serve to educate and mobilize the populace in support of government program thereby waking them up from the state of apathy and indifference. Besides, the media can also set agenda for the society on economic, political and social issues (Idahosa (2008, p.202).

It is now 12 years that president Obasanjo initiated the policy on SMEs development yet; the level of poverty is still unreasonably high. The question evolving from the foregoing which incidentally forms the general aim of this study is, to what extent has the press gave adequate attention and prominence to SMEs growth and to what level has their reports contributed to national development in Nigeria. In order to fill this gap, the study investigates the prominence as well as the volume of reporting on SMEs in relation to national development.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study seeks to:

1. Examine the amount of coverage given to SMEs, poverty and governance by the Nigerian media.
2. Investigate the extent to which the prominence given to SMEs and development issues reflects the purpose of agenda setting theory.
3. Assess the type and intent of press report on SMEs
4. Evaluate whether the issues highlighted about SMEs, poverty and employment generation aligned with the tenet of development media theory.
5. Observe the trend and direction of the frequency of press reportage of SMEs.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study investigates and provides answers to the following research questions:

1. What was the volume of media coverage given to SMEs, poverty and corruption?
2. To what extent has the prominence given to SMEs and development policy reflected the expectation of agenda setting theory?
3. What was the degree of coverage given to privatization and economic reforms that occurred about the same time?
4. Do Nigerian newspapers and magazines differ in the amount of coverage given to SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development?
5. Were the issues highlighted about SMEs, poverty and employment generation aligned with the tenets of development media theory?
6. What were the sources of the stories on SMEs and governance reported by the Nigerian media?
7. What influence does the press reporting of SMEs and governance have on public perception towards Nigerian government?

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study, which examines media report of SMEs in Nigeria and how it has contributed to national development, covers 12 years beginning from May 1997 to May 2009. These include the eight years of Obasanjo regime, two years before and two years after. The period was deliberately selected for three reasons. One, it coincided with the time when poverty became an international issue at the United Nations level and for which the poverty reduction goals were set for member nations including Nigeria. Two, it was the time when government gave the utmost attention to SMEs development and lastly, it was also the time the nation's economic index was at its lowest and the government was determined to transform it using SMEs as the base.

## **1.7 Significance of Study**

The study is expected to generate valuable information and give penetrating insight to the activities of SMEs stake- holders including investors, government and its agencies, the academics particularly those involved in the training of development journalists, and the media industry. It is anticipated that these will culminate in changing some of their outmoded culture and negative attitudes that have constituted a clog in the wheel of SMEs development for a long time.

### **(a) The SMEs Stakeholders**

These include the government, the academic community, media industry, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), National Association of Small Scale Industrialist (NASSI), Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Nigeria Bankers Committee (NBC) and all those who are directly or indirectly involved in establishing and managing SMEs. The study will not only furnish them with useful information that could enhance their investment in SMEs but will also sensitize and mobilize them to support government efforts to develop SMEs sub-sector of the economy.

### **(b) The Government**

The study is expected to educate the government on the need to encourage and promote press freedom as well as providing enabling environment for the media and other businesses to operate. It is also expected to educate the government on the need to cultivate assured reliance of the populace on its ability to initiate and implement development policy that can affect the citizens directly through openness and accountability. The study is also expected to assist the government of developing nations, particularly Nigeria, to evolve a comprehensive development communication strategy that can stimulate public supports for poverty reduction policy and widespread participation in economic activities such as SMEs.

**(c) The Media**

This study will serve as wake-up call to the media on the need to carry out their social responsibilities with renewed zeal and professional forthrightness. The study will also enable the press to know that the current development journalism transcends mere reporting of an event but encompasses investigation, interpretation and analysis of issues and events such that it will influence the reading public to act in a positive way.

**(d) Schools/Colleges of Journalism**

The study will be significantly useful to sensitize all colleges /school of journalism to the need of redesigning and redefining their curricula with emphasis on modern approaches to business reporting with special reference to SMEs and the windows of opportunity it offers and how business reporters can remain relevant in this present day when newspapers and magazines are being threatened by the advent of social media. The increased number of social media users who are willing to reach mass audience demands that exceptional and professional journalistic skills are required to produce quality contents that can gain the attention of target audiences. This therefore suggests that the content of the school curriculum must include such skills that will induce the development of micro, small and medium scale businesses and boost acquisition of productive managerial skills thus, making the graduating students job creators as against job seekers.

**(e) Academic Community**

Expectedly, this study will throw up new challenges which other researchers will use as a basis for widening the frontiers of knowledge and research in a way that can lead to better appreciation of media contributions to poverty reduction and sustainable development in general.



## 1.8 Clarification of Terms

**Mass Media/Press:** This refers to those organs of mass communication through which information can be moved from one person to large, scattered and heterogeneous audiences. These include television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books and internet. However, it needs be stated that both media and press are used interchangeably in this study to refer to Nigerian newspapers.

**National Development:** The essence of national development is to improve the quality of lives of individuals and groups in a social system by reforming the entire structures, transforming the society and changing the attitudes of the people in a particular nation.

**SMEDAN:** This acronym means Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria.

**SMEEI:** Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Investment Scheme.

**NASME:** Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, which is an umbrella body of all SMEs investors.

**MAN:** Manufacturers Association of Nigeria is the official association of manufacturing companies in Nigeria.

**NACCIMA:** Nigeria Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture is an association of various Chambers of Commerce in Nigeria.

**NASSI:** Nigerian Association of Small Scale Industries is the umbrella association of all the Small Scale Enterprises in Nigeria.

**NBC:** Nigerian Bankers Committee is a body of which all the Managing Directors of licensed banks operating in Nigeria are members.

**DFID:** Directorate for International Development is a British government agency for international development programs.

**NEEDS:** National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy.

**NAPEP:** National Poverty Eradication Program.

### **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter provides the background of the study by identifying the interactive Trinity among the central concepts (media, SMEs and development) that run through the study. Development in this chapter is perceived essentially as the process of raising the nation's productive capacity; strengthening competitive spirit, promoting socio-economic sustainability and minimizing poverty rate through good governance. The mass media are also seen as agents of change and mobilization with ability to stimulate public participation in entrepreneurial activities in a way that will guarantee national development. Anchored on three press theories, this study posits that the media as agents of social and economic changes cannot be ignored in the critical assignment of achieving national development for the benefit of the people. In doing this, apart from the media's traditional roles of informing, educating and entertaining the populace which it derived from the social responsibility theory of the press, it is also expected to provide up-to-date information on economic and investment opportunities, finance, healthy trade and global market conditions while it keeps eyes (watchdog) on the government and its officials so as to engender a friendly business climate characterized by transparency and accountability. This study equally believes that in the development press theory dispensation, the media must go beyond the level of merely reporting an event to subtle investigation and critical analysis of development process in order to discover its relevance to the national and local needs. This is the reason why this study titled "media coverage of SMEs in Nigeria: imperative for national development" specifically aims at extensively examining and evaluating the relevance of mass media reports on SMEs as government's economic policy in relation to Nigeria's development status. More than 12 years after the policy was initiated, the study therefore seeks to identify whether the press coverage and prominence given to SMEs actually brought to light the difference between the original policy plan and its actual implementation; and on the whole, to ascertain

whether or not it has made any impact on the economy and in the peoples' lives as claimed by the government. To achieve the aforementioned aims and objectives, this study will be housed under three interrelated press theories and we shall see how the Nigerian media have operated within the trinity to engender development goals in Nigeria.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Theoretical Framework and Relevance to Mass Media Roles

#### 2.1 Introduction

The concept of theory is often mentioned in relation to scientific observation of an occurrence. This is why it has been defined as “a set of inter-related constructs, definitions and propositions that give a systematic view about phenomena” (Kellinger, (1973) cited in Anaeto *et al* (2008, p. 42). It is evident from this definition that predicting the outcome of methodical observation of an event is possible and explainable. For example, the effect of media communication on a group can be measured through communication research and the effects on different kinds of people under certain kinds of condition can be predicted. This perhaps is the basis of Daramola’s (2003) assertion that communication theory has a number of deductions through which communication events are clearly and systematically explained.

For a development study dealing with the interrelationship of SMEs, employment generation and poverty reduction, and the pertinent role of mass mediated communication, it makes sense to anchor the study on a definite theoretical foundation so as to have a better perception of the study with a view to making a proposition that could be scientifically explained. Therefore, this chapter is divided into two major parts. The first part deals with the reviewing of three relevant theories looking at their origins and underlying principles and how they have impacted positively or negatively on the functionality of the mass media to achieve development goals. The second part will examine the history of the print and electronic media in Nigeria, their functions and relevance to the society, the challenges confronting the industry as it seeks to act as transforming agent within the theoretical principles and how, by employing professional skills and ethical observance, it navigates its ways around the problem.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Authorities of mass communication believe that theoretical framework is an intellectual theoretical working concept that serves to differentiate logical statements from the illogical (Schramm, 1963). Theoretical framework is also believed to provide guidelines for interpretation, explanation and understanding of complex situations (Littlejohn and Foss 2005, p.31, Griffing 2003, p.6). Therefore, to systematically analyze and discuss this study and place the interrelationship of the inherent concepts in clearer perspectives, it will be housed under three media theories. These include Agenda Setting theory propounded by McComb and Shaw (1972), Social Responsibility theory by Siebert et al (1963) and Development Media theory by McQuail (1987).

### **2.2.1 The Agenda Setting Theory**

Over the years, the agenda setting functions of the mass media has become a central focus by mass media scholars. The concept of agenda setting propounded by McComb and Shaw (1972) is used to refer to the perceived power of the press to influence the coverage of issues and events in the society. The mass media is believed to possess the ability to set agenda for the public “by presenting certain issues frequently and prominently with the result that large segment of the public will come to perceive those issues as more important than others” (Coleman et al 2009, p.147). This means that the more attention in space and time given to an issue in the media (prints or electronics), the more the people’s attention will be directed at such issue. It also means that editors and programmers use their journalistic skills to select what the media dish out to the public thus, determine what they (public) think about.

According to Coleman et al (2009, p.147), the genesis of agenda setting have been linked to Walter Lippmann (1922) who argued that “the news media construct our view of the world” thereby using the media messages to influence “the pictures in our head”. This idea is what McCombs and Shaw (1972) described as agenda setting theory which has over the years become a major recurring issue in mass media research.

Agenda setting was tested by McCombs and Shaw in Chapel Hill study of the 1968 United States presidential election and how 100 undecided voters eventually made up their minds. The press coverage of the election was content analyzed in order to identify five campaign issues and the amount of coverage given to them in the (media). The result was compared with a personal interview of 100 undecided voters all of who were asked to mention which issue they considered to be the most important (public agenda) at the moment. McCombs and Shaw found that there was correlation between the rank orders of the five issues on the media agenda and the rank order of those on the public agenda. This therefore implies that the media tell the public “what to think about”. Rogers (1993) also affirms the position by arguing further that the amount of coverage accorded an issue in the media might determine the rating of such issue by the public. Folarin (2005, p. 95-96) also maintains the position when defining agenda setting as “the powers of the media to predetermine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a society”. While expatiating further on agenda setting, Folarin (2005, p. 95-96) identifies four interdependent elements which include the amount or regularity of reporting; status given to the reports through positioning of stories, headline display, picture exhibition and page layout in newspapers and magazines; as well as timing on radio and television; the extent of argument generated in the reports and; the aggregate of media specific effects over time.

It goes to show from the above characterization that by giving prominence to an issue in the media through the amount of coverage in terms of space and time devoted, the media can succeed in selling an idea to the public, either good or bad. If it is good, according to Mahatma Ghandi “it stimulates among the people certain desirable sentiment” but if it is bad, it creates fear and panic in the society. The approach of agenda setting as suggested above indicates that the media, in the opinion of Watson and Hill (1993) cited by Umuerrri (2008, p.192) believe that, “audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, but they also learn how much importance should be attached to an issue on the basis of the emphasis the media placed on it”.

Derived from the identified elements in agenda setting, Anaeto *et al*, (2008, p.90) observe that if people are exposed to the same media contents, they (audiences) are likely to attach the same importance to the issues based on the value placed on it by the media. However, the above claim has been faulted by critics. Cohen (2003) cited the Bill Clinton scandal as classic example of how media agenda setting may not result in uniform understanding and acceptance of an issue. During the event, the media was ever present. The placement of full page, colorful advertisement, editorial opinions, incisive articles and analysis on news programming made it clear that Americans should regard the issue as very important. Despite this, some believed Clinton should have been impeached while others thought otherwise. Based on the divided opinion of Americans on this celebrated event, Cohen believed that media do not succeed in telling us what to think at all times as Clinton still retained his position based on popular opinion. The Clinton case has also debunked the claim that if the same people are exposed to the same media message it will produce the same effect. Although the above claim had been faulted on the ground of Clinton's case, the fact still remains that even though different people may feel differently about the case, most people within and outside United States still regarded it as important. While arguing his position, Soola (2008) observes that understanding of the message which is a function of the knowledge to interpret particularly, the literacy level of each member of the group is a factor that determines what part of the message is considered important and why.

Nevertheless, it is also instructive to note that developing a means of measuring the relationship between mass media and mass media audience has produced some theoretical concepts, which affirm the media ability to inform and to influence the people about what is important to know (Bittner, 1989, p.382). This means that the media create an agenda for people's thoughts as well as influence them in what seems important. It is on this note that McQuail (2005, p.548) defines agenda setting as a process of media influence (intended or unintended) by which the relative importance of news events, issues or personages in the public mind are affected by the order of presentation in news reports. This theory is thus premised on the

assumption that, the more emphasis placed on an issue in the media, the greater the significance and the more importance the news audience will perceive it.

Some early researchers in mass communication believe that agenda setting can only be related to elections and political matters. For instance, Camel et al., (1996) cited the Spanish elections of 1995, Japanese mayoral election of 1986 (Takeshita, 1993) and Argentina legislative elections of 1997 (Lennon, 1998) to justify their positions. However, Coleman et al., (2009, p.149) debunk this notion as they gave credible proofs to show that agenda setting occurred in several other matters of public concern such as ‘budget deficit’ (Jasperson et al., 1998); ‘economy’ (Hester and Gibson, 2003), ‘environmental matters’ (Chan, 1999); ‘health-related issues, including HIV/AIDS (Prat, Ha & Pratt, 2002). Besides, agenda setting is neither country unique nor is it restricted to issues of national and local importance. Agenda setting has become a recurring issue across the world at both national and local levels, in election and non-election issues except in countries where the media are controlled by the government and where one political party dominates the political landscape. Coleman et al., (2009) cite the examples of Spain (Lopez-Escobar, Llamas & McCombs, 1998); Japan (Takeshita, 1993); Argentina (Lennon, 1998) and Israel (Sheafer & Weimann, 2005). Going by the above assertions therefore, we can rightly claim here that agenda setting can occur in development related matters such as SMEs thereby giving it adequate coverage and prominence through headline display, editorial writing and analysis. Thus, agenda setting can make people to think about SMEs and what it stands for as well as what difference it can make in the development process of the society.

Weaver, McCombs and Shaw (2004) also identify two levels of agenda setting process. They contend that agenda setting do not only extend beyond geographical boundaries but goes beyond issues or people (first level of agenda setting process) to attributes or characteristics of issues or people (second level of agenda setting process). From the two levels it is observed that while the first level focuses on the degree of reporting and prominence an issue enjoys in the media, the second level focuses attention on the attributes and characteristic of an issue that people perceive



as important. When journalists report an issue or write about a political figure, different tones and attributes are used to paint the picture in the public mind. This is what Scheufele (1999); McCombs et al., (1997) refer to as framing.

Framing is in fact an extension of second level agenda setting and has been loosely used to refer to such terms as frame of reference, context, themes or news angle (McQuail, 2005). This definition of framing pre-supposes that journalists, depending on their professional competence, decide on what they perceive as more important (virtue or vice) about a particular person which they want the public to hold as important and by which they can evaluate the personality. To this, Gans, (1997) believes that journalists use framing as a means of minimizing the complexity of an issue by giving meanings to news. This may be done through features and news analysis that make references to some news value which may connect one event with other similar ones. Although in some complex matters, the audiences need to be guided by journalistic news frame for proper understanding and contextualization of events. Nevertheless, it has been observed that journalists, in the process of news framing, usually depart from the pathway of objectivity and professionalism into the domain of subjectivity and bias.

Despite the diverse criticisms of agenda setting theory, Chaffe and Berger (1997) cited by Anaeto *et al.*, (2008, p.90) observe that it has some inherent benefits. These include proffering details for the public's equal attention to the same issue, foreseeing the people's likely response if exposed to similar message, its simplicity and easy to comprehend, the ease with which it can be faulted if people are exposed to different messages and thereby feel differently; and its ability to facilitate further research.

## **2.2 Social Responsibility Theory of the Press**

The social responsibility theory propounded by Siebert et al (1963) owes its origin to the Hutching Commission on Freedom of the Press set up in the United States in 1947 to review the concept of press freedom as articulated in the Libertarian theory. This was because it had been observed that the earlier open market of idea that guided the media operation and performance had failed to guarantee press freedom and yield the expected benefits to the society. The commercialization of the press as a result of unanticipated technological developments in the media industry had priced the media out of the reach of common individuals and groups, while it was concentrated in the hands of a few businessmen (advertisers, publishers and media professionals) most of who had the resources to establish and run media empire and monopolize its usage.

The social responsibility theory which we now celebrate as the defining platform for the practice of journalism arose out of dissatisfaction with an earlier normative ideal, the libertarian theory. While taking a retrospective view of the Chicago school's criticism of the market place of idea Baran and Davis (2008, p.103) argued that "unregulated mass media inevitably served the interests and tastes of large or socially dominant group while the small, weak and minority groups would either be neglected or denigrated". They also held that "ruthless elites could use the media as weapon for gaining personal political power". While supporting their viewpoint, Oso, (2011, p.129) also denounces the performance of the media which he portrayed as sometimes sensational and irresponsible and tending towards serving parochial interest. According to him, the unethical behaviors must have originated from unrestrained liberty of the media under the Libertarian theory.

Overtime, the free market based Libertarian model resulted in a number of problems ranging from corporate and political censorship to media bias. Media had chosen to misplace its priorities as important stories that should have attracted wild coverage such as conflicts in Somalia, Syria and Iran and the biting poverty ravaging the entire continent of Africa and some countries of Asia and Latin America are dropped for

sensational stories such as the death of Michael Jackson and such other matters of little consequence. It was against this backgrounds there arose clamor for change particularly in the United States, and for this reason, the Hutchins Commission was set up. According to the commission, a responsible media “should provide a full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meanings”.

While explaining the basic principles of this theory, McQuail, (1983, p.121) cited in Anaeto *et al.*, (2008, p.57) summarize it as follows: media must be socially responsible to the public; the responsibility must be based on truth, accuracy, objectivity and fairness, media must be self-regulating, it must not promote violence and civil disorder, the press must be pluralistic in giving equal voice to diverse groupings represented in the society, where the media become irresponsible, the society’s interference can be justified to ensure public good; and although journalists must be accountable to their employers notwithstanding, they have superior loyalty to the public.

Giving the above circumstances, the press, either privately or publicly owned are expected to serve the “public interests” however defined (Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn, 1974; McQuail, 2010). Where it failed to operate in a socially responsible manner, someone (media industry or government) must call it to order (Okunna, 2003). Oji (2008) citing McQuail, (2000) however observed that the government’s intervention can only be justified when the security of the nation is under threat. Although not totally against curtailing the excesses of the media, Folarin (2005, p.29) contends that “allowing the government to enforce the principles of social responsibility can be counter-productive especially in most developing nations where the political class oftentimes operates like military dictators and where the only salient official power is concentrated in the wrong hands such as the police and military institutions, which usually constitute the government”. To avoid external interference in the media affairs under the pretext of safeguarding the public interest is why the code of ethics and professionalism has been put in place to allow self-regulation of its operation.

According to McQuail (2000, p.157), “one way of abiding by the tenets of social responsibility theory without internal or external interference is the establishment of public service broadcasting (PSB) as was done in many parts of the world, particularly in Europe and the former British colonies which was expected to ensure cultural and political pluralism”. This explains why World Radio and Television Council WRTC (2002, p.2) cited in Olatunji (2009, p.140) describes public service broadcasting as “a meeting place where all citizens are welcome and considered as equals. It is an information and education tool, accessible to all and meant for all, whatever their social or economic status, both are neither commercial nor state-controlled”.

A number of reasons have been advanced for the establishment of PSB. McQuail (2000, p.157) and Ojebode (2009, p.61) argue that for mutual understanding and equal sharing of knowledge and for high degree of editorial freedom and autonomy, there is need for PSB which they believe will present: geographic universality of service; provision for minority audiences and the disadvantaged; diversity of programs; editorial independence sustained by detachment from those holding economic and political powers.

Sipos (2001, p.1) also justifies the establishment of PSB, claiming that broadcast media are “too powerful and influential to be left at the control of market forces alone”. Although PSB was financed from public treasury, yet it enjoyed a large degree of editorial independence. However, it is unfortunate that despite its popularity, the shrinkage of the world economy coupled with the gale of neo-liberalism and other capitalist economic prescriptions from the World Bank and other International financial corporations, which swept away many public service oriented institutions, did not spare the broadcasting organ and instead, enthroned free market ideologies (commercialization and privatization). The consequence of the new ideologies is the concentration of the media power in the hands of few rich politicians and businessmen who in-turn uses them for personal advantage.

The mass media industry in Nigeria as in other nations has mixed ownerships ranging from the Federal government, states and private individuals. The governments fund its media and use it to project its policies and programs to the people. The privately –owned media on the other hands are funded and run as purely commercial venture though profit motive and the political lineage of the promoter determine their editorial focus. This is the basis of Ayodele’s (2004) postulation cited by Akpesiri and Friday (2008) that although privatization removed the control of information from the government and transfer to the business class, which incidentally portends greater danger through private sector monopoly of information. Notwithstanding, if the private investors consolidate their grips on the media, the purpose can be ambivalent. While it grants financial autonomy to the press, the media may also become instrument of oppression in their hands.

It is therefore not surprising to note the danger of free market crusade on the corporate make-up and goals of the media whether in the developed or among the developing nations where most media organizations like other enterprises, operate as commercial entity. This therefore calls to question their claims to “serving public interest” as a social institution. Although, privatization of the media can still be advantageous if it becomes a public liability outfit with shareholding spread across all the social strata of the society. The pertinent question here is how many of the media houses are in that category in Nigeria as well as many countries of the world. An average media proprietor in Nigeria will prefer to singlehandedly own and manage an unviable and a dying medium than to team up with others to jointly build and enhance a flourishing one. Perhaps, this is why the media industry in Nigeria experiences high mortality rate as a result of underfunding.

In conclusion, a review of series of arguments for and against social responsibility theory shows that it is not a theory for the western press alone but for the press in all responsible societies. It is only expected that the interpretation of its operational principles may differ from one nation to another.

### **2.2.3 Development Media Theory**

Although, the mass media in most developing countries operate according to some of the principles of classical theories but evidences have shown that none of the theories of the press was strictly applicable to developing countries (Okunna, 1999, p.136). This, according to her, was because as the society transits from developing to developed, there is a wide range of socio-economic and technological gaps that dictate different roles and working conditions for the mass media.

Development media theory propounded in 1987 by McQuail therefore seeks to explain the normative behavior of the press in countries that are classified as developing or third world countries (Folarin, 2005, p.42). According to McQuail, (1987, p.119) there are varying economic and political conditions as well as changing circumstances in developing nations that made it inappropriate to make any generalized statement on their media situations and also make application of other theories of the press of limited benefits. These conditions, according to McQuail (1987, p.44) include:

Absence of communication infrastructure, professional skills, production and cultural resources, dependence on the developed nations for technological needs, skills and cultural products; commitments given to economic, political and social development vary; developing nations have become increasingly aware of their identical interests in international politics and are pursuing them.

These varying conditions were the basis of Oboh's (2007, p.282) submission that among the developed nations, development gave birth to mass media but to the developing nations, the media is seen as a means of development. This is also why development media theory is opposed to absolute press freedom, foreign domination and irresponsible journalism. In other words, it stands for positive use of the media to achieve development goals, national autonomy and cultural identity and for participatory communication process which favors democratic and grassroots involvement. This study which sees mass media as core participant in the development process agrees with the tenets of the development press theory.

According to McQuail (1987), the media under development press theory must participate in development tasks as designed by the state, the freedom of the press must be justified by giving priority to economic development, the media must build bridges across countries that are related geographically, culturally and politically, the pressmen must be free to access information and disseminate same; and in the interest of development, the state's censorship of the media can be justified.

Some scholars however, disagreed with the aspect of McQuail's propositions, which suggests state's censorship of the media. It is argued, for example by (Folarin, 2005) that the proposition goes against the workings of press freedom and makes nonsense of the idea of development. If the state will intervene in the press freedom, then there is no freedom again. Anaeto *et al*, (2008, p.64) however agree with McQuail, adding that "though there is press freedom but there is no absolute press freedom anywhere in the world". This argument is true to the extent that even in America and Europe, the mass media are used at various times to achieve political and economic ends and this is why even though the media are in the private hands, the governments still collaborate with the private sector to determine what goes into news coverage. According to Aina (2004, p.62) most of the media services are government-run or at least government supervised with large dose of political and economic imputes. This is why Dominick (1994, p.58) also argues that "a good deal of the content of some media services are best labelled as propaganda". Voice of America VON, Radio Moscow RM and British Broadcasting Service BBC are all used by their respective governments to achieve national interests.

Regardless of the different views and positions of scholars on development media theory, Folarin (2005, p.33) believes that it has provided solid foundation for the concepts of development communication and development journalism with positive influence on the development process among developing nations. Given that this study borders on developmental issue, the media, especially print should be socially responsible to the society by giving adequate coverage and prominence to SMEs

expansion thus, stimulating and mobilizing Nigerians for active participation in business and economic development of the state.

As we conclude discussion on the theoretical framework, it is important to mention that nothing in the origin, basis and principles of development media theory should be interpreted as shielding the media and the journalists from being socially responsible or ousting the concept of press freedom. Since the primary objectives of the study are to examine the volume of coverage and degree of prominence given to SMEs; and to evaluate whether the media reports within the period of study has translated to economic development, efforts will be made in the subsequent sections to see how far the Nigerian media have operated within the contexts of these theories.

### **2.3 The Media**

Every society is structured into social units for the purposes of sustainability and interrelationships. Each social unit is identified differently and assigned different functions and responsibilities in the constitution that guides the relationship. These units include family, ethnic group, religion, education, politics, economics, media (press) among others. The media which is our prime focus in this part of the study is fundamental to the efficient running of the early society and indeed, a critical factor in the functioning of contemporary society (McQuail, 2005). The media aspects which capture information sharing among the human component of the society is the news gathering, processing and dissemination of information to mass audience. The mass media, press or journalism oftentimes are used interchangeably to refer to the institution saddled with the responsibility to gather information and process for effective transmission to every member of a society without exception (Adaja 2012, p.29).

Understanding the origin of human communication transcends communication itself into the realm of human cooperation to meet man's basic needs of food, water, shelter. Specifically cooperation is a character unique to the human kingdom and it is referred to as shared intentionality (Searle, 1995) which is required for collaborative



action which engenders joint goals, mutual knowledge and shared beliefs in a cooperative context. The indispensability of communication among human beings is the reason why human beings can jointly be involved in culturally constructed entities such as marriage, business and government which are collectively constituted.

The relevance of information sharing among the various units and sub-units that constitute the human society cannot be over-emphasized. Information sharing otherwise known as human communication, is germane to the peaceful co-existence, development and functioning of the society. “It is the lifeblood that sustains..., the glue that holds together..., the oil that smoothens..., the thread that ties... and the binding agents that keep relationships” (Goldharber, 1990). While citing McLuhan, Akinfeleye (2011, p.1) likened communication and society to the relationship between a fish and water. The fish’s existence is so dominated by water that only when water dries up the fish realizes its helpless condition.

Going by the above background, it is therefore not surprising that the concept of human communication has lent itself to several definitions among scholars and authorities of communication. The more one attempts to define communication, the more such definition and its definer end up in the sphere of controversy. Notwithstanding the variability and the controversies around the different definitions, it is generally agreed that communication is a process..... (Akinfeleye, 2011).

McQuail, (2005, p. 24) believed that far back during the early middle ages, element of large scale (mass) dissemination of ideas was present at a point in time in the propagation of political and religious awareness and obligations. This however, was independent of any ‘media’ and cannot be equated with the modern technology-driven information sharing methods. It needs be stated that the process of information gathering, processing and dissemination at that time was at the primordial level. The news management process did not follow contemporary principle and techniques and lacked professional and technological inputs that could

facilitate timely dissemination of message and enhance correct understanding among the information consuming public.

### **2.3.1 The Origin of the Media**

The history of what is today known as mass media or the press (including newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and news bulletin) started after the printing technology. Mass Communication scholars have argued that printing had existed for about 200 years before the establishment of what was later recognized as a “prototype newspaper” (McQuail, 2005, p.27).

The genesis of printing was actually traced to the period of screw technology when direct pressure was applied to produce impression on a flat surface. This technology was primarily used to compress and extract juice from grapes and also, to press and imprint pattern on cloth (Henri-Jean and Lucien, 1997). Before this invention, book publishing was hand written while the Chinese and the Koreans as early as A.D 175 used to cast letters on wooden blocks on which they poured ink and press on papers for impression (Baran, 2000).

In 1446, a German goldsmith, Johanne Gutenberg invented a “movable type press” from the old screw technology. This new printing machine was regarded as one of the most outstanding technological developments in the second millennium. Gutenberg’s new invention was very significant in many respects. According to Baran (2002, p.42), “it revolutionized the printing landscape by leaping it above all other existing printing methods”. Among other things, it also made printed words available to the reading public at affordable price, heightened democratization of knowledge and broke the monopoly of the few elites who dominated the political firmament and the church administrative hierarchy (McLuhan, 1962).

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were subsequent significant improvements on Gutenberg’s manually operated machine as “steam-powered rotary press” was developed which later became a world-wide technology for modern bulk printing. In 1800, Lord Stanhope took the printing technology to the next level. Apart from

building a complete press from cast iron which increased energy efficiency up to 90 percent, it also boosted the production capacity from 170 to 480 pages per hour. Another factor that also contributed significantly to the development of printing press was the introduction of paper production machine which made it possible to mass produce and cut papers into different sizes thus, reducing the cost of production.

The development of printing technology in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was therefore seen as the catalyst that quickened the springing up of different newspapers across the European countries like England, France, Germany, Netherland and a host of others (Baran, 2002). Although, for a very long time, there have been arguments about what actually was responsible for the springing up of newspapers around the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Some mass media historians, according to Ryfe and Kimmelmeier (2011) citing (Baldasty and Rutenbeck, 1988; Baldasty, 1992) have argued that a relatively gradual improvement in the economic and technological environment was mainly responsible for the birth of modern journalism. A few historians on the other hand, have recently argued that, rather than economic and technological reasons, politics was the prime motive for the development of modern press (Kaplan, 2002; Ryfe, 2006b). Whatever conflicting reasons advanced for take-off of the mass media is not as important here as the fact that the newspaper evolution is a product of a combination of factors such as technological advancement, economic improvement, increased literacy level and political awareness in the late 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is also necessary to mention that because the historical origin of the media is controversial and as such, no nation can lay claim to its beginning because there were other historical facts which revealed that some newspapers were in print before the advent of the metal type. For instance, *Acta Diurna* was published in Italy in 59BC (Pavlik 2000, p.229) China published *Tsing Pao* around A.D.500 apart from other handwritten publications such as *Italian Gazette*, *Sydney Gazette*, *Georgia Gazette* and *Colorado Spring Gazette* (Bittner 1989, p.23).

The evolution of the press differs from one country to another. In the Renaissance Europe, newsletters disseminating information about wars, economic conditions, local customs and human interests were circulated among merchants and the few

educated elite. Although, the first printing press was founded in 1446, the first printed newspaper was established in Germany in the late 1400s in the form of pamphlets and was highly sensational in contents (Eisenstein, 2005).

In the English speaking world, *Coranto* was regarded as the earliest prototype newspaper established in 1621. It followed Germany's pattern in form of small news pamphlet and was produced occasionally during important events. However, Bittner, (1989) observe that this prototype could not be regarded as true newspaper going by today's standard.

In the English colony of North America, the first newspaper to be established was *Public Occurrences*. This publication did not last before the government proscribed it, arrest the publisher and many copies were destroyed because it was alleged that the publisher commenced operating the press without being officially registered. The first successful news publication was the *Boston's Newsletter* established in 1704 by John Campbell. This was followed in 1720s by two newspapers in Philadelphia and New York. At the end of the revolutionary war in 1783, there were 43 newspapers in circulation. The year 1833 also marked the beginning of what Emery and Emery (1978) cited by Ogbondah (1985, p.185) described as "the beginning of a new epoch". According to him, it was the year "penny newspaper" also known as the "common man" started in America. Going by the 1880 census record, 11,314 newspapers were in circulation with majority located in Massachusetts, New York or Pennsylvania (Isaiah, 1910; Mott, 1941).

Although one might be right to say that the press took off from a very rudimentary background, but regardless of its unrefined background, it rode on the back of technological development, beginning from the hand-composition of types to mechanical type-setting and later, the rotary printing press machinery with stereotyped equipment and appropriate accessories to substitute for wharf-dale flatbed printing machine which were in use; to become a massive and thriving industry with the sophistication of computer printing technology of the moment (Nnamani, 2005). It needs be stated however, that the emergence of independent press in the 19<sup>th</sup>

century was what actually transformed the press to its present status with modern technology, highly skilled manpower and better editorial focus with relative freedom to operate.

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

The Nigerian media have been described in various ways by different authorities of mass communication, history, politics and religion. While some see the Nigerian press as a product of nationalist struggle, others see it as a religious vehicle. Yet some others believe media provided secular jobs for the few African literate returnees (freed slaves) who came to sojourn in the West coast of Africa in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ayandele, 1974; Omu, 1978; Ogunade, 1981, Coker,n.d). Perhaps, it is against this background that Golding and Elliot (1979) cited by Oso, (1991) remark that “Nigerian press was created by anti-colonial protest, baptized in the water of politics and matured in party politics”.

The concern here is not as much with the description or classification of the press as it is with identifying landmark development that will give us penetrating insight into the historical journey of the media in Nigeria from the beginning till date. Therefore, for better understanding, it will make more sense if we divide the history of the press into the following two parts: Pre-press and the Press era.

#### **2.3.2.1 Pre-Press Era**

Before the advent of modern press and other mass information dissemination organs, Nigerian society, like any other had communication needs. These include the need to be informed about people and events, need to share information and idea with others, need to socialize and participate in developmental programs, to settle disputes and to be entertained among others. To meet these communication needs, the indigenous Nigerian society relied on indigenous communication system.

According to Omu,(1978, p.1), “although indigenous Nigerian society had no newspaper, but it had agencies and institutions which, in several respects, served the same purposes as the newspapers or at least, satisfied the communication needs of

the moment". Prior to the arrival of the colonial lords, Nigeria was divided into kingdoms and empires, each with her distinct political administrative structure. Ikime (1977) identifies some important ones as Oyo Empire, Benin kingdom, Jukun and Kanem Bornu Kingdoms among others.

The agencies of communication used at the time may be classified into two; the informal media and the formal or organized media (Omu, 1978). These categories according to Wilson (1998) cited in Kalejaye et al, (2006, p.2) are further divided into six sub-groups. These include instrumental, demonstrative, iconographic, extra-mundane, visual and institutional modes. Four new classes including venue-oriented, myths and legends, names; proverbs and folktales were added by Akpabio (2003) to bring the number to ten. Going by the above classifications of communication system, it could be observed that there were overlapping in the groupings. However, none of the classifications could be certified as right or wrong because as far as there are many scholars of African communication, their cultures, observations and experiences would normally impact on their classification; as a result, there could be various classification modes. Notwithstanding, for this study, we will rely on the classification of Omu, (1978) because it is believed to be broader and it captures the features of other classifications.

**The Informal Media:** This refers to all forms of unofficial interactions between individuals. Informal media involve dissemination of rumors and unofficial information. Information and messages are shared through the media channels such as family visit, ceremonies (burial, naming and marriage), village festivals, family gods, folk-tale tellers, tribal mark, incantation, names among others.

**The Formal Media:** This media mode is characterized by systematic dissemination of information between the government and the people. The primary objectives of the formal media include paving way for enhanced recognition of the members of the ruling class so as to guarantee the loyalty of the subjects (Omu, (1978:1).

It is important to mention here that the formal media during the pre-press era employed the services of recognized state officials (town criers or bell man) who

used identifiable sounds, signs and symbols (drums, guns and smoke from bush burning) to disseminate information to the people. In contemporary times, particularly during the early post-independent time, traditional rulers in rural communities were still employing these formal channels to disseminate information and to mobilize the local people for community work. The governments, since the colonial days had greatly relied on the traditional rulers in various communities as gatekeepers who usually coordinated the official information flow process from government to the people using formal channels.

However, it is apparent to discover that no mention was made of the written form of communication. It has been observed that most of the earliest writers on African traditional communication either deliberately or out of ignorance often neglected this reality as if it did not exist. Whatever may be their reason, the fact is that there were evidences of some written forms of communication among African societies, including Nigeria. According to Haruna, (1995) cited in Kalejaye et al (2006), the Egyptians had developed a type of writing way back in 300BC. The writing which was called *Hieroglyphs* “the word of God” developed from different pictorial representations out of which people later developed the spoken and written words.

Beside hieroglyphs, there was yet another form of ancient writing, *Nsibidi* discovered among the Efik and Ekoi people of Niger Delta area of Nigeria and the Western Cameroon. The Nsibidi writing was used especially by the secret society to send messages among members and also from the group members to outsiders. The nsibidi is a form of ideogram representing an idea or thing rather than the sound of the word. According to [www.abibitumikasa.com](http://www.abibitumikasa.com), “there are three types of Nsibidi script. The first was secret or mystical signs representing human relationships and communication. The second includes “dark signs” representing danger while the third was known as *Nsibiri* representing signs of rank and ritual which were used only by the priests and initiates”.

Whether formal or informal, written or oral, the truth is that traditional African society, including Nigeria had different system of communication with which they

interacted. They were developed locally by the people and employed local technology and the ultimate is that they enabled African people and Nigerians in particular to communicate intelligibly and participate in different socio-economic activities.

#### **2.4.2.2 The Press Era**

The historical account of the press development in West Africa and indeed Nigeria will not be complete without mentioning the role of slave trade. West African sub-region, beginning from Freetown, the present day Sierra-Leone up to Nigeria all along the west coast was the epicenter of transatlantic slave trade of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Early in 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the populations of freed slaves were multiplying in Europe the British government decided to repatriate them back to the continent where most of them originated from. Between 1802 and 1807, not less than 150,000 slaves had regained their freedom out of which about 400 from United States, Nova Scotia and Great Britain were returned to Sierra Leone, the first British West African Colony and settled in Freetown “Province of Freedom” (Omu, 1978).

The fact that most of these freed slaves had no common language and culture, the British colonialist took advantage of their situation to provide them a shared culture in English language (Omu, 1978). In order to fulfil their (British) colonial expansionist ambition and to promote English language acquisition, the British missionaries decided to embark on western education to complement the colonial government program. This, according to Omu, (1978) led to the establishment of schools in Freetown and all other West African British colonies where Africans were trained not only in language use but also in Christian religious knowledge.

Later on, the British colonial government realized the power of the mass media as propaganda machinery to disseminate the colonial policies and to propagate the new religion in the colonies therefore, decided to establish the *Sierra-Leone Gazette* in 1801. The newspaper was funded and managed exclusively by the colonial government and it remained the only newspaper in West Africa until 1855 when



William Drape established *New Era*, the first indigenous newspaper in Freetown (M'Bayo and Mogekewu, 2000).

With the advent of *New Era*, other news media began to spring up in other colonies such as Gold Coast now Ghana, Gambia and Nigeria. The Nigerian press actually started in the British fashion and has been described in various ways by different media scholars. While some media historians perceive the Nigerian press as a product of nationalist struggle Golding and Elliot (1979) and Oso and Adaja (2011); others see it as a product of missionary evangelistic exploit into the colonies (Akinfeleye, 1974; Omu, 1978; Kalejaye et al, 2006). Another group still argue that the press in Nigeria was born out of commercial ambition of some English merchants who entered into publishing business so as to make profit through information gathering and dissemination to the elite European community about the happenings around them (Oton, 1958).

The concern here is not as much with the descriptions as it is with identifying the important developments and their implications to the historical growth and development of Nigerian press. A deeper examination of the 19<sup>th</sup> century press history reveals that the missionaries played considerable role in the evolution of the press not only in Nigeria but in the entire West Africa sub-region. It is therefore not surprising that in 1859 when Rev. Henry Townsend established the pioneer newspaper in Nigeria *Iwe Irohin fun awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba*, (simply put, Newspaper for the Egba and the Yoruba people) his motives were a combination of social, economic, political and cultural commentaries spiced with religious flavor. While commenting on Townsend's reasons for establishing the newspaper in Nigeria, Sobowale (1985) cited by Oso et al (2011) believe the prime motive behind Townsend's newspaper project is "to atone for the sins of Europe during the dark days of the slave trade", they (British) set out to Christianize the freed slaves and also educate them so they can be useful to themselves and be helpful in spreading the gospel among their kinsmen. Ogbondah (1985) also reasoned along the line of Sobowale adding that the missionaries' main objectives of establishing the press is to aid their evangelistic outreaches aimed at converting Nigerians to Christian religion

and making them to abandon indigenous worship and traditions that were believed to be contrary to Christianity. Contrary to religious explanation is the fact that most of the so called traditional idols carved into images which Nigerians were accused of worshipping as gods were later cunningly taking away from them and found their ways to museums in Europe. If religious evangelization and not economic is truly the motive behind the European exploration of Nigeria, why have they stolen these images for safe keeping in their museums? This is why, although many have argued that missionary activities and political agitation were at the roots of the Nigerian press, notwithstanding this study will not overlook the reality of economic interest. Omu (1978, p.28) has noted that “the pioneer newspapermen were either those who were anxious to recover from financial ruin arising from past business failure or those who were jobless and needed to be fixed quickly”. These categories of people only needed their educational skills (not necessarily in journalism) and printing expertise to float a newspaper publishing outfit. The profiles of most early newspaper proprietors showed that many of them were trained in different fields of study other than journalism.

Explaining the circumstances that occasioned the genesis of the Nigerian press, Golding and Elliot (1979) observe that “the press was created by anti-colonial protest, baptized in the waters of politics and mature in party politics”. Going by this assertion therefore presupposes that Nigerian press was established for political reasons. This may not be far from truth because a peep into the past history of the media in Nigeria and other British colonies confirms the role of the press in their political emancipation and development. As noted by Akinfeleye (2010, p.10)

“the Nigerian press is 101 years older than independent Nigeria (1960), it is 55years older than amalgamated Nigeria (1914), it has been there at every milestone in Nigeria’s march towards independence, the unification and sustainability of the nation before, during and after the civil war (1967-70) and especially, during the transition from military to civilian rule (1966-1999)”.

Golding and Elliot's earlier description of symbiotic relationships between the press and politics has not changed thus the press has remained a cantankerous member of the political class. Any wonder too that most of the media houses in Nigeria presently are either owned by the government or one of the political big wigs. That may also be the reason why political stories usually dominate most Nigerian newspapers and magazines.

The study of Nigerian press history has been divided into various stages by various authors for better understanding. Tador (1996) cited by Ukonu (2006, p.17) classifies the development of the Nigerian press into three as follows: "From 1800-1920 (early press); 1929-1960 (nationalist press); and 1960-to date (modern day- press)". In another classification, Ogunsiji (1989, p.6) divided the history of Nigerian press into four phases as follows: "Era of missionary journalism (1846-1863); the era of alien-dominated press (1863-1914); era of indigenous press (1914-1960) and the era of modern press (1960-till date)". Kalejaye *et al.* (2006, p.14) present seven classifications as follows: "the religious press (1859-1879); rise of African press (1880-1960); the first republic press (October1,1960-January 16, 1966); the first military interregnum press (January 16, 1966-October1, 1979); second republic press (October 1, 1979- December 31, 1983) ; second military interregnum (December 31, 1983-May 29, 1999) and third republic press May 29, 1999-till date)".

However, since none of these authors gave explanations of why he chose those dates as boundaries to delineate one historical period and the other dates, one can only suggest some possible reasons: important personalities whose contributions (good or bad) have impacted on the future of the press; significant landmark developments that coincided with the chosen dates; and paradigm shift in the editorial focus, personnel recruitment and management style. Notwithstanding, Kalejaye et al (2006, p.14) opines that the classification may be useful in facilitating easy traversing of the historical terrain without complication.

### 2.3.2.3 The Media Era (Before Independence)

Although, Nigerian media may not have started in a grand style, but as the year went by, it gradually developed into a big thriving industry that it is today. The way for the emergence of newspapers in Nigeria was paved by the early missionaries who penetrated the west coast of Africa with the purpose of evangelizing the inhabitants and winning them into the Christian faith. This is why it is important to state it clearly that the missionaries did not start from newspaper publication directly. Rev. Hope Waddel, of the Presbyterian Mission in Calabar actually set the ball rolling by establishing the first printing press in 1846 from where school books, Bible and other Christian literature were printed. Printing press as part of the educational concepts of the Christian missionaries received a boost in 1854 when Rev. Henry Townsend also established another printing press in the Anglican Church mission house in Abeokuta. About five years after, December 3, 1859 the first newspaper, *Iwe Irohin* was established in Yoruba language. The English version also later appeared on the newsstand on March 8, 1860 (Omu, 1978; Ukonu, 2006; Kalejaye et al. 2006; Ismail, 2011).

More recently, there have been arguments among academics that *Iwe Irohin* could not be regarded as the pioneer newspaper in Nigeria. They based their argument on the definition and features of newspaper by Otto Groth (1929) cited by Bittner (1989, p.22) “a newspaper must be published periodically, must have mechanical means of reproduction and must be vary in content” Going by the definition, all the missionary newspapers and their early indigenous successors may not be regarded as true newspaper. However, if that view is accepted, it could also be argued that Amsterdam Weekly News-book called *Corantos* and the Boston *Publick Occurrences* regarded as the pioneer English language newspapers in Britain and America respectively are also not because they did not align with the set out characteristics in Groth’s definition. But if otherwise, it will be unreasonable to disregard *Iwe Irohin* as the first newspaper in Nigeria.

Regardless of whether or not it measured up to present day newspaper standard, *Iwe Irohin* made its significant marks in the literacy build-up, religion and political discourse as well as laid the foundation of colonial resentment and economic advancement of its host community. The paper rested in October, 1867, eight years after it was established. The relative success of *Iwe Irohin* had opened the eyes of many others to the prospects of newspaper publishing. Its demise coupled with other factors such as increase literacy level as a result of western education, expanding commercial activities, prompting quests for business news and the growing economic possibilities of printing business gave rise to more printing press and newspaper outfits (Omu, 1978)

Other newspapers subsequently established drew inspiration from *Iwe Irohin*. Their names, year of publication and publishers are presented in the table below.

Table 2.1 List of pre-independent newspapers and publishers

NEWSPAPER	PUBLISHER/PROPRIETOR	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	
Anglo African	Robert Campbell	1862	
Lagos Times	Richard Beale Blaize	1880	
Lagos Observer	Blackall J. Benjamin	1882	
The Eagle & Lagos Critic	Owen Emerick Macaulay	1883	
The Mirror	Adolphus Marke	1887	
Iwe Irohin Eko	Andrew Thomas	1888	
Weekly Times	John P Jackson/ Richard Blaize	1890	
Lagos Weekly Record	John Payne Jackson	1891	
The Lagos Standard	George Alfred Williams	1894	
Lagos Echo	J.S Leigh	1894	
Lagos Reporter	Victor Mason	1898	
Nigerian Chronicle	Christopher J. Johnson/ Emmanuel T. Johnson	1908	
Lagos Standard	G.A. Williams	1908	
Nigerian Pioneer	Sir Kitoye Ajasa	1914	
African Messenger	Ernest Ikoli	1921	

Lagos Daily News	Herbert Macaulay	1925	
Daily Times	Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company Ltd.	1926	
Nigerian Citizen	Gaskiya Corporation	1948	
The Nigerian Times	James Bright Davies	1910	
The Comet	Duse Mohammed Ali	1933	
West Africa Pilot	Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe	1937	
West African Express	E.C. Thompson	1948	
The Nigerian Tribune	Chief Obafemi Awolowo	1949	

Source: Omu (1978); Duyile (2004)

It is pertinent to mention here that the above listed newspapers were the few prominent ones. According to Omu (1978, p.26), a total of 51 newspapers were established between 1880 and 1937, a period of 57years. Also, between 1937 and 1960, a period of 23 years, 39 newspapers were established, only two, (Daily Times and Tribune) are surviving till date.

It is also essential to mention that the early newspapers unlike their modern successors were established and edited by professionals from other fields. Perhaps, this is the reason why Agbaje (1992, p.42) describes the early journalists as “jobless drop-outs and commercially frustrated local elites who could not make headway in other professions” This probably is the reason why Ayandele (1974) also dismissed the early journalists as “deluded hybrids looking for political relevance”.

However, the year 1920 was remarkable in the history of the Nigerian press. It marked the entrance of trained journalists into the profession. Ernest Ikoli who edited *African Messenger* and the *Nigerian Daily Times*; and Duse Ali, *Comet* brought into the profession high literary quality that was unprecedented in the era of both alien and indigenous press. The entry of Nnamdi Azikwe also known as (Zik of Africa) into Nigerian journalism having being trained in political science and journalism in the United States was another noteworthy landmark in the history of Nigerian press.

He had acquired some years of work experiences as city reporter and feature writer in America while he also edited an Accra based *African Morning Post* before he finally returned to Nigeria where he established *West African Pilot* in 1937 (Omu, 1978; Ukonu, 2006).

From the inception of the Nigerian press in 1859, newspapers were observed to be established to give effective expression to the political opinion of their proprietors (Adesoji, 2010, p.23). This was actually the case with Zik and his *Pilot* newspaper group. As a very popular media outfit, it attracted the largest readership because of its unparalleled role in increasing the nationalist consciousness. Governor Coleman once noted about Zik's *Pilot*, "The boldness, the daring and sometimes the shocking directness of his editorials and news items radically differentiated them from those of his predecessors". Zik's entrance into Nigerian journalism marked a general turning point and the birth of nationalists struggle against colonial domination in Nigeria. The former structure of small scale private owner where the proprietor is the editor and sole determiner of the paper's editorial focus gave way for professionalism and division of labor as *Pilot* became a newspaper chain under the name Associated Newspapers of Nigeria. *Pilot* group consisted of *Eastern Nigerian Guardian* (1940) based at Port Harcourt, *Nigerian Spokesman* (1943) at Onitsha and *Southern Defender* (1943) at Warri. In 1945, Zik Press bought over *Comet*, converted it to a daily newspaper and moved it to Kano in 1949 to become the pioneer daily newspaper in the North of Nigeria. The same year, he established the *Northern Advocate* in Jos and in 1955; he launched *The Sentinel* in Enugu. *Pilot*, being the first newspaper in Nigeria to be entirely managed by Nigerians, introduced different features of general interest such as women's page, gossip column, and chit chat among others. Besides, it introduced a new system of headline casting where headline runs across all the columns of the page. According to Omu (1978), *Pilot* at the time, was the largest circulating newspaper in West Africa.

There was no other vibrant newspaper to challenge the monopoly and towering popularity of *Pilot* until 1949 when Obafemi Awolowo, the Premier of Western Region of Nigeria started another newspaper group under the name Amalgamated

Nigerian Press. The *Daily Service* owned by the Action Group Party merged with *Nigerian Tribune* in the chain. The Amalgamated Press established *The Mid-West Echo* in Benin, *Middle Belt Herald* in Jos, *Northern Star* in Kano, the *Eastern Observer* in Onitsha and *Sunday Express* in Uyo.

Although many had argued in the past that the real motive why the pioneer publishers went into press and newspaper business is basically economic but unfolding evidences proved that political consideration rather than economic was the major reason. According to Adesoji (2010, p.23), with the introduction of the democratic elections in 1922, most newspapers established, though were not founded to purposely promote the electoral fortunes of their mentors, their activities betrayed their use for promoting the political interest of their proprietors. This, however, could be argued further by looking at the history of the press in Europe and America where newspaper, according to Haberman (1989) cited by Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009) transformed from an instrument of commerce on the one hand and religious controversy on the other, into mass media apparatus for continual political argumentation and deliberation. Thus, newspapers became fierce instrument in the hands of the educated elite to express their grievances and frustrations; articulating anti-colonial positions, mobilizing the people and public opinion against the colonial rule. If the press could be found partisan as early as the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the western world, it will not be out of place if Nigerian press also forged robust relationship with the political class so as to fight common enemy. In fact, it may be argued that the war against foreign imperialism in Nigeria was fought and won on the pages of newspapers. This view clearly aligns with Kalejaye et al (2006) that while other nations such as Algeria, Angola and Mozambique fought for and obtained their independence with weapon of mass destruction, Nigeria obtained hers with ink and paper.

Media historians have attributed the dynamism and vibrancy of the early Nigerian press especially, before independence to a number of reasons. These include increased consciousness of western education, enhanced commercial activities as well as the quest for maritime and market news in the Lagos province where the



early press were concentrated. Other factors include ready availability of printing press, capital in-flow from foreign partners, technical manpower and most importantly, the population of Nigeria (Omu, 1978; Ukonu, 2006; Oso et al, 2011).

Notwithstanding the relative success of pre- independence Nigerian press, they were however, confronted with the challenge of financial limitation most vividly illustrated by high mortality rate. According to Omu (1978, p.26), a total of 90 newspapers were established between 1880 and 1960, a period of 80years, only two (Daily Times and Tribune) are still publishing till today, others are rested.

### **2.3.2.3 The Post-Independence Press Era**

Prior to independence, according to Coleman (1960) cited by Oso et al (2011), the more Nigerians were getting involved in governance, the wider the division within their political ranks which oftentimes manifested in the media contents. In fact, the 1950s witnessed intense political rivalry and fierce press war among the three major political parties struggling to take the mantle of the nation's political leadership from the colonial administrators.

By this, owning a newspaper therefore became a task that must be accomplished to attain political relevance. At independence, in 1960, Nigeria inherited a very volatile and complex political system characterized by ethnic segregation and religious dichotomy. The polity was partitioned along the line of North, East and West with each region under the control of different political parties and regional-based press to articulate its programs. While the Northern Region which comprised majorly the Hausa-Fulani tribe belong to the Northern People's Congress (NPC), publishers of *Nigerian Citizens*, the Eastern Region consisting of the Igbo ethnic group belong to the National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) under their late leader, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe whose *Pilot* Group served as their mouth piece. Similarly, the Yoruba race occupies the West and belongs to the Action Group (AG) party. Their official newspapers were *Tribune* and the *Daily Service* (Uche, 1989; Agbaje, 1992; Duyile, 2004).

It is remarkable to observe that the media were not only partisan they were actually run and funded by political parties. This situation therefore made the press to become the political propaganda machinery of the regional ruling parties. By this time, objectivity, professionalism, national patriotism and unity of purpose that used to be the hallmark of the Nigerian press before independence had given way to ethnic consideration and pursuit of parochial interests (Kalejaye et al, 2006).

Notwithstanding the press partisanship, it is still noteworthy that all hope was not lost about the press. The divisive situation became a catalyst that prompted the Federal and regional governments to invest more into newspaper business. The Federal government established the *Morning Post* in 1961; the West floated *The Sketch* in 1964 while the North established the *New Nigerian* in 1966.

There arose a shift in the ownership structure of the press in 1967 as a result of military coup that terminated the first democratic republic. The then Federal military government created 12 states out of the former three regions and each of the newly created states established its own newspaper.

Table 2.2 List of state-owned newspapers

<b>STATES</b>	<b>STATE CAPITAL</b>	<b>NEWSPAPERS</b>
Anambra	Enugu	Daily Star
Cross River	Calabar	Chronicle
Imo	Owerri	Statesman
Kano	Kano	The Triumph
Rivers	Port Harcourt	Tide
Kwara	Ilorin	Herald
Plateau	Jos	Standard
Akwa Ibom	Uyo	Pioneer
Edo	Benin	Observer
Delta	Asaba	The Pointer
Abia	Umuahia	National Ambassador
Benue	Makurdi	The Voice

The primary purpose of state creation was to make thin the regional attachment as well as neutralizing ethnic based-politics but despite this, the inter-press wrangling and bickering orchestrated by ownership, regional and political influence continued unabated.

The advent of the military into Nigeria's polity in 1966 through a military coup introduced a new dimension into the media practice. Not only was the entire nation brought under a unitary system of government, but *an emergency decree of 1966* was promulgated which empowered the Inspector General of Police IGP to arrest and detain any citizen without warrant and also empowered the IGP or any other officer of the same rank to search any newspaper office or premises in Nigeria without warrant or notice. Subsequent to this in 1967, *circulation of newspaper prohibition decree* was promulgated which empowered the Military Head of State to restrict from circulation any newspaper in Nigeria where he is satisfied that it is detrimental to the interest of the federation or any state thereof (Ismail, 2011; Kalejaye et al, 2006). By these, the press freedom came under severe restriction as a result of which it could no longer perform its watchdog (surveillance) role on the government and the society. The press under this regime became subservient and responsible to the military establishment that determines what is/is not publishable and what national interest is.

The end of the civil war in 1970 marked the beginning of national reconciliation and reconstruction process during which the press played significant role. Once again, the press was able to regain its professional focus and patriotic zeal. Despite series of repressive decrees of the then military government that made the press to suffer a lot of harassment, intimidation, detention of pressmen and proscription of titles, the media industry once again witnessed a steep rise in the number of independent publications that sprang up across the country. Between early 1970 and 2000s, the following notable newspapers were established in Lagos and other parts of Nigeria.

Table 2.3 List of post-independent privately-owned newspapers

<b>TITLE OF PUBLICATION</b>	<b>PUBLISHER</b>	<b>DATE / PLACE OF PUBLICATION</b>
Punch	Olu Aboderin	1974 Lagos
Concord	Moshood Abiola	1980 Lagos
The Guardian	Alex Ibru	1983 Lagos
Democrat	Isa Funtua	1983 Kaduna
Vanguard	Sam Amuka Pemu	1984 Lagos
The Reporter	ShehuMusa Yaradua	1987 Kano
Champion	Emanuel Iwuanyanwu	1987 Lagos
New Outlook	Author Nwankwo	1988 Lagos
Thisday	Nduka obaigbena	1995 Lagos
Post Express	Sunny Odogwu	1996 Lagos
The Comet	Lade Bonuola	1999 Lagos
Abuja Mirror	Today Communication Ltd.	1999 Abuja
National Interest	Ide Eguabor	2000 Lagos
Daily Trust	Kabiru Aliyu	2000 Abuja
Daily Independent	Abel Ubeku	2001 Lagos
The Sun	Orji-Uzo Kalu	2003 Lagos
Hallmark	Emeka obasi	2003 Lagos
New Age	Century Media Ltd.	2003 Lagos
The Nation	Bola Hamed Tinubu	2008 Lagos
Compass	Gbenga Daniel	2008 Lagos

#### **2.4.1 Historical Evolution of Magazine in Nigeria**

The history of magazine, like the daily newspapers, dates back to the colonial days. According to Nigerian press historians, magazine publication did not start at the same time the newspapers started. It took 28years after the pioneer newspaper before

the first magazine hit the newsstand (Aina, 1998; Amenaghawon, 1999). Unlike newspapers, there are scanty materials on evolution of magazines in Nigeria this is because, most of the media historians concentrated on newspapers. Another reason for the dearth of material may also be because the media historians did not see magazines as a popular medium of communication during the colonial period especially when one considers the issues of politics and economy as the central focus of most publications at the time. According to Aina (1998), before independence, the few magazines published in Nigeria were foreign in content and language.

Magazine publication evolved when the missionaries felt there was the need for them to back-up their oral preaching with written material that their converts can read at their spare time and in the confines of their homes. Magazine was first published purposely to reinforce the messages from the pulpit. This is the reason why Nwuneli, (1985) notes that early magazines were essentially church messages and church-related news. Such magazines include *Readers Digest* 1887, *In Leisure Hour* (1917) by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), *African Church Gleaner* (1917), *African Hope* (1919) by the African Church Organization, *Nigerian Baptist* (1923) by the Baptist Convention, *Nigerian Methodist* (1925) by the Methodist Church, *African Challenge* (1934) by Sudan Interior Mission, *African Christian* (1930) by the African Church of Nigeria, *African Chronicle* (1930) and *Catholic Life* 1936) by the Roman Catholic Church.

It must be stated that magazine publication remained unpopular until after Nigeria gained independence in 1960. The first magazine in Nigeria post-independence era was the *Drum*. This was followed by the *Flamingo* in 1961. The daily Times group of newspapers also gave birth to another magazine in 1962 called *Spear* (Ukonu, 2006). The advent of oil boom in the early 1970s also gave rise to the establishment of general interest magazines. Thus, magazines like *Modern Woman*, *Today's Woman*, *Happy Home*, *Family Health*, and *African Impact* were established to serve the interest of different readers.

The year 1980 actually recorded unprecedented sudden rise in the number of magazines on the Nigeria newsstand. A factor that engendered this phenomena growth includes the entrants of many professionally trained journalists most of who transformed the style of reporting by introducing flowing feature writing and investigative reporting and follow-up stories. In this category, the Punch group set the pace by floating two magazines *The Super* and *Ophelia*. This was followed in 1984 by *Concord Weekly* and *African Concord* owned by late Chief MKO Abiola. Other magazines that hit the newsstand include *Newswatch* (1985), *Complete Football* (1985), *Prime People* (1986), *Hotline* (1985), *Tell* (1985), *The News* (1986), *Source* (1996), *Classics*, *Conscience International* (1999 ) among others.

It is also pertinent to mention that the media in general had regained its vibrancy and professional status at this time thus becoming a pain in the neck of the government and the arrowhead of the democratic struggle to wrestle the nation from the military juntas that held her hostage for a long time.

#### **2.4.2 The Dawn of Broadcast Media in Nigeria**

Broadcast media found its way to Africa from Europe in 1926. According to Ukonu (2006), Africa did not desire the broadcast technology when it crossed its borders. It was an unsolicited advancement brought by the Europeans to enhance easy governance of their colonies in Africa.

Radio broadcasting first started in South Africa in 1925. Other countries such as Kenya 1928, Tunisia 1930, Madagascar 1931 and Zimbabwe 1932, began to follow. The British Empire service from Daventry, England relayed in Lagos in 1932 marked the beginning of broadcasting in Nigeria (Omu, 1978; Kalejaye et al, 2006). In 1936; the Colonial government in Lagos started the radio distribution service (re-diffusion) to beam programs from London to Nigeria. Subsequently, in 1951, the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) was established by the national government with headquarters in Lagos and three regional stations in the then three regions to which the nation was divided (Rauf, 2003). Although the reason for the establishment of the regional offices was to ensure even and adequate news coverage of events in all the

regions but the reverse was the case as this failed to meet the aspiration and yearning of the regions. The need to break the monopoly of the national government's use of radio broadcasting prompted the Western regional government to establish its own radio station (Western Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation) in May 1960. The same reason also was why the Western region established its television station a year earlier to become the first in Africa. In 1962, the Eastern region also started its radio and television service (Ukonu, 2006; Aro, 2011).

It is noteworthy that in 1967, with the creation of twelve states structure out of the existing three regions in Nigeria, electronic broadcasting assumed national acceptance as all the newly created states took turn to establish radio and television stations which were used to inform, educate and mobilize the citizens in support of their programs and for participation in the democratic process. According to Okunna (1993, p.55), as at 1983, Nigeria had 32 radio and television stations; each operating within the official guidelines that established it either by the state or federal government.

It is also pertinent to note that electronic broadcasting, from independence year in 1960 till 1992 became an instrument of mass mobilization in the hand of the government alone no private individual was allowed to own radio or television station. In 1992, the military administration of Gen. Babangida promulgated the National Broadcasting Commission Decree 38 which terminated the 60 years of government monopoly of broadcast media. By 1993, licenses were issued to private individuals to own and operate private radio and television stations in Nigeria. According to Udejah, (2004) cited by Ukonu, (2006:93), Nigeria, as at 2003 had 262 radio and television stations owned by the Federal, state and private individuals. With the increase in the number of new investors in the media industry, there has been an increase in the number. Presently, Nigeria has a total number of 152 radio stations, 116 television stations, and 40 cable stations (Wogu, 2006; Odeh, 2007).

Notwithstanding the seeming development in the media industry, the mid 1980s witnessed a new chapter in the history of the media, not only in Nigeria but across

the globe. There emerged a new world order where developing nations as integral part of the world information consumers participated in information technology acquisition leading to significant revolution in information gathering, processing and dissemination. The evolution of new information technology has therefore turned the world to a global village where information is made more easily accessible and also travels at an incredible speed of light. Among the astounding new communication technologies are cybernetics, cable television and radio, fibre optics, electronic and online newspapers and magazines, communication satellite and general computer networks (Ukonu, 2006). These new technologies have contributed immensely to information distribution process at the same time redefine the concept of mass communication. Bittner (1989, p.262) says “New technology is changing the way we receive and consume mass information. The definition of mass communication is changing to encompass more specialized media such as electronic publishing (online publishing) and internet broadcasting.

Tracing the media development journey back to 1859 when the pioneer press started in Nigeria, one can say without contradiction that the media have come of age. An assessment of the early press and pressmen demonstrates that the press has provided the platform for most outstanding intellectual discourse which standard and quality cannot fail to fascinate modern readers.

Despite the impressive credential of the mass media in Nigeria, it has been observed that the media organizations are mostly concentrated in Lagos and other state capitals where they focus attention on the coverage of events in the urban centers and pay scanty attention to rural communities. Akinleye and Ojebode (2004) have also noticed this rural-urban lopsidedness in information flows which they referred to as “domestic replica of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)”. The issue of Information and communication imbalance between the developing and developed world has constituted a matter of discourse at various development and communication conferences. NWICO like its economic predecessor, the New World Economic Order (NWEEO) was an explosion of bottled up anger against apparent injustice unleashed by the developed rich nations against



the developing poor ones whereby information appeared to flow in one way from the rich to the poor and not vice versa. Most multinational media conglomerates such as British Broadcasting Service (BBC), Voice of America (VOA) Cable News Network (CNN) and Radio Moscow (RM), New York Times, Times Magazines among others have been found to give prominence in space and time to issues of political and economic interests that concern the western world while they deliberately shrink and in most cases distort information from the developing world (Ganley and Ganley, 1983; Meyer, 1988). In other words, this means that most of the news about developing worlds is observed to be deliberately lacking in development content and value.

Since the inception of mass media in Nigeria, the concentration has followed the lopsided international pattern illustrated by inequality in the information flow within Nigeria. This is what MacBride et al., (1980, p.166) describe as “a gap between a cultural elite and illiterate or semi-literate masses” or “ gap between the information –rich and the information poor”.

Both print and electronic media are believed to be urban-centric in their content and coverage and have consistently paid less attention to rural community reports. The rural communities in Nigeria have been neglected for so long by each succeeding governments. For instance, it was only recently in 1986 that the Koma people in the Adamawa state of Northern Nigeria first featured in the news since many decades they have lived behind modern civilization. Apparently if the media have not been far away from the Koma community, the pitiable state of over 150,000 Koma people wearing leave as cloth should have attracted the attention of the government and modern development would have been provided in the area. Denying this large number of people access to news is not only contrary to the principle of development journalism but also against the tenet of social responsibility theory which says the media as a whole should be pluralistic, giving voice to the voiceless and reflecting the diversity of the society.

As we consider the issues of new world order and the sustenance of poverty reduction program among developing nations, we need to put in perspective the rural-urban information imbalance. If the developing nations complain about world information imbalance at the international level, there is a greater need for as much agitation to maintain balance at the national level. There is urgent need for true community media in Nigeria. National or regional media have been found to be unable to cater for the development needs of Nigeria's sharply divergent urban-rural populace. It is observed that the lopsidedness in information gathering and reporting could be traced to the fact that most media proprietors and the reporters are urban based therefore focused more attention on their immediate communities. A possible way out is for community media to be established owned and managed by the community. Although there is great level of improvement in community radio broadcast today but there is still much to be done in print media.

## **2.5 The Functions of the Mass Media**

There is hardly any society today that can function properly without the presence and impact of the mass media. Everywhere, the press has always functioned to disseminate information about public affairs, interprets government policies and programs, and particularly, provides sufficient information on which the public form opinion about particular issues affecting the society. The more access people have to the news from the media is the more their conduct and moral values are affected either for good or bad. As a matter of fact, all the mass communication scholars have accepted the mass media as agents of social, cultural, economic and political changes in the society. However, the only point of argument is in how the media play their roles in the society to facilitate the expected changes. Giving that there is a symbiotic relationship between mass media and the society, the link can be viewed on the basis of the functions the media perform in the society. Thus, in this subsection, the study will evaluate the functions of the media in a modern society with particular reference to Nigeria and will observe whether their performances align with the media theories discussed above.

### **2.5.1 News Gathering and Reporting Function**

News, though a mono-syllabic word appears to be simple but has lent itself to several controversial definitions. News has been defined in various ways by different scholars. It has been defined as “an account of what the public wants to know, what they must know and what they ought to know”. “It is an accurate and unbiased account of timely event that is of human interest to the newspaper readers, radio listeners and television viewers” (Harcup and O’Neill, 2010, p.262; Akinfeleye, 2011, p.95).

Our experience as practicing journalists and news hunters reveals that news is found everywhere and according to Nwanne (2008) reporter must gather information and write report that describes the events on daily basis. This is where professionalism and experience come in, to determine which of the available news materials will pass the news selection process using the codified ground rules set by the media organization (Harcup and O’Neill, 2010). Although many events occur daily but not every event is newsworthy in the mass media. Of the various events that may make news, it is the reporters and the editor’s duties to decide which news is more prominent than others. Given the transient and relative nature of news, different news media often treat the same story differently. The reason is that based on different editorial judgment; very important news (lead story) to a media organization may be treated as less important by the others.

Due to the ambivalence of news judgment therefore, an event can only make news if it conforms to one or a combination of the following criteria: timeliness, proximity, prominence, degree of impact, human interest, accuracy and unusual (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Palmer, 1998; Watson, 1998; Herbert 2000; Nwanne, 2008; Akinfeleye, 2011).

All media houses serve their audience with varieties of news using different manners and approach depending on in-house policy of each medium. Mass media perform this role by engaging the services of reporters and editors to work in various beats whose responsibilities according to Ukonnu, (2008, p.13) and Akinfeleye, (2011, p.

96) include gathering of information, storage, process, package and disseminate to the identified public on daily, weekly or monthly basis.

For the audience to fully understand the message a journalist is passing across, the reporter must present his message logically, accurately, concisely, coherently, unambiguously and in readable manner. According to Okunna *et al*, (2002, p.233) to write and communicate effectively, a reporter has to understand the theory and practice of effective communication, bear the target audience in mind continually, be familiar with and respect common elements of style and have a good command of the language of publication and indeed, the appropriate register of the issue being reported.

In addition to obeying the above rules, a reporter must also structure his report to conform to the traditional news writing format otherwise referred to as inverted pyramid. This is the style of reporting where the most important message in the report is presented first as a 'lead' or 'intro' while other messages are arranged in the descending order of importance bearing in mind the 5Ws and H. These are: 'who, what, when, where, why' and 'how' of the story. Here again, the relativity of news has manifested in that each media house uses different editorial judgment to determine the angle to the story. While a media organization may see the 'Who' of the story as the most important, another media house may see the 'Where' as the most important and the lead.

To efficiently carry out these assigned roles, a journalist must not only be sufficiently knowledgeable in the art and craft of writing but must be familiar with the overall operation of his beat (Awolowo, 1996; Mattar, 2008). To be knowledgeable, according to Merrill, (1974) cited by Owolabi, (2008, p.160) is to be well educated, accurate, objective and constructive. According to Ogundimu, (2008, p.172-173), ethics of journalistic reporting "demands a careful assemblage of facts through multiple sourcing of evidence, independent verification and confirmation of evidence, careful sifting of facts for the selection of appropriate set that best depict a reproduction of a coherent narrative". He further states that a good journalistic

reporting must be guided by the following ethical principles of truthfulness, objectivity and fairness while maintaining independence and minimizing harm to public interests.

### **2.5.2 Gate Keeping and Agenda Setting Function**

Gate keeping and agenda setting is another media function that is very pertinent to news gathering and reporting function discussed above. According to Shoemaker et al (2009, p.73), “gate keeping is the process of selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating and otherwise massaging information to become news”. Journalists (reporters and editors) receive large volume of information daily from various sources out of which they selects the news-worthy ones for publication. As Donahue et al (1972) cited in Shoemaker et al (2009) emphasize, gate keeping is a complex process involving decisions about the amount of time (on television or radio) or space (newspapers or magazines) allotted to a news event. Besides, the gate keeper also determines the importance attached to a story by using the appropriate news judgment and value to determine the position of a story in the newspaper or news program. In carrying out these editorial functions, journalists must be objective which is a human characteristic based on understanding and experience on the job (Nwanne, 2006). In spite of the immense professional value attached to objectivity in journalistic practice, the concept of objectivity has come under severe criticism. “Some say that journalism is not objective; others believe that it cannot be objective; and still others, that it should not be objective” (Lichtenberg 1996, p.225). Confusion arose when some scholars observed that objectivity is an unattainable ideal while others believe that insisting on objectivity is an attempt by a group of people to oppress other members of the society (Mackinnon, 1982, p.537; Lichtenberg, 1996, p.226). They based their arguments on the fact that mass media owners and those they appointed as gate keepers regulate and determine the volume of local and international information that gets to the people. This means, the more information is denied the people, the less power they have, therefore maintaining hegemonic hold on the people. This confirms the views of some scholars especially from the developing nations that there is information imbalance between the developed and

developing nations due to shaping, sifting and fine-tuning of news which often result in outright distortion of the news contents to the detriment of developing nations.

This is where agenda setting comes to play. The basic principle of agenda setting involves the transfer of object and salient matters from the media to the public (Kiousis, 2010; Chyi and McCombs, 2004; Craft and Wanta, 2004; Kur et al, 2003; Shaw and McCombs, 1977). Other scholars, Folarin (2005) and Umuerrri (2008) further state that agenda setting power of the media implies that the media do not only influence the reportage of issues and events in the society but also pre-determine what issues are regarded as important at a given time.

Gate keeping and agenda setting function of the media have been criticized in contemporary times for introducing news slant and biases into report. McChesney (2000) identifies three different biases. The first is associated with story selection which most times regarded anything done by government official as newsworthy. Thus, conferring agenda setting power on political office holders by what they said or decided not to say. The second bias is tagged professional journalism tenet that based news reporting of an issue on news peg. By this, an issue is not considered newsworthy until there is a striking development. For instance in Nigeria, the need for constant and strict enforcement of aviation safety laws and professional ethics is not worth reported until such a recent tragic occurrence involving Dana aircraft 992 that crashed into the densely populated Iju-Ishaga, suburb of Lagos state and claimed 153 lives including some top government officials. Third, journalists usually allow commercial consideration and political interests of their owners to dictate what goes into their reports. This truth is further reinforced by Hulteng (1979) that, for the press to stand on better ground to perform its responsibilities professionally in the present society; mass media must first establish themselves economically as viable ventures. How the mass media can achieve this in the face of present economic reality without an element of bias remains to be seen.

### **2.5.3 Surveillance/Watchdog Role**

Of all the traditional functions of the mass media, none is as important and so demanding as its surveillance / watchdog role. It was this critical role that conferred on the media the official status of the ‘fourth state of the realm of polity’; the other three estates being the Legislative, Executive and the Judiciary. The watchdog role, which, according to Siebert et al, (1963) stemmed from the principles of social responsibility theory of the media expects the mass media to serve as informant and watchdog to the society in order to safeguard the fundamental right of individuals.

By far the most significant watchdog role of the media to the society is to the political and the economic class. Mass media ensure openness and accountability in political and economic governance (Balkin, 1999; Tejumaye and Adelabu, (2011). According to Lasswell, (1948) cited in Daramola, (2008), these functions are simplified as surveillance and watchdog. As an observer, the media investigates the environment and report on the threats and dangers as well as on the prospects and opportunities inherent in a particular policy of the government. For instance, the media in 1985 alerted both the government and the citizens on the danger of Nigeria obtaining the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan proposed by the government. The media, through editorial, news analysis, features and opinion articles identified the possible effects which include devaluation of national currency, inflation, removal of subsidy on some social services, retrenchment, among others. Contrary to media advice, the government took the loan. Today, Nigerians are all living witnesses of the economic consequences of neglecting the watchman’s advice.

The watchdog role of the media also includes making the business of government more transparent; stimulating debate on public issues thereby creating understanding of the policies and programs of the government, encouraging the people to participate in the political process; providing surveillance and checkmating corrupt practices, abuse of power and violation of the social contract and most importantly, holding members of the political class more accountable (Balkin, 1999; Azekome, 2008; Yuezhi, 2000; Meijer, 2010).

To accomplish the watchdog role in a way that will strengthen the state, the mass media must embark on extensive investigative journalism that will go extra mile to gather facts that somebody wants to hide and disclose every dirty deals of the government as well as all behind-the-scene intrigues and under hand deals of the ruling class (Ganiyu, 2004; Nwabueze, 2005).

Despite the positive effect of the watchdog role, mass communication scholars have observed that the mass media are ambivalent in discharging their responsibility. While corroborating this position, Balkin (1999) opines that mass media can hinder transparency as well as help it by assisting the political class to fake accountability and openness in government business through rhetorical and media manipulation. There have been instances in Nigeria when the government officials and members of the political class declared that the government is going to wage war against corrupt practices in every office. They have used the media to make this empty promise of their determination to break away from the past when corruption looms large both in the public and private sectors. The recent happenings in Nigeria now are pointers to the fact that the government is not in any way serious about fighting corruption. The Federal House of Representatives through its ad-hoc committee on oil subsidy management headed by Hon.Farouk Lawan discovered a large scale fraud of about N1.7trillion involving some oil cartel which include marketers and some agencies of government and for which 15 oil marketers have been indicted and were recommended for heavy sanction. The lukewarm attitude of the Federal government to the report has not left anyone in doubt that the government was not interested in bringing the perpetrators to book. Instead of the government to go after those indicted in the house report, it (government) through the media sponsored another report indicting two members of the House Committee of taking bribe while the probing exercise lasted. Although, the Federal government had not acted on the initial report involving a whopping sum of money worth about 50 percent of the annual national budget yet, it has immediately commenced probing the culpability of the two house members. As if that was not bad enough, the video recording of how the multi-millionaire oil magnate offered bribe to House members has become an



entertainment program in some national and state television stations, thus trivializing and rubbishing the house committee report. The mass media have knowingly or unknowingly joined the government as it turns serious criminal case against the state to an entertainment menu so as to shift attention away from prosecuting those who were indicted in the oil subsidy report, all in an attempt to cover-up the party loyalists who were indicted.

The Independent Power Project (IPP) fraud involving some ruling party members and some foreign contractors were similarly covered up using the media to play it down by indicting the Chairman of the Senate Committee that discovered the fraud. The committee chairman's bribery case was what the government pursued till the government changed hand in year 2008 while it swept under the carpet the main issue.

Although mass media enhance transparency and accountability through its watchdog role, it can also frustrate the values of transparency while performing other function of entertainment. When politicians attempt to simulate or fake transparency through rhetoric and media manipulation, they use the media to set another agenda that will divert the attention of the people from reality (Balkin, 1999). It is against this background that Tejumaye and Adelabu, (2011) also remark that the Nigerian media watchdog role has been compromised and substituted with the docile, friendly and humane dog role as the press sometimes look away from the thriving wrong doings at the corridors of power. They also noted that the privately owned media that are supposed to be outspoken, critically constructive and objective have been compromised because some of their proprietors either belong to the same political party with the government in power or because they are government contractors enjoying regular patronage.

The watchdog role of the media has yet come under rigorous scrutiny by some media scholars who perceive this traditional role of the media as ambivalent. According to Curran (2000, p.122) cited by Kanyegirire (2008), the watchdog role is stale and not as straightforward as it presently appears in the prevailing socio-economic and

political climate. He felt it will be inappropriate to assign this fundamental role of surveillance to the media believing it was formerly done based on the traditional assumption that the government is the seat of power and tyranny which the media must be able to checkmate. It has now been observed that the traditional estimation fails to consider the unlimited influence of big shareholders in private business of which the private media have lately become a significant part. Going by the above observations, the problem now is not that the media can be compromised by their relationship with the political and economic class. The main issue is that the media itself has become big business Empire that must be watched. Then, who watches the watchdog is the critical issue that remains to be determined. Opinions on this issue have been somehow diverse. While some argued in line with the principle of development media theory that “in the interest of national development, the state or a constituted body has the right to intervene in media operation” (McQuail, 2005), some others believe that doing so will restrict the press freedom and make a mockery of development idea. Instead, according to Wasan (2013) before an external force points accusing fingers at the press, it should look inwards to self-regulatory mechanism. However, this study believes that with the present structure of the media industry globally, self-regulation might be an impossible task in view of various factors affecting the media operations such as ownership influence, personal opinion of the editors and reporters and economic motive. This means it is the responsibilities of the civil society, NGOs and social activists to play watchdog role on the press using new tools of social media. According to Thomas (2013), Facebook and twitter can empower the civil society to join forces, coordinate and offer voice to the voiceless to expose and criticize any perceived unethical conduct of the mass media. In conclusion, while contributing to the debate, Curran (2000) has called for immediate review of the perception that the media are watchdogs on both political and the business groups. The thrust of his argument is that since most media have turned to full profit-making outfits, their ability to carry out the traditional watchdog role remains doubtful. This perhaps explains the position of the critics of development journalism who, according to Donohue et al (1995, p.115-117) argue that instead of the media becoming a watchdog against corrupt practices, they may in

actual fact become a “guard dog” that will secure corruption arena while the deal lasted.

Notwithstanding the identified press dysfunction, it will be unfair to deny the positive contributions of the media by way of publicity, critical analysis, investigating and reporting evil doers and keeping the government on its toes.

#### **2.5.4 Mobilisation Role**

The mobilization role of the media, according to Lanihun (2003) is a recent responsibility that evolved from development communication and the development need of the society. It is no longer in doubt that the role of the media in development effort are to inform and to educate but to also mobilize the people to participate in the development process. The media activities are aimed at creating awareness motivate and encourage the people to cooperate with the government to accomplish development initiative (Ojette, 2008). However laudable the government program may appear to be, the relevance and the inherent benefits to the people notwithstanding, the people need to be informed, educated and mobilized to participate for success to be guaranteed. This cannot be done without the media (Umechukwu, 2003).

According to Udoakah (1998) cited in Lanihun, (2003, p.79), the press also influences the public to accept new ideas and new ways of doing things otherwise known as attitude change and it is therefore seen as corrective, integrative and revolutionary in nature. Attitude change results from a systematic process of information sharing aimed at influencing the people to change their outmoded way of thinking and all anti-social behavior and orientation most of which constitute a clog in the wheel of development.

The mass media must be able to assist the people to participate in the political process; the most prominent of these are the analysis of electoral manifestoes, campaign, public opinion, debate and discussion on issues making use of the right source of information to provide fair, accurate and balanced information that will

enable the electorates to make informed political judgments (Okunna, 1994; Agba, 2001; Ukonnu, 2007).

Since the post-colonial period, the media have supported various programs and policies of the government so as to enhance the socio-economic and political development of the country. While citing Jason (1996) Ojette (2008) however, observed that this collaboration did not translate to wholesale endorsement of successive governments' programs. This is why mobilization effort of the press must involve objective interpretation and thorough evaluation of such programs and if possible, proffer alternative views. Evidences abound of well evaluated and interpreted programs that attracted popular participation from the people in Nigeria. If the press evaluation for instance necessitates alternative view, for government to go ahead with such program may fuel agitation and may lead to opposition by the people. The year 2012 fuel subsidy removal attempted by the Federal government of Nigeria is a clear case of how the media can mobilize the people against government program. The media, through series of news report, editorials, features and opinion articles have suggested to the government that the citizens have suffered enough and it will be an act of gross insensitivity on the part of government to add to or compound their problems if it cannot reduce it. The media therefore suggested possible alternatives such as making the wealthy people in the society who incidentally are the tax evaders to pay more tax as it is done in developed nations, bringing to book those fraudulent public officers and contractors who still walk like saints on the streets and by seriously pruning down the government expenditure in line with the present economic reality. The government disregarded the media advice as it went ahead to remove the fuel subsidy which was greeted with wild protest that almost grounded the government.

## **2.6 Nigerian Media and the Challenge of Economic Distress**

The mass media in Nigeria have been operating in a very hostile economic atmosphere most vividly illustrated by high cost of production, constantly dwindling advertising patronage and infrastructural inefficiency while a significant proportion

of the population have also got to struggle with shrinking purchasing power. Most newspaper proprietors maintain the organization by depending on personal resources and limited advertisement proceeds which oftentimes are inadequate to guarantee the continued sustenance of an organization as financially demanding as the media. It is not an exaggeration to say that the media industry and especially the pioneer newspapers in various parts of the world have distinguished itself in its unique roles of shaping and transforming the society by inducing socio-political changes. However, the appraisal of the mass media in general and the prints in particular shows that what the media have accomplished politically has no resemblance with their present miserable economic position. The present economic state of the traditional media industry in the world is generally appalling. According to Usher, (2010) cited in Owolabi and O'Neill (2013) the competing influence of new media and the harsh reality of distress economy foretell a gloomy future of the media industry which has experienced steady cutback in circulation rate due to year 2008 economic slump that affected most developed economy of the world (The State of the News Media, 2009). Data obtained from the United States reveals that over 15,000 people have lost their jobs out of 56,000 employed in the industry in 2008 (Paper Cuts, 2009; The State of the News Media, 2009). The *Detroit Free Press* and *New York Times*, two leading news media in the USA were worse hit by the economic down turn thus necessitating downward restructuring of their home delivery service to thrice a week while some of their unviable subsidiaries were wound down (Lendon, 2008; Pena, 2009; Sanders-Ware, 2009).

The situation in France is equally horrible as the former President; Nicholas Sarkozy had to embark on bail out strategy to prevent some badly affected newspapers from closing down (Chrisafis, 2009). Available statistics in United Kingdom also shows that many newspapers including the *Guardian* were reported to experience about 5 percent drop of their circulation and *The Times*, 1.57 percent within a space of one year (World press Trend, 2008).

An outcome of a general survey of the state of newspapers industry in the United States and Europe is all that is required to have the correct view of the world of the

news media in other parts of the world. In Africa, particularly in Nigeria, the harsh reality of economic meltdown has dramatically changed the outlook of the media industry indicating high debt profile, downsizing, retrenchment and drop in circulation and in extreme cases they mostly resorted to closing operations. Recent findings revealed that a total of 51 newspapers were established between 1880 and 1937, a period of 57 years. This consisted of 11 dailies, 33 weeklies and 4 monthlies. Except 15 provincial weeklies, all these newspapers were established in Lagos. Of all the 51 newspapers, only one (1), *Daily Times* of Nigeria survives till date, all others, except *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Service* that survived till early 1960s were rested. Also, between 1937 and 1960 a period of 23 years, 39 newspapers were established of which only *Nigerian Tribune* is still publishing. Between 1960 and 2008 a period of 38 years, 168 newspapers and 48 magazines were established. Only 43 newspapers and 15 magazines are yet operating and they are all based in Lagos and Ibadan axis of Nigeria (Omu, 1978; Owolabi, 2011). Although there are other regional and community –based newspapers in other cities and states of the federation but they are circulating within their states and local communities.

Going by the above statistics, it is an incontestable fact that there is high mortality rate plaguing the media industry in Nigeria as can be seen in that most newspapers and magazines die between the ages of two and nine years.

#### **2.6.0 Freedom of the Press**

According to Tejumaye and Adelabu, (2011), if the mass media are to be effective in carrying out its traditional functions, there must be atmosphere of freedom void of restrictions and obstacles such as decrees, legal and social constraints, government interference and harassment. The concept of media freedom which is inextricably interwoven with that of citizens' is situated within the universal rights of freedom of expression and freedom of speech (Awolowo, 1998; Owolabi, 2008).

All over the world, there is nowhere the freedom of speech and of the press were obtained on a platter of gold. Some people actually fought for it. The history of man is replete with struggling for freedom of expression in the process of which many

lives were lost. In Daramola, (2003b) cited by Oji, (2007, p.417), Socrates (470-399BC) was convicted while defending his freedom of expression. The defense of freedom of expression did not stop with Socrates' death, it continued even after the death of Jesus Christ when Peter, one of his Apostles and followers was also convicted and jailed by the religious leaders of his days for exercising his freedom of speech (Acts of the Apostles 5:17-29). The struggle continued until the bills of rights were drafted- Magna Carta (Great Charter, 1215); English Bill of Rights, (1689); Virginia Declaration of Rights of Man (1789); and the United States Bill of Rights (1791). Despite these developments, it was the trial and legal victory of John Peter Renger in a criminal libel case that finally paved the way for press freedom (Obe, (1991) cited by Oji, (2007).

According to Daramola, (2003b, p.154), the 1791 United States constitution was derived from the 1776 constitutions of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which state that people have unfettered freedom of speech, writing and publishing. Thus, the US first amendment states that:

Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

However, some people usually confuse freedom of expression with press freedom claiming there is no need of demanding for press freedom which they believed is situated within the Universal Rights of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Speech (Ogunsiji, 1989; Awolowo, 1996). But Akinfeleye (2003, p.3) believes the two are different adding that, "freedom of expression is individualistic while freedom of the press is collective". Akinfeleye (2003) further explained that freedom of expression is an inalienable right of an individual which is guaranteed by the United Nations Charter of Human Rights while freedom of the press represents internal control mechanism that is, checks and balances or the societal scale for measuring achievement and developments which should be enjoyed by the masses through the media professionals who are themselves accountable to the society in which they live and serve under the condition that they will be socially responsible.

There are a number of guarantees for media right among the bodies of fundamental rights and the constitution. For instance, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), a United Nations General Assembly resolution of December 10, 1948, p.13 guaranteed the right of expression to the extent that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes the right to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

Also, according to the European Convention on Human Rights and European Court of Human Rights 1950, p.32 the Article 10 addresses the protection of the right to freedom of expression. It is composed of two parts:

- “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression and this right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises”.
- “The exercises of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.”

Notwithstanding, freedom of the press is relative from country to country and that informs why it is interpreted differently from one country to another. It is however interesting to note that there is no country in the world where there is absolute press freedom even in the United States where it was categorically stated that “the Congress shall not make any law abridging the freedom of the press”, the Supreme Court has sometime justified some congressional anti-press enactment. Similarly, in Latin America and some European Countries such as Germany, Spain, Netherland



and Turkey, Insult Law otherwise known as *deseccato* law are still in use against the press on the ground of being rude to the king and members of the royal family (Osinbajo and Fogan, 1991; Walden, 2000; Addo, 2000; McMahon, 2002, Uran, 2010).

Some media scholars have, however, justified some restrictions on the media. According to Opubor, (2005, p.16); Oji, (2007, p.423), in the midst of freedom, there may still be restriction, journalists are members of the society expected to carry out certain specially assigned roles which cannot be left in the hands of powerful few without a measure of control. Explaining further, they believe leaving the press with absolute power might place other arms of government at its mercy which may be dangerous for the stability of the state. But Murdock (1989) and Oso (2011) have different views, claiming that it is a wrong assumption that lack of control from government and political party will guarantee press freedom otherwise, the commercial and corporate bodies can take advantage of lack of press control to hijack and use it to protect their capitalist interests against the states and the society.

Regardless of how it is interpreted, the point is that freedom of the press is a circumstance that guarantees media professionalism by allowing journalists to search for, gather, process and disseminate information within the context of what is good for the mass audience (Ukonnu, 2006). This means, the media as a social institution are expected to serve the “public interest” as defined. For the mass media to serve the public interest, it must uphold high professional standard characterized by objectivity, neutrality, balance and truthfulness in reporting. The press must be substantially independent and free from governmental and ownership control while it keeps to professional code of ethics (McQuail, 1991 cited in Oso (2011, p.130). This is the basis of Albert’s 1954 submission cited in Owolabi (2008, p.158) that “the media may be good or bad when it is free but certainly without freedom, it can never be anything but bad”. It is against this background that many people and organizations across the world are clamoring for the legitimization of press freedom.

### 2.6.1 Press Freedom in Nigeria

Prior to the independence constitution in 1960, the practice of journalism was fashioned after the British and the United States' distinguished by its vibrancy, combative and critical, anti-government tradition (Momoh, 1996). It is also noteworthy that, before the 1960 constitution that guaranteed freedom of expression, only the Criminal Code which stipulated punishment for erring journalists was in force. However, the 1960 independence constitution introduced a radical change from the old tradition by introducing freedom of expression. The same was replicated in the 1963, 1979, 1989 and 1999, p.67-68 amended constitutions which provided guarantee for freedom of the press and of the speech as follow:

**Section 39 (1)** provides that, "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinion and to receive and impart idea and information without interference"

**Section 39 (2)** guarantees that, without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) "every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, idea and opinions"

**Section 22** gives the press the right to hold government accountable to the citizens. It states, "The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people"

**Section 16** "gives the press the right and freedom to hold the Governors accountable for good governance and to control the national economy in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity".

Although the freedom of speech and of the press is enshrined in the constitution as stated above, it does not mean that the Nigerian press operates freely without occasional control by the state. There have been many cases of government's unnecessary and illegal violation of press freedom. Despite the successive government's infringement on the media, the media could still be said to operate better in Nigeria especially during the democratic regime when compared with other developing nations.

### **2.6.2 Limitation to Press Freedom in Nigeria**

Journalism practice in Nigeria is regulated and guided by two types of rules. These guiding rules may be internal or external to the profession. While the external rules are government made, the internal ones are professionally made to guide journalism practitioners and make them socially responsible (Oji, 2007). Perhaps, that is the reason why opinions have been divided as to the appropriateness or otherwise of press freedom in contemporary society, including Nigeria. One of the advocates of press freedom such as Ogundimu (2008) argues that the antagonists of press freedom are military apologists who want to keep dictators in power so as to suppress the media and silence the civil populace from standing to criticize the mismanagement of state resources. They argue further that the media must have constitutional safeguards to enhance the discharge of its duties to the public and as a result; the media must be protected against forced disclosure of source of information. However, the antagonists, according to Oji, (2007, p.423) believe that there is nothing special in a journalists that should make them enjoy special freedom since freedom of the press is already embedded in the freedom of expression granted everybody. They added that granting absolute freedom to Nigerian press will definitely lead to abuse of power which cannot be tolerated anywhere in the world.

Going by the above debate, it is pertinent to point out that to attain absolute press freedom as demanded by the proponents may be impossible because there is no nation anywhere in the world, even United States, where the press appears to be freest. While justifying the need for the press to be regulated by the state, Oboh (2004) argues that the media can only contribute to the development status of the society if the media contents are made to align with national interests. This can be done if the government interferes in the media practice. A review of Oboh's argument has however, provoked some complex questions. How does one know when a goal is national and when it is sectional or even personal? How does a journalist know the difference between national interest and the interest of the government in power?

In a plural society like Nigeria and some other African states where racial, ethnic and religious considerations are linked to every policy formulation and implementation process, what is the definition of national interest and who defines it? Besides, giving that most African countries are either ruled by military dictators or military in civilian garb, only the few military officers and their civilian cronies usually come together to define and determine what national interest is. Nigeria is particularly very complex; with a population of about 165 million, 35 states, over 250 ethnic groups, and about 5000 dialects, three religions and 52 political parties all working differently with diverse social, cultural, economic and political interests to protect (Omu, 2008; Lewis, 2009). In practice, a nation with structural complexity like Nigeria will find it difficult to define her national interest. According to Owolabi (2008), there are various issues that present itself as “national” but which affect a section or two of the country excluding others. These include the Sharia issue which affects only five states of the Northern Nigeria, the Ogoni and Oil derivation struggle in the eight oil producing states of the South and the issue of true federalism which is being advocated among the six states of the South West as well as several minority claims. Ask a Hausa-Fulani man, if Sharia is an issue of national interest, he will not think twice before answering in affirmation. Similarly, is Ogoni struggle of national interest? To the Ogoni and Niger Delta people, it is; but more than 120 million other Nigerians will disagree with them. Yet, the Ogoni and Niger Delta control the oil and gas that sustains the economy but they are in the minority. According to Duyile, (1990) it is only a national referendum that can answer the question. Surprisingly, however, each succeeding governments has been taking decisions on such issues which they wrongly assumed to be national on behalf of Nigeria and her citizens.

National interest is subjective and is difficult to determine and it is only normal that Journalists will have moral and professional dilemma reporting such issues. It is in the process of trying to differentiate between real national interest and the government of the day’s interest that the media are being regarded as rebellious and unpatriotic. Against this backdrop, it is evident that there is great possibility of a

government making mistake while determining national interest, it will therefore be a mistake made worse on the part of the press to align with the government as Oboh, (2004) has argued.

For the media industry in Nigeria, the era of military rule could best be regarded as a period of siege. The military establishment never left anyone in doubt about its anti-press postures. Since 1966 when it first took over the government through a military coup, the political history of Nigeria has not remained the same as all forms of oppositions including pro-democracy participation, parties and political activities, unionism and labor agitation were banned with serious sanction awaiting offenders (Ufuophu-biri, 2008; Ogbondah, 2011).

During the period, the press remained the last man standing to defend the masses after others had been successfully silenced. This, perhaps, explains the frequency at which draconian decrees were churned out with retroactive application so as to also emasculate the press. For example, for the 28years of military adventure into Nigerian polity, several anti-press decrees were promulgated to silence the media and every critical voice against the military junta. Between 1966 and 1979, the media suffered serious pains and casualties as a result of the following decrees: Circulation of Newspapers Decree 2 of 1966; Defamatory and Offensive Publication Decree No 44 of 1966; Newspapers Prohibition Decree No. 17 of 1968; Declaration as Unlawful Society Edit No. 19 of 1968 and Public Officers Protection against False Accusation Decree No. 11 of 1976 (Ufuophu-biri, 2008).

Also, between 1984 and 1998, a period of 14years during which Generals Buhari, Babangida and Abacha were in power, 55 newspaper titles and 9 news magazines published by 18 media organizations were either shut down or proscribed while thousands of copies of newspapers and magazines were confiscated under various draconian decrees. The military era which was regarded as the darkest period of Nigeria's political history witnessed over 600 infringements against the press with over 300 journalists, newspaper vendors and other categories of media staffers

arrested, brutalized and/or jailed. These are apart from those who were kidnapped and secretly murdered and their corpses could not be recovered till date (Media Right Monitor Bulletin, 1997; Olukotun, 2004; Ukonu, 2006; Ufuophu-biri, 2008; Ogbondah, 2011; Oso, 2011).

On May 29, 1999, at the birth of the fourth Republic that produced Obasanjo as the president, the media sighed for relief as most of the draconian decrees were abrogated. Although, the constitution provides for the freedom of speech and of the press, but the state did not stop to interfere with the press. For example on May 2, 2005 Orobosa Omo-Ojo, the publisher of *Midwest Herald* was arrested and detained on the order of Stella Obasanjo, the president's wife for publishing an article claimed to be seditious. On January 19, 2005 armed police invaded the premises of a Port Harcourt weekly, *National Network*, arrested and detained the publisher, Jerry Needam. On April 13, 2006, two Australian Broadcasting Corporation journalists who were covering the River State government's demolition of illegal structures were arrested, detained and later released. Some state house correspondents were also barred from entering the Presidential villa for various cooked-up reasons.

According to Ogbondah, (2011, p.45), "although incidences of state-sponsored attacks against the media have abated since 1999, notwithstanding, Nigerian journalists are still being subjected to arbitrary arrest, brutalization and detention as a way to silence the press and incapacitate it to carry out its watchdog role on the government". In other words, the state still uses some anti-press laws to intimidate and suppress the media on the ground that it wants to safeguard the security of the state. However, contrary to this belief, Ogbondah, (2011, p.47) observes that "the government only determined to conceal financial data and every underhand dealings of the members of the ruling class and also to emasculate the media's ability to expose its anti-people policies and investigate the corrupt lifestyle of its officials". Perhaps this is why after reluctantly enacting the Freedom of Information Bill into law; the government still retains those old laws in the statute books. These laws are discussed below.

### 2.6.2.1 Official Secret Act

The official secret Act of 1962 which had its origin in Europe but was bequeathed to Nigeria by the British is a law which restrains anyone working for the Crown to disclose information acquired by virtue of his/her position either by word of mouth or in writing. The Act according to Nwodu, (2006, p.165) defines “anyone” to include civil servants, diplomats, members of judiciary, soldiers, police, and all other sundry workers in the payroll of the Crown. The public servants have been so indoctrinated by this law and as a result masquerade under it to perpetrate all kinds of official misconducts unchallenged. Thus, under the Official Secret Act, accessing and publishing government’s “classified/protected” information is seen as a crime against the state (Nwodu, 2006; Osinuga and Ogbonna, 2010). The classified information under the Secret Act refers to top class (secret) information while the protected area refers to any military base and buildings used by the government for security and defence purposes (Osibanjo and Fogam, 1991 cited in Ukonnu, 2006).

Since the mass media must perform their duties of informing the audience as well as carrying out watchdog role on the government’s business, this law, most times, pitch journalists whose assignments are time-bound against the officials who wish to conduct government’s business in secret and at their own pace. Therefore, sourcing and publishing information from classified documents or protected areas without permission leads to offence of divulging classified matters. This law, according to Okenwa (2000) gives unlimited power to the state to cripple the press ability to investigate government activities using vague words branded in the name of security.

Mr. Osa Director, Editor-in-Chief of the *Insider Weekly* magazine was arrested, detained and prosecuted on November 23, 2003 under the Official Secret Act for publishing a story on oil bunkering scandal which was alleged to have threatened national security. Since the interpretation of the Official Secret Act is diverse and infinite depending on who interprets it and for what purpose, it then means that journalists have to apply self-censorship restriction in practice.

### **2.6.2.2 Sedition Law**

This is another law that severely limits the freedom of the press. According to section 50(2) of the Criminal Code, Cap 77 Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (1999, p.44) seditious publication is that which has seditious intention:

“to bring into hatred or contempt or excite disaffection against the person of the Head of the Federal Military Government or the Military Governor of a state or the Government of the Federation or any state of Nigeria as by law established or against the administration of justice in Nigeria; or to excite the citizens or other in-habitants of Nigeria to attempt to procure the alteration, other-wise than by lawful means, or any other matter in Nigeria as by law established; or to raise discontent or disaffection among the citizens or other inhabitants of Nigeria, or to pro-mote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of the population of Nigeria.”

The law of sedition is not easily determined especially, with respect to the word “intention” and that is why it is difficult to know what to consider as an infringement of the law. Nevertheless, it is one of such laws deliberately put in place to diminish the power of the press to inform the public about the evils perpetrated at the corridors of power (Osibanjo and Fogam, (1991) cited in Ukonnu, (2006, p.16).

It has been observed that many instances when people are prosecuted under this law, it does not appear to stand on good ground in the Court hence, government usually resorted to extra-judicial act of detaining and brutalizing their culprits. Many Nigerian journalists have been so charged and later released by the court but then, not without the scar of police or military brutality.

### **2.6.2.3 Defamation**

Arguably, this is the most technical and difficult area to handle for journalists because according to Nwanne (2008) defamatory statement may not have been so intended. Sometimes too, it may be intended if a journalist considers the matter involved as very vital to the public.

Defamatory statement from the point of view of American Law Institute (1975) as cited by Barau (1995, p.55) has been defined as:

“a communication which has the tendency to injure the reputation of a person to whom it refers and intended to lower



him in the estimation of right thinking members of the society or to deter the third persons from associating with him”.

Defamation offence can be committed in two ways as libel and slander. While libel is committed in writing, slander is committed through spoken word. Ewelukwa (2004) notes that libel have been committed by a journalist when he writes and caused to be published any defamatory statement either in the newspaper or magazine. On the other hand, if a reporter made a slanderous statement in the course of broadcasting either on the radio or television, he has committed slander. While expatiating further, Ewelukwa (2004, p.129) highlights four characteristics of a defamatory statement which include lowering somebody in the estimation of right thinking members of the society, causing him to be shunned or avoided, exposing him to hatred, contempt or ridicule and convey an imputation on individual to disparage him in his office, profession, callings, trade or business. However, for an action on libel or slander to succeed in the court, only two of the elements noted above are required. There must be evidence of malicious publication as well as proof of damage to the defamed.

As mentioned earlier, there is also an internal guiding rules prescribed by the press association. Like every professional group, Journalism has code of ethics that guides its members in practice. Nigerian press is a member of the International Journalism Association (IJA) and a signatory to the international code of ethics designed in 1983 at Prague. In line with the internationally accepted practice, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (2005) put in place ethical rules for practicing journalists to maintain social value. The ethical codes guarantee non-negotiable right of people to true information, strict compliance to the principle of objectivity, respect for national interest, non-disclosure of the source of privileged information, avoiding the use of abusive language and respect for privacy of every citizen while reporting.

In practice, the media in Nigeria have been having problems with government officials when it comes to differentiating between their public and private lives. It is normally expected that public officers who do not want their dirty linen to be washed outside will attempt to claim their right to privacy by hiding under the seditious publication laws to nail the press. However, Ukonnu, (2006) believes that since

public officers hold their offices as a trust therefore, must be opened to media scrutiny at all times. The above point has been reinforced by Thomas Jefferson; a former American president who says that a government which cannot stand public criticism deserves to fall. We can infer from Jefferson's statement that a public officer who cannot tolerate public criticism has no reason to be in government and must quit immediately. Expatriating further on issue of privacy, Nworgu and Nwammuo (2007) note that anybody who volunteered himself for public office has automatically forfeited his privacy until he is out of office. Even, at a later time occasion may demand his being called to comment on some developments that occurred during his tenure. This means that the media at all times must be mindful of its constitutional roles of making the government responsible and accountable to the people by operating within the limit of professional code of ethics. The function of the government is different from the press and that is why James Deacon, an American journalist who covered the White House for 25 years once cautioned that "for press to remain an alert dog as opposed to a lap dog, the media and the government must relate at arm's length."

In conclusion, although these various laws are in place and are like landmine that must be carefully avoided, a journalist who keeps to professional ethics of objectivity, truthfulness and fairness and particularly allowing the news room code of conduct "if you are in doubt leave out" to guide his action, he can successfully 'play safe' without incurring the wrath of the law.

### **2.6.3 Freedom of Information**

Freedom of information (FOI) is everybody's right to know and to access information. However, most people often associate this freedom exclusively to the press. The freedom of information in its general term is the people's rights to know about the activities of the government and its officials in order to enhance good governance and informed democratic participation (Owolabi, 2008). Freedom of information, according to Akinfeleye, (2003, p.35) "is the freedom or the right to get or gain access to the source of information to be published without hindrance" It is

an atmosphere of free and unhindered flow of information. In short; it is an open market of idea. This means freedom of information is the public access to the press and information. Everybody needs information to make informed decisions. A doctor requires the HIV status of his patient before carrying out surgery on her while the patient also has the right to know as much about the Surgeon's to operate upon him.

It is equally important to note that the government needs information from the citizens of the state so as to be accountable to them and carry them along in its developmental programs; the citizens also require information about their government so that they could ask questions that concern probity and accountability from government. At this point, both the government and the citizens need to share information which can only be done through the mass media. The press therefore owes it a duty to be responsible to the citizens. Thus, the inclusion of freedom of speech, press freedom, and freedom of information in the constitution is to enhance free flow of information between the government and the society (Akinfeleye, 2003, p.36).

The freedom of information, according to Manek (2010, p.57), have three components. These include unfettered right to information in public and private offices for the exercise or protection of rights, availability of information and the maintenance of records, requestor must offer reasons for the vital information before requests are made. In Nigeria as in every ideal society, the mass media as the watchdogs cannot effectively perform its surveillance role on the government unless it enjoys freedom of information. It is this understanding among the politicians, government officials and the general public that mass support was garnered for the passing of freedom of information bill before it was signed into law in May, 2011.

According to the Federal Government Official Gazette vol.86 No.91 of December 1999, p.3 Freedom of Information is:

“An act to make public records and information more freely available, provide for public access to public records and

information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy, protect serving public officers from adverse consequence for disclosing certain kinds of official information and establish procedure for the achievement of these purposes and related purposes thereof”.

The Freedom of Information Bill contains thirty three clauses (33) with eight key issues which include maximum disclosure, obligation to the public, promotion of open government, limited exemptions, process to facilitate access, costs of obtaining information, disclosure takes precedence and protection of whistle blowers (Idahosa, 2008). In spite of the numerous inherent benefits of the FOI Act, some government officials are still apprehensive about it. Their fear is based on the fact that it can make the press to become too powerful and as such use (FOI) as a license for irresponsible journalism (Idahosa, 2008). Recently, the Governor of Central Bank, Sanusi Lamido was “suspended” by the President contrary to constitutional stipulation because he acted a whistle blower by volunteering information to the press about US\$48million sales proceeds of oil which the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) did not remit to the federation account (Punch, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014). Although the government had claimed several times at international conferences that information and indeed, the press in Nigeria is free but how much freedom the press enjoys can be seen in the “ease” with which its officials volunteer needed information to the media and the level of protection the whistle blowers enjoy. In a recent development (Vanguard, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014) Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has taken the Lagos State Government to court over failure of the latter to release information on the spending of World Bank loan of \$90 million meant to upgrade education facilities in the 639 public secondary schools in the state. The media’s lack of free access to information and lack of protection for government officials who release information to the press may be responsible for why the media’s watchdog role is not yet regarded as outstanding.

The freedom of information in Nigeria as in other nations is not absolute. For a long time, there have been civil and criminal laws guiding journalists in their work.

Besides, there are professional codes of ethics to which every journalist and media houses are subscribed to. Under the FOI regime, Section 16(1) allows any journalist or media houses that violate the freedom to be sued for defamation or sedition. It is also noteworthy that FOI places the media practitioners at greater risks than those they write about. Section 4(a) of the FOI Act outlines the procedure to follow in making request for information which includes detail documentation of information about the journalist or media house making the request (Owolabi, 2008). This implies that the information details left behind can be used to locate such journalist in case of wrong use.

#### **2.6.4 Conclusion**

Generally, the media of communication have contributed significantly towards the political and socio-economic advancement of many nations despite working under severe conditions. The media are expected to be sufficiently free to be socially responsible by carrying out news gathering and reporting functions and by setting public agenda for the society where it operates. A review of the media performance of these roles shows that while it strives to be socially responsible to the society, it is confronted by professional and economic-induced problems on one hand and on the other, legal and constitutional impediments imposed by the society it seeks to serve. The review of agenda setting function of the media also indicates that the power of the media to set agenda does not always produce uniform results in every situation and at all times. In Nigeria, there are other socio-cultural factors such as literacy level, cultural backgrounds, religion and language of communication among others that determine what media message is perceived as important. The review also revealed that unrestrained media usually misplaced its priority and this explains why the development media theory stipulates that in the event of the press malfunctioning, somebody must call it to order. In the next chapter, I will examine the string that connects journalism, SMEs and development together in line with the above mentioned theories.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Literature Review**

#### **3.0 Introduction.**

This chapter intends to look at the thread that connects poverty and underdevelopment with SMEs and media practice. To achieve this goal, the study explores the history, debates and criticisms, challenges and prospects of development and development journalism on one hand and on the other, took on a review of SMEs as catalyst for economic growth, employment generation, poverty reduction and national development in general. This chapter is divided into three sections according to the manifest key concepts in the research title so as to make way for identification of the works already done and to facilitate easy exploration of the various aspects relating to the study. Specifically, the study defines and discusses what development in development journalism represents and how it is linked with investigative journalism as a step towards achieving good governance through effective watchdog role by the media. Dwelling on insights from the global economic environment, the study in particular contrasted the general structure, prospects and problems of SMEs in the United Kingdom with Nigeria in order to discover the missing link and also to establish whether or not SMEs actually serve as engine of economic growth. The study also evaluates Nigeria's pre-independent and post-independent economic policies till 1999 so as to discover how poverty and underdevelopment came about and the economic progress (if any) Nigeria has recorded through her various economic transformation programs and specifically, since SMEs expansion became the center piece of Nigeria's economic policy. In line with the theoretical foundation laid in the previous chapter, the study proceeds to examine the role of development media in advocating for SMEs growth to engender poverty reduction and sustainable development in Nigeria.

### **3.1 Evolution of Development Journalism**

The concept of development journalism was first mentioned at a journalism workshop in Philippine in the late 1960s where the global attention was called to the economic problem ravaging most countries and the need for the media as agent of change in the society to mobilise the news audience to participate in proffering solutions (Gunaratne (1996) cited in Xiaoge, 2009).

Scholars of mass communication have linked the orientation of development journalism to different theories; Libertarian theory by Siebert et al (1963) and development media theory by McQuail (1987). As a result of the dual theoretical underpinning, development journalism has remained a subject of controversy among professional journalists, researchers and scholars of mass communication from both the developed and developing nations.

The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1974 sponsored a conference in Bogota, Columbia where diverse opinions were expressed as to the necessity of development journalism in the world. In particular, UNESCO was concerned about the level of poverty and underdevelopment among the developing nations and the need for the media to facilitate and foster national development by generating plausible solution among news audiences. However, the International Press Institute (IPI), Inter America Press Association (IAPA), Freedom House (FH) and La Federation des Editeurs de Journaux et Publication (FIEJ) now known as World Association of Newspapers jointly took exception to the position of UNESCO at the conference. The disagreement again recurred in Quito, Ecuador and Nairobi, Kenya 1975 and 1976 conferences respectively (AED 1979, p.29; Ogan, 1982). While UNESCO and the developing nations believed that they have peculiar problems of poverty, illiteracy, linguistic and ethnic diversity to contend with; they also recognized that the media is a communication tool that can be used to mobilise the people for nation building, national consciousness, unity, cooperation and peaceful co-existence among diverse and sometimes hostile communities. They also contended that western oriented journalism of hard news and gossip is of little or no

significant benefit to the poor nations but simply an instrument to protect the capitalist interests of the western world. The freedom house and its western allies on the other hand claimed that development journalism is nothing but the journalism of government-say-so which oftentimes denies journalists their freedom to independently and objectively gather information and report it to the society (Ogan 1982). While explaining further on this, Harris (1978) cited in Ogan (1982) notes that the developing nations are full of anti-democratic elements that could not defend press freedom and the freedom of speech. Another critic of development journalism, Shafer (1998) cited in Xiaoge (2009) also observes that the principle of development journalism which states that the media must carry out development task in line with nationally established policy will not only make the mass media subservient to the government but will also compromise the watchdog role which has been accepted as one of the traditional functions of the media. They believed that though development journalism has contributed considerably to health, nutrition and agricultural education programs in few African and Asian countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, China and Singapore among others(Xiaoge, (2009) yet, it has been used by most Military despots and their civilian archetypes to consolidate themselves in power (Domatob and Hall, 1983, p.18).

While supporting the position of the Western scholars, Kunezik (1988) believes that although development journalism reports the news about government's policies and programs but it has always failed to communicate the people's views back to the government especially if such views are critical. By this position, communication is presented as one way traffic where information flows from the government to the people and not vice versa. This therefore denied the people of access to information and robs them of their freedom of expression enshrined in the constitution of most countries and is also a principle of social responsibility theory which says that "the media should reflect its society's plurality, giving access to various views and granting all the right to reply" (McQuail 1987 cited in Anaeto et al., 2008, p.57).

Although development journalism has been entangled in controversies yet, all the splinter group agreed to the fact that there is a clear case of poverty and



underdevelopment and that the mass media as agent of social change have new roles to play in solving the problem (Xiaoge, 2009). This explains why the advocates of development journalism, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikwe and Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta contend that those who argue in favor of western model of journalism which insists on press neutrality and watchdog function as prescribed by the libertarian school appears to place premium importance on social events, oddities and negative news more than to the issue of poverty affecting one-third of the world population. They argue further that the western form of journalism practice that stresses an occurrence as against the process leading to it cannot profit developing nations (Ali, 1980). Therefore, there is the imperative need to discontinue the western model of journalism which places premium values on objectivity alone and instead, embrace development journalism that will not only emphasize economic and social problems but will also evaluate the relevance of developmental project to a nation and its people (Aggarwala, 1978; (Gunaratne, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 2005).

According to Banda (2006, p. 1-2) development journalism can be explained with the assumption of "modernization" which stressed the transfer of technology and socio-political culture of modernity from the developed nations to the third world. The understanding of this postulation is that the interaction between mass media and the people can provoke attitudinal and behavioral changes among the citizens of developing nations thus, leading them to break away from the traditional ways of doing things which is less productive and embrace modern values and practices. While supporting the above assumption, Lerner (1958) believes there is a connection among economic growth, development and 'modernizing' variables such as urbanization, literacy, mass media use and democracy.

Going by the above postulations, Banda sees development journalism as an effective instrument not only to educate the public, create awareness and mobilize the society to participate in economic activities that can enhance rural development, guarantee environmental protection, healthy living and productive agriculture characteristic of the western world but also as a social influence to disconnect the developing nations from the unprofitable international politics that only benefits the west.

Although the issue of underdevelopment is a problem facing most developing nations however, African countries in particular, are mostly affected. While most countries of Asia and Latin America are gradually liberating themselves from the shackle of poverty and economic degradation, the poverty situation in Africa has remained intractable. With 53 nations and over one billion population, about 70 percent of Africans live in the rural areas, poor, uneducated and having little or no access to modernization. According to the UN fact sheet (2010), of all the poor regions of the world, Africa is the least developed. In 2005, the gross national product (GNP) per capital for Africa was \$1,460 compared to \$1,590 for south Asia, \$3,170 for East Asia, \$6,730 for Latin America. As a region, the reason for her poverty is difficult to explain when viewed against the backdrop of huge untapped mineral resources coupled with enormous tourism potential, clement weather and arable land suitable for agriculture.

While commenting on the economic situation of Africa, Lamb (1983, p.20) cited in Ayittey (2002) observed that Africa has over 40% of the world's potential hydroelectric power supply, the bulk of the world's supplies of diamonds and chromium, 50% of the world's gold, 90% of its cobalt; 50% of its phosphates, 40% of its platinum, 7.5% of its coal, 8% of petroleum reserves, 12% of its natural gas deposits and 3% of its iron ore. It also has 64% of the world's manganese, 13% of its copper, 21% of bitumen, and 17% of marble and vast deposits of bauxite, nickel and lead. Besides, Africa accounts for 70% of cocoa, 60% of coffee, 50% of palm oil, and 20% of the total petroleum product traded in the world market, excluding United States and Russia. Despite the massive natural resources available in the land, the continent still remains the most economically backward in the world. Instead of exploiting the resources for the benefit of the people, Africa's resources have been mismanaged and plundered by a few members of the political class thus, large majority are wallowing in poverty in the midst of plenty (Kofi Annan, 2013).

In view of the poverty profile of African countries compared with other third world nations where development journalism had played significant role, it will not be out of place for Africa to insist on journalism of development. The accelerating impacts

of development journalism on the economic, cultural and political development of China, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and India are so obvious (Chen, 1991; Xiaoge, 2009). The imperative need of economic development and urgent quest for poverty reduction strategy in Africa and Latin America automatically create enabling environments for the adoption and implementation of development journalism (Edeani, 1993, Isiaka, 2006). Since governments in some developing nations have experimented development journalism and have found it a valuable instrument to maintain political influence and enhance socio-economic status of their countries, it will not be out of place if adopted by others because of their common peculiarity. Notwithstanding, it is pertinent to state that each nation may have to practice it the way it will profit her bearing in mind other intervening variables.

### **3.2 Development Journalism Defined**

If the historical evolution of development journalism generated such level of debates, its definition expectedly should be more. Defined variously by different authors and scholars based on what they believe it does rather than its generic meaning, the advocates and defenders of the libertarian theory of journalism who argued in favor of objectivity and absolute freedom of the media define development journalism as the journalism of ‘government –say-so’ that is docile to the government and the members of the ruling class. The group, spearheaded by the United States was of the opinion that development journalism is the kind of journalism that permits government intervention in media operation thus restricting the press from carrying out its traditional watchdog role on the government and making it socially irresponsible to the society.

In his definition, Shah (1996, p.146) cited in Banda (2006), development journalism is seen as ‘emancipatory journalism’ because according to him, “it provides a theoretical link between citizens’ access to mass media and social change, it incorporates the principles of diversity and variability in the process of building cultural identities also because it challenges the journalistic practice that stands alone on objectivity without investigation and analysis of issues in a way to help the public

to make informed decision”. This definition sees development journalist as somebody who employs his professional skill to educate and mobilize the citizens to participate in community development activities and nation building in order to foster socio-economic and political independence.

Another group of communication scholars and journalists view development journalism differently as ‘public or civic journalism’. Haas & Steiner (2006) while presenting their views opine that development journalism is a response to the lapses of the western media which created wide gap between the colonial governments and citizens in the political process thus, devising ways of enhancing civic commitment and public participation in the democratic process. Haas and Steiner believe the mass media have roles to play in enhancing strong and dynamic democratic process which, according to them, is a catalyst to achieving good governance and national development. The opinion is closely related to the perception of Moore and Gillis (2005) who while trying to define development journalism accept it as “community journalism”. According to them, community journalism encourages journalists to operate according to the basic principles of traditional journalism vis-à-vis democratization, social change, and community empowerment initiatives. This assertion presupposes that there is a development link between the community and the mass media.

Notwithstanding the variability in the nomenclature that gave birth to different definitions, for this study, we will define development journalism as the type of journalism that focuses on the transformation of the society through public education and mass mobilization of citizens for active participation in health improvement strategy, poverty reduction, gender equality, infrastructural development, economic empowerment, environmental sustenance, human rights and good governance. An important proposition here is that the press possesses the power to initiate and influence developmental policy and programs that will translate to sustainable development in the society. The same assumption is the underlying perception of development communication which Adedokun et al (2010, p.101) define as “an interactive process by which information, knowledge and skills relevant for

development are shared among members of the rural communities and information providers either personally through indigenous media, social media or through mass media”. The above backgrounds explain while development journalism and development communication are sometimes used interchangeably to mean the same thing and in relation to developing nations though the latter is believed to be broader and relatively older (Edeani, 1993).

Since development is generally believed to be a central issue in development journalism, it should be addressed holistically that is why Sha (1996) cited in Wimmer and Wolf (2005, p.3) summarize as follows:

“Development news should examine critically, evaluate and interpret the relevance of development plans, projects, policies, problems and issues. It should indicate the disparity between plans and actual accomplishments, and include comparison with how development is progressing in other countries and regions. It should provide contextual and background information about the development process, discuss the impact of the plans, projects, policies, problems and issues on the people; and speculate about the future of development. And development news should refer to the needs of the people, which may vary from country to country or from region to region, but generally include the primary needs such as food, housing, employment; secondary needs such as transportation, energy sources and electricity; and tertiary needs such as cultural diversity, recognition and dignity”.

The valid conclusion derivable from the above explanation is that whether emancipation, civic, public or community journalism, the truth is that every development communication scholar has agreed that there is problem of poverty and underdevelopment and it is more prevalent in one part of the world than others. Based on this understanding, journalists are believed to be a part of the community to gather news stories, process and disseminate it for the social, economic and political benefits of the entire community (Moore and Gillis, 2005; Ukonu, 2006; Xiaoge, 2009).

### **3.3 Investigative Reporting and Development Process in Nigeria**

Investigative journalism unlike other brands of journalism requires uncommon reportorial skills and physical ability to travel the extra-mile in order to discover the behind-the-scene conspiracy of an event, burrowing into the underground deals to uncover what may not have been imagined under normal circumstance. Investigative journalism has to do with critical reporting which is contrary to the conventional western model of journalism practice which merely reports an event but leaving out the real cause. It is pertinent to note that every journalistic report has an inherent element of investigation because the reporter normally attempts to gather facts through routine observation and analysis of information volunteered by individual or group as against deliberately bringing out the underlying details which is the focus of investigative journalism.

As a genre of journalism, it has been defined as “the reporting on matters of importance which some persons or organizations wish to keep secret” (World Bank, 2003 cited in Nwabueze, 2005). This definition presupposes that investigative journalism reports an event which somebody deliberately and carefully concealed from the public glare. This means since it is an intended secret, to discover it can be likened to bringing out water from the rock which will definitely require extra effort, exceptional expertise and uncommon wisdom. The Centre for Investigative Reporting of the United States of America also defines investigative reporting as “hard stories, hard to assemble and hard to tell”. The above definition serves to corroborate the reality of difficulties involved in investigative reporting which includes sniffing around, interviewing relevant people, sifting through documents to compare and confirm figures and separating facts from fictions; gathering and categorizing ideas, building patterns and scrutinizing options while digging deep into issues that have been swept under carpet to discover who did what and at what time.

Investigative journalism has its origin in the United States of America and it predates the publication of the first colonial newspaper in 1704 (Protess et al, 1991). For more than three centuries, investigative journalism has made significant impacts by raising

public awareness of perceived wrong doings and by pressurizing the policy makers to effect certain action. History has it that it was a former American President, Theodore Roosevelt who first referred to investigative reporters as ‘muckrakers’ in 1906 during the foundation laying ceremony of the House of Representative building. Benjamin Harris, the publisher of Boston-based “*Publick Occurrence*” was acknowledged as the first muckraker who through his paper exposed the barbaric treatment of French soldiers by the Native American allies of the British. The paper only came out once and was proscribed four days after. Though the paper died prematurely after one outing yet, it left an indelible landmark for successors to follow especially on how to go about modern investigative reporting. The popularity of investigative journalism in America has been very great and that is why most people across the globe usually cited the example of Watergate scandal by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, both reporters of *Washington Post* who exposed the dirty deals perpetrated by President Richard Nixon’s administration. The highly celebrated report led to the eventual resignation of Nixon.

Investigative journalism is a recent development in Nigeria. Precisely, the practice was started in 1980 by Dele Giwa, the late editor-in-chief of *Newswatch* magazine. Before he established *Newswatch* in 1984 along with Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed, four of his colleagues, he had edited *Sunday Concord* newspaper where he published some celebrated investigated reports one of which was why he was assassinated via parcel bomb allegedly sent to his house by the then military regime of Gen. Babangida. Having made the pioneering mark, other newspapers and magazines have adopted this model of reporting which authorities of mass communication perceived as giant leap in the practice of journalism in Nigeria (Nwanne, 2008).

Prior to 1999 when the fourth democratic republic started, the media industry witnessed a lot of persecution due to investigative reporting of thriving malfeasance among the military administrators. The diplomatic correspondent of the Guardian newspaper, Tunde Thompson and assistant news editor, Nduka Irabor were in 1984 jailed for one year by a military tribunal constituted by Gen. Mohammadu Buhari for

publishing an “offending” story. The Publisher of the paper, Alex Ibru also narrowly escaped assassination attempt on his life in 1996 under Gen. Sanni Abacha. These are just a few of journalists who were fortunate to survive the dark era of the military rule, some others were not that lucky as they were brutally killed. It is important to note that it is in a democratic environment as presently experienced in Nigeria that investigative journalism can thrive and be safely practiced. In most democracies, either emerging or developed, investigative journalism is primarily concerned with watchdog role by which it sanitizes the society of scandals and moral ineptitude especially among the public officials.

The development of any nation is universally perceived in terms of the consistent improvement in the level of meeting the basic human needs, including, according to Howkins and Valantin (1997): healthy and secured life, qualitative education, steady source of income and right to equal participation in development process. In Nigeria, these goals are clearly outlined in the national development plans and at the international level, the millennium development goals (MDGs) equally highlighted it in detail. An important assumption underlying the notion of poverty is that it is the major issue depicting under-development and cannot be discussed without mentioning governance. The process of development is not easy to commence, this is because apart from the availability of human and natural resources there has to be good governance that can exercise economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. Transparency and accountability have strong tie with sustainable development the same way development and investigative journalism are interrelated (Edeani 1993, p.126). It needs be stressed that to attain the objectives of governance most especially, socio-economic development, there has to be an interplay of development and investigative journalism to carry out surveillance role on the government ministries and agencies. When transparency and accountability become noticeable features in government business, every form of official iniquity and human right abuse will surely give way while the huge waste that normally characterize corrupt government will be avoided. Though both investigative and development reporting have similar goals of educating, mobilizing



and informing the people yet, investigative reporting in addition aims at ensuring that an action results, for example a reform carried out or a wrong corrected (Nwanne, 2008). This is why Proress et al., (1991) and Waisebord (2000) argue that investigative reporting builds policy agenda and engenders reforms. The media exposure can induce the populace to demand for policy change and reforms that can enhance development in the society. Through the outcome of investigative reports, the public can be propelled to put pressure on the government to carry out reforms. It can be deduced from the above that press exposé alone cannot guarantee developmental breakthrough, investigative reporting must be anchored on the active participation of the organized civil society in a coalition that can engender and sustain reforms.

Despite the internationally accepted role of investigative reporting in enhancing good governance and sustainable development, the muckraking has been constrained by a number of factors. These include lack of press independence, inefficiency of other institutions and the unorganized and unenlightened civil society, failure to punish exposed offenders and particularly, the lives of muckrakers are constantly being threatened (Waisbord, 2000).

### **3.4 Role of Development Journalism in Poverty Reduction Program**

The role of development journalism cannot be fully appreciated unless we first attempt to place development as a concept in the right perspective. Over the years, development as a concept has been at the center of debates that pitched the developed nations against the third world countries. While the debate lasted, the developing nations disagreed with the western understanding of development which Melkote (1991, p.201) cited in Soola (2002, p.11) referred to as ‘modernization’ or ‘dominant paradigm’ of development. The advocates of the modernization paradigm believed that the western world possessed all the essentials of development such as technology and technical know-how, productive and entrepreneurial skills; infrastructural facilities and mass media which they can easily transfer to the developing nations. It was based on this understanding that development was

perceived in purely quantitative terms such as Gross National Product (GNP), per capital income, high technology, mass production and urbanization, investment in mass media infrastructure, among other factors. The protagonists of this notion asserted that by using the power of mass media, they could propagate and distribute development innovations among the developing nations, believing that the modernizing influence of the innovations will transform their (developing nations) perception and cause them to embrace the western culture. The assumption was that this would translate to expected development. This assumption has been faulted on ground of its simplicity (Habte, 1983; Hamelink, 1983; Mabogunje, 1983) and due to what Lent, (1987) called ignorance of the complexity and the multidimensional nature of development. The failure of the experimentation in some Asia and Latin America countries has further revealed that development is conditioned by other factors that are peculiar to each nation. This means a workable program in one country all things being equal; the same may simply be impracticable in another if the certain determining variables are not available. The inadequacy of dominant paradigm and its attendant failure has therefore necessitated the re-conceptualization and redefinition of development by shifting attention from purely quantitative economic indices to humanizing and physical transformation of the society.

The alternative model therefore placed emphasis on self-reliance, people's participation and ability to learn and adapt to changes (Lent, 1987). It is against this background that Oladipo (1996, p.1) evolved a new definition of development. According to him,

“Sustainable human development is development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably; empowers people rather than marginalizing them. It gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities and provides for their participation in taking decisions affecting them. It is a development that is pro-poor, pro-nature, pro-jobs, pro-women and pro-children.”

While contributing to the redefining of development, Todaro and Smith (2003, p.57) provide three prongs definition based on what they believe development should achieve in the society. According to them, development should widen the distribution

of basic life sustaining goods and services, raise the levels of living, including freedom from alienation and against discrimination on matters of job provision, higher income, better education and greater attention to cultural and human value; and expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and poverty.

From the above definitions, it is assumed that modern development is not measured in statistical terms but people-centered. Development is also not just technological advancement and economic boom that merely places the mass of people at a disadvantaged position where they wallow in abject poverty and are unable to meet their basic needs of life while spurious statistics shows the contrary. Therefore, in this study, we view development as economic situation where the basic necessities of life such as food, housing, education, security and good health are met at affordable cost and where the society is made to be worth living.

Going by the above definition of development, it is noteworthy that an important index of underdevelopment which development journalism seeks to address is poverty which according to the UNDP (2008), is seen as denial of choices and opportunity, a violation of human dignity, lack of minimum capacity to participate effectively in the society and not having enough to feed, to cloth a family, not having access to school and health services, lack of land to farm or job to earn a living and not having access to credit facility. It also means gender discrimination, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities, susceptibility to violence and living on marginal or fragile environments without access to clean water or good sanitation.

One area of mass media dysfunction which was earlier mentioned is its inability to guarantee “free exchange of ideas, information and experience among equals without discrimination” (Moore & Gillis, 2005, p.4). What this translates to is that the media only report the government’s activities and programs to the people but the people’s problems and desires are not reported to the government. In some developing countries of Africa especially Nigeria, the media have been democratized in the

sense that both the cities and the rural communities now have reasonable degree of access to the media. Apart from the national dailies that devote some pages to development news from rural communities, there are national and state radio and television channels that give generous coverage to development issues from the countryside. Besides, some communities have even gone a step higher to establish community newspaper while some with the assistance of the Local government have established television viewing centers at accessible locations within the community. The implication of this is that the rural communities now have access to current information while their voices can also be heard in the news. It is pertinent to mention that the needs, problems and priorities of the communities especially, the critical elements of development such as food, housing, education, health care and security are better identified by both the masses and the government which action and inaction affect those issues. For example, there have been cases of security challenges in some villages in different parts of Nigeria since the advent of the fourth Republic in 1999. Armed bandits have been terrorizing, killing and maiming children and women in large number while the ill-equipped police have been helpless. Through the mass mobilization power of the media, the rural communities were able to evolve community security outfits popularly referred to as ethnic militias which work hand in hand with conventional police to embark on effective policing of every community in Nigeria. Thus, we have *O'odua People's Congress* (OPC) formed in 1994 by the Yorubas of South West, *Egbesu Boys* (1998) in the Niger Delta area, *Arewa People's Congress* (APC), formed by the Hausa/Fulani group in the Northern states, *The Hisbah Group* in the North West, *Bakassi Boys* (1999), *Tiv Militia* 2001 by the Tiv speaking population in Benue State, *Jukun Militia* (2001), *Ijaw Militia* (1999), and *Itsekiri Militia* (1999) (Okechukwu, (2003) cited in Onimajesin, 2007, p.284).

Notwithstanding, the feelings of euphoria and popular acceptance that initially greeted the establishment of these community vigilante groups shortly fizzled out and were consequently outlawed in 2006 when they were found to be operating

outside the foundational objectives and the limits imposed by the societies (Agbaje, 2002).

Since 2011 when Dr. Goodluck Jonathan was sworn-in as the third democratic president, the issue of violent killing once eradicated has staged a fearsome comeback. About seven states in the North, Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi, Adamawa, Bornu, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory have witnessed the violent and murderous activities of a gang of an Islamic terrorist that have claimed more than 5000 lives. The most recent incident was in Plateau state on Sunday, July7, 2012 when about 150 people majorly women and children, lost their lives and three days after, about 14 others, including a serving Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and a Minority Leader in the Plateau State House of Assembly who were brutally murdered by yet to be identified armed bandits. The degree of media coverage given to the incident has prompted the Federal, State and Local governments to step-up a combined military and police security network in other to maintain sanity in those villages.

It is also important to mention that without the media which maintain a constant flow of vital information essential for economic progress, national development is bound to be stagnated or at best, retarded. Good decisions are taken based on the quality of information at the disposal of policy makers, entrepreneurs and employees among others. Knowledge and information are the basic ingredients required by any person who wants to respond to opportunities and challenges in any socio-economic climate. It makes economic sense when industries are located in the rural communities where there is constant availability of raw materials and labor force needed for their operation. Such decision will not only bring accelerated development to the rural areas but will also checkmate rural-urban movement, depopulate the cities and reduce the perennial social problems experienced in most urban centers. It is the anticipated function of development journalism to identify and publicize the raw material potentials of every geographic location and various self-development initiatives evolved by the villages such as construction of bridges and feeder roads,

building of water project and rural health centers which could serve to open up the place for industrialization.

It has been established by professionals that one major constraint why most rural communities in Nigeria are still being plagued by all kinds of communicable diseases is because of the settlers' lack of basic knowledge of hygiene. Through development media, such knowledge can be communicated to the people. For example, people can be taught on how to manually purify and preserve clean water for drinking, keeping the surrounding clean and free of mosquito that causes malaria fever, using the little resources to prepare nourishing and balanced diet, benefit of breast feeding to keep the babies healthy, child spacing, benefits in children immunization among others. According to Awolowo (1996) cited in Owolabi (2008), in a country such as Nigeria, where the masses of the people are largely untutored in the art and concept of a modern state, and where democracy is still in its inchoate state, there is an urgent need to educate the citizens about their civic responsibilities to the state by participating actively in the political process especially as it concerns the choice of those who will represent them in the government. While the constitution concedes some rights to them, the media must be able to educate the people clearly that the good amenities and privileges which they enjoy are products of their civic duties to the state. Therefore, it is obligatory they must pay all necessary taxes and levies to the government as and when due so as to keep the government running and maintaining those public services.

The mass media can also stimulate the rural dwellers' interest towards participating in economic activities that can easily lift them up from the cesspool of poverty and wants. It is a proven assumption that development is a product of applied knowledge (Soola, 2008). Large chunks of rural populace in Nigeria are by tradition subsistent farmers but due to lack of information and knowledge about modern farming method they still remain at the subsistence level. The development journalism can be a major source of information and enlightenment for the rural audience in the area of contemporary agricultural innovations and techniques needed by modern farmers which normally would have required large capital outlay but can easily be acquired

at little or no cost. These include training and techniques on crop rotation, correct application of harvest yielding fertilizer, weed control, pesticides and product processing and preservation.

The mass media can also use its persuasive power to mobilize the people to participate in micro farming businesses such as poultry, piggery and fishing. The media, especially community newspapers, radio and television can freely educate the villagers and equip them with basic applicable knowledge of practicing micro farming. Lack of funding has always been an impediment to the people venturing into such businesses thus, the media can encourage and mobilize such potential farmers to organize themselves into cooperative societies so as to pull their resources together and provide soft loans for members of the group. Besides, as a group, it will be easier to approach government micro-finance banks for agricultural loan as well as exchange information and skills among members to move their business forward. The media advertising ability have been discovered to possess the magic power that can influence and hasten quick marketing of products and services at minimal cost. It is heartrending to note that farming which is the largest employer of labour in most rural communities in Nigeria has not developed beyond its present primordial level apparently because of its inability to make use of the opportunities available in Development, Research and Training (DRT) due to information gap between the farmers and the relevant research centers. This gap can easily be bridged if the appropriate government agency and ministry network their development plans and research outputs through various development communication channels to the rural communities where they will be used.

In summary, development journalism has the rural populace as its primary focus and as such, it makes the people to participate in setting agenda for the media while the media in-turn facilitate dissemination of information, ideas and experience among them. This is why FAO (2006) cited in Adedokun, et al, (2010) acknowledges that development journalism enhances people's participation and community mobilization, decision making and implementation, confidence building for raising awareness, sharing knowledge and changing attitudes, behavior and lifestyles.

### 3.5 The Challenges of Development Journalism

Notwithstanding the outlined functions of development journalism and the level of successes that attended its adoption as partners in progress among the developing nations, there have been identified problems which tend to limit its maximum potentials especially among African nations. These include economic adversity, state interference in the media and dearth of experienced professionals, infrastructural deficiency and wide linguistic diversity among others. However, since these problems vary in degree from country to country, in this study, we are concentrating on Nigeria being the focus of this study.

By far the greatest problem that has constituted serious challenges to development journalism practice is economic recession. The mass media globally are going through a period of economic slump occasioned by the economic meltdown experienced first, by the United States and then Europe and later, other developed countries of the world. The fact that the economy of most developing nations including Nigeria, are directly or indirectly tied to the developed worlds, the spillover effect is easily discernible. The harsh economic environment took tolls on every sector of the economy including the media. Nigeria's fragile economy increases the cost of production yet limits the people's purchasing power. Most media proprietors rely on personal resources and meagre proceeds from sales and advertisement to sustain their outfits. Oftentimes, these resources are limited by a number of factors which usually leave the medium to struggle for survival and in most cases, it resulted in premature death. For example, according to Omu (1978) cited by Owolabi and O'Neill (2013a), a total of 51 newspapers were established between 1880 and 1937, a period of 57 years. Of all the 51 newspapers, only one (1) *Daily Times* survives till date. Except *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Service* that survived till early 1960s, all others were rested. Also, between 1937 and 1960 a period of 23 years, 39 newspapers were established, only *Nigerian Tribune* is still publishing. Out of 168 newspapers and 48 magazines established between 1960 and 2008, only 43 newspapers and 15 magazines are currently circulating (Owolabi and O'Neill, 2013a). Besides, of all these existing media houses still operating in Nigeria



today, only 6 newspapers and 3 magazines can better be classified as truly national because of their circulation and coverage network. Others are either regional, state or community based publication. In a nation of about 160 million people and with about 56 percent literacy rate, that statistics on the media is not good for development. It is only normal and expected that an industry that experiences such high level of instability and mortality rate will not contribute significantly to national development.

As fallout from economic recession, there is the challenge of high staff turnover in the newsroom due to low incentive and unattractive welfare package. Many journalists now regard the profession as a stepping stone to a better paid job in other industries. This perhaps, explains why there is consistent dwindling of experienced and seasoned professionals thus leading to systematic declining of standard and professional skills among the practicing journalists. To arrest this downward trend, International agencies based in Nigeria such as World Bank, British Council, DFID, UNDP, UNESCO, USIS, NGOs among others have invested so much into the training and development of journalists not only in Nigeria but in the whole of Africa. Despite the efforts of these agencies, the situation has not produced significantly cheering results as more experienced hands continued to leave the profession in droves to search for greener pastures. A World Bank official was reportedly bemoaning this trend claiming that, international agencies are now becoming hesitant to invest more into human development in journalism. There have been growing concerns in the academia and among editors about the future consequences of this development if not arrested. It has been argued in many fora that the proprietors are the cause of this declining standard. While they argue their positions on the issue, Minnie (2008) and Usher (2010, p.920) decried the attitude of most media proprietors who elevate profit making above rewarding true talents and ensuring standard practice. Arguing further, they identified lack of specialist training and lack of quality control on the part of most media proprietors as contributory factors to this trend. Besides, editors on many occasions would not release their reporters for a free training that will cost them nothing but simply because they

believed this may disrupt their daily routines and also that such professional training may quickly open the gate of opportunities for such reporter to leave them. Notwithstanding, apart from the proprietors, the governments in most African countries especially Nigeria deserve to be blamed. The government, for a long time has left the labor force in the hands of the employers to exploit and abuse at will by its lukewarm attitude towards protecting their rights. An average entrepreneur will always want to take advantage of an unprotected labor market like Nigeria. For instance, there is no labor law that makes it a crime for any employers to pay workers below minimum wage. Realizing the high unemployment situation in the country, the employers use that as opportunity to subject their employees to various demeaning working conditions, the media industry is not an exception. “The government is expected to set the minimum salary standard which employers must maintain, but because the government as the largest employer of labor has also not lived above board, employees are left at the mercy of their pay master” claimed Adams Oshiomhole, a former President of Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC). Hopefully, the media professionalism bill being considered by the parliament will address this problem if eventually passed into law.

Nigeria, a nation of about 165 million people is faced with complex ethnic, cultural and linguistic problems that can easily liken her to the ‘Biblical tower of Babel’. With over 250 ethnic groups, 525 languages and dialects, three religions and varied culture (Lewis, 2009), it is very difficult for the media to conveniently reach all these ethnic groups. The only saving grace is that Nigeria has an official language (English) through which the media can communicate with a sizeable population while some others can be reached through a few major indigenous languages. Notwithstanding, the barrier of illiteracy which UNESCO (2012) and Oloyede (2012) put at between 56 and 60 percent constitutes another serious hurdle to development communication in English. In view of its important characteristics, radio can comparatively overcome this literacy hurdle better than newspaper or any other media because radio can easily broadcast in different local languages and dialects (Edeani, 1993, p.137).The question arisen from this linguistic diversity vis-à-

vis indigenous language broadcast is, given the number of ethnic groups, languages and dialects, can the radio broadcast in all of these groups? Does the country have enough resources to establish local stations to take care of all these languages? Granting that it has, does she have competent professionals to manage the stations? The answer is simply no. Assuming there is resources to establish separate media for 525 languages, each of the medium may not be able to survive on its own unless they are funded by the government. If the government decides to fund them it then means they will merit the name critics call them “government –say-so media” (Kunezik, 1995) and besides, they will no longer be able to efficiently carryout their watchdog roles on the government. However, in every logjam there is always a midway position. The position of this study is for the government to liberalize the media industry in a way that will not only allow anybody or group to establish its own media and use it for the purpose that will benefit the society but will also make it available for use by everybody regardless of social status which is in line with one of the principles of social responsibility theory of the press. Nigeria, especially during this democratic government can be said to be enjoying a measure of democratization and press freedom more than any other African nations as the government, groups and private individuals are now allowed to invest into the media industry.

It is necessary to mention a pertinent issue which Domatob and Hall, (1983) described as the government’s subtle control of the media in the name of development. This happens when, in the view of Wimmer and Wolf (2005, p.2) information are systematically manipulated in favor of subtle development that benefits an insignificant fraction of the society. This can be true in Nigeria, the reason being that most newspapers and broadcast outfits are owned by politicians and businessmen all of who are benefitting from government contracts and advertising patronages and by this, the government can indirectly, through the proprietors, influence their editorial focus. However, Nigeria appears to be on a safer side in this area because it operates a multiparty democracy in a Federal arrangement. By this political equation, out of 56 registered political parties, only seven have strong political base in different states and local government areas apart

from the dominant party at the Federal level. All these parties or their members have media outfits which they use as propaganda machinery to counter the ruling party at various levels. Perhaps, this explains why opposition camp is very strong in Nigerian and can easily mobilize the civil society against any perceived bad policy of the ruling party.

Another more recent challenge facing development journalism is the advent of new media. According to McCombs (2006), the advent of internet technology which gave birth to other social media such as face book, LinkedIn, blogs, twitter, you-tube, websites, chat rooms, e-mail and online newspapers have further changed the style of the game in communication landscape as there is now fierce competition against the traditional mass media not only in news reporting but most importantly, in advertising patronage. Although, according to Hirst and Harrison (2007) social media are very advantageous to the society in that it paved way for 'participatory journalism' where everybody (user) is also a reporter and editor. While the media set agenda for the people, the people in-turn set agenda for the media and most importantly, while the media perform watchdog roles on the government, the civil society can also carryout watchdog role on the media through the use of social media. In other words, every user participates in news gathering, processing and distribution (McMillan, 2006). The result is that most people who used to rely on the traditional media for news report and advertisement placement now prefer to patronize the social media with marginal cost. However, this development to a large extent is the cause of shrinking revenue for an industry already struggling to survive economic adversity occasioned by underfunding, drop in circulation and low advertising patronage. The new media have, as a result, succeeded in pushing traditional media and development journalism into a dilemma of either surviving economically at all cost or maintaining editorial integrity while carrying out watchdog roles and contributing to development (Michael and Gary 1986). Going for the former connotes serving the economic interests of advertisers who are either the government or corporate boardroom governors who are quick to exploit the masses

and if it goes for the latter, this may mean performing its traditional roles uncompromisingly and starve itself to death.

### **3.6.0 Background to Entrepreneurships in Nigeria**

Economic history is stuffed with details of how most of today's multinational industrial complexes started from what Ogechukwu (2006) simply called a "humble beginning". It has been argued that most multinational corporations that cut across manufacturing, engineering, banking, insurance, publishing, among others started from the scratch as small cottage industry or a small retail outlet. From Europe to America, Asia and Africa, the story is the same "Rome was surely not built in a day". According to Morrison (2000, p.1), "the explanation for the commencement of entrepreneurial process is inherent within the individual members of the society". Through dint of hard work, determination and entrepreneurial ingenuity of individuals, the pioneer businessmen started little firms inform of small service providing outlet or buying and selling of a particular article which they nurtured and matured into big and massive corporations of today. As Anderson (1982) also observes, it is not surprising to note that some of these worldwide enterprises which started with little personal income or loan from wife and/or relatives had multiplied after repeated turnover within a period of time.

According to Hoselitz (1959), most manufacturing industrial complexes in Europe and Japan today started as small cottage and handcraft enterprises before they developed into small and medium-sized industries which they are today. Initial starting structure varies from one organization to another. While some started purely as a single man, manager/owner structure, some others, depending on the size, nature of business and initial capital base, may have started with husband and wife and later their children and eventually two or three others may join as they made progress. All things being equal, depending on the level of education, skills and orientation of the owners, the growth and expansion may be very fast for some firms while it may be slow for others (Cortes, et al 1987).

Prior to the arrival of the Colonial government in Nigeria in 1912, most people have been engaged in some local work such as farming, fishing, cloth weaving, blacksmith, goldsmith, dyeing of cloth and construction among others. The urge to be involved in entrepreneurship started manifesting when the people began to produce more than they can consume at a time. Besides, they also realized that they have need of some other things that they did not produce. As a result of this, they decided to exchange what they produced in excess with what they needed. For example, a farmer with excess yam tubers needed to exchange some with cutlass or hoe produced by a blacksmith. As a result of this, each producer realized the need to specialize in the production of a particular product where they have comparative advantage. This transition from absolute subsistence level to peasant production is what the early scholars of Nigerian economic history referred to as trade by barter which is the exchange of a commodity for another (Aghalino, 2004). It was also through this exchange process that modern trade or entrepreneurial skill developed. According to Ogechukwu (2006), the advent of slave trade along the west coast of Africa coupled with the coming of the British colonial masters and their merchant houses from Liverpool, Glasgow and London marked the beginning of modern entrepreneurship in Nigeria. These foreign entrepreneurs usually brought their wares to Lagos and Calabar ports where they had their appointed Nigerian middlemen to help distribute them to the end users while they (middlemen) also purchase farm products and other local goods and sold to their foreign partners. Realizing the rate of turnover and the profits generated from the new line of business, most early entrepreneur discontinued their traditional cottage industry to face a new trade which was essentially buying and selling. This explains why most of the early pre-colonial cottage industries died a natural death.

Notwithstanding, it did not take longer time before they realized what contemporary economists referred to as trade imbalance as the British entrepreneurs soon decided to bypass their Nigeria counterparts to deal directly with farmers which allowed them (British) to carry back to Britain more than they exported to Nigeria. Besides, they succeeded in taken over both the import and export trade and as such, killed the

entrepreneurial initiatives of most Nigerians. This development made most of the pioneer entrepreneurs, especially those with little education to take-up paid job in any of the foreign companies already stabilized in Nigeria while those who are not literate went back to farm.

Prior to independence, on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960, the entire business and political environment was largely populated by foreigners who were running the affairs of government as well as managing the subsidiaries of their companies with the parent companies based in Europe. They include United African Company (UAC), G.B Olivants, Lever Brothers now Unilever Plc, Patterson and Zoochonics (PZ, Leventis Plc and United Technical Company (UTC) all of which deal in imported finished goods while they export agricultural raw materials back to Europe. Nigeria being an agricultural dependent nation became a cheap raw material outsourcing zone for Europe based companies. It is also important to mention that these companies had very strong base because they enjoyed special concession from the colonial office in form of waving export and import duties, tariffs and many times, tax exemption (Ogechukwu, 2006).

In the mid-1950s, the colonial government felt there was the need for intermediaries that would serve as distributors and retailers within the Nigerian business community which was dominated by foreigners. To facilitate this, Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB) was established to provide funding for would-be entrepreneurs who would like to go into agriculture, mineral exploration, commerce and manufacturing. Despite the promised incentives, only a few Nigerians with little education benefitted from the business plan. The well-educated ones prefer to go into public service which at the time, was considered most prestigious and highly rewarding. In the early 1960s, the number of educated Nigerians had increased relatively and all the vacant positions that were created as a result of the exit of the colonial officers were urgently filled. Those who could not be absorbed in the public service had no alternative than to return to the private sector as managers and/or entrepreneurs.

### **3.6.1 An Overview of the Nigerian Economy**

Nigeria, according to 2006 population census has a population of 165 million making her the most populous nation in Africa and the largest black dominated nation in the world. At independence in 1960, it was largely an agricultural nation with agriculture accounting for about 70 percent of GDP and 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings, 73 percent of total employment generation and 71 percent of total export (Iyoha and Oriakhi, 2002, p.6; Adedipe, 2004; Chinedu, Titus and Thaddeus, 2010). Within the first decade after independence till early 1970s, there was rapid growth of the economy particularly; the manufacturing sub-sector which contribution to the GDP rose from 3.9 percent in 1960/61 to 10 percent in 1981 and by 1997 it fell again to 4.8 percent. The rise in the manufacturing sector's contribution to the GDP was due to government's import substitution industrialization policy that made the government to invest heavily in large industrial projects in various parts of the country. Although, according to Olusoji (1999) the policy had been criticized on the ground that it was just a drain pipe through which incentives were lavished on industries that could not go beyond the first level of producing consumer articles and also because the industries relied heavily on foreign raw materials, technology and skilled manpower. It is also important to mention that while the large industrial projects were being developed, the SMEs remained largely unattended to. Whatever it's short coming, the policy was meant to diversify the economy and increase the nation's export capacity. At the time, although Nigeria was still mainly dependent on agriculture, yet it was able to produce enough to feed her population and still had more to export. The farm products then include cocoa, groundnut, rubber, coffee and palm oil. Towards the end of the 1960s, oil was discovered in commercial quantity, a development that shore-up the industrial share output to about 15.6 percent.

In the early 1970s, the contribution of oil to the GDP became significant, accounting for about 37.8 percent thus; Nigeria became a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) which made her to also benefit from the oil price increase of 1973 as a result of Arab-Israeli war (Iyoha and Oriakhi, 2002). It has been observed by Nigerian political economists that though the military actually



interrupted the democratic process in 1966, it was in the 1970s that their incursion began to take toll on Nigeria's socio-economic status. While decrying the role of the military in Nigerian politics, Igbatayo and Igbinedion (2008, p.6) argued that Nigeria's political history was seriously undermined by about 28 years of military rule during which corruption was significantly heightened and the post-independence economic gains reversed through bad governance. It was therefore not surprising that they (military) subverted the general consensus to address the socio-economic problem of the country. Instead of investing the proceed of the oil boom in human and infrastructural development, they wasted the windfall on hosting the 1977 Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) while the remaining were siphoned into foreign accounts of a few top military brass.

The relative increase in the petroleum output in the total GDP in addition to slight improvement in agricultural sector should have been a double blessing for the economy but that was not to be as the then military government soon made a policy somersault by shifting attention away from agriculture and depended solely on oil for economic projection. This was not without adverse economic consequences. Apart from changing the economic structure of the nation to mono-culture and making oil to become the sole export product for the nation, it equally led to the steady fall of agriculture output thus, erodes the export capacity of the nation, diminished her external reserves and also translated Nigeria from food exporter to importing dependent country (CBN, 1995). This structural shift also made the economy vulnerable to every adverse circumstance from the international oil market. This, perhaps, explains why Nigeria economy was badly affected in the 1980s when the petroleum market according to Ezema and Ogujiuba (2012), entered its deep and protracted slump which in a way could be explained that what the oil economy gave to Nigeria during the booms it took back during the bursts induced by price adjustment in the international market due to world events.

To rescue the dangerously drifting economic ship, the government put in place several economic measures such as Economic Stabilization Acts of 1981, the

National Economic Recovery Fund (NERFUND), and the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) These policies were designed and implemented to jump-start the SMEs and also to encourage entrepreneurs on local sourcing of raw materials for their production. Despite the various economic policies put in place, the economy remained incurably sick which was vividly illustrated by steady decline in agricultural and industrial outputs by 40 and 30 percent respectively; leaving the service sector which includes public service with marginal improvement while all the economy and infrastructural facilities were already in deficit.

According to the United Nations Development program (UNDP, 1998) cited in the (CBN Brief, 2002 and 2003), Nigeria has been included in the list of 50 countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa where poverty rate is still intolerably high. The report further added that Nigeria is not just poor and getting poorer each day, but that more than four out of 10 Nigerians live on less than N320 per capital per month. This is approximately US\$8.2 per month or 27 cents per day which barely provides for a quarter of the nutritional requirements of healthy living. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cited by Sanni (2003, p.10) painted yet another glooming picture as Nigeria is ranked 152<sup>nd</sup> among countries with the lowest Human Development Index (HDI), 54<sup>th</sup> among 94 other developing nations where poverty level remains high and upward swinging. The Economist in a survey provided another perspective on the poverty situation in Nigeria. According to the survey, before the military disengaged from governance in 1999, life expectancy was pegged at 50.1 years, infant mortality was 112 per 1,000 live births, and adult literacy rate is 59.5% (Economist, 2000, p.5).

Realizing this declining state, the new civilian government that assumed office in May, 1999 decided to diversify the economy by empowering the industrial sector which the past military administrations had neglected. During his inaugural speech after being sworn in, President Obasanjo painted a glooming picture of the economy and decried the devastating impacts of the military misadventure into polity largely characterized by infrastructural decay, high debt profile (domestic and international),

low external reserve, soaring unemployment rate, epidemic thievery of public fund and general lack of policy framework and economic direction. As a way out of this economic doldrums, he evolved a new economic blueprint premised on SMEs development. This was the administration's economic focus for the eight years it remained in power and this also forms the nucleus of this study.

### **3.6.2 Evolution and Growth of SMEs in Nigeria**

It was not until early post-independent era when the government began to see the potentials of SMEs as engine of economic growth and for this reason; special attention was devoted to activate the sector. Despite enormous prospects in SMEs, some academics and financial institutions had contrary opinion, claiming it has high mortality rate and as a result regarded as risky business that constitutes a waste of resources (Woldie et al 2008; Ojeka, 2011). While corroborating this view, Ihua (2009, p.200) reasoned that whenever an enterprise goes under, "entrepreneur loses his capital investment, employees lose their jobs, the society loses a means of production and distribution of goods and services while the government loses revenues". In his argument while reinforcing the supports for large firms, Brown (1990) contends that large firms were actually the dominant source of net job creation in the manufacturing sub-sector of the economy in America. These critics therefore, would prefer large investment which, according to them, could withstand adverse economic circumstances. Those arguments have been faulted on the ground that it appeared to have overlooked the fact of economic history that most big multinational corporations of today were micro, small and medium businesses of yesteryears (Ogechukwu, 2006; Muritala et al., 2012). The critics also seem to have forgotten the fact that there is high rate of job turnover in SMEs sub-sector when compared with low employment flexibility in large organizations, especially the modern ones where almost all the production process is automated and technologically based. It is against this background that Ekpeyong and Nyong, (1992) reasoned that looking at the economic potentials of SMEs in terms of employment generation and the aggregate contributions to the economy, whatever

may be its perceived short coming may not be strong enough to dismiss it as bad business.

Perhaps it was based on this understanding that SMEs have started to attract the growing interests and attention among researchers, investors and policy makers. Obasanjo equally must have understood this reality hence, in year 2002, he challenged the Bankers Committee to come up with acceptable modality for reactivating the SMEs that was in comatose and by extension, diversify and revive the ailing economy. At his meeting with the Bankers Committee it was identified that the most significant problem facing the industry in Nigeria as in other countries is underfunding and as a result, it was agreed among the then 82 registered banks operating in Nigeria to set aside ten percent of their profits before tax for SMEs funding. The government, on its side pledged to make business environment conducive by fixing all the dying infrastructural facilities especially, electricity generation and distribution, road and rail network that are perceived to be critical for consistent operation and growth of SMEs.

### **3.6.3 SMEs: Definition and Purpose in the Economy**

When it comes to defining SMEs, it has become a somewhat controversial area among the policy makers and scholars especially in developing nations. Many reasons are responsible for this. According to (USAID, 2004; Akingunola, 2011), many people are confused as to when an organization is deemed to be small or medium because they are difficult to measure individually. Besides, available statistics on the number, size, geographical distribution and activities of the SMEs sub-sector are not too reliable. While corroborating the above view, Ekpeyong and Nyong (1992); Fatai (2011) reasoned that the definition of SMEs is controversial because classifying the businesses into small and large is subjective since different value judgments are used and this, according to them, is the reason why its definition varies from country to country and from region to region. This definitional variability has also been observed within countries where definition changes over time. Perhaps, this is why Ayaggari et al., (2003) opined that the definition of SMEs varies

according to context, author and country but notwithstanding the variation from place to place; the underlying concept remains the same.

According to Baenol (1994) cited in Muritala et al. (2012), SMEs can be defined using different statistical values such as total assets, staff strength, value of annual turnover and capital investment. In developed nations such as United States, Canada and Britain; small-scale industry is defined according to annual turnover and the number of paid employees. In Britain for example, Ekpeyong and Nyong (1992, p.4) defined small-scale enterprises as “that with an annual turnover of two million pounds or less with fewer than 200 paid employees”. This is different from Japan’s where small –scale industry is defined according to the type of industry, paid-up capital and number of employees. Small-scale industries are defined as “those in the manufacturing with 100 million yen paid-up capital and 300 employees”, “those in the wholesale trade with 30 million yen paid-up capital and 100 employees”, “those in retail trades with 10 million paid-up capital and 100 employees” “while those in service trades with 10million yen paid-up capital and 50 employees” (Ekpeyong and Nyong, 1992).

In Nigeria, SMEs is conceptualized different from the developed nations’ as there is no definitive distinction between small and medium-scale enterprises. According to the National Council of Industries (2003) cited in Ubom (2006, p.17), SMEs is defined according to four industrial classifications using capital base, cost of land and number of employees as indicators.

**Micro/Cottage Industry:** “This is an industry which total cost is not more than N1.5 million, including working capital but excluding cost of land and/or a labor size of not more than ten”.

**Small-scale Industry:** “This is an industry with a total cost of more than N1.5 million but not more than N50million, including working capital but excluding cost of land, and/or labor size of 11-100”.

**Medium scale Industry:** “An industry which total cost is over N50 million but not more than N200 million, including working capital but excluding cost of land and/or a labor size of 101-300 workers”.

Large-scale Industry: “An industry with a total cost of over N200 million, including working capital but excluding cost of land and/or labor size of over 300 workers.”

In another definition, the Central Bank of Nigeria (2010) in its Credit Guarantee Scheme Guidelines, defines small-scale enterprises “as one having an asset base (excluding land) of between N5 million and N500 million and labor force of between 11 and 300.” The Federal Ministry of Industries cited in Muritala et al., (2012) also defined SMEs “as enterprises having capital investment (in land, building, machinery and working capital) up to N60,000 and employing not more than 50 persons” The indicators used to define SMEs here are paid-up capital, the annual turn-over and number of workers which differ from the former two definitions by NCI and CBN and this also goes to confirm the argument that there is variability in the definition of SMEs across the world.

Although there are controversies around the conceptual explanation of SMEs, but, according to Schmiemann (2009), its immense contributions to economic growth and development are not controvertible. According to Ihua, (2009, p.199), SMEs constitutes the bulk of businesses and investments all over the world; it is the largest employer of labour and the greatest provider of products and services thus making it the largest contributor to the nations GDP outputs. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development UNCTAD (2001) also observes that the nations with strong SMEs base usually have fair income distribution and low economic inequality between urban and rural communities; it encourages optimum utilization of local raw materials Aryeetey and Ahene (2004); it stimulates mass generation of employment opportunities, provokes quick acceleration of rural development, strengthens entrepreneurial skills and mobilization of local savings, provides goods and services, enhances even distribution of development and provides great opportunity for self-employment and equal distribution of income and wealth across the nations (William, 2006; Yaobin, 2007) while it also stems rural-urban drifts among others. It is for these reasons that both developed and developing nations tap into the productive and socio-economic supporting power of SMEs to stimulate national development (Muritala et al., 2012). Data from the United Kingdom reveals that

SMEs represents over 95 percent of all her businesses and generates 65 percent of total employments and contributes 30 percent to the gross domestic products GDP (Day (2000) cited in Ihua, 2009). Similar evidences from some African countries reveal that SMEs generate about 3.2 million employments in year 2003 translating to about 18 percent of the national GDP while it provides 55 percent of total job creation in South Africa that is, about 22 percent of the country's GDP. (Woldie et al.,2008; OECD, 2005). In Nigeria, the Federal Office of Statistics also acknowledges that SMEs constitute about 97 percent of the nation's investments while it generates an average of 50 percent job opportunities and contributes about 50 percent of her industrial outputs.

Table 3.1 Contributions of SMEs to world economies

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Number of SMEs %</b>	<b>Employment %</b>	<b>SMEs' Contribution to GDP in %</b>
Australia	96.0	45.0	23.0
Belgium	99.7	72.0	n.a
Canada	99.8	66.0	57.2
Denmark	98.8	77.8	56.7
Finland	99.5	52.6	n.a
France	99.9	69.0	61.8
Germany	99.7	65.7	34.9
Greece	99.5	73.8	27.1
Ireland	99.2	85.6	40.0
Italy	99.7	49.0	40.5
Japan	99.5	73.8	57.0
Netherland	99.8	57.0	50.0
Portugal	99.0	79.0	50.0

Spain	99.5	63.7	64.3
Sweden	99.8	56.0	n.a
Switzerland	99.0	79.3	n.a
United Kingdom	99.9	67.2	30.3
United States	99.7	53.7	48.0

Source: Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Synthesis Report (1997).

Table3. 2: Contributions of SMEs to selected Asian economy (in percentage)

<b>Industrial Characteristics</b>	<b>Malaysia (1985)</b>	<b>Singapore (1990)</b>	<b>Republic of Korea (1991)</b>	<b>India (1994)</b>
Contribution to Total Number of Industrial Establishment	92.1	88	97	94
Contribution to Total Industrial Employments	49.4	40	63.5	31
Contribution to Total Industrial Production	46.7	26	44.5	40
Contribution to Total Industrial Value Addition	30	23	45.8	35

Source: "Confederation of Asia Pacific Chamber of Commerce and Industry" Journal of Commerce and Industry, Volume 11, 1994: pp 6-18

Despite the significant contributions of SMEs to economic growth across the world as well as series of policies initiatives put in place by the government, we still observe that the overall performance of SMEs in Nigeria has been considerably low for a number of reasons which will be discussed later in this chapter.

#### **3.6.4 The Challenges of SMEs Development in Nigeria**

Given the massive domestic market and the availability of raw materials, policy makers and researchers have shown great concern about the unimpressive state of



SMEs among the countries of Africa specifically Nigeria (Mambula, 2002; Muritala, et al., 2012).

Over the years, the Federal government has evolved clear policies intended to create incentives and to revamp the SMEs sub-sector of Nigerian economy. These efforts, according to Muritala et al (2012) include the establishment of Small and Medium-scale Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), National Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) and Small and Medium Industry Equities Investment Scheme (SMIEIS). Apart from that, the government also set up financial institutions through which investors could access loans to establish new SMEs or to recapitalize the existing ones. The institutions include Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB), Nigerian Micro-Finance Bank (NMfB), Peoples' Bank of Nigeria (PBN) and Merchant Banks of Nigeria (MBN). Besides, the government also mandated all the registered banks in Nigeria to set aside 10 percent of their profits before tax as loan to SMEs operators. In a bid to unlock the credit market and enhance access to finance by SMEs, the Central Bank of Nigeria on April 16, 2010 approved the investment of the sum of N500 billion debenture stocks to be issued by the Bank of Industry (BOI). Of this amount, N300 billion is allocated to power projects and N200 billion to the refinancing/restructuring of banks' existing loan portfolios to Nigerian SMEs/Manufacturing Sector. The primary objectives of the fund according to CBN Guidelines (2010a, p.1) are to "to fast-track the development of the SMEs and manufacturing sector of the Nigerian economy and to improve the financial position of the deposit money bank". In addition to that, the CBN as part of its regulatory function has established the Small and Medium Enterprises Credit Guarantee Scheme (SMECGS) "for the purposes of setting pace for industrialization of the Nigerian economy and providing guarantee for credit from banks to SMEs and manufacturers"(CBN Guidelines, (2010b, p.1) . The governments at the state levels are not left out in the process of designing a robust action plan to jump-start the economy through SMEs development. Many states also established their Micro-

finance institutions and Credit Guarantee Schemes to provide soft loans to investors in the SMEs sub-sector. Despite the massive government investments in supporting the policies and in creating incentives for SMEs promoters, observed Sagagi (2006, p.20), there is still not much corresponding growth and improvement in the sector. The World Bank (2011) investment assessment report had rated Nigerian companies' productivity level in relation to labor and capital output as abysmally low. The Nigerian Governors Forum also lent credence to World Bank reports, describing the prospect of SMEs as bleak due to hostile environment plagued by corruption, faking/counterfeiting of products, harsh credit condition, poor access to bank facility and unfavorable loan tenure. While lamenting high mortality rate in the sub-sector, Onugu (2005) observed that most SMEs die in their first five years of operation, still, some wind up between 6 and 10 years while less than 10 percent usually develop to full maturity. Researchers however, have identified some challenges strongly contending with the growth. Key among these includes lack of funds, unfriendly economic environment, excessive government control, corruption, infrastructural deficit and management incompetence (Olusoji, 1999; Mambula, 2002; Oboh, 2002; Ubom, 2006; Chu, Kara & Benzing, 2008; Ojeka, 2011).

**Inadequate funding:** All over the world, underfunding has been the greatest problem identified as constituting stunted growth and instant premature death to SMEs. Policy makers, entrepreneurs and researchers, according to SBA (2000); UNCTAD (2001); Ihua (2009), have agreed that gross undercapitalization has been the bane of SMEs development in most countries especially, among developing nations. Entrepreneurs need funds to purchase modern equipment and raw materials, shore-up the capital base of the business in order to stay afloat and compete favorably with others in the open market. In Nigeria, SMEs promoters are facing serious financial stress due to lack of access to needed capital to grow their business and this often results in business failure. Evidences abound of most investors in SMEs who rely on personal resources and funds borrowed from informal credit market which in most cases are either grossly inadequate or the cost may be too prohibitive for any productive venture. Woldie, et al. (2008, p.5) observe that only 2 firms out of 21 that originally

had less than 10 employees grew beyond that number in Nigeria for a period of 30 years. Also, Friedman (1988) cited by Woldie, et al. (2008) notes that out of 214 micro-businesses studied in the northern Nigeria for eight years, only four managed to graduate into small and medium firms. The World Bank Report (2001) also observes that about 25 percent of large business face financial problem in Nigeria while 50 percent of Micro, 39 and 37 percent of small and medium-scale enterprises respectively are financially distressed because financial institutions are unwilling to advance credit to SMEs which, according to Abereijo and Fayomi (2005) and Fatai (2011) are considered as risky borrowers because of their easy vulnerability to market shifts. Oftentimes, when credit is advanced to SMEs for specific project, such money is usually found to be grossly inadequate due to high inflationary rate and high interest charged by banks thus defeating the purpose of taking the loan.

Researchers have wondered why the financial state of SMEs in Nigeria still remained precarious in spite of the various assistances from international financial institutions and the governments at different levels. Abereijo and Fayomi (2005) observe that government interventions most times are political in design and implementation consequently; beneficiaries usually cultivate the culture of mismanaging and diverting the funds advanced to them for business into other projects which oftentimes place them in difficult situation to make a refund. According to Mambula (2002), most of the interventionist arrangements by the government are characterized by corruption and favoritism which usually make things hard for those who really need the funds for business development as against pseudo entrepreneurs who “understand” the underlying principle of benefitting albeit illegally from the interventionist funds. In addition, Nigerian legal system is sluggish and corrupt particularly, it provides loopholes for financial criminals and chronic debtors to escape from judicial sanction. Since there is no potent law to protect financial institutions in the event of default and most defaulters usually capitalize on the loopholes to remain unwilling to perform their financial obligations to financial institutions; banks are also cautious in matters of granting credits (Mambula, 2002).

Another dimension to the issue of bad loan is the problem of insider lending which leads to deliberate diversion of fund reserved as loans for SMEs' development into other ventures (Abereijo, 2005). It has also been observed that the banking industry in Nigeria is not well equipped to carry out credit check on borrowers in order to determine the credit status of each entrepreneur. This, in most cases, often results in one entrepreneur being indebted to three or more banks without any of the banks knowing before falling victim. According to Onalo (2004) and Akingunola (2011), the Bankers Committee should be able to establish a credit data bank where all the banks will be able to store and access information about any potential borrower so that each bank will be able to verify the credit worthiness and debt profiles of entrepreneurs as well as identify chronic debtors often referred to as "adversarialists" in the financial sector.

Unfriendly economic environment: To say that Nigeria's economic environment is harsh to business is to repeat the obvious. This is an economy reputed for heightening the cost of production yet limiting the people's purchasing power. With its high inflationary trend (double digits), unreasonably high debt profile, low purchasing power, high interest rate and weak currency, the economy appears unfavorable to investment. Many factors have been identified as responsible for this bad economic situation which include inconsistent economic policies (Ihua, 2009); insecurity of lives and property and corruption (Dike 2005), lack of friendly regulation to protect locally produced goods and multiple taxation among others (Lead Capital 2010; Abugu, 2007; Ojeka, 2011). It has also been pointed out by Ekpeyong and Nyong, (1998) that conflicting government monetary policies are usually harmful to SMEs. For instance, while the credit allocation to SMEs through the banks was increased from 16 to 20 percent on one hand, on the other the same government put in place another policy that removed excess liquidity in the banking industry by increasing the minimum rediscount rate (MRR) as well as ordered the transfer of governments' accounts from commercial banks to the Central Bank thus, reducing the commercial banks' capacity to fund the SMEs. Since about five years, Nigerians have been facing serious security challenges from armed robbers,

kidnappers and members of an Islamic terrorist gang. In year 2011, terrorism emerged in the northern Nigeria as another dimension to issue of security. No fewer than 5000 people including over 200 school girls and foreign expatriates working in Nigeria have been killed or kidnapped and are yet to be rescued. Although analysts have argued that Nigeria's brand of terrorism is a local breed and is said to be a product of successive governments' failure to arrest the wave of ravaging poverty and heightened unemployment affecting over 80 million people particularly youths and women. Seven states in the north including Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Bauchi, Jigawa, Bornu and Sokoto have lost more than One trillion Naira (\$600 billion) economic worth since the crisis erupted. Nigeria needs serious and committed people in government who will be able to initiate good policy that can cause radical transformation of the economy (Abugu, 2007). Notwithstanding, the way out of bad governance is for the civil society and the various NGOs to intensify on political enlightenment through the mass media whereby good and competent person will be voted into power at the various tiers of government.

Poor infrastructural facility: Efficient infrastructure has been identified as one of the core pillars of any economy and that is why in the western world where SMEs have developed significantly, there are evidences showing corresponding huge investment in infrastructural expansion such as electricity, telecommunication, transport system and water. Constant electricity supply is particularly very essential for keeping the SMEs running. It is however most disheartening to note that for more than ten years, Nigeria has been unable to generate enough electricity to power her industries and for domestic use. The unbearably high cost of running industrial machine and equipment on generator has drastically crippled the production capacity of most organizations while those that could not withstand the stress were forced to wind-up. The transport system is another facility that serves as catalyst to the efficient performance of the economy. Unfortunately, from North to South, East to West, apart from not constructing new roads, all the existing ones are full of potholes. Worse still, the colonial railway that was inherited from the colonial government has collapsed while all the locomotive engines have become unserviceable thus leading

to drastic increase in the cost of moving goods from one part of the country to another. The governments all over the states have also tactically abandoned the provision of water hence every individual has become personal provider of electricity and water for domestic as well as for industrial use. The cost of providing these services apart from other costs to be borne by entrepreneurs is prohibitive and these are making business management in Nigeria to be financially burdensome. The deplorable state of infrastructural facilities in Nigeria can best be explained by the number of multi-national companies that have relocated their operation to neighboring Ghana where the facilities are comparatively better (Fatai, 2011). It is therefore not surprising the stunted growth and high mortality rate that have characterized the industry over the years (Elkan, (1995) cited in Mambula, 2002).

Lack of transparency and accountability: These are serious problems that breed corruption and have crippled not only SMEs but have almost systematically reduced Nigeria to a failed state. Corruption, though a global issue but Nigeria has, as a result attracted to herself an unenviable reputation among other nations (Dike, 2005). In Economic Confidential magazine report of August 15, 2009 Nigeria was rated as the most corrupt nations in 1996, 1997 and 2000 out of 54 nations surveyed in the world. It also came third to the last position in year 2001, 2002 and 2003. From the point of business registration up to the market level, entrepreneurs encounter problems in government ministries and agencies where they need to obtain one document or another as a precondition for starting a new business or expanding existing ones. In his description of corruption, Obayelu (2007, p. 1) succinctly states that “corruption strangles economic growth and reduces economic performance of the country. It erodes the country’s image and engenders loss of revenue. It devalues the quality of human life, robs schools, agricultural development, hospital and welfare services of funds. It discourages foreign investments leading to decrease in Direct Foreign Investment (DFI). It aggravates inequality, desecrates the rule of law and undermines the legitimacy and stability of government. It slows down administrative processes thereby making ineffective the implementation of government reforms policies”.

The cost of all underhand dealings when factored into the production process heightens the cost of production beyond other competitors. Although the government has repeatedly professed to be fighting corruption but evidences are showing the contrary. While ‘petty thieves’ are easily sent to jail the same cannot be said of ‘high profile’ corrupt public officials. For example, between 1999 and 2012, a period of 12 years, about 20 former state Governors and 10 political office holders have been arraigned in the Court for corruption related issues but none of them has been brought to book because the judicial system is also enmeshed in corruption (Business Day, August 15, 2012). It took a London based Court to convict one of those state Governors recently for money laundering to the tune of £250 million (“Ibori’s Loots,” 2012), the same offence for which a Nigerian court had acquitted him. It is therefore not surprising to see SMEs sub-sector becoming moribund due to lack of basic infrastructure required for growth.

Excessive government control: Many times, the government has attempted to put certain measure in place and oftentimes, these measures create problems for entrepreneurs. According to Drame (1996) there are instances of inconsistency in government policies giving room to conflict of interests among the three tiers of government in Nigeria. For instance, Lagos State and the Federal government have been having legal tussle over whose right it is to issue driver’s license and vehicles plate number. Individuals and companies that have obtained their vehicles plate number from Lagos state government have been compelled to re-number them at additional cost. The same thing happens between the state governments and many local governments across the nation where the state and local governments often compel companies to register their company premises in addition to several taxes and levies paid by SMEs operators at different levels of government. It is a common experience in Nigeria to discover how Federal and state governments are embroiled in power tussle over who controls what.

Management deficiency: Researchers have identified management deficiency in form of financial indiscretion and administrative incompetence as serious factors

militating against SMEs growth and survival. In the opinion of Okpara (2011) management deficiency could also result from bad accounting standard, lack of book keeping and record, misapplication of resources, wrong investment decision and corruption. Other researchers have also identified other areas of management deficiencies such as lack of expertise in the area of business, lack of technical know-how, lack of planning and market research. Ekpeyong and Nyong (1998) observe that the attitudes and dispositions of entrepreneurs which are deeply rooted in socio-cultural tradition can hinder development of SMEs. For example, according to Olusoji (1999) SMEs promoters are commonly found to utilize business loans for other unintended purposes not known to the creditors, such as buying exotic cars, marrying new wives or taking chieftaincy title. In some cases, SMEs investors usually ignore basic management and accounting principles while running the business as a family affair. When all these inadequacies abound, it is only a matter of time before such businesses crumble.

### **3.6.5 SMEs in the United Kingdom**

All over the world especially among the developed economies, special attention has been given to SMEs obviously because of its strategic roles in promoting economic development. The huge contributions which include generation of employment, provision of goods and services, increasing national GDP and ensuring internationally accepted standard of living (A-Shaikh 1998; OECD 2000). Statistics have shown that SMEs constitute about 95 percent of business investments, generate about 65 percent of employment opportunities and 30 percent of annual GDP (Day, 2000; Dewhurst and Burns, 1993). This also explains why each succeeding government in UK has given serious political attention to the growth and development of SMEs.

While commenting on the commitment of successive British government to SMEs growth, Abugu (2007) observes that between 1979 and 1989, the government of Mrs. Margaret Thatcher took a far reaching decision by bringing relieve to the sector



through pruning down of corporate tax to single digit, stimulating competition in merger policy, introducing loan guarantee scheme and linking SMEs with technology-incubating institutions and relevant research centers. This gave birth to an average net increase of between 500 and 900 new firms per week in 1979 while it also accelerated the number of self-employed people from about one million to three million between 1980 and 1988, a period of eight years. The venture capital industry was also not left out of the ripple effects of the economic development policies as the sector grew from almost nothing in 1979 to about £191million (Abugu, 2007).

Mr. Tony Blaire government also did not slack efforts in this regard as enhancing policies were put in place to stimulate the growth of SMEs. Specifically, there was policy shift towards “building an enterprise culture; encouraging a more dynamic start-up market; building the capability for growth; encouraging enterprises among the minority communities and improving access to finance” ((Irwin, 2003). In addition, UK government invests close to £7.5 billion annually in providing managerial and technical support services for SMEs development through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This, according to Irwin (2003, p.3) includes tax relieve measure and expenditure from local authority.

Infrastructural development is a bed-rock of economic development and this is why the UK government has committed huge resources into power generation and distribution, road rehabilitation and construction, telecommunication networking and water services and this has significantly contributed to entrepreneurial development. As an advanced democracy, UK has over the years evolved consistent economic policies that effectively addressed the problems of security of lives and property as well as checkmating corruption. The government, through the Small Business Service (SBS) recognizes the strategic importance of SMEs thus; it puts in place policies and regulations that can mitigate the burdens of business enterprises. (SBS, 2006). Apart from creating an enabling environment for SMEs to thrive, the government also protects the interests of consumers and workers while it guarantees safe environment for people to live in.

### **3.6.6 Comparison between SMEs in the United Kingdom and Nigeria**

In this section, we are going to do a comparative evaluation of SMEs performance in the UK and Nigeria using some specified variables with the purpose of discovering some similarities and dissimilarities. This will, to a large extent assist Nigeria as a nation to review her policy towards growing the economy through SMEs development. Therefore, six variables have been identified and will form the basis of comparison.

(a) Definition: In the UK, SMEs are defined as “enterprises with an annual turnover of two million pounds (£2m) or less with fewer than 200 paid employees”( Ekpeyong and Nyong, 1992, p. 4). This is different from Nigeria’s definition of SMEs as enterprises with a total cost of N200million excluding land and total employees of between 10 and 200 people. The difference here is based on the fact that the turnover rate in UK is higher than in Nigeria. Nevertheless, in both UK and Nigeria, the number of employees falls within the same range.

(b) Funding: All over the world, the issue of funding is fundamental to the growth and development of SMEs. The British government has long realized this basic truth hence the serious attention it consistently paid to vibrant and efficient loan guarantee scheme to dispense needed credit to SMEs in the UK. The government loan scheme has enhanced the growth of about 19,000 businesses between 1981 and 1987 while it assisted 3,000 firms to raise £750 million between 1983 and 1988 in their business expansion plan. Alongside these, there are tax incentives in form of tax holiday to newly established businesses and tax reduction for the grown-up ones (Abugu, 2007). Government also spends about £2.5billion per annum to provide support services for SMEs (Irwin, 2003). With all these various incentives, the government has become a burden bearer to all the SMEs operators in the UK. In Nigeria, each succeeding government since early 1960s had initiated policies that appeared promising and targeted at SMEs funding. The policies gave birth to various financial institutions such as Industrial Bank, Development Banks and other Commercial Merchant Banks that are statutorily saddled with the responsibilities of ensuring credit flows to SMEs. In year 2002, President Obasanjo caused the 82 banks

operating in Nigeria to pull together over N21 billion about (£77.12 million). Good as the decision appeared to be on paper, the government has not got the political will to implement them for the benefit of SMEs. As at year 2010, the money was still idle in the account without anyone accessing it obviously because of the stringent condition of collateral security attached to it. For more than a decade, the government had paid lip service to the establishment of credit guarantee scheme which remained on paper till 2010 when the CBN diverted the idle funds pull together by commercial banks into the scheme. Lack of transparency and corruption is another issue that usually plays out when the issue of disbursing money comes up. Most funds earmarked for SMEs development are usually mismanaged by diverting it into a different purpose for which it was not intended. The conduct of State and Local governments with respect to array of taxes, levies and high statutory fees usually imposed on SMEs promoters are at variance with what obtains in UK and are capable of killing the visions of prospective investors in the SMEs.

(c) Contribution to Development: The significant contributions of SMEs to the economic growth and development of most developed nations cannot be over-emphasized as illustrated in the UK where statistics shows that they have about 3.7 million SMEs and only 7,000 contribute 37 percent to private sector GDP and accountable for 44 percent (that is 12.5 million) of private sector jobs and 51 percent of private sector turn-over (Irwin 2003). As a result of these significant contributions to the nation's economic development, the UK government had over the years given political and institutional supports to SMEs development (Ihua, 2009). In Nigeria on the other hand, research report shows that SMEs have performed abysmally low within the last four decades. With over 160 million people, Nigeria is blessed with abundant human resources, mass arable farmland, favorable weather every year round, availability of a wide range of industrial raw materials and large deposits of both solid and liquid mineral resources all of which represent what any nation needs to make her one of the leading economies in the world where SMEs play significant roles. Incidentally, only about 10 percent of SMEs in Nigeria are into manufacturing

and they contribute a paltry 4.7 percent to GDP and between 10 and 15 percent of total manufacturing output (Ubom, 2003; Onugu, 2005).

(d) **Infrastructural Facilities:** There is a wide technological gap between UK and Nigeria. As a developed nation, there is technological advancement in Britain coupled with infrastructural efficiency that serves as catalyst to optimum performance of SMEs sub-sector of the economy. The government has consistently lived up to its responsibility by providing adequate infrastructural supports needed for SMEs growth across the UK. The situation in Nigeria is different as it lags far behind UK in terms of technological development. Although globalization should have made it easy for technology importation, SMEs promoters in Nigeria are yet constrained by financial inadequacy. This explains why most SMEs still operate below capacity level; their costs of production are comparatively higher and are placed at a disadvantaged position to compete favorably with others in the global market.

(e) **Unfavorable Economic Condition:** There is a great level of economic variability between developed and developing nations as statistics from the UK and Nigeria amply reveal. In UK, there is macro-economic stability with stable currency, high purchasing power and low inflation rate of one digit (Ihua, 2009). This clement economic climate is responsible for low cost of production of goods and services delivery. In Nigeria on the other hand, the economic condition is highly unfavorable to SMEs growth. This is evidently illustrated by high number of poverty-stricken citizens with low purchasing power yet; have to contend with aggravated cost of goods and services. The Nigeria's Naira is presently exchanged at N260 to UK £1 while the inflation rate fluctuates between 23 and 25 percent. Undoubtedly, the inconsistencies of economic indices stand to impact negatively on the performance of SMEs sub-sector.

(f) **Good Governance:** It is pertinent to mention that the adverse socio-political situation of a country can also reflect in the general picture of the environment where

SMEs operate. For example in UK, there is evidence of good governance vividly exemplified by transparency and accountability, consistent policies, smooth transition of government, efficient and corruption-free judicial system, security of lives and properties among others are products of good governance that engender favorable environment for business to thrive. Politically speaking, Nigeria has a different picture of governance because of her past political history. Nigeria has just returned to a democratic government after about 28 years of military rule. It is therefore not surprising to observe that Nigeria still suffers from hangover resulting from past military maladministration characterized by corruption, inconsistent policies and infrastructural deficit among others. The reason for SMEs failure in Nigeria can then be explained within the context of a failed government. Notwithstanding, the government under Obasanjo instituted wide-ranging economic reforms that sought to improve on the legal and regulatory environment with respect to business registration, taxation and infrastructural improvement.

### **3.6.7. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN)**

The plan to establish an umbrella agency to superintend the small and medium industry (SMI) in Nigeria was first mooted in 1987 by a consortium of experts drawn from the Nigerian Working Group (NWG), Federal Ministry of Industry (FMI) and the World Bank as a precondition for accessing US\$ 270 million loan facility specifically granted for the enhancement of the failing small and medium industry sub-sector. The World Bank wanted an institution that could be entrusted with the funds which, apart from coordinating and guiding the activities of SMIs, will also give accurate account of the loan. As a preparatory to this, the Federal Executive Council presented a bill to the National Assembly in year 2000 for the establishment of Small and Medium Industry Development Agency (SMIDA) as an agency under the Federal Ministry of Industry. The agency was eventually established by SMIDA Act 2003 with Mrs. Modupe Adelaja as its pioneer Director General. The agency was subsequently renamed as SMEDAN in 2002 by the Federal government under Obasanjo and offices were established in all the states.

As an agency, it was statutorily established and mandated to function like the Small Business Service (SBS) of UK, National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) of India, the Small Business Agency (SBA) in the United States, Small and Medium Enterprises Agency (SMEA) of Japan, Bureau of Small and Medium Business Development of Romania, National Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, Slovakia and Small and Medium Industries Development Organization, Bangladesh (Onugu 2005, p.49).

According to Ubom (2003, p.275-276) SMEDAN was specifically established to design, package and promote SMEs projects, provide industrial extension services such as fabrication of machinery, establish and promote strong ties between research institutes and SMEs, design and adapt machinery, industrial and agricultural plants for commercialization, guarantee quality assurance in the sector, provide and upgrade industrial infrastructural facilities in industrial estates; and give necessary technical supports and managerial training to SMEs in key areas of operation.

The general assumption is that if SMEDAN realistically carried out the outlined statutory responsibilities, not only will it enhance the growth of MSMEs as catalyst of sustainable development but will also contribute to poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria. While reviewing the activities of the agency since inception, Onaolapo and Oladejo (2011) observe that it has performed well in the area of providing technical training and supports to SMEs stakeholders in many states. For instance, it performed creditably well in the training of NGO staffers and cooperative society members on how to mobilize members to access funding and to share skills and experiences. These can be seen in the existence of many registered cooperative societies in the states that have offered financial supports to members in order to keep them afloat in their businesses. SMEDAN has also collaborated with the National Bureau of Statistics to conduct a survey that identified all the existing MSMEs operating in Nigeria. This survey makes it possible to classify MSMEs according to Local governments and states thus making it easy to know which state or local government specializes in what kind of SMEs (Masari, 2013).

According to SMEDAN enabling Act that allows it to enter into workable agreement with related institutions and organizations for the promotion and development of SMEs, the agency has been accepted as a chapter of the International Council of Small Business (ICBS). By this, SMEDAN and ICBS can share international best practices and experiences through global networking. Similarly, the agency has also been collaborating with the National University Commission (NUC) and the National Council of Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (NCPCE) with the purposes of including entrepreneurial studies in their curriculum and also to establish Business Support Centers and Business Information Centers in all the campuses (Ubom, 2003; Adelaja, 2006).

There have been arguments that the agency should have made more impact in Nigeria's economy than it has, considering the generous supports it got from the Federal government. However, one cannot overlook the avoidable error of the government in making such a strategic agency to be subsumed under a ministry that has been enmeshed in redundancy, bureaucratic officialdom and other limiting factors. In the United States, Small Business Administration an equivalent of SMEDAN is an independent agency reporting directly to the Congress and it derives its power and annual subvention directly from the Federation account and as a result was insulated against needless interference. This independence has not only enhanced the performance of the agency but also made its impacts to be nationally felt such that when the past governments wanted to phase it out, it survived three such attempts. In the case of SMEDAN, it is answerable to many "bosses" (Presidency, Supervising Ministry, National Assembly and the Ruling Party). If the performance of SMEDAN is rated side by side the present level of unemployment in Nigeria one can easily conclude that it has not measured up to the expected level of performance obviously due to certain factors such as underfunding, over-politicization of operational modality as can be seen in the manner of staff recruitment, discipline and promotion, management structure and corruption. All these have combined to emasculate the agency and rendered it less effective.

### **3.7.0 The Nation state in Relation to Development**

The concept of a nation as a political construct has lent itself to diverse definitions among researchers in different fields of study and the more definitions are proffered the more misunderstanding is built around the word. In his classic modernization argument, Gellner (1983) noted that the concept of nation evolved in the mid-1700 when industrial revolution brought a group of people from different cultural backgrounds together to work, share information and idea through common language and to contribute to building a peaceful society for all. This means that a nation is a homogenous mixture of compatible ethnic units who are capable of living together in harmony

In attempt to discover acceptable definition for the word 'nation', Gilbert, (1998, p.214) produced a survey report of different views of authors as they tried to answer the puzzle: "What is a nation?"

To the nominalists, "a nation is whatever a group of people who consider themselves a nation say it is", the naturalists on the other hand acknowledge "a nation as a group of people whose grouping is given by nature". The voluntarists believe a "nation is a group of people bound by a commonly-willed union", territorialists in their opinion see " a nation as a group of people attached to a particular territory", to linguists, "a nation is a group of people who share a common language", axiologists also believe "a nation is a group of people who share the same distinct value" and to the destinarians " a nation is a group of people who have a common history and a common mission.

In all these definitions, it is evident that a nation is a group of people bound together by an identified element. This means, there is a consensus among them hence, the ability to co-habit together in a community on the basis of that element. This agreement also predisposes them to aspire to become a nation-state which most times, generates political conflicts in the world. When a group of people who have lived together for some time decide against the wish of others to be independent and



form a state of their own, such move is referred to as nationalism which is an attempt to attain political self-determination.

According to the business dictionary “a nation is a community or race of people with shared culture, traditions, history and usually language whether scattered or confined to a country”. For example United Kingdom is a country or nation-state comprising four different nations (English, Irish, Scots and Welsh) each with its tradition, culture and language as distinguishing marks from others. This brings about the issue of interchange use of the words ‘nation’, ‘state’ and ‘country’ to mean the same thing. The word nation stresses a particular group of people; a country emphasizes the physical dimensions and geographical boundaries while a state stresses political and self-governing status ([www.businessdictionary.com/definition/nation.html](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/nation.html)). Although the three words can be used to mean the same thing notwithstanding, that does not remove their original meaning.

It needs be stated that every country or nation-state has the characteristics of self – rule, organized government, territory and population comprising different ethnicities. By organized government, law and order are maintained. From one nation to another, government is structured differently depending on their chosen type of constitution. For example, Nigeria follows the American federal system where government is in three tiers (federal, states and local) and each tier also divides the powers of government into three arms (executive, legislative and judiciary) to maintain checks and balances and for efficient governance. It is how the government is structured to carry out certain constitutional roles and keep the citizens together in harmony within the territorial border that confers sovereign status on the nation and makes it completely independent of others.

However, in our present day reality when the whole world has been turned into a global village and where the frontiers of global market have crossed the territorial boundaries, the traditional sovereignty appears to be under threat. While arguing his position, Khan (1992) observed that the entire world has become one organic whole

where all the nations are economically interrelated and interdependent of one another. The advanced nations depend on the economy of the less-developed ones to stabilize. United States economy cannot do without crude oil coming from Nigeria and other Middle East nations while the developing economies also need the technical products from the economic super-powers to survive. This therefore calls for a review of the extent to which any nation-state could lay claim to traditional sovereignty without unnecessarily jeopardizing its economic interest with other nations.

It is pertinent to also mention that the mere realization of economic inequality among nations is a reason for distinction between one nation and the other. Nations are described based on their economic strength and this informed why certain nations are regarded as economic super-powers otherwise known as developed nations and others are seen as developing. Development or underdevelopment is a key issue and besides being fundamental to the growth and sustenance of a nation, it is also a basic yardstick for measuring the greatness of any nation. A country is classified on the basis of its ability or otherwise to transform its environment as well as provide the basic necessities of life for the majority of her populace (Lawal and Abe, 2011). Developing nations, according to Ray (2007) is a group of countries which the World Bank classified as having “low” or “medium” income while developed nations are those having “high” income.

Developed nations constitute over one billion of the world seven billion population while the developing nations make up over five billion. Together, the low and medium income nations generate about \$6 trillion while the high income economies generate about \$25 trillion (World Banks report, 2003).

Nigeria is one of the developing nations and the second largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa, after South Africa. With a population of about 165 million people according to United Nations report (2011), Nigeria’s economy is mono-cultural. As the world’s 6<sup>th</sup> largest producer of petroleum products, it accounted for about 90

percent of her foreign income and about 80% of her GDP. In spite of Nigeria's massive land, human and natural resources, it is ranked among the 13 poorest countries in the world based on her per capital income. (World Bank, 2001). There is a great divergence between her economic potential and the level of poverty ravaging over 100 million people most of who are resident in the rural areas. Although Nigeria's economy records a growth rate of about 7.3 percent, yet the inflation rate is 12.80 percent. According to a recent UNDP report, Nigeria's human development index places her ahead of only 27 other poor African countries as her unemployment rate is calculated at 19.7percent. The paradox of Nigerian economy is that though the economic indicator is confirming that the economy is developing, yet the growth is not visible in the lives of average Nigerians who are poverty stricken. Public analysts have discussed Nigeria's unexplainable stunted development status and concluded that the major causes of her economic problem is bad governance illustrated by political uncertainty, corruption and lack of transparency and accountability.

### **3.7.1 National Development in Perspective**

National development has in recent time become a controversial concept, the reason being that there is significant divergence observed between the economic statistics that most classical economists and modern day policy makers brandish when compared with the economic reality as illustrated in the lives of the citizenry. Although we have sufficiently discussed the issues of 'development' and 'nation' earlier under subsections 3.7.3 and 2.9.0 respectively nevertheless, the study will still describe and delineate national development as it relates to this study.

As previously mentioned that one of the characteristics of a nation state is its ability to develop political and administrative institution to maintain law and order within the group and to also coordinate and mobilize for participation in transforming the society (James and Hardgrave, 1973) cited in Eboreime, (2008). This implies that the development of a nation state is a product of how vibrant and dynamic the political and administrative institution is. This is why anybody coming in to occupy these administrative offices must come with clearly stated socio-economic blueprint and

strong determination to impact positively on lives and environment. It therefore follows that national development must reflect the socio-economic transformation in the lives of the citizens within the border of a nation. This is why Naomi (1995) defined national development as the general transformation of a nation which produces socio-economic growth, equitable distribution of resources and provision of food, qualitative education and affordable health care, housing and other basic necessities of life. From this definition, it is apparent that human development forms the nucleus of national development. This also means that a nation will remain classified as underdeveloped if it cannot improve on the quality of lives of her citizens through significant reduction in poverty and unemployment rate. To achieve these requires systematic planning and implementation of well-tailored development policies and programs. The quality of development policies and the degree of resolve to follow through normally determines the development profile of a nation and that is why the concept of national development varies from country to country (Lawal and Abe, 2011). The puzzles we must provide answers for is why Nigeria has remained underdeveloped despite her massive human and natural resources. Is it for lack of good and workable development plan? Has the policy implementation been faulty? Are there other variables constituting hindrances to development in Nigeria?

### **3.7.2 A Review of Nigeria's Development Plans Since 1945**

In order to give deeper insight to the issue of development planning, it will make more sense to begin by presenting a clear perspective of planning before relating it to development. Planning is a core management function and is the bridge that connects an action with the result. While defining planning as a concept, Koontz (1980) cited in Marcellus (2009, p.2) sees planning as “deciding in advance what to do, how to do it, who is to do it and when”. For a nation, “development planning is all about making deliberate and calculated efforts to set workable development goal and providing other factors, bringing about the over-all social economic and political development to a nation”. Going by the above definitions, it is observed there is correlation between development and planning and this also pre-supposes that national development planning is not a momentary action but rather, continuous and

coordinated steps towards achieving development targets. This also explains why every organization and government takes time to draw up short, medium or long term workable plan of action and the possible means and manner of accomplishing it. Every succeeding government in Nigeria has over the years come up with different development action plans aimed at developing the people and transforming the environment. Nigeria is one of the countries in the world where virtually all known patterns and models of development plan have been tested without considerable success (Obikeze and Obi, 2004; Aremu, 2003; Okojie, 2002). Having explained and conceptualized national development plan, we will now go ahead to review its history, prospects and challenges in relation to Nigeria's present development status. To make way for easy navigation, the review will be divided into two phases: pre-independence and post-independence era.

### **3.7.2.1 The Pre-independence Era (1945-1960)**

In Nigeria, the first attempt to evolve a development plan was in 1945 by the then British Colonial administration based in London. Prior to this time, there was no such plan for the colonies by the colonial office. The reason for this, according to Rodney, 1972; Goshit, 2001; Obikeze and Obi, (2004) was that the primary goal of the British colonial government was not to develop the colonies but to exploit them. The colonial government's understanding of national development especially in Nigeria is smooth and unfettered exploitation of agricultural and other mineral resources that were available in abundance. Therefore, to accomplish their pre-planned goals, various policies were evolved such as construction of roads and railway from the coast region of the south to the hinterland where these resources were domiciled, improvement in the social services such as water supplies and health care delivery, telecommunication and agricultural development. There was also the renewed determination to improve on the taxation, exportation of cash crops and mineral resources to service the manufacturing industries located in the United Kingdom. These also partly explain why Nigeria has remained underdeveloped and economically backward. In his observation, Ekundayo (1971) also opined that the British government never had holistic development plan for its colonies. For

instance, he argued why has the colonial authorities not incorporated industrial development in their development framework for Nigeria? Instead, it only planned to enhance her social and political grip on the country so as to continue to exploit and milk her. The pioneer development plan was initially designed for 10 years (1945-1955) but owing to the 1947 constitutional change from unitary to the federal system, the plan was put on hold and revised by breaking it into two phases, 1951-1956 and 1957-1962 respectively. With the reality of political independence appearing, there was a shift of emphasis during the second phase (1957-1962) from multiplication of social services to economic reengineering through industrialization. Realizing that there is correlation between strong economy and efficient infrastructural base, premium attention was therefore placed on infrastructural development especially transport and communication. The colonial office equally realized the grave danger of inter-regional rivalry existing among the then three regions and the necessity to cement them together. This it did by providing loans for statutory development corporations in the various regions while it superintended the implementation of the various regional based projects. For this, £110 million capital expenditure budget was projected by the Colonial office of which £54 million was to be generated locally from Nigeria while the colonial home office was to provide the balance (Akintola, 2006). However, people have queried the rationale behind the British government's plan to execute development plan in Nigeria with external funds if the underlying motive is truly genuine. If there were no ulterior motives, the colonial office should have allowed industrial foundation to be laid in Nigeria and funding sourced from within since the raw materials were available locally. It was therefore not surprising to note that lack of funds was one significant problem that cast spells against the planned industrial take off in Nigeria during the colonial administration.

Although this pioneer development plan appeared to focus on infrastructural building, such as transport and communication, the primary undeclared motive was to support the growth of some exportable agricultural products such as cocoa, rubber, palm produce, coffee, timber and groundnut as well as mineral resources such as coal. While reflecting on the objective of the plan, according to Okigbo (1989) the

colonial administration deliberately looked away from the significant disparity between the telephone trunk mileage in United Kingdom and Nigeria. For example, Okigbo noted that in 1954, there was only 7,248 miles of phone trunk in Nigeria as against 74,370 miles in Scotland which was less than a region in Nigeria. Similar evidence of wide disproportion was observed in the health sector where one hospital bed was proposed for an average of 2000 people in Nigeria as against one to 250 people in UK, apart from teaching hospitals and private medical centers. Marcellus (2009, p.200) also identifies as its drawback the “little attention paid to developing of the productive base and lack of comprehensive development objective for the country”. This only goes to confirm what researchers had observed that the underlying factor behind British involvement in the colonies, including Nigeria was not economic and infrastructural development but simply how to develop their raw material base and guarantee un-interrupted exportation to Britain where they are used to service their growing industries. It was therefore not surprising that instead of the planned industrial take off in Nigeria, it was the foundation of retail outlets that was actually laid. And this informed why British giant retail outlets such as Leventis stores, Lever Brothers, A.J. Seward, Kingsway Stores, G.Allen, G.B. Ollivants, John Holt, United African Company, United Technical Company, Patterson and Zoochonis among others had their networks in Nigeria’s major cities to facilitate easy distribution of finished consumer products from Britain. Ekundare (1971) and Adamolekun (1983) cited in Marcellus, (2009) also observed that apart from poor financial resources required for implementation, weak formulation and implementation machinery, lack of technical skills by those who designed the plan, lack of consultation and public participation during the planning and implementation process, all contribute separately and collectively to undermine the success of the plan.

Notwithstanding, in the opinion of Jelili *et al.*, (2008) despite the flaws of the pioneer development plan in Nigeria, it can still be credited for its impacts on Niger Agricultural Project (Balwin, (1975), Shendam Agricultural Project, expansion of export crop production and establishment of a “model village”. Besides, it is still

being referred to in Nigerian economic history as the pioneer effort and it is the forerunner to the post-independence development plans.

### **3.7.2.2 Post-independence Era**

The last three years before Nigeria's independence in 1960 was characterized by inter-regional rivalry among the federating units as a result of which the political atmosphere was so tense and polarized along ethnic divides. This situation therefore foreclosed any attempt at initiating any development plan immediately after independence. On assumption of office, the new government was much concerned with the arduous task of stabilizing the polity by fostering unity among the federating units before embarking on any development plan. It was in the midst of this socio-political confusion and disenchantment that the first national development plan (FNDP) was conceived. For better understanding and easy exploration of the post-independent development plans, it will be divided into nine phases.

#### **3.7.2.2.1 First National Development Plan FNDP (1962-1968)**

Nigeria as a new sovereign nation inherited a lot of problem from the colonial administration most of which required urgent attention. Apart from the inter-ethnic wrangling among the regions which was characterized by tribal politics and violence, the development status of the country at the time also posed serious challenge to the new government. Besides dearth of high level manpower, there was generally lack of basic infrastructure that could enhance modern development. During the transfer of power from the colonial government to the natives, all the British seasoned and experienced technocrats also disengaged from public service leaving only the junior Nigerian officers most of who were inexperienced in statecraft.

At independence in 1960, Nigeria was largely an agrarian nation with agriculture, though practiced at subsistence level but contributed about 70 percent to the GDP, employed over 73 percent of the total working population and accounted for about 90 percent of the foreign income (Adedipe, 2004 cited in Ezirim et al., 2010). Still at independence, industrial sector accounted for about 7.7 percent of the nation's GDP,



services 28.5 percent while the manufacturing sub-sector contributed 4 percent. It is noteworthy that only about 14 percent of the entire populations live in urban centers at the time while the remaining 86 percent were rural dwellers. The financial sector at the time was very small with few banks operating only in major cities. There was high level of poverty in the country as per capital income stood at US\$100; illiteracy level was about 80 percent while life expectancy stood at about 40 years (Iyoha and Oriakhi, (2002).

Given the significant disparity between developed economy of the west and Nigeria's at the time, the new government could not do otherwise but to design a development plan that could guide in transforming the economy, accelerate the growth rate and boost the living standard of Nigerians. It was therefore not unexpected that the FNDP in Nigeria emerged under uncertain circumstance that presented a glooming future for the nation. Disappointing as it may be the plan according to Forest (1971) and Ubom (2006, p.227) had the following fundamental objectives:

“Accelerate the rate of economic and population growth,  
Enhance the establishment and growth of industries,  
Encourage Nigerians greater participation in the economy; and  
Increase human development status of Nigeria”.

As a preparatory to achieving the above set goals, the Federal government allocated about 70 percent of its annual budget to economic development and particularly, high-level manpower development. According to Ubom, (2006, p.227), as a mark of government's readiness to implement the plan, it began to establish an integrated iron and steel complex and oil refinery, provide funds for direct participation in industries, establish a development Bank that will lend to industries, establish insurance company, provide relevant services to trade and industries through research and development and trade exhibition as well as evolving policies and legislations to stimulate the growth of private industry.

The regional governments were not left out in the planning. While the Western regional government budgeted 40 percent to agriculture and industry, Eastern and

Northern regions budgeted 34 and 30 percent respectively. Realizing the need for efficient coordination of the planning and implementation between the Federal government and the three regional governments, a Joint Planning Commission (JPC) comprising of senior technocrats drawn from relevant Federal and Regional ministries and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was established to carry out oversight functions of the plan. The JPC was however mandated to report to the National Economic Council (NEC), the body which oversees the development planning process at the time. The NEC was made up of representatives of the Federal and Regional governments headed by the Prime Minister (Adamolekun, 1983) cited in Marcellus, 2009).

However, good as the plan appeared on paper, its implementation however ran into problems. Right from conception, many academics have predicted the failure of the plan because of some obvious reasons which, according to Ekundare (1971); Ogwunike, (1995); Marcellus, (2009) include exclusion of the experienced foreign expert planners from the implementation process, inexperience on the part of the implementers, planning on the basis of external borrowing, no consideration for public participation in the planning and non-involvement of the private sector, both in the planning and implementation except in the area of tax collection. The most terrible yet unanticipated obstacle to effective implementation of the plan is the January 15<sup>th</sup> 1966 military coup which Igbatayo and Igbinedion (2008) described as the most significant undermining factor which hindered the quest for national consensus to address socio-political and economic challenges inherited from the colonial era. This position is true when viewed against the background of several turbulent political crises including a three year civil war which the nation managed to survive yet remained together despite her diversity. The 1966 coup goes to confirm what Owolabi and O'Neill (2013) have said that the military adventure into the Nigeria's polity only succeeded in reversing the post-independence democratic and economic gains by corrupting the system, weakening national solidarity and destroy internal cohesion that facilitated quick political emancipation from the British colonial lord.

The FNDP in 1966 finally hit upon serious political storm that eventually led to its discontinuation as the government had to channel available resources to stitching the nation together during the three and half year military induced civil war (Obikeze and Obi, 2004). Despite the apparent deficit in the planning and implementation, the plan actually contained strategic projections that did not only find convenient place in subsequent development plans but also formed the foundation for the nation's industrial growth. These, according to Marcellus (2009) include Niger Dam, Port Harcourt Refinery, Jebba Paper Mill, River Niger Bridge and establishment of Universities in the existing four regions in Nigeria.

#### **3.7.2.2.2 The Second National Development Plan (1970-1974)**

The civil war ended on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1970 signaling a new chapter in the political history of Nigeria. Luckily the nation weathered through the period without incurring debt and besides, the end of the war coincided with heightened exportation of high-quality crude oil to the tune of about 2 million barrels per day. Between 1973 and 1978 there was another period of oil boom resulting from Israeli-Arab war during which Nigeria's realization from crude oil increased by about six folds (Ezema and Ogujiuba, 2012). This development made it an easy task for the Federal military government and the government of the then 12 states of the federation to plan the rehabilitation of the victims and also embark on the rebuilding of all the rubbles of war time. The Second National Development Plan was launched in 1970 under favorable economic climate and it outlined five primary national objectives which, according to Dalli, (2001, p.29) include building a united, strong and self-reliant nation, great and dynamic economy, just and egalitarian society, a nation of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and free and democratic society.

Specifically, the plan emphasized social changes evident in the provision of social services such as education, health care delivery system, and rural electrification and water projects across the nation. The assumption according to Ekundare, 1971, p.153) is that "the economy stands to benefit more if there is improvement on the

road and rail transport system, expansion of the communication network, the inadequacies of medium and high level manpower are lessened, if new health facilities are established and existing ones upgraded, if there is improvement in agriculture, industry and commerce". The United Nations Centre for Development Planning, Projection and Policies (UNCDP, 1990) noted that as at 1974, due to factors outside the plan, Nigeria had exceeded her 6.2 percent initial target by about 100 percent. The period was particularly remarkable because some of the Federal highways connecting different parts of the countries together were constructed; many primary, specialists and tertiary health institutions across the country were built while scholarships and loans were also provided for Nigerian students in tertiary institutions. The second national development plan by its content and implementation could be regarded as people-oriented because apart from stimulating Nigeria's economic growth rate and engender significant social changes, it indeed, enhanced people's purchasing power through equitable opportunity and distribution of resources, it also accelerated the nation's human development index and stimulated the growth of healthy population. These appear in line with the modern definition of development among developing nations which emphasized on human development through equal opportunity and general availability of resources to meet the people's basic needs and the overall improvement in the living standard of the people.

Despite the success of the plan, development economists have noted some of its drawbacks. The large inflow of funds from oil exportation without corresponding production led to high inflation for which the government was unable to stabilize the commodity prices (Yesufu, (1998) cited in Akpan-Obong, 2009). The failure of the plan, according to Olayiwola and Adeleye, (2005) could also be seen in the Federal government's lukewarm attitude to rural infrastructural development. The inability to give due attention to the rural communities later resulted in rural-urban migration syndrome with its attendant social problems visible in major cities.

#### **3.7.2.2.3 The Third National Development Plan (1975-1980)**

The third development plan launched in 1975 for a period of five years has been described as a turning point in the history of development planning in Nigeria

(Ayinla 1998). Unlike the second development plan, it gave serious attention to rural development. According to Lewis, (2007); Olaniyi, (1998, p.108) the plan had the following main objectives; increase in per capital income, equal distribution of income, reduction in the rate of unemployment, economic diversification, indigenization of economic activities and increase in the supply of high level manpower.

Specifically, the plan targeted nationwide rural electrification projects, establishment of nine River Basin Development Authorities to complement the two existing ones (Sokoto and Rima) so as to serve as irrigation sources for agricultural development; construction of small dams and boreholes to provide drinkable water in the rural and urban communities; rehabilitation and construction of feeder roads as well as rural electrification to open up the rural communities for economic activities (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005). The state governments were also given the freedom to embark on similar developmental activities in every local government areas under them.

Commendable as the plan was, the government could only spend N29.43 billion out of the projected N43.31 billion before another military coup terminated the ruling military regime and consequently aborted the plan. Although the plan had been commended for its content but its deficiency is only in the method of implementation which allowed duplication of efforts between the Federal and state government thus, translating to wastage of scarce resources. Between 1976 and 1979, there was a period of silence as the military government in power did not concern itself with any developmental plan but only concentrated its efforts on how to install a democratic government on October 1, 1979.

#### **3.7.2.2.4 The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985)**

The fourth NDP was evolved by the civilian administration. In view of the new constitutional prescription of three tiers of government under a Federal arrangement, the local government played active roles in the planning and implementation of the fourth development plan (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1981). The focus of the

planning is rural infrastructural development. Specifically, it emphasized public/private sectors participation in growing the economy while it also aimed at even development among the various states and local governments of Nigeria. However, how the goal of “even development” was to be achieved in a Federal system of government remains a mirage. This is because under a Federal constitution, every component state and local government does not have equal capability in terms of resources more so that each state and local government has different prospects and challenges that will only allow it to develop at its own pace. To achieve its cardinal objectives under the plan, the Federal government allocated N924 million to the eleven River Basin Development Authorities for the construction of boreholes, small dams, feeder roads and jetties. It also allocated N645 million for rural electrification projects in different states while the states and local government also invested heavily in primary health care, transportation scheme, and rural water and electrification projects (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005).

Although the plan was carefully designed to achieve significant improvement especially at the grassroots level where more than 70 percent of the population are domiciled, but high level of corruption among the political class crippled the plan to complete the beautiful projects midway hence the various monument of abandoned projects that are seen in different parts of the country till date.

The fourth NDP, like the second was aborted by a military coup in 1983 and barely 20 months after, there was another counter-coup in 1985. The two successive military interventions impaired seriously on the smooth and complete implementation of the plan and, consequently, the socio-economic development during the time was rated as poor (Salawu et al., 2006). Despite the limitations of the fourth NDP, it nonetheless addressed the some socio-economic problems of the nation.

#### **3.7.2.2.5 The structural Adjustment Program (1985-1988)**

For some reasons, the three years between 1985 and 1988 was regarded as a watershed in the economic history of Nigeria. It was the period when Nigeria first

discontinued her established tradition of five yearly development plans. The first of the three years also marked the period of economic emergency program which, according to Marcellus (2009) was aimed at addressing the inherited huge budget deficits of the third and fourth plans that had heightened Nigeria's external debt to about \$22 billion. The period was also characterized by severe economic recession, vividly illustrated by escalating inflation, joblessness, poverty, diseases and political instability (Iyoha and Oriakhi, 2002). The situation was so bad that the then military administration was confused about how to address the plethora of problems. Under this precarious situation, the government felt the erstwhile culture of short/medium term plan may not suffice as the nation was then neck deep in debt. As a matter of fact, Nigerian creditors no longer have confidence in the economy and the polity that kept changing like weather. If anything at all, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the International Financial Corporation (IFC) must be involved in the subsequent planning and implementation. Thus, for Nigeria to get any succor in form of debt relief, the World Bank and IMF, the two foremost creditors prescribed the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) as the only potent economic therapy that can resuscitate the economy. Among other reforms, SAP as a two year economic emergency program gave preference to policy-based as against project-based planning, private-sector-driven economy as against public-sector-led and yearly planning system (Marcellus, 2009; Akpan-Obong, 2006).

The bitter contents of SAP, as prescribed by IMF and World Bank include serious pruning of government spending on social services, privatization and commercialization of government corporations and devaluation of Nigerian currency by 69 percent making Five Naira to exchange for one United States Dollar. The devastating effects were so much on the prices of essential services and commodities such as petroleum products, transportation system, food, medication, production capacity of most companies consequently leading to mass retrenchment and unemployment among others. The SAP effects soon became unbearable that the media had to incite the civil society against the military administration in what was popularly referred to as 'anti-SAP riot'. The attendant civil uproar was what

prompted the government to device some ad-hoc programs to mitigate the SAP effects on poor Nigerians who constitute about 75 percent of the population. First, it established Better Life for Rural Women (BLFRW) program that organized women across the country into different economic groups engaging in cottage industries, trading, craft, agriculture, food processing and other services. The BLFRW worked with other interventionist agencies such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE); Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) and Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). Decrees were promulgated to give effect to the statutory functions of each of the agencies.

Actually, the government had good intention while conceptualizing the agencies and their functions. For example, NDE was statutorily established to train young and employable Nigerians in different technical skills and after, buy working tools for them and give them little start-up capital; MAMSER was an agency saddled with the responsibilities of mobilizing people to imbibe desirable values and conduct, providing citizenship education, re-orientate the citizens and create in them self-confidence, and realization of individual potential (Wayo, 1990); DFRRI on the other hand is established to provide rural infrastructural facilities such as road network, water, electricity and housing; boost food production and reduce poverty. Despite several billions of Naira allocated to all these agencies and their programs, the results were not encouraging due to bad implementation resulting from large scale corruption, politicization of projects, and lack of continuity and non-involvement of the various communities in the planning and implementation process (Odigie and Orobosa, 2008).

The failure of government programs and projects has therefore thrown up a number of pertinent questions: What is the economic sense in drilling oil from the south coastal region of Niger Delta and channeling it for refining in Kaduna in the North Central Region, a distance of about 850 kilometers? How does one explain the construction of irrigation system in the Southern rain forest region where incessant



rains and flooding have become yearly challenge? What logical reason informed the building of computer laboratories and sophisticated workshops in rural community schools where there is neither electricity nor competent manpower? Nothing other than politics and corruption informed the irrational decisions. It is apparent that if the people were carried along during the planning, they would have indicated their most pressing needs as against using political consideration for taking a project to where it will neither make any economic sense nor serve any useful purpose to the citizens.

Since Nigeria's first military coup in 1966, there have been evidences of strong link between military regimes and corruption in Nigeria and that explains why coups are staged at short intervals giving frivolous reason of "corrective mission". Nigerians are not surprised why each succeeding administration discredited and discontinued every good program and project inherited from its predecessor only to start another thus giving birth to several abandoned projects in virtually every community in Nigeria. It has also become a permanent tradition of each government since the first military administration in 1966 till date to have at least one ad-hoc program through which it gives "better hope" to the populace but in most cases such program usually died with the administration without adding any value to the welfare of the people.

Table3.3 List of Emergency Programs for Poverty Reduction in Nigeria (1972-2009)

<b>S/n</b>	<b>Name of Program</b>	<b>Year Established</b>	<b>President/Head Of Government</b>
1	National Accelerated Food Production	1972	Gen. Yakubu Gowon
2	Operation Feed the Nation	1976	Gen.OlusegunObasanjo
3	Agricultural Development Program	1976	Gen.Olusegun obasanjo
4	Go back to Land	1983	Alh Sheu Shagari
5	Directorateof Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure	1986	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
6	National Directorate of Employment	1986	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
7	Better Life for Rural Women	1987	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
8	Green Revolution	1987	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
9	Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Cooperation	1987	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
10	Strategic Grain Reserve	1988	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
11	Guinea Worm Eradication	1988	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida

	Program		
12	National Commissions for Nomadic Education	1989	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
13	National Primary Health Care Agency	1990	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
14	National Board of Community Banks	1991	Gen.Ibrahim Babangida
15	Family Support Program	1994	Gen. Sanni Abacha
16	Family Economic Advancement Program.	1995	Gen. Sanni Abacha
17	Women Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative.	1998	Gen. Abubakar
18	Child Care Trust.	1999	President O. Obasanjo
19	National Poverty Eradication Program.	2000	President O. Obasanjo
20	Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank.	2000	President O. Obasanjo
21	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency.	2002	President O. Obasanjo
22	Universal basic Education Program.	2000	President O. Obasanjo
23	Forestry Development Program.	2000	President O. Obasanjo
24	Roll Back Malaria Program.	2000	President O. Obasanjo
25	National Action Committee on HIV/AIDS.	2000	President O. Obasanjo
26	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy	2004	President O. Obasanjo
27	Women and Youth Empowerment Program	2007	President Musa Yar'Adua
28	Education Tax Fund	2007	President M. Yar'Adua

Source: Compiled from newspapers, magazines and journals

### 3.7.2.2.6 The Rolling Plan Era (1990-1998)

The post-SAP era ushered in a novel plan known as 'rolling plan' which was introduced to fashion out long term policies from which the medium plan and annual budgets were to derive their programs (Marcellus, 2009). The main objectives of rolling plan according to Akpan-Obong (2009) and Salawu (2006) include globalization of the economy through regional integration and enhanced free market

so as to create market competitiveness for goods and services; reducing inflationary trend and checkmating steep currency depreciation, upgrading infrastructural facilities, boosting agricultural output and alleviating the effect of SAP on the most vulnerable group. In the economic sphere, the plan presupposed that globalization has correlations with liberalization of the economy as policy option for developing countries through free trade, investment and capital flow from within and outside. The rolling plans proposed three step approaches. These include a long term plan of about 20years, a three year rolling plan and an annual budget (Okogie, 2002).

As a result of lack of vision and sense of responsibility, the long term and the three year plans that were to commence from 1990 could not start until 1996 after another military coup had imposed a military administration on the nation. The frequent military incursions into polity had actually become a clog in the wheel of the successful planning and implementation of any development program at this time hence, the back and forth movement as a nation.

In 1997, Gen. Sani Abacha dropped the idea of ‘rolling plan’ and in its place launched what he christened ‘Vision 2010’. True to the prediction of many people, the regime and its “vision” ended up the worst in the history of development planning and political history of Nigeria. Funds for capital projects were diverted into private accounts abroad and those who had the effrontery to challenge him were silenced or chased into exile. The media were severely dealt with as journalist were hunted and clamped into detention without trial, copies of newspapers and magazines confiscated and burnt and sometimes, the media houses were proscribed through decrees. Perhaps it was on that score that Wole Soyinka, a Literature Nobel Laureate described the regime as “a period of no government” while Igabatayo and Igbiniedion (2008) depicts the era as a period of national calamities. The military regime in its characteristic manner soon commenced mass retrenchment, the four refineries broke down due to lack of maintenance, most financial institutions became distressed, students stayed more at home than in school, all infrastructural facilities were in deficit while many companies had to move their operational base to neighboring

countries as a survival strategy. According to Fika, (2004) the bad culture of abandoning national development plan as a blueprint for socio-economic development remained until the restoration of democratic regime on May 29, 1999.

#### **3.7.2.2.7 Development Planning and the New Democratic Experiment**

After 28 years of military administration, the earnest desire of most Nigerians to return to democratic governance eventually came to pass as Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as President on May 29, 1999. The new government wasted no time as it commenced a four year medium term plan from 1999 to 2003. The plan named National Economic Direction aimed at ensuring economic competitiveness and innovativeness, sensitivity to motivation, private sector-driven and market-oriented economy (Donli, 2004). At the end of year 2003, despite the massive revenue accrued to the government from oil and gas exportation, privatization program and several billions of United States dollars reclaimed from the late Abacha's family and their cronies, Nigeria's development status was still very poor as exemplified by unreasonably high poverty index and aggravated unemployment rate. The government had to go back to the drawing board so as to re-plan on how to redeem the economy from the brink of total collapse realizing that no plan will ever turn out well if the old failed technique is adopted. On account of this, a new development plan (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy) was worked out as a home-grown poverty reduction plan patterned after the MDGs.

#### **3.7.2.2.8 National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy**

Frank (2008) and Marcellus (2009) argue that since the early post-independence planning era, national economic empowerment and development strategy (NEEDS) appears to be the most comprehensive plan produced by any administration in Nigeria. They anchored their arguments on its all-inclusiveness which, apart from involving the three tiers of government; it also encompasses the Organized Private Sector (OPS), Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and the general public. Aremu (2005) however disagreed with the above view, claiming that there is nothing sacrosanct about it because Nigeria is one country where all kinds of development

models have been experimented and ended woefully not because the plan was faulty but for reason of defective implementation. Nigeria has always had good development plans even as detestable as the military regimes were; they still came up with good plans but which were not meant to be implemented wholeheartedly to produce good results.

NEEDS as an economic blueprint was actually derived from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework ratified in year 2000 by 189 member nations under the umbrella of United Nations and it was to operate in two phases (NEEDS<sup>1</sup> and NEEDS<sup>2</sup>) for a period of six years, between 2004 and 2010. According to CBN (2005, p.4) it aimed at achieving the following objectives:

“To eradicate poverty in Nigeria, to create a country that Nigerians can be proud of and be grateful to inhabit, a Nigeria that promotes self-reliance, entrepreneurship, innovation, rewards hard work, protects its people and their property, and offers its children better prospects than those they may be tempted to seek in Europe or the United States”

Specifically, the plan attempts to create wealth, generate employment and lessen poverty while reconstructing the mind of Nigerians to imbibe good values. To achieve the goals, the state and local governments also established their SEEDS and LEEDS respectively and there was collaboration between Federal government and others through joint funding of projects and programs under NEEDS (Marcellus, 2009). Other strategies adopted for realizing the objectives include empowering the people for productive engagement, stimulating private entrepreneurship by making business environment conducive and transforming the excessive bureaucracy and corrupt tendency that normally characterize the running of government businesses (Frank, 2008). Despite the feeling of euphoria that greeted the launching of first and second phases of NEEDS, the two phases have completed their life spans and nothing has changed in the nation's development status in terms of poverty rating, job creation, security of life and property, improvement in the infrastructural facilities and above all, bureaucracy and corrupt culture that used to depict

government transactions seemed to have found a more convenient place in the system. It was midway into its dismal performance that Obasanjo's tenure expired and Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua was elected as new president on May 29, 2007. With the liabilities of feeble economy bequeathed to the new government, Yar'Adua was prompted in year 2008 to launch the 'Seven Point Agenda'(SPA) which became the development framework of his administration till he died on May 5, 2010. His deputy, who later became his successor, has inherited the agenda with little modifications.

Since the administration is just about two years old, this study will not review its development plan so as not to run the risk of hasty judgment. Notwithstanding, it is pertinent to mention that there are ominous signs from stakeholders from different sectors of the economy showing that the outcome can be anything but encouraging.

#### **3.7.2.2.9 Challenges of Development Planning in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a nation with great potentials. With several million acres of arable land, 38.5 billion barrels of oil and gas reserves, a variety of unexploited solid mineral deposit, a wealth of human capital (Oteh, 2009, p.1), Nigeria ought to be among the twenty leading economy in the world but surprisingly, available facts showed that it is ranked among the top three countries in the world where the level of poverty is still unreasonably high. Since her independence in 1960, there have been series of unsuccessful attempts to reposition the economy through series of development plan. Within the last one decade, it has also made a failed attempt to achieve the United Nations stipulated MDGs which mandated member nations to halve the number of poverty invested people. Nigeria in her desperate quest for development has experimented various development plans ranging from short term (annual budget), medium term (rolling plan) and long term plan. All these development plans were broad and comprehensive covering both the private and public sectors with well-articulated and measurable economic target yet they were abandoned because they were considered unable to bring about the desired development. The paradigm was thus, shifted to a combination of MDGs and NEEDS which was again dropped for seven point agenda. This is the most recent of the various plans which though gave

assurance of a bright economic future but the early ominous signs manifesting are that it may end like others. There have been general consensus among policy and economic analysts that all the development plans which Nigeria has experimented from the colonial era till date has no serious error in conception and content, the problem can only be spotted in its implementation. Particularly, they argued that since most of these plans have been successfully experimented in other nations why the frustration Nigeria has been experiencing. Factors independently or collectively attributed to the failure of successive development plans in Nigeria include bad governance evidently illustrated by massive corruption, little or no consultation with the general public in the process of design and implementation, mono-economic base of the country and lack of continuity of policies and programs by succeeding administration (Ekundare, 1971; Mimiko, 1998; Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005; Salawu et al., 2006; Akpan- Obong, 2009; Jelili et al., 2008; Frank, 2008; Marcellus, 2009; Lawal and Abe, 2011). On account of the observation above, they also agreed that for Nigeria to rebuild years of economic decline and make significant leap from poverty to prosperity there must be strong determination and commitment on the government's part to embark on economic policy reforms. Although there were few notable achievements recorded during the past development plans such as restoration of macroeconomic stability but even at that, the challenge still lies in how to translate that to the welfare demands of the people. To safely address this challenge, a number of issues are outlined for future administrations to tackle through deft economic reform as witnessed recently in other nations.

### **3.7.3 Communicating Economic Reforms for National Development**

The issue of underdevelopment has, within the last two decades become a focal point in development discourse especially among the governments of developing countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa. Underdevelopment is very well illustrated by the degree of poverty most people in the developing nations have to struggle with. Poverty, which is a state of wants and inability to meet the basic needs of life such as food, housing, education, and good health care is confirmed by statistics to have affected about two third (2/3) of the world's population. Nigeria as one of the affected nations has gone through cycles of economic planning so as to get out of

economic devastation but the more attempts made to find the pathway out, the deeper it slides into it thus, provoking urgent intervention from the international community. The World Bank, Paris Club and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have, as a result, prescribed structural adjustment program (SAP) as radical economic reforms for these nations. According to Compos and Esfahani (1996) cited in Adeyemi (2008) reform was defined as government's direct involvement in correcting the lapses and distortion in the free- market philosophy with the purposes of enhancing the economy to increase demand, generate employment and reduce poverty. Therefore, according to Camdessus (1990) and ILO (2012) economic reform seeks to provide medium term economic framework that will induce macroeconomic stability, put in place a system of power redistribution that guarantees good wages, saving and investment culture, establish social insurance to cushion the negative effects of reforms on the poor segment of the population and ensure social transformation, behavior change and consensus building. For any economic reform to succeed, Todd (2002) and Adeyemi (2009) identify four conditions as a prerequisite. These include robust macroeconomic policies that produce financial soundness favorable to consistent growth, good governance earned through probity and accountability, the deftness of the government to quickly design a program of action that will mitigate the likely effect of the reforms on the vulnerable and ability to engender sufficient understanding and mobilize citizens' supports in favor of the reform.

Besides the conditions outlined above, scholars have argued that the extent to which economic reforms succeed is predicated on how intelligible its contents are to the public and the degree of approval given to it (Cabanero-Verzosa and Mitchell, 2002). This means that for economic reforms to be successful, the people, mostly those who will be affected directly or indirectly must be adequately briefed and their supports significantly enlisted. Communication in this circumstance transcends merely creating awareness about the reform into the realm of strategic communication which involves persuading the people to support the reform agenda while carrying them along in the process of planning and implementation.



Between 1983 and 2004, Nigeria has experienced series of economic reforms most of which were prescribed by the international financial institutions. These include SAP, privatization and commercialization of public enterprises, economic deregulation, public sector reform meant to inculcate fiscal discipline, good governance and institutional reforms, anti-corruption, transparency and accountability (Adeyemi, 2009; Sanusi, 2003). These reforms have recorded marginal success in some areas while it failed in some others. The derived benefits include debt cancellation by the creditor nations and institutions, increased inflow of direct foreign investment, consistent economic growth from 2.45 percent in 1998 to about 5.3 percent in 2004, and rise in external reserve from US\$9.91 billion in 2000 to US\$ 341 billion in 2006, and strengthening of the banking sector through recapitalization policy. On the other hand, the reform failed in critical area of infrastructural development (electricity, road, rail transport, health and education).

In the opinion of communication scholars, an economic reform that will achieve its stated objectives must not only make media a part of its designing and implementation process but must adopt the appropriate communication model. Severin and Tankard (2001) define a model “as a structure of symbols and operating rules which is supposed to match a set of relevant points in an existing structure or process and is used for understanding the more complex processes”. As there are different methods of conceptualizing communication so are there various ways of modelling the process of communication for better understanding. According to Berlo’s SMCR model cited in Anaeto et al (2008) there are two models: the linear and interactional which we are considering in this study.

According to linear model, Berlo identified four steps. A source (S) transmits message (M) through a channel (C) to a receiver (R). In this model, both the source and the receiver are affected by personal attitude, prior knowledge, socio-cultural background and other intervening factors in the communication process. The second model is interactional and it emphasizes a two way perspective of communication. It portrays communication as role exchange. Person “A” (source) sends a message to

person “B” (receiver). In an attempt to give response to the message, “B” transforms a message by way of reply to “A” who now becomes a receiver. If that communication exchange continues, the two people will keep changing roles as sender and receiver. That is what is referred to as two way communication process.

The implication of the above models is that both can be used to illustrate communication process at different range. Linear model is limited in scope because few human communications actually occur in one way. An instance is a boss passing instruction to the subordinate which may not require any feedback than to carry out the instruction. Most every day conversation is interactional and is good to explain mediated form of communication as will be used here to explain the process of communicating economic reforms in order to achieve success.

In the earlier part of this study, we reiterated the problem of macroeconomic instability confronting Nigeria as a nation and for which people are calling for urgent economic reforms to reposition it in a way that can address the people’s needs. These problems were illustrated by poverty, high level of unemployment, infrastructural deficit, corruption in public offices, insecurity of life and property among others. It therefore calls for reforms in selected areas of the economy such as deregulation of the oil industry, recapitalization of the banking sector, public service reform, re-orientation of anti-corruption policy, power sector reform, transport sector reform (road, air and rail) among others. It is important to mention that though these reforms are critical and necessary for Nigeria’s economic turnaround but the media must be seen as an active development partner if it must be successful. It is based on this belief that we attempt to examine the communication management framework according to Cabanero-Verzosa and Mitchell, (2000) to observe if it explains Nigeria’s circumstance with regards to its economic reform program. Their communication template which is in five steps includes identification of public, message, medium, response and appraisal. Since there appears to be a correlation between Berlo’s interactional communication model and the five step communication process, we will

adopt the model as a case study to communicate economic reform to the Nigerian populace.

**(a) Identifying intended audience**

The audience here refers to citizens who have stakes in the economy and stand to gain or lose something in time of economic reform. To identify them therefore, a communication audit will be conducted to identify the different interest groups at every stage of the reforms (Naim, 1993). In Nigeria, the major stakeholders in any economic reform are the public officials (technocrats), private investors (local or foreign), the multilateral financial institutions and other international creditors. The second group includes the three tiers of government which includes presidency, Federal and state executive council, National and state Assembly and Judiciary; Labor Union and Political Parties, the Organized Private Sector (OPS), civil society, ordinary citizens on the road and the media. The different groups must be identified to discover their interests and concerns, to allay their fears and gain their supports at every stage of the reform.

**(b) Design the message**

For economic reforms to succeed there must be detailed messages that will give the reforms background, prospects and anticipated problems. For instance, if the power sector is going to be reformed to enhance power efficiency and increase the tariff, it is only normal that those government contractors and political patrons, power generator importers and distributors as well as corporate organizations who have been evading electricity bills over the years and the poor people who may find the increase tariff unbearable will want to resist the power sector privatization. The deregulation of the downstream sector of the Nigerian oil industry is a sensitive economic reform that will normally incite serious oppositions from various groups. The oil cabal that have been the long-time beneficiaries of the old order where several billions of US dollars are illegally funneled into foreign accounts, the oil industry workers some of who may lose their jobs as a result of the reform, the faultfinding mass media and the hypercritical civil society that are aware of the

underhand dealings between the government officials and the petroleum dealers and the over 80 million vulnerable Nigerians who may have to pay more for liters of petroleum products and increase transport fare are most likely to oppose the deregulation policy. Similarly, the Nigeria's economic transformation agenda using the SMEs as a catalyst of economic growth and poverty reduction will, expectedly not have a smooth sail in the public sector. The view of the government is that the organized private sector (OPS) will be directly involved in the new economic agenda. To this end, the government attempts to deregulate the sector and provides the enabling environment for the private sector to take charge. The public officials and the political class that have been reaping from the past economic malfunction may clandestinely work against the policy using ethnicity and religion to mobilize the masses against the government's good intention. Also, the banking industries that erroneously believed that investments into SMEs are risky business and to which they are unwilling to advance credit are also well known to be indifferent to the future of SMEs in Nigeria. How about the multinational companies that are willing to maintain the monopoly of the market as well as several marketers and representatives of foreign companies around the globe who felt their business may be threatened if SMEs take roots in Nigeria. Therefore, to persuade all these diverse interest groups to fall in love with the policy, the communication message must be more than just raising awareness but will also highlight their concerns and apprehensions while devising plausible ways of addressing them. The government must be able to persuade each affected group to see the inevitability of the reforms, the mass media institution must not only be convinced to see the rationale behind the reform but must be active partners in the design and implementation while the media serve as the platform for general public to engage in constructive dialogue and debate that will strengthen the reform program. However, for the communicator to deliver this message successfully and get positive responses from the target audiences, it needs to build up robust arguments reinforced with faultless statistical information and verifiable facts which people can easily access and confirm. Message must be succinct, unambiguous and presented in the appropriate language register most intelligible to each group. The communication of development message takes long

period to package depending on the intended reforms and therefore must be well coordinated and presented consistently to achieve positive result.

**(c) Choose the channels of communication**

In contemporary time, there are various media of transferring messages from the sender to receiver. This depends on the message and the intended receiver. Therefore, identifying the target audience and the most accessible media to them are critical in development communication. For example, the print media may not make any impact among the illiterate public that constitute about 57 percent of Nigerian population while lack of electricity in most villages may not allow television to carry the message far to the grassroots level where about 70 percent of the population are resident. Radio appears the most efficient organ of mass dissemination of information to wide, diverse and heterogeneous audiences. This is because most mobile wireless devices such as handset, Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA), Digital-AMPS and Universal Mobile Telecommunication System (UMTS) possess in-built capability to receive broadcast signal anywhere at no extra cost. However, there is the high possibility that the rural dwellers may not be able to operate their radio every time due to non-constant electricity or none at all. Against these backgrounds therefore, communicators may need a combination of media channels so as to reach their target population.

It is worthy of note that in the present-day, the internet and satellite technologies have widened the frontiers of information network and heightened the speed at which information travels across borders. This technology is also responsible for the advent of social media such as website, Facebook, My Space, You Tube, LinkedIn, Skype, Twitter, Blogs and Micro blogs among others, through which information can be disseminated and feedback received in seconds. It is important to emphasize here that social media also have an added advantage in that not only will every user become a reporter and editor, it costs them little or nothing to send and access messages. There is also a wide range of indigenous media such as gong, town-criers, drums, masquerade, film and cinema, mobile theatre and drama group that can be effectively used to carry development message to the grassroots (Owolabi & O'Neill, 2013b).

Apart from the indigenous media, we also have the informal channels of communication through which information can be shared with group of people. There are casual gatherings where people congregate in the morning and evening time to discuss religious, political and socio-economic matters. These include churches and mosque; schools, palm wine joints, pub houses, beer parlors, market places, motor parks, salon among others (Wilson, 1997; Lanihun, 2003; Kalejaye *et al*, 2006). In some cases, a combination of these media may also be used to send reform messages in order to produce the desired effects.

**(d) Expected feedback**

How well a message is packaged and the appropriateness of the channel used to deliver it will determine what response it produces and whether or not it will create change of habit and behavior in the publics. A message on economic reforms that ignored the concerns and apprehension of the people stands the risk of violent resentment and failure. The January 2012 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria was a clear example of how defective communication management can easily spell doom for a reform program. The announcement of the deregulation of the downstream sector leading to removal of subsidy on petrol and diesel was so sudden, evidently there was not enough communication with stakeholders in the reform process, the communication managers appeared not to have built robust argument capable of swaying critics to the side of the reform, and the strong resistance that followed was therefore unimaginable. The program generated so much opposition from Nigerians at home and in the Diasporas almost to the point of unseating the government. The summary of this is that if the message is not properly and sufficiently communicated, the intended audience may assume adversarial postures which may kill the purpose of the reforms no matter how good.

**(e) Evaluate the communication effect**

To determine how successful the communication efforts have been, it has to be measured by research. To this end, the communicators among others must be able to determine what the perception of the audience about the reform is, know whether the communication efforts has changed the perception and behaviors of the people,

evaluate how people feel about the reform and whether the communication efforts have generated enough support for the planned reform. However, it is pertinent to mention that in a nation like Nigeria that is as diverse in language and culture and with a large population resident in the interior rural part, it may take longer period to get all the expected feedback.

In conclusion, communication is undoubtedly a significant part of economic reform. Mass media in particular have been certified as an indispensable agent of change and social instrument for communicating development (Oboh, 2004). To communicate effectively especially on important issues such as economic reforms demands active collaboration with the media. In Nigeria, the main media are the local media and more often than not, specialized reporters covering every related aspect of the reform. For instance, on the issue of economic transformation through SMEs growth, the reporters covering business, banking and finance, agriculture, information and communication technology in both prints and electronic media are to be adequately briefed with verifiable facts as the reform implementation progresses.

To engage the supports of the media, the government must be absolutely open to the press men, as a matter of fact; they must not only be made to understand the reform objectives but must be a watchdog on the reform planning and implementation. The “fire brigade” approach and one-way Ministry of Information-style of communication where only the government’s voice is heard may be counter-productive as this will only succeed in aggravating the deep seated distrust and hatred for government’s programs which are believed to be corruption-ridden.

The first step towards communicating economic reform should be to promote the core themes and objectives of the reform through generous media coverage in form of special interviews, phone-in program, discussion forums, radio and television debate, well researched opinion and feature articles, syndicated analysis and editorials must be published and broadcast in different major languages. The second step of media relations is the demonstration of practical development-related actions

that show the seriousness of the government to carry out the reform. A government that has been branded as corrupt as Nigerian government must first be able to exhibit its determination to rid itself of this vice by publicly making scapegoats of some key officials found guilty of corruption.

The third step is to presenting verifiable facts and figures to the media of anticipated benefits from the reform and how the government intends to genuinely address the concerns of every stakeholder. Realizing that the foundation of a successful economic reform is a democratic government that is open and accountable to the people and this can only be achieved when the government strengthens the media through unfettered access to information about its activities particularly the reform agenda.

### **3.8.0 Media and Women Empowerment for Participation in Development**

Women, including girls constitute a significant proportion of world populations who live in the rural communities, are poor and largely uneducated. The world population estimated at about 6.9 billion has about 1.3 billion poverty-infested people out of which 60 percent are women (United Nations Development Program, 2011). Nigeria, with her population of about 162.5 million out of which 80.2 million (49%) accounted for women and girls with no fewer than 52.6 million (60%) living in rural communities where they constitute the unskilled labor force even though men are more likely the land owners (Ngeri-Nwagha, 1996; Aighokhan, 2000; British Council (2012). According to Bhasin (1992, p.16) women work two-third of the total work hours in the world but get paid for only one-tenth hence; they own only one-hundredth of the properties in the world. UNDFW (2001) also observed that two-third of 876 adults in the world who cannot read and write are women while 77million children who are never enrolled in school or are drop-outs are girls.

In Nigeria, women are discriminated against in many ways. For instance, more women than men registered to vote during the 2011 general election yet only 9% of those who contested in the elections were women. While the upper chamber of the



national assembly has 109 members, 8 or 7.3% are females; the lower chamber with 360 members has 22 or 6.1% females. Although the federal Ministers are 24 in number, 6 or 25% are women respectively (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The gender inequality in the distribution of political power can be located within the context of women's educationally disadvantaged position as well as lack of financial war chest to compete favorably with men.

Gender inequality thrives on the ground of discriminatory culture which oftentimes denies women their pride of place and right to education. In Nigeria for instance, there is the wrong assumption that if women are educated, not only will they break the yoke of poverty but will also be swallowed up in pride and be uncontrollable by their spouse. "Western education engenders unlimited independence" many parents claim. They also believe that money expended on the education of girl child is an investment down the drain. The thinking is that once she gets married, she is permanently detached from the biological parents and whatever she possesses belongs to her micro family and can never be of any assistance to the parents again. For this reason, the education of male children is given topmost priority than girls'. This is one of the reasons why the birth of girl child is always greeted with indifference among some ethnic groups and in some cases, the mother of such new baby girl might be denied the most needed post-natal care and in some extreme cases, the "unlucky mother" and her baby may be banished from home. Still on the unfair role of culture in gender inequality, it is against Nigerian culture for a woman to inherit her parent's possessions especially landed property. If a woman loses her husband, unless she chooses to remarry any of the kinsmen to the late husband, she will automatically be dispossessed of everything including the children and will be sent away empty. The assumption is that allowing the wife to go with the children and possessions will make her transfer the heritage of one family to another. Another factor that fuels gender discrimination against women is religion. Nigerians are very religious and the two dominant religions, Christianity and Islam are known to command women's absolute submission to their spouse which serves to underscore their subservience existence not only in the family but in the society as a whole.

According to Osunyikanmi (2008, p.150) this timeworn discriminatory culture against women produces unimaginable socio-economic and political impacts on the generations of Nigerian women. Ochonogor (2008) also notes that most women than men lack capital and access to credit facilities as a result of not having landed property and other assets to secure loan from banks and other credit advancing agencies. In securing loans from the informal credit market, their spouse's consent may sometime be required before approval is granted. The growing poverty level among the women has breathed more life into the existing social menace in the society with more women becoming prostitutes, hard drug carrier, armed robbers, kidnappers, children traffickers, cultists among others. A peep into the Nigeria's development indicator shows that women are at the lowest rung of the ladder. They constitute the greater percentage of the poor in the society 60%, they form the greatest proportion of the unskilled labor in all the economic sectors, they are the most vulnerable in times of crises, they are deficient of educational and requisite skills that can properly position them to participate in and benefit from the windows of opportunity available in SMEs as engine of economic growth and prosperity therefore, unable to contribute to sustainable development activities (Owolabi, 2008; Owolabi and O'Neill, 2013b, 2014).

The women's socio-economic profile in Nigeria is different from what obtained in the developed world such as United States where there are evidences showing that women entrepreneurs are in the majority with 6.7 million businesses growing two and half times the national average and generating employment three times faster than the national average (National Women Business Council NWBC (2004) cited by Ademokun and Ajayi, 2012, p73). The report further indicated that in US between 1997 and 2002, an average of 424 women entrepreneurs established their enterprise daily thus translating to about 154,760 new investments per year which is about 55% of new businesses. By this, women entrepreneurs in the US are reported to be actively involved in MSMEs and created about 9.2 million jobs as at 2004. In the United Kingdom, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development

OECD (2004) also notes that women play active role in the economic growth of the country as self-employed and employers of labor. There are presently over 10 million self-employed women in Europe contributing to sustainable development through active involvement in MSMEs (OECD, 2004).

According to Clinton (2010) cited in Owolabi and O'Neill (2013b) "investing in the potential of the world's women and girls is one of the surest ways to achieve global economic progress, political stability and greater prosperity for women and men". To accomplish the above goals means that the government must initiate policies and actions that will empower the girl child to acquire qualitative education, make available to women productive assets (capital and land), improve reproductive health status and provide easy access to family planning, increase enhancement of women's voice in political process while throwing away all discriminatory culture and antiquated belief that limits women ability.

For some years, a lot of development information are being propagated but with marginal benefit to Nigerians simply because this information apart from not tailored to Nigeria, the marginalized women groups are not properly empowered to understand and make good use of it. Therefore, empowering women for sustainable development entails mainstreaming women empowerment issues through the communication media. To communicate women empowerment in a nation like Nigeria, it has been argued that the traditional mass media, prints (newspapers and magazines) and electronics (radio and television) may not be able to achieve much because of Nigeria's multi-ethnic and multi-lingual make-up (Owolabi & O'Neill, 2013b, 2004). For example, the print media is elitist in culture and content and as such may not make as much impact among the illiterate rural dwellers that constitute about 57% of the populations unless they are printed in the indigenous language. The pertinent question is in how many languages the media will publish out of about 250 languages besides several other competing dialects. The same is for television and radio which experience the limitation of poor power generation in the rural community where about 70% of the people live without electricity. This is why radio

appears to be more efficient in carrying development news than other media because it is more affordable to the masses and can be operated at minimal cost. Notwithstanding, radio also has its shortcoming in that it cannot broadcast in all the languages and dialects. This is why Lanihun (2003) and Akinleye (2003) argue that when disseminating development message, communicators may have to use a combination of both mass media and indigenous media to achieve considerable effects.

Apart from the print and electronic media, eloquent and influential women, charismatic opinion leaders and prominent religious leader, school teachers, theatre and mobile cinema group are powerful media of communication in the informal settings where people congregate together daily to discuss socio-cultural, economic and political issues (Wilson, 1997; Kalejaye et al, 2006). As a way of enhancing mass effect of messages especially in a multi-lingual setting like Nigeria, Lanihun (2003) posits that the indigenous media can be incorporated into the mass media production process. Media as agents of change and development must channel its communication power to positively influence people's behavior; change their attitudes, orientation and disposition to women education and all such outdated tradition that has portrayed women as inferior being so as to keep them in the bondage of poverty. Therefore to communicate women empowerment for development program demands active collaboration between the media audience and the specialized reporters in the local media. For example the reporters covering business, banking and finance, agriculture, information and communication technology must be able to promote the central idea and objectives of women empowerment scheme through a variety of special programs such as personality interviews of professional and career women, phone-in program, panel of discussion, radio and television debates, in-depth opinion and feature articles, entertainment, theatre and film show, serialized analysis and editorials on issues that border on women inequality and empowerment with translation in all the major languages both in prints and electronics. A government that will effectively carry out these roles must be open, transparent and democratically accountable to its citizens. To be

accountable is to allow free flow of information and plurality of idea even from the opposition camp. It is only in a democratic government as operated in Nigeria today and in most developed nations of the world that can guarantee such characteristics. As Chalkley (1968) cited in Xiaoge (2009, p.357) once notes that it is the responsibility of journalists “to alert news audiences to development problems and open their eyes to possible solutions” but it has been argued that the media in most developing nations like Nigeria appear to be serving the elite and not the common people who constitute over 70 percent of the population. This problem according to Akinleye and Ojebode (2004) stems from the fact that the media ownerships structure tends to concentrate more in the hands of the rich to the exclusion of the poor who are mostly neglected in media coverage. As it is at the international level where there is communication imbalance between developed and developing world so it is nationally between the urban and rural communities. As Ansah (1984, p.44) notes that,

rural dwellers are generally treated as passive recipients of information selected, processed and packaged for them by urban-based professionals; they do not have adequate facilities for voicing their feelings and participating even if only indirectly in taking decisions that affect their lives.

While highlighting one of the principles of development media theory, Anaeto et al., (2008, p.63) note that the freedom of the media should be opened to economic priorities and the development needs of the society. This means that development journalism must not only report the government’s economic blueprints and what has been accomplished but must go steps higher by comparing the government’s development claim with the reality in the people’s lives. This transcends the levels of traditional reporting to the realm of development journalism that makes investigative reporting its working technique. The media in Nigeria appear to be good at instant reporting of an event but somehow deficient at doing follow up reports to bring out news from news. For instance, the front page of most Nigerian media were awash with different captivating headlines on Tuesday, August 21, 2001 applauding the decisions of the Bankers’ Committee in conjunction with the Federal Government of Nigeria to set aside 10 percent of their profits after tax as loans for SMEs development in Nigeria. As good as this may sound, the media with eyes of development should have

its focus on the long term development process as against one off news reports without a follow up. This is why development journalism is believed to be tied to agenda-setting theory which demands that while journalists pursue development plan, they should focus on critical inquiring and evaluation of development projects by the frequency of reporting and the prominence given to reports through headline display, picture and layout in newspapers or timing in radio and television (Traber 1985; Folarin 2005, p.68).

Baran and Davis (2011, p.104), while commenting on the media and its social responsibilities to the society, emphasized on the necessity of the media scrutiny of government and other social institutions while providing objective and honest news reports. They opine that the media ought to be responsible for encouraging productive activities that can make the society great.

### **3.8.1 Appraising Media's Role in SMEs Growth and Sustainable Development**

While illustrating sustainable development, Rioplus (2006) describes the concept as a process of monitored transformation intended to guarantee a stable society where the economy and population are managed in a way to encourage growth and satisfy human basic necessities of life such as housing, food, water, job, education and environment sustenance (Akinleye,2003; Bodt, 2007). From the above description, it is evident that human being is at the center of sustainable development. Man as development agent has the capacity to transform his environment by increasing or decreasing the population, preserving and replenishing the resource foundation, modernize technology and administer risk. Perhaps this is the reason why Ajayi (1998) cited in Akinleye, (2003) noted that human resources are the most prized possessions at the disposal of a nation to enhance her economic base. This human asset however, must be strengthened through increased knowledge and expertise while up-grading the quality of life so as to put other resources to profitable use. Here, a connection can be established between knowledge, education and poverty eradication (development). This is where the press becomes relevant to share knowledge, educate the people about public policies, inform them of what to do,

influence them on what behavior to change and mobilize them to participate in every social, economic and political activity geared towards eradicating poverty in their society.

Mass media as channels of communication contribute significantly to sustainable development of many nations by encouraging participation in series of economic activities in order to stimulate job creation and consequently reduce poverty in the society. To develop SMEs as economic activity in Nigeria, mass media play both direct and indirect roles. Globally, the direct impact of the media is small when compared to its indirect impact. Graves (2010) observed that the media's share of the world economy is about 1.7 percent of the United States GDP where one hundred leading media organizations generate about \$287 billion in 2006. However, in Nigeria, the revenue from all the media is less than N200 billion (about US\$1.43billion) including advertising and public relations (National Planning Commission, 2009). Notwithstanding its small contributions to national economy in terms of revenue and employment generation, yet its indirect impact on the economic aggregate is immense. Entrepreneurship cannot grow in an atmosphere of insecurity of lives and property, civil unrests, epidemic, violent crime and corruption. Mass media, according to Balkin (1998) builds democracy and fosters transparency in governance by mobilizing civil society to participate in political decisions and make the government accountable to the people. It is a transparent and accountable government that creates enabling environment for investment by building and sustaining the necessary infrastructural facilities such as road, airspace, railway, power and electricity, hospitals, telecommunication and adequate security system. An enabling environment will not only stem the tide of capital flight that has made Nigeria to remain junior partner in most of her joint ventures but will also stimulate local and foreign participations in SMEs sub-sector of the economy thus, enhancing growth.

One of the primary responsibilities of the media is to be a watchdog (Grave, 2010). Over the years, Nigeria has witnessed a lot of high profile frauds with its grave economic implications. In its surveillance role, the mass media is the ubiquitous

watchdog of the government and other organizations that serve the people. The freedom of information enjoyed by the media demands that it provides balanced and up-to-date information about how public and private organizations are run to benefit the nation and its citizens. As watchdog, while watching for scandal and underhand deals, they also scrutinize the budget, sniff the locked-up cabinet for skeleton, and peep into the management and public expenditures to discover if tax payers and stakeholder's funds are properly accounted for. Within the last three years, five Chief Executive Officers of five banks exposed by the press have been detained and depositors' money running to N350 billion (about US\$2.20 billion) have been recovered from them besides several choice properties locally and abroad, forfeited to the government. This watchdog role has the tendency to foster ethical compliance in the management of SMEs funds and other credit granting agencies.

All over the world, the greatest problem confronting SMEs' promoters is access to funding and it is therefore not surprising to note that the various attempts made by investors in Nigeria to grow their businesses have been crippled by paucity of fund. Against this background, the Federal government has approved the investment of the sum of N200 billion (US\$1.26billion) debenture stocks to be used in refinancing banks' existing loan portfolios to Nigerian SMEs sub-sector. In addition to this, the government established the SMEs Credit Guarantee Scheme with a start-up capital of N200 billion (CBN, 2010a; CBN, 2010b). This pool of resources is meant to fast-track the development of SMEs by increasing entrepreneurs' access to credit and to improve the financial position of the deposit money banks. Despite the windows of financial opportunities, most investors / entrepreneurs are still in the dark as to how to access the funds and as a result developed a sense of apathy towards it. The mass media can connect SMEs promoters to the sources of funds by educating them on what to do, how to do it and where to direct their quest. Besides, the media can also use its persuasive power to mobilize the investors to form cooperative societies. As a society registered with the company registration agency, they can jointly raise soft loans to assist one another in growing their businesses.



It has also been observed that one of the reasons why the SMEs in Nigeria have not developed beyond its primordial level is lack of access to research and development (R&D) results. There is so much information gap between research centers and SMEs and as such, many are not aware of the opportunity and a few that knew about it are not sufficiently informed about what can be done with research results. The media can bridge this information gap by connecting entrepreneurs with sources of useful research outputs. This can be done by splashing detailed reports about the discovery on the pages of their papers and magazines. In addition, the media can also provide good platforms for development discourse by bringing researchers and professionals in different fields to discuss new development and also provide linkage between them and entrepreneurs who may want to ask questions.

Health is wealth is a common axiom. An unhealthy individual and indeed, a community ravaged by epidemic and all kinds of diseases can neither participate nor contribute to socio-economic and political development of the nation. A critical role of the media is to provide citizens with vital information on health, rule of hygiene and clean environment; particularly it alerts the government and its relevant agencies to the danger of environmental pollution of air, water and land as a result of oil drilling, spillage and gas flaring, industrial manufacturing and mining activities in various parts of the country with their attendant health hazards and severe ecological impacts on the immediate community, while it assists the vulnerable people to respond quickly to disaster warning messages in order to avert disaster. Globally, the issue of climatic change has assumed a life threatening posture in many countries including Nigeria; leading to excessive rainfall and flooding in the coastal region of the south while it heightens temperature, heat wave and prolong dryness in the northern part. For example, in September 2012, thirty people were killed, 120,000 displaced while about 36,000 hectares of farmland were washed away during flood disaster that affected ten states (National Mirror, September 2012). Besides, Abiodun et al, (2011) and Owolabi and O'Neill (2013b) also mention that climatic change has been observed to cause acute outbreak of cerebrospinal meningitis, yellow fever, lassa fever, guinea worm, schistosomiasis (bilharzias) and onchocerciasis (river

blindness) in the arid northern region while it engenders frequent outbreak of malaria in the wet south causing the death of many especially children. The world is presently inundated with technological advancement that can enable the media to quickly disseminate news and life information to vulnerable people as it unfolds. The media by this could serve as early warning signal of impending danger and consequently keeping the society healthy and safe while economic activities are protected.

Decisions are taken based on the aggregate information at the disposal of policy makers and entrepreneurs. Applied knowledge gained from information is necessary for people to respond to opportunities and challenges in their economic climate. The media provide relevant information to the people so as to make informed political choice and rational economic decisions. For instance, as a result of media's ability to disseminate information about modern technologies, skills, innovations and ideas about SMEs, more entrepreneurs can easily and quickly have access to such free opportunities that were previously restricted to few elites. For example, through the media some Nigerians have acquired free technical skills to produce candle, chalk, ice-cream and yoghurt among others on a micro scale and these they nurture until it becomes a medium-sized business today.

The World Development Report, (2000) cited in Graves, (2010) notes that advertising creates demand for products. Studies have also revealed that the media advertisements have subtle influence on its audience and as such can influence the buying habits of individuals. Advertising in the media and internet can play dual roles of promoting SMEs' products and services in the local and international markets thus, discovering the sellers and buyers of products and connecting them together. The media, by these, stimulate the demands for those products and services and enhance their growth and financial independence.

In this present day of knowledge-based and technology-driven economy, it is important that SMEs adopts Information and communication Technology (ICT) as

part of its development plans. According to Maldeni and Jayasena, (2009), ICT will enable SMEs to provide services and products at a competitive advantage. It is also an agent of organizational change and transformation (Hazbo et al, 2008). Intra and inter- departmental communication are faster when SMEs introduce ICT into its operations. The use of ICTs such as telephone, telex and internet, facsimile and so on facilitates quick information dissemination and decision making process thereby saves time, cost and leads to management efficiency. The rapid development in the area of ICT is fast redefining the process of managing businesses today. For example, there are specialized computer software that can be used to carry out different tasks in business management such as accounting, administration, human resources, business development, research and statistics, product development and sales and marketing. Despite various roles the media perform in fostering sustainable development in the world today, there are problems that have not allowed Nigerian economy to annex those opportunities for sustainable growth.

### **3.8.2 Obstacles to Nigerian Media Coverage of Development Activities**

The media all over the world have always had various challenges to struggle with; these however, differ in degree and intensity from region to region and nation to nation depending also on the form of government in power. Under a military regime for instance, owing to the authoritarian nature and command structure of military government, there may be severe press restriction as against good press/government relationship which is common under a democratically elected government. However, we must also not overlook the fact that having a democratically elected government in place alone does not guarantee painless relationship between the media and the government. As Seng and Hunt, (1986) noted, every government, both military and civilian need the press to get feedback from the citizens on the prominence and acceptability of its policies and programs. All things being equal, there is no nation in the world where the media operate without inherent challenges; but could be mild as in Nigeria and Ghana or severe as in Libya, Central African Republic, Republic of Togo and Zimbabwe (Domatob and Hall,1983; Minnie, 2005).

In Nigeria as in other nations, there are challenges that have constituted a limiting factor to the effectiveness of the press. These, according to Vision 2020 report (2009); Usher( 2010); Paper Cut (2009); Pena (2009); include economic problem, ownership influence, low literacy level, cultural and linguistic diversity, multiple taxation, high mortality rate, underfunding and inadequate skills on the part of journalists.

Harsh economic climate exemplified by high inflationary trend, high import duties payable on equipment, prohibitive cost of production, low purchasing power on the part of the media audience, poor infrastructure and underfunding have combined to constitute serious obstacle to media effective participation directly and indirectly in national development. The inflationary trend has made the prices of all printing equipment, newsprints and other production materials to escalate beyond measure. Besides, publishers usually pay huge sum as import duties for every item imported while electricity, water, security among others are also provided at another staggering sum. In Nigeria, the literacy level, according to World Bank Report (2010) is 60.1 percent which means about 40 percent of her 165 million populations translating to 60 million, cannot read and write. This figure is apart from the significant fraction of the literates who, more often than not are incapacitated by lack of purchasing power. It is therefore not surprising to note that the circulation run of all the newspapers in Nigeria is 300,000 ([woweffectng.com/new/the-solution-to-the-dwindling-newspaper-circulation-in-Nigeria](http://woweffectng.com/new/the-solution-to-the-dwindling-newspaper-circulation-in-Nigeria)).

Multiple taxations are another pain in the neck of the media proprietors in Nigeria. Since the economic crisis started and the governments at the three levels were confronted with financial problem, various methods of financial drives were adopted in form of taxes and levies which put unnecessary stress on individuals and corporate bodies including the press. The problem of underfunding is also an offshoot of economic meltdown which has not only reduced the corporate profit margin but also eroded the financial base and credit worthiness of many companies. The media industry is worst hit by this situation as most financial institutions are usually reluctant to advance credit to media promoters either as start-off capital or to

recapitalize the ailing ones. Another dimension to economic problem is the fact that as the media attempt to beat back economic adversity and yet remain committed to its social responsibility to the society it allows profit consideration to becloud its sense of judgment of public interest. All these economic related problems have occasioned severe instability and high mortality rate that plague the industry in recent time and it may also explain why new media houses are not springing up. An industry that experiences such degree of mortality as being witnessed in Nigeria is very unlikely to contribute either directly or indirectly to national development (Owolabi and O'Neill, 2013).

Since Nigeria returned to participatory democracy on May 29, 1999 there appears to be a sigh of relieve for the press. Besides repealing the various draconian decrees enacted to emasculate the media, the democratic government has strengthened the freedom enjoyed by the press as it accented the freedom of information bill passed by the parliament into law. Although the government intervention with media practice seemed to have subsided, the ownership influence has become another issue. Most independent media houses, both prints and electronics are owned either by politicians who are part of the ruling class or businessmen and contractors enjoying government patronage. These publishers in politics and business garb usually bring their influence to bear on the editorial focus therefore, hindering objectivity, truthfulness and press responsibility to the society. For example, there have been occasions when programs on health, agriculture and education were simply cancelled with ordinary memo from the Minister of Information to allow a political chieftain to make speech on government radio or television. Often times, things like these are not done based on superior editorial judgment but on personal consideration.

The issue of cultural and linguistic diversity in Nigeria has become a major complication in the course of media effective participation in national development. Nigeria is made up of over 400 ethnic, language and cultural groups (Omu, 2008, p.90). This wide diversity coupled with the fact that a large percentage of the population live in rural communities has made it more difficult for the media to

communicate development issues to every group. In communicating any development message, it is necessary to consider which channel of communication will be most suitable to carry the message to the target audience. For example, television may be more efficient to reach urban audiences but surely not suitable for the poor rural dwellers that live in remote villages where there is no electricity. Likewise, print materials will not be valuable to illiterate audiences. Although radio is credited with the greatest capacity to reach wider audience than other media yet, it has its disadvantage in that most often, the poor rural community residents may not be able to afford the cost of operating their radios on battery always. It is noteworthy that most media houses are short-staffed because of economic reason; it is therefore difficult to print messages and broadcast in all the diverse languages spoken in Nigeria. This being the case, it then means alongside the traditional mass media, other channels of communication such as village meetings, one-on-one communication, town-crier, music/lyrics, festivals, oral poetry, folklore, cinema and drama can be considered for use.

The exodus of seasoned reporters, producers and presenters from the newsroom to other professions has within the last two decade become a matter of concern in the media industry. This circumstance which is attributed to high mortality rate leading to job insecurity and lack of motivation and poor condition of service are fallout of economic distress the industry has experienced within the last decades. The media industry is now left with greenhorns most of who are neither committed to nor experienced in the job. How does a media house justify the broadcast of a farmers' program between 11a.m and 12noon a time when real farmers should be in the farm. An experienced producer should have moved such a program to the evening time (5pm-6pm) when farmers will be resting at home. The media investors themselves are not helping matters as they are disinclined to retraining their reporters for fear of losing them to the corporate world after committing resources to their development. The consequence is that development reporting suffers in the hands of novice and by extension; the nation is unable to realize her sustainable development objectives.

The media in Nigeria especially the broadcast have a long history of credibility problem. This stemmed from its past usage as instrument of deception and propaganda by the past military and civilian governments; a situation that makes most people to view information coming from the media with suspicion. According to Soola (2003, p.122) the mass media are considered as a pawn in the hand of the power elite. Since the inception of the broadcast media in Nigeria, it has always enjoyed the monopoly of the government. This position was supported by Decree 8 of 1979 but backdated to April 1998. In 1992, the administration of Gen. Babangida promulgated the National Broadcasting Commission Decree 38 of 1992 which democratized the ownership and use of the broadcast media. This development thus opened up the industry for private investors to establish radio and television stations in various states of the nation especially in the southern part. The advent of these private media has somehow restored the people's confidence in the broadcast media as they are now at liberty to read, watch and listen to independent and objective news reports and analysis from various media channels.

Notwithstanding the merit of media democratization, it is pertinent to mention that the private investors' entrance into the industry has fuelled news commercialization which is another dangerous trend in media operation and management (Oso, 1991; Soola, 2003). Under the commercialized arrangement, development news does not attract special attention more than any other news as news coverage generally is now on the basis of cash and carry. Before this era, the media were owned and funded by the owner governments and were used freely for information dissemination but a private media outfit cannot afford to carry development news freely at all times somebody has to pay for it. This is why Soola (2004) argues that this development may cause the media to be tempted to pay greater attention to personalities rather than issues. This also presupposes that news like commercial products will flourish only when a large segment of the audiences with purchasing power are delivered to the advertiser (sponsor of news) leaving the poor rural communities and their development activities to their fate. It is against this backdrop that Folarin (2005, p.27) opines that giving premium attention to financial gains at the expense of social

services may vitiate the noble ideals of social responsibility theory that says media should reflect the society's plurality, giving access to diverse views and granting voice to the voiceless (McQuail, 2005; cited in Anaeto, et al.,2008 p.57). The press may also become a push around by the advertisers and boardroom governors while it remains urban-centric in its event coverage to the disadvantage of the rural communities. If the news reporting imbalance subsists, development process might suffer in the rural communities.

### **3.8.3 Strengthening the Media to Foster National Development**

In the preceding subsection, I have identified some factors that constitute major drawback to media effective participation in national development. If the media would ever be a catalyst and not a drag in the wheel of development, it must be sufficiently equipped and well positioned to function at its best despite manifold constraints. Minnie (2008) has suggested a number of ways through which the media can be strengthened and stimulated for better performance.

On the issue of underfunding, Minnie suggested that small media houses should come together as consortiums. By this, they could pool their resources together to make joint importation of newsprint and other materials, distribution of their newspapers and magazines as well as collectively negotiate for advertisement rates. In South Africa, an Association of Small Independent Local Newspapers was established to give the members strong bargaining power when making purchase in the market. Minnie's suggestion is not dissimilar from the views of Owolabi and O'Neill (2013a) that media houses with similar editorial focus may come together through the process of (merger) to form a bigger organization under a new name or by retaining one of the old names (usually the one with larger capital base) may be retained (acquisition). According to Graves (2010, p.9) between January and May 2007, about 372 of such mergers occurred across the world in the media industry with some of them involving American-based companies. Through merger and acquisition, media organization can shore-up their capital base so as to survive the problem of underfunding occasioned by the present economic recession. Financial



experts have also argued that the stock market is a very good source of raising funds to support existing business but which media proprietors hardly patronize. There are examples of media organizations across the globe that actually sourced funds from the capital market by divesting part of their existing shareholdings for sale to the public in form of stocks. The Media Works (NZ) Limited, a New Zealand television broadcast group was once in financial crisis and in 2004, a Canadian broadcast group through the capital market acquired 100% shares of the group, renamed it as Can West Media Work (NZ) Limited and eventually sold 30% of its share interest to the public. The same method was adopted to bail out PBL Media, an Australia media group that owns stakes in nine broadcast networks and ACP Magazines. The African Newspapers Limited (ANL), the publisher of Tribune titles and the oldest surviving private newspaper in Nigeria adopted this method for survival in 1998 when it ran into financial crisis (Owolabi and O'Neill, 2013a). The United States- based Google similarly purchased Double Click for \$3.1 billion while Yahoo also acquired the shares of Right Media for \$680million (Graves, 2010). Despite the windows of opportunity in the stock market, it has been observed in Nigeria and most developing countries of Africa that media proprietors prefer to go solo and possibly become managers of dying organizations instead of partnering with other persons.

Another idea proposed by Minnie (2008) is for the United Nations and other International Development Agencies to establish a Media Development Fund that could provide assistance in funding and training of media practitioners in developing countries. Good as this proposal is, there is however a snag that may frustrate this efforts. Most media proprietors are not professional journalists but politicians and businessmen who can wake up one day and decide to divert funds meant for media development into another business. To avert this anticipated problem, instead of direct funding, arrangement could be made for any distress media outfit to purchase printing equipment on hire-purchase while the funding agency stands as guarantor and provides specialized training in media management and reporting.

Multiple taxation and levies have been observed to have severe negative impact on media's ability to contribute to development. If the government is truly determined to achieve sustainable development, it has to relieve the media of various taxation and levies. Besides, the government should also give generous concession on tariffs paid on importation of media equipment and spare parts. The media though may be independently owned should be seen as critical institution that must be aided to provide specialist social service of a linkman between the government and the society.

As we think of a new world order and the media's participation in ensuring sustenance of poverty reduction programs among developing nations, we need to put in perspective the rural-urban information imbalance with regard to Nigeria's linguistic and cultural diversity. If the developing nations are complaining about world information imbalance at the international level, there is a greater need for as much agitation to maintain balance at the national level. There is urgent need for true community media in Nigeria. National or regional media have been found incapable to cater for the development needs of Nigeria's sharply divergent urban-rural populace. Community media should be sited in, owned and managed by the community. Over the years, most of the local areas have been neglected both in news coverage and development programs despite that they were those the political class rely upon when it is time to canvass for electoral vote during election. For example, between August and October 2012, there was a torrential rainfall in Nigeria and this has caused rivers Niger and Benue to overflow their banks. The resultant effect of this is the washing away of farmlands and houses in about 250 communities in five States. Most of these rural dwellers have accused the government of not sending the warning signal to them when it knew there will be incidences of flood in the year. Although the government warned that there will be heavy rain and may result in flooding in some communities but the message was only disseminated in the urban centers where most of the media are domiciled and never got to the villages. The mass media need to dedicate significant number of pages and time to rural development news.

It has been argued at various forums in and outside Nigeria that the single most terrible problem against good governance and by extension, national development in Nigeria is corruption. This evil has robbed Nigeria of a huge sum that could have gone into developmental purposes. To curb this vice requires good governance that will be transparently open and accountable to the people. This is not possible without the active involvement of the ubiquitous media that will serve as alarm blower when corruption is discovered anywhere in public office. Stapenhurst (2000, p.12) has suggested two ways by which the media can be strengthened to carry out its surveillance role.

Firstly, the need for the protection of investigative reporter covering government beat. Investigative reporters are by nature of their job vulnerable to physical attack, arrest and detention and in extreme cases, outright murder by corrupt public officers and their cronies whose fraudulent acts may be exposed. For example, Nguyen Hoang Linh, editor of a state paper in Vietnam was wrongly convicted and jailed for the article he wrote about the Customs Department concerning the purchase of Coastal Patrol Boats in 1997. Jose Luis, an Argentinean photojournalist was strangely murdered for exposing the under hand deals of the nation's police institution. This is not different from the killing via parcel bomb in Nigeria of Dele Giwa, the pioneer Editor-in Chief of *Newswatch* Magazine in 1987 because he was alleged to be in possession of "sacred" information of government's fraudulent deals. Based on the above examples, it is necessary that the rights and safety of journalists are guaranteed to ensure their efficient participation in the risky job of curbing corruption and inspiring good governance. Second, access to Information in public offices is critical for effective and accurate reporting. Although the Freedom of Information law is in place in Nigeria but it appears the public officers are still living in the past when information were hoarded and classified as top secret. The judiciary must be absolutely independent so as to stand on the side of the media to make the government accountable.

### **3.8.4 Conclusion**

The above literature review illustrates that this study which has development as its main focus is housed under the Agenda Setting, Social Responsibility and Development Media theories and they serve to explain the role of development media in fostering good governance by acting as efficient agenda setters, gatekeepers and watchdogs to the government. Development journalism which is expected to be operating in the social responsibility tradition believes that the freedom which the media enjoy must be used to carry out some kind of development-related duties to the society. In doing this, apart from its traditional roles of educating, informing and entertaining, the press must critically examine events, evaluate and report the relevance of development projects to national and local needs, identifying the difference between a planned scheme and its implementation. This brand of journalism weighs government claims about the impacts of development projects on the people against practical reality (Aggarwala, 1979, p.181). This chapter also reveals that although theoretically, development journalism is closely connected to social responsibility and development media theories in their emphasis on community development but the success in reality is dependent upon the context in which the media operate and most especially the worth of government which determine the development content. It is observed that the agenda setting and surveillance capacity of the press do not always generate uniform results in every nation and every circumstance. The success of development media in Nigeria as in other developing nations according to Domatob and Hall (1983, p.17) depends on some complex factors such as economic and/or political freedom, ownership structure, ideology of the ruling elite, availability of competent manpower and the level of media technologies. In the case of Nigeria, according to Soola (2003) mass media in the name of promoting development activities have become the mouth piece of the power elites who constitute the government and it is used mostly to consolidate power in their hands to the disadvantage of the mass majority who dominate the rural communities. Within the period covered by this study, the issue of poverty that breathes life into other social evils has become a serious threat to the

government and people of Nigeria and it is based on this that SMEs as a catalyst of economic growth and sustainable development has been adopted by the government to serve as the engine of its economic transformation program. Laudable as the program is, corruption has not allowed the program to yield the expected results as it has been in other countries such as United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the Nigeria media as development partners which are expected to analytically interpret policies and programs, carry out subtle investigation (watchdog), report events (agenda setting) and engage in sincere association with the grass roots (Domatob and Hall, 1983) are curiously not pluralistic as it is observed they are not giving adequate coverage to the rural communities which they are expected to serve. The New World Information and Communication Order are here being replicated between the urban and rural community which is contrary to the principles of social responsibility and development theories.

In sum, this chapter notes that for the mass media to act as efficient agenda setters and provide good surveillance that will foster good governance and sustainable development, it must be sufficiently independent both economically and otherwise.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the methodology adopted in carrying out the research. In this study, quantitative research method is used and it involved research design, study population, sample and sampling techniques, sample size, instrument for data collection, data analysis and presentation with validity and reliability. Finally, the research methodology investigated and provided answers to the following seven research questions:

1. What was the volume of media coverage given to SMEs, poverty and corruption?
2. To what extent has the prominence given to SMEs and development policy reflected the purpose of agenda setting theory?
3. What was the degree of coverage given to privatization and economic reforms that occurred about the same time?
4. Do Nigerian newspapers and magazines differ in the amount of coverage given to SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development?
5. Were the issues highlighted about SMEs, poverty and employment generation aligned with the tenets of development media theory?
6. What were the sources of the stories on SMEs and governance reported by the Nigerian media?
7. What influence does the press report on SMEs and governance have on public perception towards Nigerian government?

#### **4.2 Research Design**

Actually, there are two stages involved in research design which include the preparation and implementation. While the preparation stage started when the researcher mooted the idea to carry-out a research and a topic evolved, the second stage which is the implementation is more important and it involves step by step of

data collection, what instruments will be used, how they will be used and the means for analyzing the data collected. According to Kerlinger (1973, p.300) research design has been defined as “plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variation”. Three elements stand out in this definition. These include plan, structure and strategy and they accentuate the fact that research cannot be carried out haphazardly rather, it must be systematically planned and structured and must follow a laid out strategy so as to achieve the expected success. The plan outlines the design of the research, the structure details the methodology and the relationships among the variables while strategy specifies the methods adopted in data gathering and analysis.

In any research endeavor, research design serves two major purposes. According to Kerlinger (1973, p.301) research designs are invented to enable the researcher to answer research questions as validly, objectively, accurately and economically as possible and it is also used as a control mechanism, making relevant prescriptions for investigators about what observations to make, how to make them and how to analyze the quantitative representations of the observations.

In the field of media and communication studies, quantitative and qualitative research methods have been adopted at various times to explore complex phenomena encountered by researchers in various fields of study (Denzine and Lincoln, 2000). Although over the years, there have been on-going debates about which of the two methods are superior. Quantitative research actually originated from the field of natural sciences such as biology, chemistry, physics, etc. which was concerned with observations and measurements of things objectively with the assumption that other researchers can replicate same at other times. Much later, along the line came the researchers working in the humanities and social sciences such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and media studies etc. who were interested in studying human behaviour and the social world inhabited by human beings (Morgan 1983). The qualitative researchers found it difficult to explain human behaviour in measurable term. Their reason is that measurements only tell how many people behave in certain ways without providing the explanation for why? Research

approach which expands our knowledge on why certain things are the way they are in the social world and why people behave in certain way is called qualitative research. Whereas qualitative methods may be very ideal for exploring new fields especially where the level of available data are still very small, quantitative research however, is required for a more rigorous attempt to generate large amount of data or information that can be converted into number, put into categories, quantify in units of measurement and explained with the use of graphs and tables (McLeod, 2008). It is pertinent to state it clearly here that this study is not going to join in the recurring debate because it is believed that each of the methods has its strengths and limitations.

Notwithstanding, to properly carry out this study which borders on evaluating the manifest contents of some selected media and partly to assess the effect which the media report had on some target population, a quantitative approach will be adopted. While justifying the use of quantitative research in social sciences, Robson (2011, p.19) among others, reasoned that it offers opportunities for measurement and quantification while converting raw information into number; it strives for objectivity; scientific principle is followed as in the natural science; detail specification of procedures is provided so that replication of study is possible; it entails statistical breakdown of data while reliability (consistency over time) and validity (showing measurement) are ensured. Therefore, against the above backdrops, this thesis will, in its analysis and interpretations opt for quantitative content analysis.

### **4.3 Content Analysis**

Content analysis has been defined in different ways by many authors and users; a few examples will suffice here. Neuendorf (2002, p.1) defines it as the systematic, objective and quantitative analysis of message characteristics in order to make meanings out of them. According to Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas (2013) content analysis is a generic term commonly used to define the study of recorded textual information such as words, meaning and pictures. While describing the concept of content analysis, Stemler (2001, p.1) citing Berelson (1952) defines it “as



a systematic and replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding". This definition was based on the fact that the process of content analysis can be replicated by different researchers to obtain validity of result. By the reason of the data's durability, it will be easy for other researchers to replicate what was earlier done. When investigating the contents of printed materials, content analysis has become a time tested method. This is why its usage is widespread in the fields of communication and cultural studies as well as social and human sciences and all such research that involves large volume of recorded data. By nature, its quantification ingredient allows for the use of statistical methods to generate accurate and precise results.

Researchers in social sciences have recognized various reasons why content analysis is preferred to other research techniques. Wimmer and Dominic (1987) identified three reasons why it is unique. First, its organized nature allows data to be selected according to clearly stated rules. Second, individual prejudice and peculiarity can easily be prevented in the process of using content analysis. Lastly, its quantitative nature allows researchers to collect, analyze and interpret a huge data using statistical tools. The position is further buttressed by Kerlinger (1973) assertion that in this computer age, content analysis is advantageous in that it is easier to conduct and to analyze.

Specifically, the choice of quantitative content analysis for the study is based on the fact that it can be easily used to study and analyze the manifest content that focuses on meanings and interpretations in texts also, because of the ready availability of the needed data. Since the sampling size is fairly broad (1997- 2009), content analysis allows researcher to scientifically sort through large volume of data without much stress (GAO, 1996). It permits easy studying of an issue over a long period, in order words; it gives room for continuity of a research process since what it involves is sorting through documents (Tejumaye, 2013). It also has the advantage of not being intrusive in that data obtained from documents does not interfere with the process and outcome of the research and it allows justifiable deduction to be made based on

other data gathering techniques (Stemler, 2001). Recorded messages or printed texts are easily interpreted and analyzed to answer outlined research questions.

Although content analysis has been identified to be of great potentials to researchers nevertheless, it has a few inherent limitations. First, it can only be used to study printed or recorded information. Second, it is time consuming and expensive to use. The process of categorization and coding can be laborious and hugely demanding. Third, it cannot be used to measure communication effects on the audience. These limitations however, cannot invalidate the results generated through careful usage of content analysis especially since this study basically deals with published materials.

In view of the limitation of content analysis in its inability to measure media effects on the audience this researcher has devised interview method as an adjunct technique to be used with content analysis to gather data for the study.

#### **4.4 Interview Methods**

Interviews are among the flexible and adaptable strategies for gathering data either in a quantitative or qualitative research. The different interview strategies commonly used (structured, semi-structured or unstructured) usually emerged from diverse disciplinary perspectives. While structured interview is seen as the format in which the stimulus (question) and analysis are standardized and predetermined to gain some insight into an issue and to ensure the reliability of the data; semi-structured and unstructured interviews on the other hand require some form of qualitative approach which encourages the interviewees to share rich descriptions of phenomena and this is why they are widely used in qualitative studies. Specifically, semi-structured interviews are often the sole data source for a qualitative research project and are usually prearranged around the topic or issues for investigation (Gerrish and Lacey, 2010, p.348). They are generally organized around a set of open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees. Unstructured interview on the other hand originates from the ethnographic tradition of anthropology. They are the most in-depth and with the least directive. Ethnographers gather data through participant observation and recording of

field notes as they observe from the sidelines and/or as they join in the activities of those they are studying. Unstructured interview is usually very informal and can appear more like conversation than interview and this is why it may take longer time to conduct and to transcribe and analyze; in fact, it can be labor intensive and expensive. Expectedly when doing a research, it is important to select the appropriate data gathering tools that can engender good results within the time frame and cost estimate.

This is why for this study, we are using structured interviews which, according to Cohen et al (2007, p.355) allows the interviewer to retain balance of control in the interview process. To obtain responses from the selected population with the purpose of “evaluating the media influence on their perception about media reports on SMEs, poverty and corruption”, (60) respondents were selected, by choosing 10 participants from each of the six groupings using purposive sampling method. The groupings include members of Bankers Association, SMEs Regulatory Agency, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, National Association of Commerce and Industry, Mines and Agriculture, National Association of Small Scale Industrialists and Members of Nigerian Union of Journalists (Lagos State Branch). Their choice was made based on their knowledge and their prior roles as stakeholders in SMEs development, and their willingness and ability to provide useful information and data for the research. Structured interview has a set of rules which the researcher must adhere to. Among others, it prepares a set of pre-determined questions with fixed wording and it contains a greater number of open-response questions. The outlined questions should be read word for word by the researcher without any deviation from the procedure when dealing with each respondent. The benefits are that it keeps the data concise and reduces researcher’s bias. In all, six open-ended questions were administered on each of the respondents at an agreed venue and time. Their responses were recorded and converted into numerical form for easy analysis. The names and groupings of the respondents are in the appendix (p.323-324).

#### **4.5 Study Population**

When we talk about population in research, it refers to a group of people or class of objects about which scientific enquiry is made. It also represents any group or class of subjects or things which possess the characteristics relating to research purposes (Wimmer and Dominic, 1978; Preece, 1994). Oftentimes, due to large size, cost and time implications, researchers find it difficult to engage every individual or object in the populations. This is why researchers sometimes adopt sampling techniques. For this study, the study population consists of the print media (two daily newspapers and two weekly magazines). The selection of the print as against broadcast media was based on the fact of its accessibility, availability and permanent nature of the published materials. The broadcast materials are transients and may not be readily available to researchers especially in the developing nations like Nigeria where there is dearth of storage facility. This also explains why the content analysis study of printed 'elite' media texts are widespread than the broadcast media, the former being readily archived in most libraries.

#### **4.6 Sampling Frame**

Sampling frame, according to Wimmers and Dominic (1987, p.75) is "a complete list of members in the population from which a sample would be drawn". From the above definition, a sample can be seen as a small part of the population that represents the entire population. A scientifically selected sample will represent the population both in structure and character, and the results obtained would be capable of representing the overall population.

Since it is not possible to study the contents of all the print media in Nigeria in this research, selection has to be made scientifically. To this effect, the sampling frame for this study was generated from the internet where a list of all the print media, newspapers and magazines were downloaded for easy selection. In view of the national importance of the issue under discourse, it is very important that its investigation be done on a national scale hence; preference is given to the

newspapers and magazines which in the opinion of the researcher are believed to have national coverage and wider distribution network.

#### **4.7 Sampling Technique**

In line with the scientific method of sampling especially where all the population are qualified for selection and there are large pool of data available from which researcher can obtain facts, purposive sampling method was used in this study to select two most popular newspapers and two magazines respectively. This, according to Oliver (2006) is a type of non-probability sampling where research samples are selected by researcher based on his specialist knowledge of the research issue, and the capacity and willingness of selected populations to provide sufficiently rich data. In the newspaper group, *Punch* and *Guardian* were purposively selected while *Tell* and *The News* were purposively selected in the magazine group. Their selection was based on their private ownership nature leading to independence of opinion, wider coverage illustrated by their national outlook, larger circulation, thorough and objective coverage of national issues. The four selected media were based in Lagos which is Nigeria's former Federal capital as well as the commercial nerve center.

Lagos as a mega-city is heterogeneous and that explains why it is popularly referred to as mini-Nigeria in that all the different tribal groups are well represented in the population figure. With a population of about 20 million people, Lagos evidently stands as the most populous city in Africa and one of the largest urban centers in the world.

This study covers a period of 12 years (May 29, 1997- May 28, 2009). The month of May was specifically chosen as the commencing period of study because that date is nationally acknowledged in Nigeria as democracy day. To ensure good representation, the period will be divided into three groups of A, B and C organized into **2: 8: 2** years respectfully.

**Group A** – This is the two years of military regime that immediately preceded Obasanjo's regime (May 29, 1997- May 28, 1999)

**Group B** – This represents the eight years of two terms of President Obasanjo’s government during which SMEs evolved as economic policy and was given the greatest attention (May 29, 1999 – May 28, 2007).

**Group C** – The two years of President Umaru Yar’Adua that immediately succeeded the regime of Obasanjo (May 29, 2007 – May 28, 2009).

The two years before and after Obasanjo’s regime were included so as to make it easy to compare between the degree of attention given to SMEs under Obasanjo, his immediate predecessor and successor respectively.

Purposive sampling method was used to select one year out of the two in group A. The selected year is May 29, 1997- May 28, 1998). In group B, four years were purposively selected out of the eight years captured in the group. The selected years are May 29, 2002- May 28, 2003; May 29, 2003- May 28, 2004; May 29, 2005- May 28, 2006 and May 29, 2006- May 28, 2007. One year, (May 29, 2007- May 28, 2008) was again selected purposively from the two years in group C.

Purposive sampling method was also used to select the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday editions within the six selected years. The three days were selected because the two newspapers usually devote the greater number of pages to business reports than other days of the week. Also, the choice excludes the weekend editions that is, Saturday and Sunday because the weekend papers cover more of politics and human angle stories.

As a summary, in group A, three (3) editions per week and 12 in four weeks of every month were selected for analysis. This means, (12 editions x12 months) translating to 144 editions per year. For two newspapers, *Punch* and *Guardian*, 144 editions x 2newspapers x 1year gives us 288 editions selected in group A. In group B (1), B (2), B (3) and B (4), 288, 288, 288 and 288 editions were selected from the two (2) newspapers per year. In group C, 288 editions were also selected (see table and key below).

Table 4.1 Showing newspapers sampling figures

NEWSPAPERS	GRP A	GRP B(1)	GRP B (2)	GRP B (3)	GRP B (4)	GRP C	TOTAL
PUNCH	144	144	144	144	144	144	864
GUARDIAN	144	144	144	144	144	144	864
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>1728</b>

**KEY: GRP = GROUP**

A = May 29, 1997- May 28, 1998

B (1) = May 29, 2002- May 28, 2003

B (2) = May 29, 2003- May 28, 2004

B (3) = May 29, 2005- May 28, 2006

B (4) = May 29, 2006- May 28, 2007

C = May 29, 2007- May 28, 2008

In the magazines grouping, two magazines (*Tell* and *The News*) have been purposively selected for study and the period of study is also twelve (12) years. The same sampling technique used for newspapers was used to divide the magazines into three groups. The summary of the selection procedure is presented hereunder.

**Group A-** represented the two (2) years before Obasanjo's regime out of which (May 29, 1997- May 28, 1998) was selected.

**Group B** – represented the eight (8) years of Obasanjo-led government. Under this group, the selected years are: May 29, 2002 – May 28, 2003; May 29, 2003 – May 28, 2004; May 29, 2005 – May 28, 2006; May 29, 2006 – May 28, 2007).

**Group C** – These are the two (2) years subsequent to Obasanjo's regime out of which (May 29, 2007 – May 28, 2009) was selected.

Purposive sampling method was used to select one year in group “A” thus, May 29, 1997 – May 28, 1998 was selected. Since they are weekly publications, four (4) editions per month of each of the two magazines have been selected for study. This means 4 editions x 12 months = 48 editions per year per magazine. This translates to 96 editions for the two magazines selected for study.

In group B (1), B (2), B (3) and B (4), 96, 96, 96, and 96 editions respectively were chosen. Lastly, in group C, 48 editions were selected. Thus, the total number of editions selected in the magazine grouping is 288. See the table below.

Table 4.2 showing the magazines sampling figures

<b>MAGAZINE</b>	<b>GRP A</b>	<b>GRP B(1)</b>	<b>GRP B(2)</b>	<b>GRP B (3)</b>	<b>GRP B(4)</b>	<b>GRP C</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
TELL	48	48	48	48	48	48	<b>288</b>
THE NEWS	48	48	48	48	48	48	<b>288</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>576</b>

**KEY: GRP = GROUP**

A = May 29, 1997- May 28, 1998

B (1) = May 29, 2002- May 28, 2003

B (2) = May 29, 2003- May 28, 2004

B (3) = May 29, 2005- May 28, 2006

B (4) = May 29, 2006- May 28, 2007

C = May 29, 2007- May 28, 2008

To complement the data obtained through content analysis and the use of manifest coding, the researcher also used structured interview method to obtain responses from some SMEs stakeholders including officials of Bankers Association, SMEs



Regulatory Agency, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, National Association of Commerce and Industry, Mines and Agriculture, National Association of Small Scale Industrialists and Members of Nigerian Union of Journalists (Lagos State Branch). By using quota sampling method, 10 respondents were selected from each of the five groups translating to a total of 60 respondents.

#### **4.8 Sample Size**

This refers to the number of elements selected from the sampling frame to represent the entire population. As indicated earlier in the above tables, this research studied the manifest contents of two national newspapers and two magazines.

A total of 1,728 editions of the two (2) newspapers and 576 editions of the two magazines were selected for study. The breakdown shows that *Punch* Newspaper has 864 editions, *The Guardian* (864); *Tell* Magazine has (288) and *The News* (288). Together, a total of 2,304 editions of the newspapers and magazines were selected for a study that covers 12 years.

#### **4.9 Instrument of Data Collection**

By instrument, it refers to the tools or apparatus employed by the researcher to collect the necessary data for the study. A coding schedule was therefore designed for the collection and recording of news material and stories on SMEs and other related issues having to do with national development in Nigeria. According to Preece (1994), coding schedule is the data base created where all the relevant data whether as numbers, codes or letters are recorded for easy analysis. Coding schedule consists of the coding sheet and the coding manual. The contents of the coding sheet reflect the research questions which the researcher attempts to answer while the coding manual on the other hand contains the codes or numbers assigned to the variables outlined in the coding sheet.

Six open-ended questions were administered to 60 respondents, (10 from each of the six groups) selected by using quota sampling. The interviews are intended to evaluate the influence of media coverage on public perception of SMEs in Nigeria. These

groups of people were selected as research populations because of their relevance to the study. Apart from being active members of their various business and professional groupings, some of them have either invested directly or indirectly in the SMEs sub-sector of the economy or have served as government appointees in government agency that have oversight role in SMEs.

#### **4.10 Validity and Reliability**

This researcher deliberately design the coding schedule in simple and clear language so as to ensure it is free from ambiguity and misinterpretation on one hand and on the other, to guarantee validity and reliability of the instrument used for data collection. To this effect, the contents were sequentially structured and arranged to generate information relevant to the study, provide answers to the research questions as well as allow easy coding and analysis of data. To conduct the reliability test, coding schedule was given to inter-coders who are professionals in media studies and content analysis to define the categories and select the recording units independently. Their result (85%) substantially agreed with the researcher's. Computer experts in statistical package for social science (SPSS) were also consulted to verify the analytical capability of the data generated by using the coding sheet.

#### **4.11 Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis is the list of countable items such as words, characters, symbols, themes etc. For this study, the unit of analysis includes straight news, columnists, news analysis, editorials, features, opinions, cartoons, advertorials and letters to the editors. Each unit is given equal attention so as to make sure no part is left out of the study and also to guarantee equal representation and reportage of SMEs in Nigeria.

#### **4.12 Method of Data Collection**

The data used for the study were gathered from newspapers and magazines by using coding schedule. The coding sheet contains fifteen question-items designed to elicit response about the frequency and the prominence the media gave to SMEs. Besides, six open-ended questions were administered on some respondents selected from

among selected SMEs operators, participating banks in SMIEIS program and the officials of SMEs Association, members of Chambers of Commerce, the regulatory agencies and members of the press union. This interview is to enable the researcher to appraise and evaluate the media influence on the stakeholders' opinion and attitudes towards SMEs report which is definitely beyond the ability of content analysis.

#### **4.13 Method of Data Analysis and Presentation**

According to Engel and Weggenig (1991) cited by Sarantakos (2005, p.344) quantitative analysis is uniquely characterized in that it is mostly used when available data can be reduced to numerical form which can be classified into categories and measured in units with supporting graphs and tables. This study particularly gave preference to quantitative methodology because; the researcher intends to present his observation and discussion with simple descriptive statistics, tables and graphs. Since the research methodology adopted in this study is quantitative in nature and procedure, the researcher only employed the use of statistical programs for social scientists (SPSS) to record and analyze the data generated while the findings were presented using frequency tables and simple graphs for clarity and understanding. This was followed with general descriptions of the data, stating the relationships between the variables in the tables as well as narrating the extent to which our findings portray the characteristics of the population so as to make generalized statement. The study's findings were discussed in relation to the research questions using descriptive or narrative method with devoid of statistical complexity.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Data Analysis and Discussion

#### 5.1 Introduction.

In this chapter we analyzed the data generated from the population samples (*Punch* and *Guardian* newspapers, *Tell* and *The News* magazines), editions from May 29, 1997- May 28, 2009. Through the analysis, answers were provided for the following outlined research questions:

1. What was the volume of media coverage given to SMEs, poverty and corruption?
2. To what extent has the prominence given to SMEs and development issues reflected the purpose of agenda setting theory?
3. What was the degree of coverage given to privatization and economic reforms that occurred about the same time?
4. Do Nigerian newspapers and magazines differ in the amount of coverage given to SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development?
5. Were the issues highlighted about SMEs, poverty and employment generation aligned with the tenets of development media theory?
6. What were the sources of the stories on SMEs and governance reported by the Nigerian media?
7. What influence does the press reporting of SMEs and governance have on public perception towards Nigerian government?

The analysis is done in relation to the already identified 12 variables which include the name of newspaper/magazine, year of publication, months of publication, number of stories, subject matter, type of stories, position of stories, sources, dateline/place of publication, tone, intent, principal characters and sex of principal characters in the stories. In all a total of 1,728 editions of the two (2) newspapers and 576 editions of the two magazines were selected for study. The breakdown shows that *Punch* newspaper has 864 editions; *The Guardian* (864), *Tell* magazine has (288) and *The*

*News* (288). Together, a total of 2,304 editions of the newspapers and magazines covering a period of 12 years were selected for study.

Since the focus of the study is the manifest content of the selected publications, qualitative content analysis method was adopted. The researcher also used narrative or descriptive technique to categorize and explain the content of data by using simple percentage, frequency count and variable correlation to bring it close to natural situation.

To complement the data obtained through the use of manifest coding, the researcher also used structured interview method to obtain responses from some SMEs stakeholders including officials of banks, SMEs regulatory agency, manufacturers association of Nigeria (MAN) national association of chamber of commerce, industry, mines and agriculture (NACCIMA) and national association of small and medium-scale industrialists (NASMI) and members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (Lagos State Chamber) on their perception about SMEs. Ten samples were taken from each of the six groups and the following five open-ended questions were administered on them.

1. Do you anticipate any role from the mass media concerning SMEs?
2. If you have the opportunity, how would you rate the degree of coverage the mass media give to issues relating to SMEs?
3. Will you agree with the notion that the mass media have failed in its responsibilities to influence SMEs growth If yes why?
4. In your own opinion, do you foresee bright future for SMEs sub-sector?
5. Do you believe there is no adequate communication on SMEs in Nigeria?
6. What do you think has constituted barriers to effective coverage of SMEs as catalyst of economic growth in Nigeria?

The data obtained were converted into numbers and simple percentage for easy analysis. In all, a total of 792 stories were content analyzed.

Table 5.1 below shows the frequency distribution of stories reported in the four print media analyzed in the study. The table shows that '*Guardian*' carried the largest reports with 325 stories representing (41%) while '*Punch*' followed with 250 representing (31.6%). In the magazine category, '*The News*' led with 113 reports representing 14.3 percent while '*Tell*' followed with 104 translating to (13.1%). The frequency distribution in table 1 is graphically represented below.

Table 5.1 Frequency distribution of total number of stories published

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Punch	250	31.6
	Guardian	325	41.0
	Tell Magazine	104	13.1
	The News	113	14.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 5.1 Chart showing frequency distribution of total number of stories published

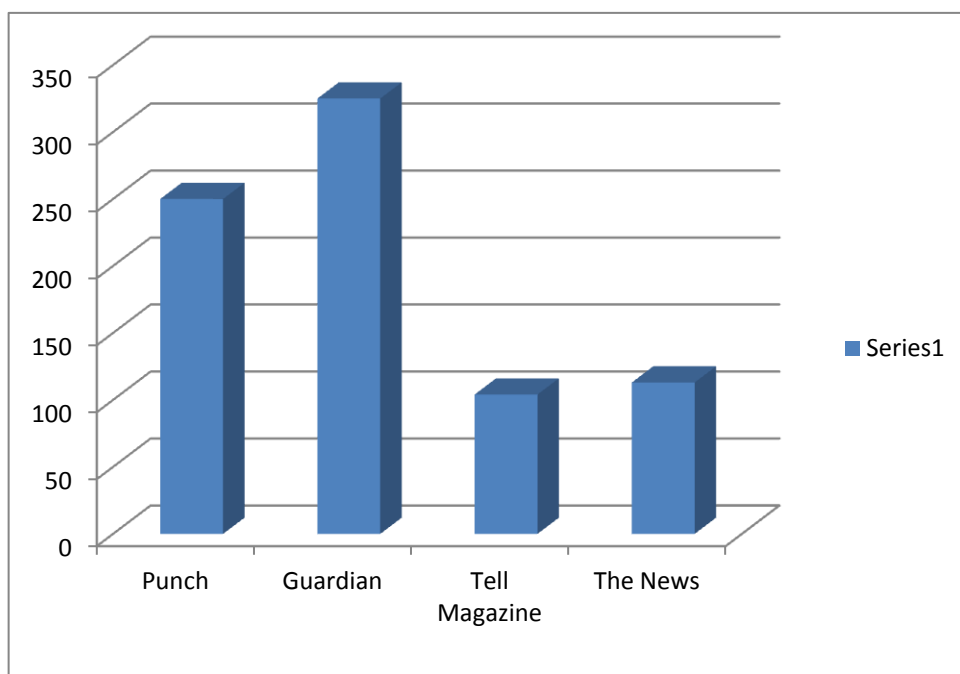


Table 5.2: Frequency distribution of Stories published yearly on SMEs

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1997	52	6.6
	1998	46	5.8
	2002	116	14.6
	2003	141	17.8
	2004	75	9.5
	2005	89	11.2
	2006	128	16.2
	2007	98	12.4
	2008	47	5.9
	<b>Total</b>		<b>792</b>

Table 5.2 above shows that the highest reports were recorded in year 2003, 141(17.8%). This is followed by 2006 when 128 reports (16.2%) were recorded. The next is year 2002 with 116 (14.6%). The least reports were recorded in 1998 and 2008, representing 46 (5.8%) and 47 (5.9%) respectively. The graph below shows the distribution pattern.

Figure 5.2: Chart showing the frequency distribution of stories published yearly

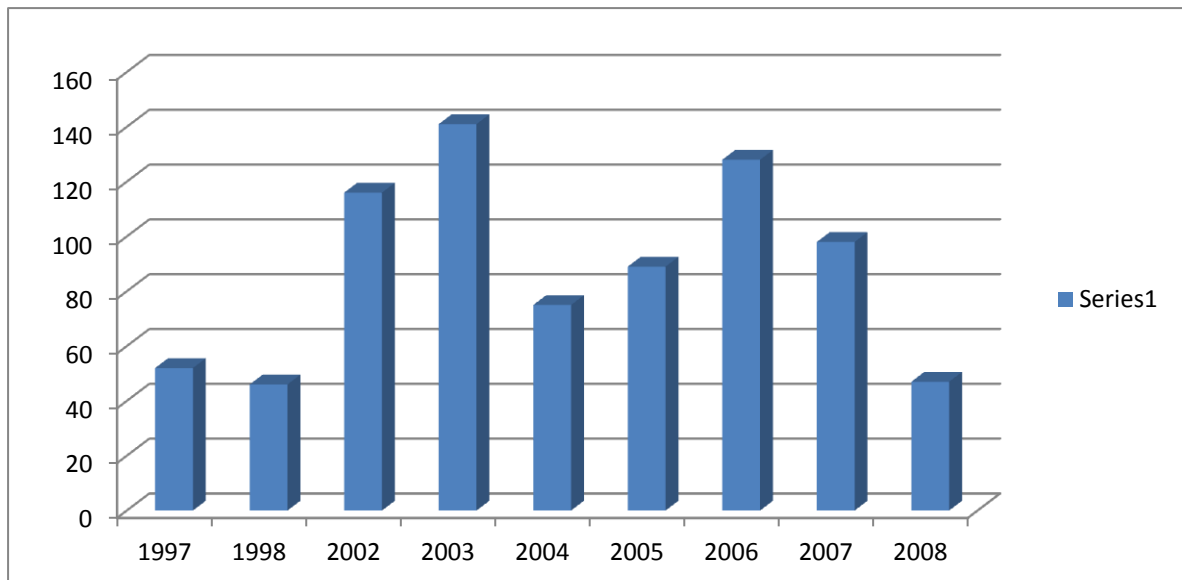


Table5.3 Frequency distribution of monthly coverage of SMEs

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	January	66	8.3
	February	67	8.5
	March	56	7.1
	April	59	7.4
	May	72	9.1
	June	67	8.5
	July	65	8.2
	August	76	9.6
	September	60	7.6
	October	80	10.1
	November	62	7.8
	December	62	7.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>792</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5.3 shows the number of stories published monthly on ‘SMEs by the four selected media. It reveals that there are little gaps in the frequency from one month to another. The highest number, 80 stories (10.1%) was recorded in October followed by August and May with 76 and 72 representing (9.6%) and (9.1%) respectively. The lowest figures were recorded in March and April with 56 and 59 representing (7.1%) and (7.4%) respectively. Find the graphic representation below.

Figure5.3: Chart showing frequency of stories published monthly on SMEs

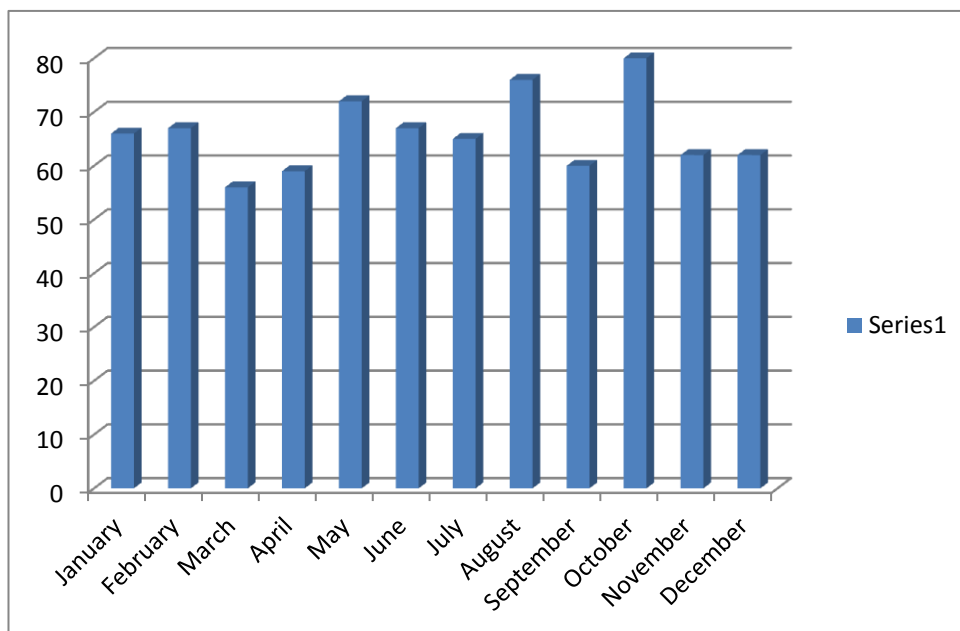




Table 5.4a: Frequency distribution of level of prominence given to SMEs through its position in newspapers

Position of Stories(Prominence)	• Frequency	Percentage %
Non-existing	• 18	3.1
Front Page ( Lead)	• 4	.7
Front page (Minor)	• 4	.7
Back Page	• 2	.3
Editorial Page	• 21	3.7
Inside page	• 526	91.5
Total	• 575	100.0

Table 5.4b: Frequency distribution of level of prominence given to SMEs through its position in magazines

Position of Stories(Prominence)	Frequency	Percentage %
Non-existing	46	21.2
Front Page ( Lead)	6	2.8
Editorial Page	5	2.3
Inside page	160	73.7
Total	217	100.0

Tables 5.4a & 5.4b above show that both newspapers and magazines do not differ in the level of prominence given to SMEs coverage. It is evident from the tables that

both newspapers and magazines reported SME issues majorly as inside page stories. While SME stories were reported 526 (91.5%) times as inside stories in newspapers, magazines reported them 160 (73.7%) times as inside page stories. Similarly, newspapers published 21 (3.7%) editorials within the period under focus; magazines published 5 (2.3%) editorials. The breakdown is graphically illustrated below.

Figures 5.4a & 5.4b: Showing the level of prominence given to SMEs by Newspapers and Magazines

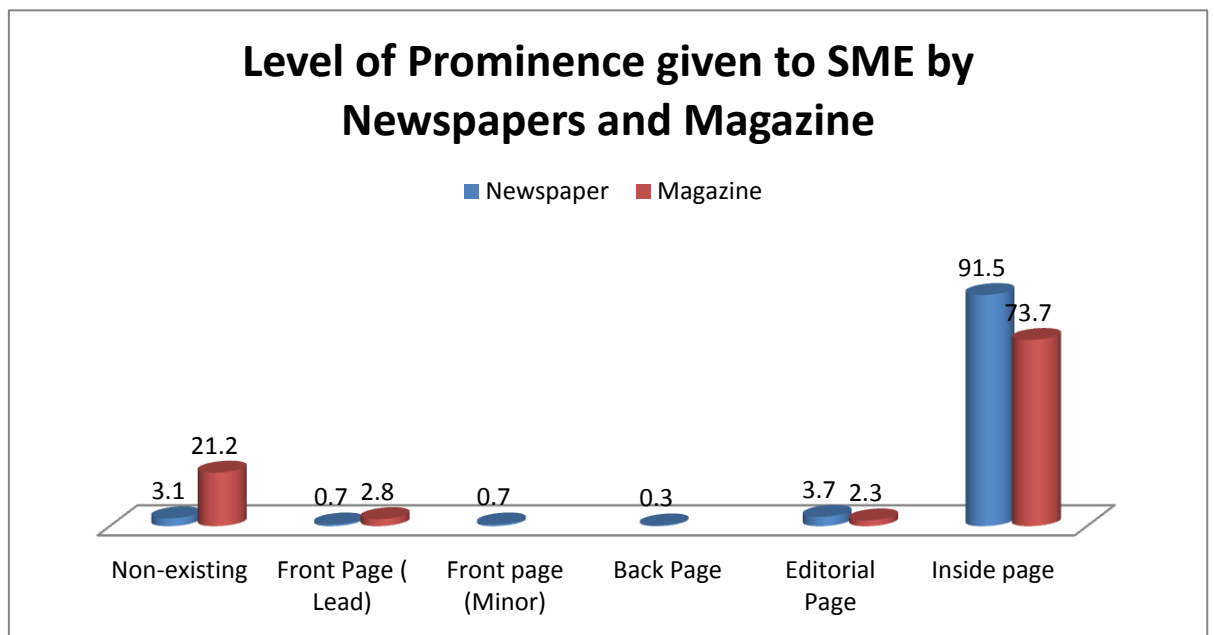


Table 5.5 below shows all kinds of stories reported about ‘SMEs’ and ‘privatization’. Out of 792 stories coded for analysis, 259 representing (32.7%) are on ‘privatization’. The next in rank is the story on ‘SMEs in general’ that has 176 representing (22.2%). This is followed by stories on ‘Sources of SMEs funding’, ‘Poverty and Hunger’, ‘Corruption and SMEs’ representing 95 (12%), 60 (7.6%) and 43 (5.4%) respectively. Stories on ‘International finance’ and ‘Environmental sustainability’ came next with 17 and 3 reports translating to (2.1%) and (.4%)

respectively. Altogether, out of 792 stories, issues around SMEs were reported 399 times. However, it must be noted that 64 (8.1%) actually indicated ‘No story’. This came about when the media either did not publish for one reason or the other or that the edition could not be found. The distribution breakdown is represented in the graph below.

Table 5.5: Frequency distribution of issues reported on SMEs & Privatization

	Frequency	Percent
Valid No Report	64	8.1
Privatisation	259	32.7
SMEs in General	176	22.2
International Financial Institution and SMEs Development	3	.4
Poverty/ Hunger	60	7.6
Economic Reforms/ SMEs Development	13	1.6
Roles of SMEs in Economic Development	9	1.1
Challenges of SMEs	16	2.0
Sources of SMEs Funding	95	12.0
Infrastructural Development and SMEs	16	2.0
SMEs and Environmental Sustainability	4	.5
Taxation and SMEs	17	2.1
Global Partnership and SMEs Development	9	1.1
Corruption and SMEs	43	5.4
ICT and SMEs	8	1.0
Total	792	100.0

Figure 5.5: Chart showing frequency distribution of issues reported on SMEs and Privatization

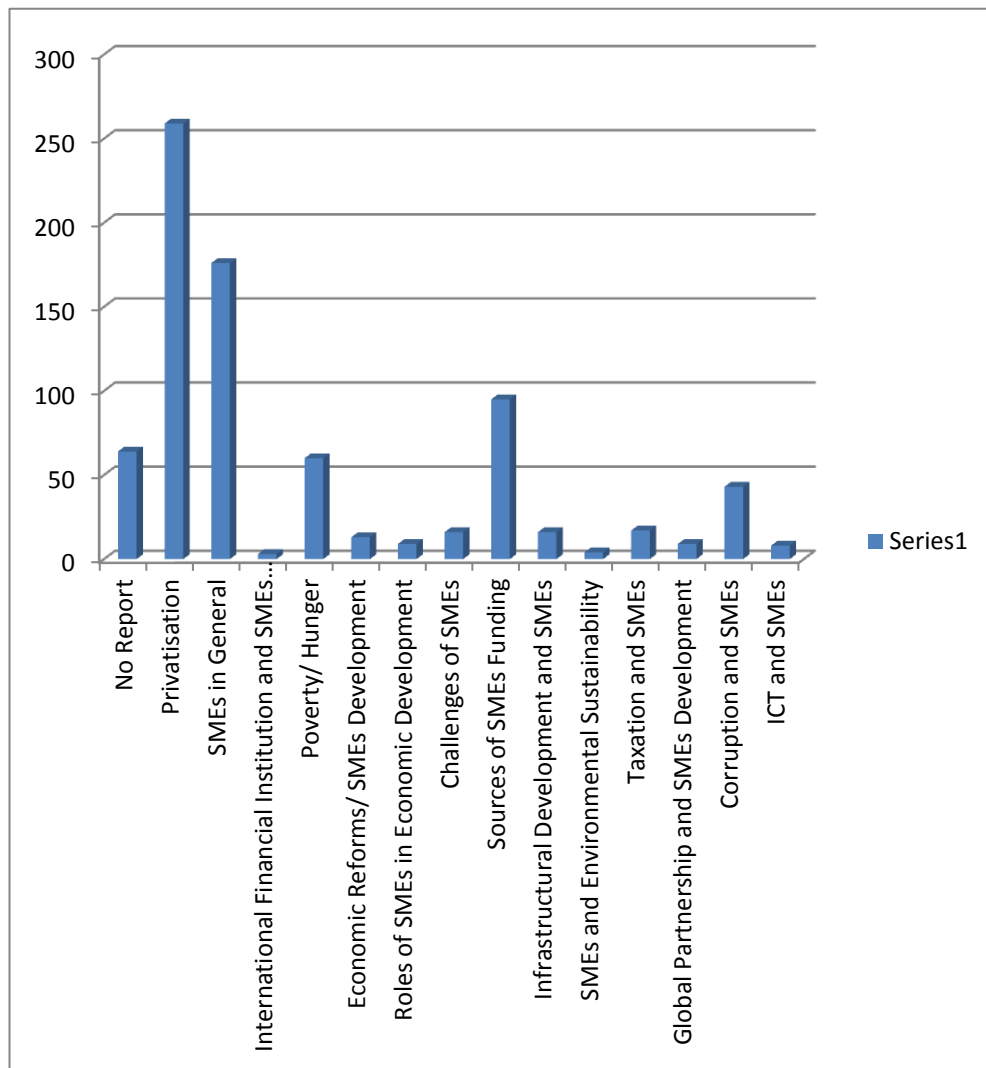


Table 5.6: Showing the frequency distribution of type of stories

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No story	64	8.1
	Straight News	512	64.6
	Columnist	1	.1
	News Analyst	4	.5
	Features	148	18.7
	Opinions	21	2.7
	Editorial	27	3.4
	Letter to the Editor	2	.3
	Advertorial	12	1.5
	Others (Special)	1	.1
	Total	792	100.0

Table 5.6 indicates that out of 792 stories coded for analysis, 'Straight news' has the highest frequency of 512 representing (64.6%). This is followed by 'Features' 148 (18.7%), 'Editorial' 27 (3.4%), 'Opinion' 21 (2.7%) and 'Advertorial' 12 (1.5%) respectively. 'News Analysis' and 'Letters to the Editor', 'Columnist' and others came last with (.5%), (.3%) and (.1%) in that order. The distribution in the table is graphically presented below.

Figure 5.6: Chart showing the frequency distribution of type of stories

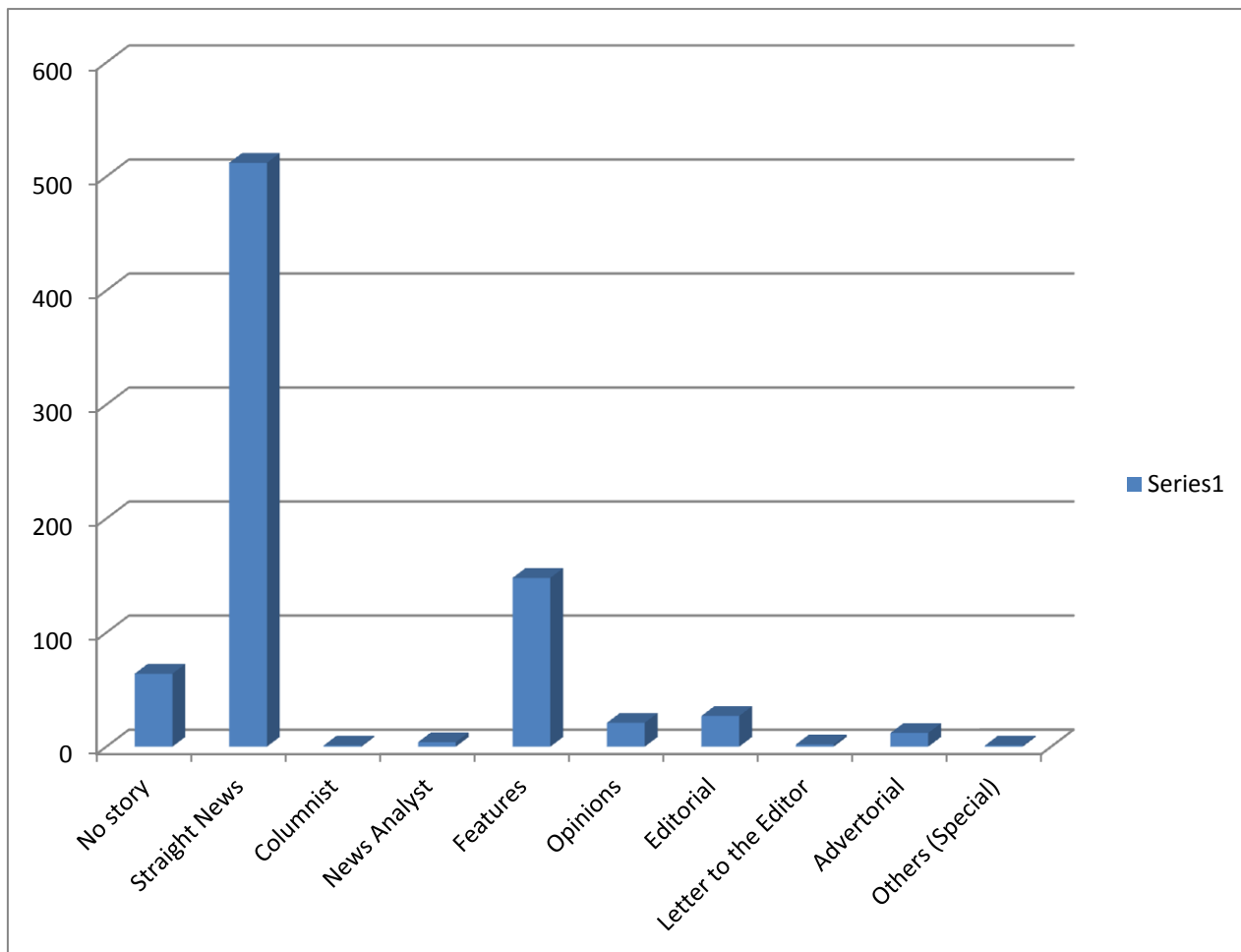


Table 5.7: Showing the frequency distribution of sources of stories

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not Available	64	8.1
	Event Coverage/ Happening	174	22.0
	Interview	129	16.3
	Financial Institution (CBN, Other Banks)	33	4.2
	Press Release/ Statement	36	4.5
	Reporter's Investigation/ Analyses	110	13.9
	Research Findings/ Report	24	3.0
	Other Media Publications/ News Agency	11	1.4
	Professionals/ Professional Association	23	2.9
	Diplomatic Community	6	.8
	Government (Federal, State, Local)	36	4.5
	MAN, NACCIMA, NLC	16	2.0
	Government Agencies (CAC, SON, BPE, SMEDAN, RMRC)	67	8.5
	Bankers Association of Nigeria	23	2.9
	International Organisations (IMF, World Bank, DFID)	16	2.0
	Non-Governmental Organisations	4	.5
	Association of SME Owners	4	.5
	Others	16	2.0
	Total	792	100.0

Table 5.7 reflects the sources of the stories analyzed in the study. Most of the stories were sourced from ‘event coverage/happening’ (174) which account for 22 percent of the total sources for gathering stories. ‘Interview’ and ‘Reporter’s Investigation’ are next (129) and (110) accounting for (16.3%) and (13.9%) respectively. The next in the distribution breakdown is ‘Government Agencies’ (67) which represent (8.5%). ‘Press releases’ and ‘Governments’ came next with (36) each, representing (4.5%). Apart from ‘Financial Institutions’ and ‘Research findings’ that have (33) and (24) accounting for (4.2%) and (3.0%), other sources have less than 3%. Find the graphic representation of the distribution below.

Figure 5.7: Chart showing the frequency distribution of sources of stories

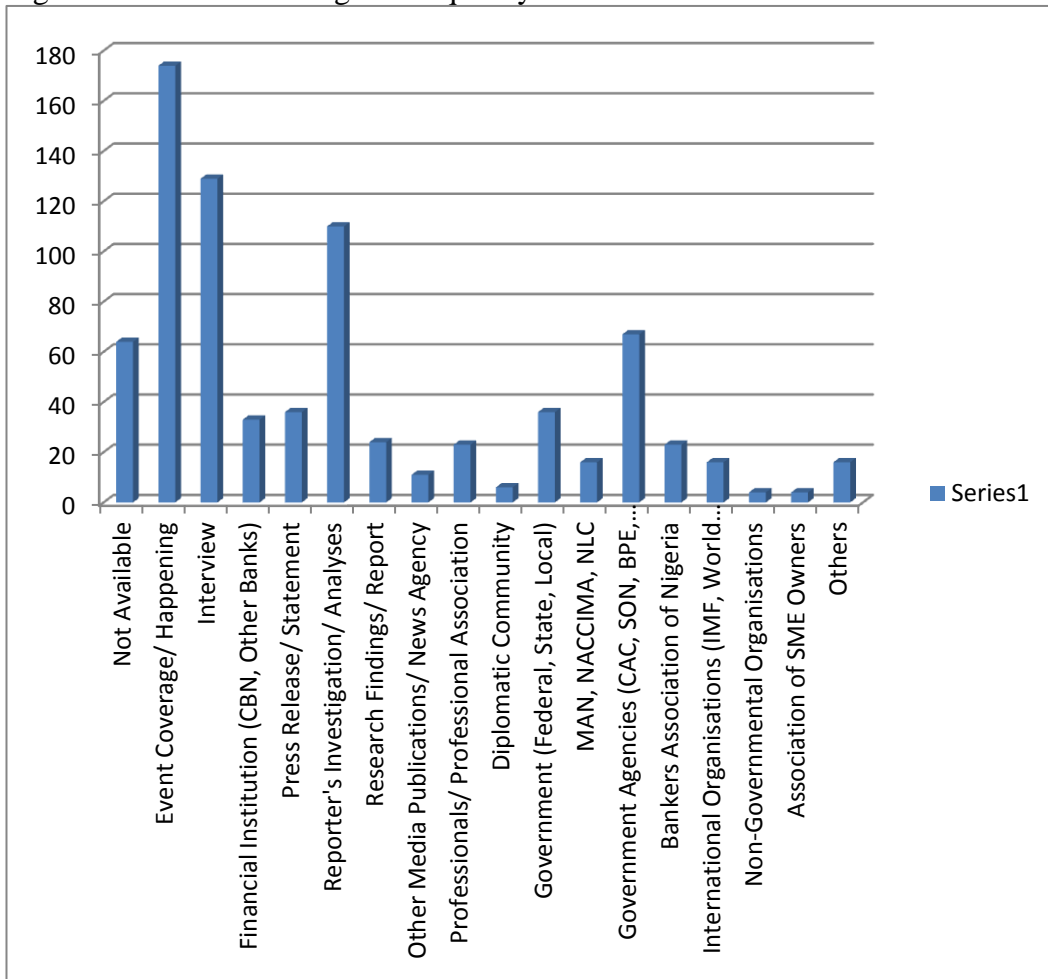


Table 5.8: Frequency distribution of position/prominence of stories

	Frequency	Percent
Valid		
Non-existing	64	8.1
Front Page (Lead)	10	1.3
Front page (Minor)	4	.5
Back Page	2	.3
Editorial Page	26	3.3
Inside page	686	86.6
Total	792	100.0

Table 5.8 indicates that only 10 (1.3%) out of the 792 stories analyzed and 4 (.5%) made ‘front page’ (Lead) and ‘front page’ (Minor) respectively while 686 stories

(86.6%) were reported as inside stories. Beside ‘Editorial’ that has 26 (3.3%), the ‘Back page’ came last with 2 stories representing (.3%). Beneath is the graphic representation of the above table.

Figure 5.8: Chart showing frequency distribution of position/prominence of stories

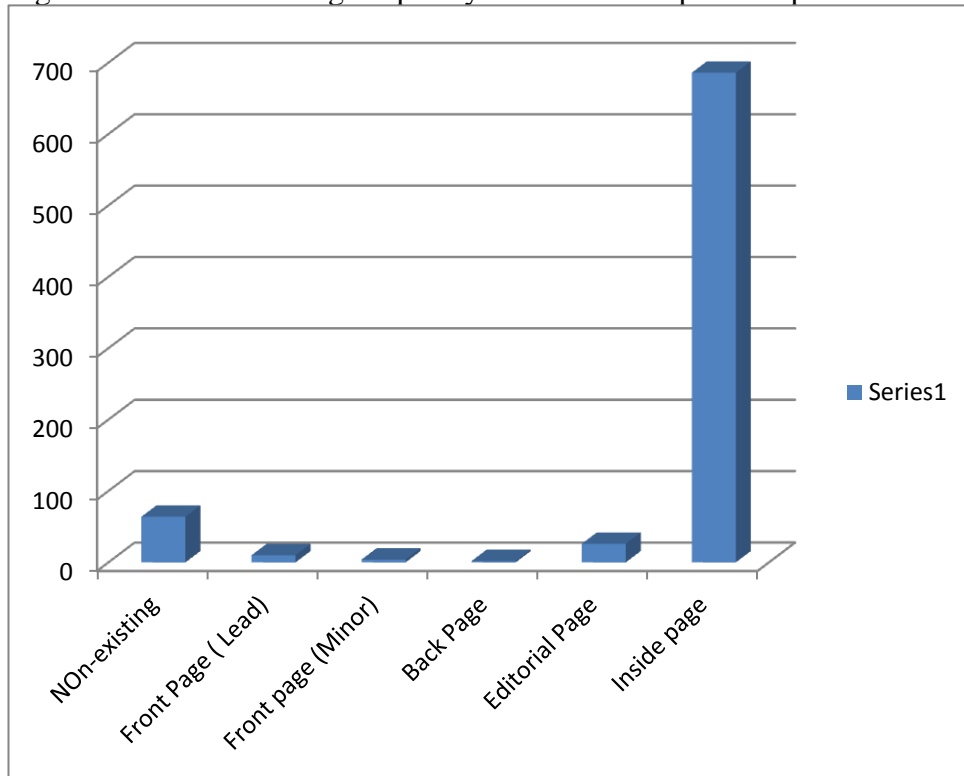


Table 5.9: Showing the frequency distribution of dateline or location of event

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	64	8.1
	South-West	215	27.1
	South-East	21	2.7
	South-South	23	2.9
	North Central	259	32.7
	North West	19	2.4
	North East	14	1.8
	Unknown/ Not Specified	150	18.9
	Foreign	27	3.4
	Total	792	100.0

Table 5.9 above illustrates the places where the reported events occurred. Of all the stories analyzed, about 259 indicating (32.7%) emanated from the North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The South-West is next with 215 stories representing



(27.1%) while about 150 stories accounting for (18.9%) cannot be traced to any location. The foreign stories were 27 (3.4%) while the South-South and South-East geo-political zones have 23 and 21 stories accounting for (2.9%) and (2.7%) respectively. The North-East zone was the least reported with 14 translating to (1.8%). The graphic display is shown below.

Figure 5.9: Chart showing the frequency distribution of dateline or location of event

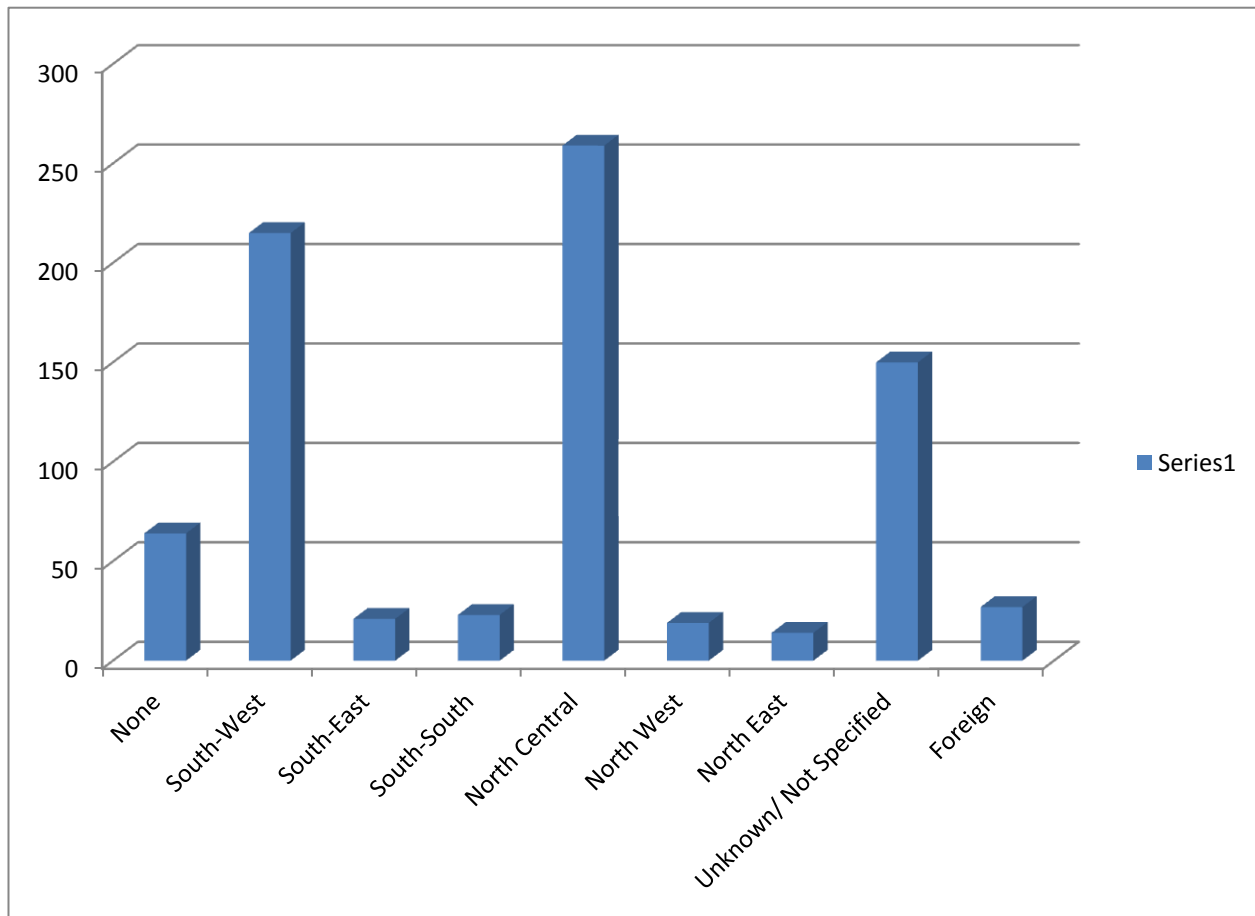


Table 5.10: Frequency distribution of tone or direction of stories

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	64	8.1
	Positive	354	44.7
	Negative	240	30.3
	Neutral	134	16.9
	Total	792	100.0

Table 5.10 reveals the direction of the stories reported on SMEs. In all, 354 stories amounting to (44.7%) were positive, 240 (30.3%) were negative while 134 (16.9%) were neutral. Find the graphic illustration below.

Figure 5.10: graph showing the distribution of tone or direction of stories

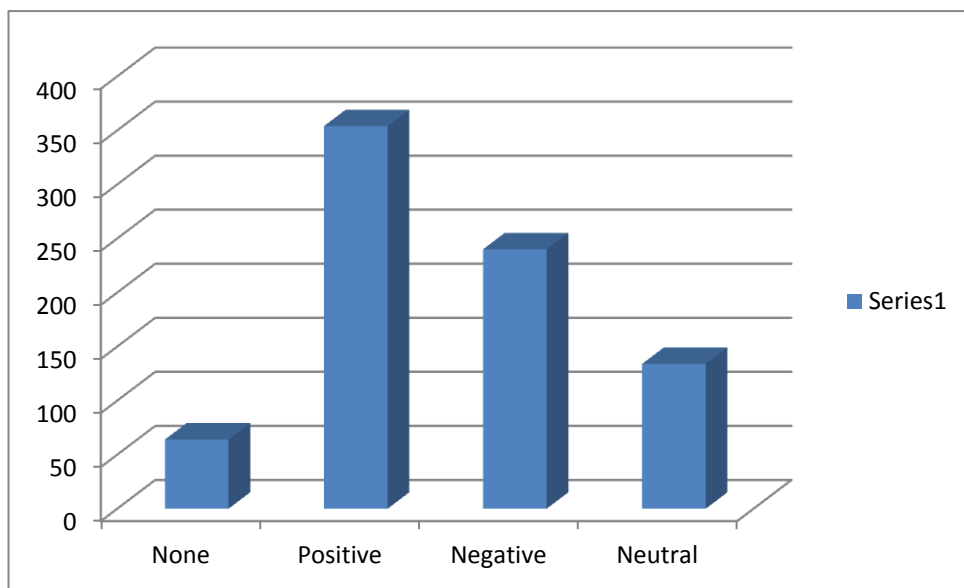


Table 5.11: Frequency distribution of story intent

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	64	8.1
	Advocacy	170	21.5
	Informative	452	57.1
	Educative	105	13.3
	Entertainment	1	.1
	Total	792	100.0

Table 5.11 shows that more than 50 percent of the stories analyzed are informative in content, and were intended to inform the people. While 170 representing (21.5%) and 105 accounting for about (13.3%) are meant to play advocacy role and to educate the public respectively, the remaining (1%) was for entertainment. The distribution is graphically represented below.

Figure 5.11: Chart showing frequency distribution of story intent

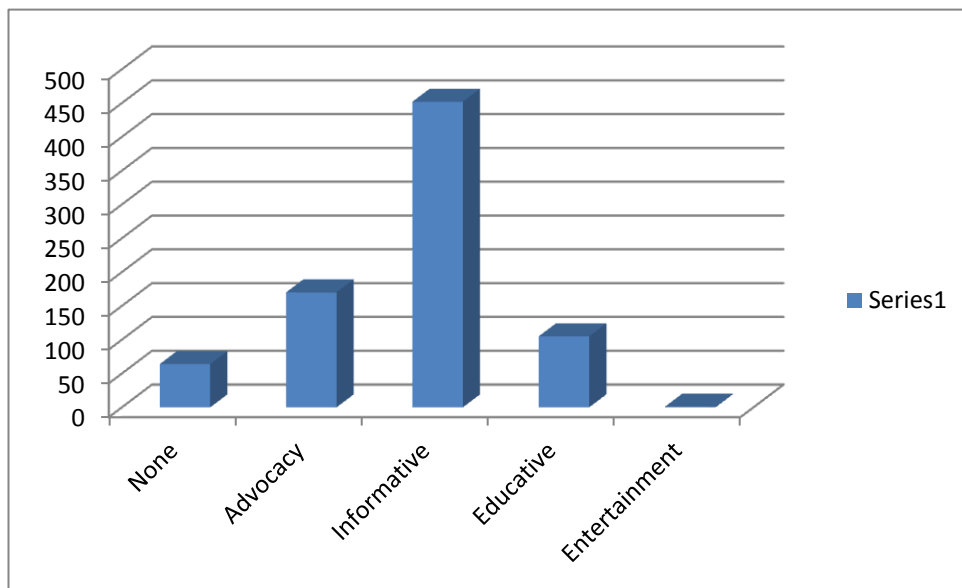


Table 5.12a: Intent of stories on SME reports in newspapers

Intent of Stories	Frequency	Percentage %
None	18	3.1
Advocacy	111	19.3
Informative	351	61.0
Educative	95	16.5
Total	575	100.0

Table 5.12b: Intent of stories on SME reports in magazines

Intent of Stories	Frequency	Percentage %
None	46	21.2
Advocacy	59	27.2
Informative	101	46.5
Educative	11	5.1
Total	217	100.0

Tables 5.12a and 5.12b show that both newspapers and magazines' reports on SMEs were largely intended to inform Nigerians. As evident in table 5.12a, 'Informative' recorded the highest percentage of 61.0% for newspapers while it also recorded the highest percentage of 46.5% for magazines. These are graphically displayed in the chart below

Figure 5.12a &amp; 5.12b: Chart showing the newspapers and magazines differences on the intent of SMEs stories

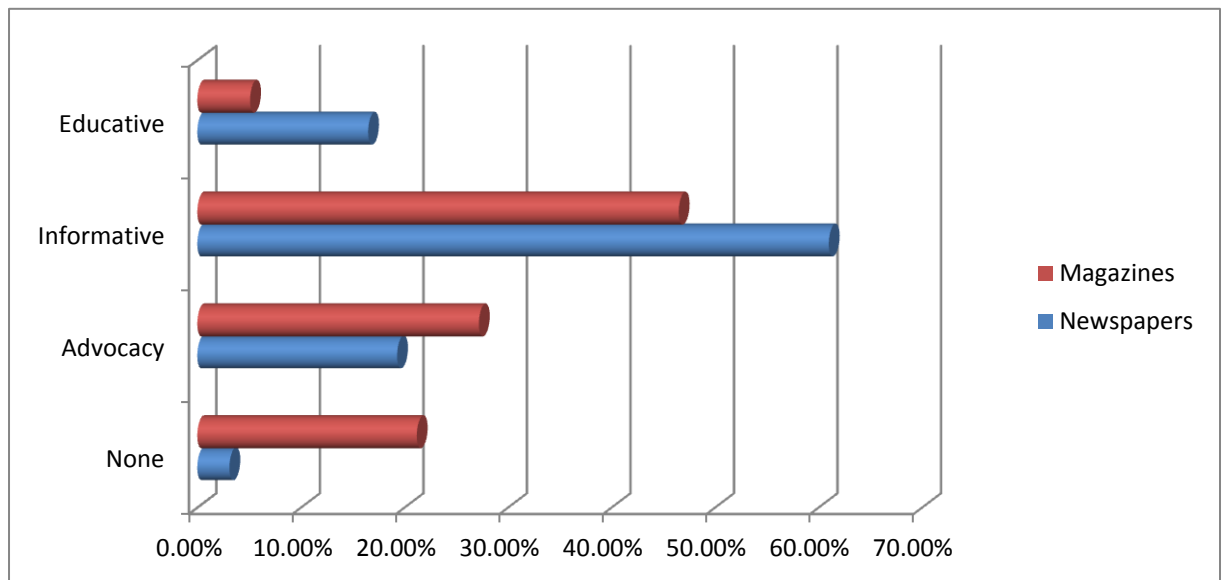


Table 5.13: Frequency distribution of principal characters in the stories

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	64	8.1
	President/Vice President	55	6.9
	Government Official	199	25.1
	Principal Official of National Assembly	9	1.1
	Public Corporation or its Official (s)	24	3.0
	NGO or its Officials	4	.5
	CBN Governor or Representatives	25	3.2
	Bank CEO, Other Officials	37	4.7
	Business Executives	50	6.3
	Officials of International Agencies	15	1.9
	Professional/ Experts	29	3.7
	Individual Citizens	9	1.1
	Foreigners/ Foreign Investors	8	1.0
	Officials of SMEs Regulatory Agencies	32	4.0
	Executive Members of NASME, NLC, NASSI, NACCIMA	53	6.7
	Others/ Not Indicated	179	22.6
	Total	792	100.0

Table 5.13 above reflects the major characters in the SMEs stories. From the table, it is observed that most of the stories were on government officials. A total of 199 stories are on ‘government officials’ which represent (25.1%) of the total stories analyzed. Besides, the ‘President/Vice President’ and ‘Principal Official of National Assembly’ also recorded 55 (6.9%) and 9 (1.1%) respectively. The next in the category is ‘Others/Not Indicated’ that has 179 (22.6%). In contrast, all other characters have less than 60 stories and less than 10 percent. The Executive Members of NASMEs, NLC, NASSI and NACCIMA were reported 53 times which account for (6.7%); ‘Business Executives’ 50 (6.3%); ‘Bank Chief Executives /Other Officials’ 37 (4.7%); ‘Officials of SMEs Regulatory Agency’ 32 (4.0%); ‘Central Bank Governor or Representatives’ 25 (3.2%) and ‘Public Corporations or its Officials’ 24 (3.0%) in that order. The least in the category is ‘NGOs or its Officials’

which recorded 4 stories amounting to less than one percent of the major characters reported in the stories analyzed. The graph below illustrates the distribution.

Figure 5.13: Chart showing frequency distribution of principal character of stories

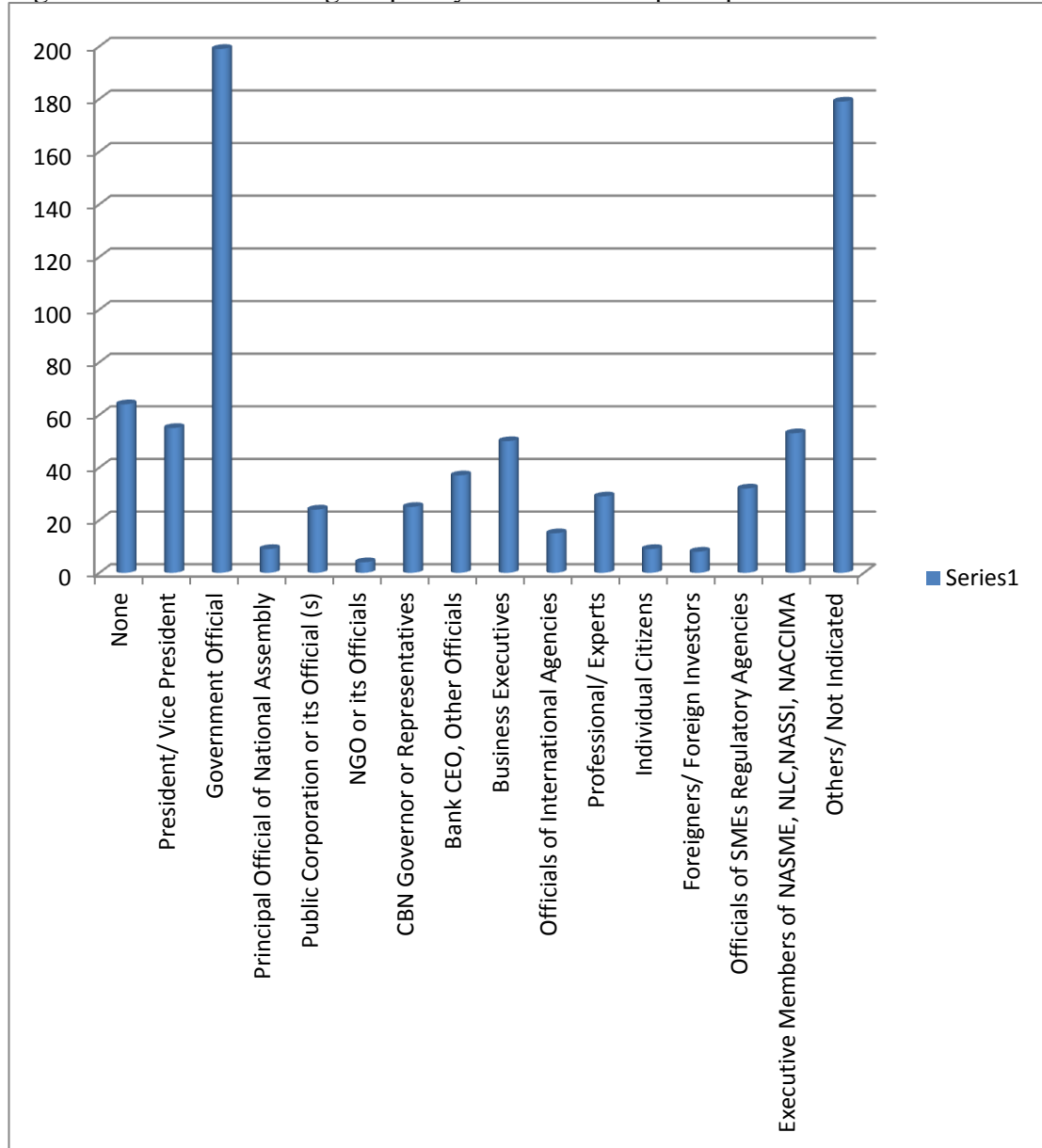
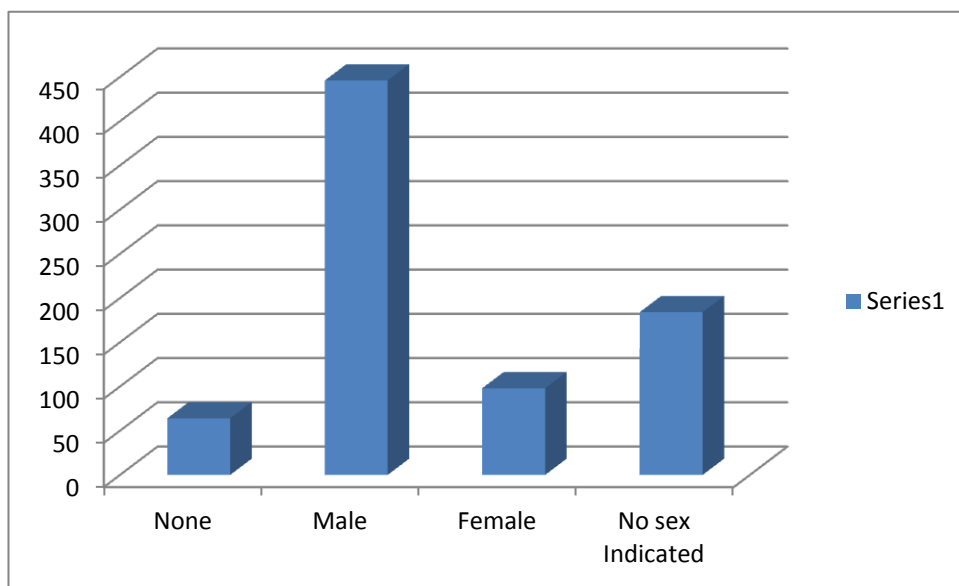


Table 5.14: Frequency distribution of sex of principal characters

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	None	64	8.1
	Male	446	56.3
	Female	98	12.4
	No sex indicated	184	23.2
	Total	792	100.0

Table 5.14 shows the distribution of characters according to sex. From the table, the male gender dominated the character distribution with more than 50 percent of the total number while the female came third in ranking with 98 stories representing (12.4%). However, 'no sex Indicated' came second with 184 accounting for (23.2%). The gender distribution is represented in the graph below.

Figure 5.14: Chart showing frequency distribution of gender in the stories



#### Un- Structured Interview with Selected Respondents (Stakeholders)

One-on-one interview was conducted for selected 60 respondents using quota sampling. The findings are presented below.

1. *Do you anticipate any role from the mass media concerning SMEs development in Nigeria?*

To this question, a great majority of respondents 48 out of 60 representing (80%) are aware of the active roles of the mass media in SMEs development by responding in affirmation while 9 or (15%) said they do not anticipate any role. The remaining 3 or (5%) said “they do not Know”.

*2. If you have the opportunity, how would you rate the degree of coverage and prominence the mass media give to issues relating to SMEs?*

Seventeen respondents or (28.3%) rated the media “excellent” 7 or (11.6%) scored them “good” while 32 or (53.3%) rated them “poor” and the remaining 4 or (6.6%) wanted to remain neutral.

*3. Will you agree with the notion that the mass media have failed in its responsibilities to influence SMEs growth? If yes why?*

Eighteen respondents or (30%) disagreed with the statement while 33 respondents or (55%) strongly agreed because, according to them, “most of the stories reported by the media are around the government and its officials while they down play or out rightly leave out reports about other people” however, the remaining 2 or (3.3%) would prefer to be neutral.

*4 In your own opinion, do you foresee a bright future for SMEs sub-sector in Nigeria?*

Almost all the respondents 58 or (96.6%) agreed that “there is better future for SMEs in Nigeria as in most developed economy”. They added, “Government must do the right thing such as providing enabling environment where efficient infrastructural facility is guaranteed and where the government encourages would-be investors by providing institutional funding”. Only 2 respondents or (3.3%) were not optimistic about the future of SMEs in Nigeria. They claimed, “things have remained the same as it was during the military regime when corruption and looting of public treasury were the norm and since the members of the ruling class now are still the political actors of yesteryears; the future not only of SMEs but the entire country is doom”.



*5. Do you believe there is no adequate report on SMEs in Nigeria?*

Thirty two respondents or (53.3%) agreed while 28 respondents or (46.6%) disagreed

*6 What do you think has constituted barriers to effective coverage of SMEs as catalyst of economic growth in Nigeria?*

All the respondents except four gave diverse reasons ranging from “inaccessibility to information about SMEs, lack of commitment to duties on the part of reporters, lack of determination on the part of the government to publicize the program, failure on the part of the media houses to mobilize the reporters to cover necessary event on SMEs and related matters, lack of advertising patronage from the SMEs subsector and dearth of experienced hand in most newsrooms”.

## **5.2 Summary of Findings**

(1) Attempt was made to determine the ‘volume of coverage’ given to SMEs, poverty and corruption from the data collected and analyzed. Table 5.5 shows SMEs and related issues were variedly reported within the period in focus. Apart from ‘Privatization’ and ‘Poverty and hunger’, media reportage covered several SMEs related issues. As shown in the table, ‘SMEs in general’ was reported 176 times (22.2%) , followed by ‘Source of SMEs funding’ 95 times (12.0%), ‘Corruption and SMEs’ 43 times (5.4%). In the main, out of 792 stories, issues around SMEs were reported 409 times.

(2) We observed the ‘degree of prominence’ given to issues reported about SMEs and related development issues. Table 5.8 provided answers to this question. Out of 792 stories reported, SMEs and related matters were reported 686 times or (86.6%) as ‘inside page’ stories. The number of stories reported in the ‘front page’ (lead) accounted for 10 or (1.3%), ‘front page’ (minor) 4 or (0.5%) and stories in the ‘editorial page’ appeared 26 times or (3.3%).

(3) The ‘degree of coverage’ given to privatization and economic reform issues were also observed. Table 5.5 reveals that a sizable proportion of the stories analyzed, 259 or (32.7%) were on privatization. When the coverage given to privatization is compared with SMEs and related matters 409 or (51.2%), it is evident that SME issues were widely reported by the media than privatization.

(4) We examined whether or not the newspapers and magazines differ in the degree of prominence given to SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development in their coverage. Tables 5.4a and 5.4b provided insight to this issue as they revealed that both newspapers and magazines do not differ in the level of prominence given to SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development coverage. Available evidences in the tables show that both newspapers and magazines reported SMEs mostly as inside page stories. For instance, in the newspapers, SMEs stories were reported 526 times (91.5%) while magazines reported them 160 times (73.7%) mainly as inside page stories respectively.

(5) We also observed the issues highlighted about SMEs, poverty and corruption in order to understand whether or not they intended to enhance development. Tables 5.5, 5.6, 5.8 and 5.11 provide insight to this. In table 5.5, we noticed that apart from 176 reports or (22.2%) on SMEs, there were other related issues reported in varying degrees. These include ‘Sources of funding’ 95 or (12%), ‘infrastructural development and SMEs’ 16 or (2%), ‘Corruption and SMEs’ 43 or (5.4%), ‘Taxation and SMEs’ 17 or (2.1%), ‘Challenges of SMEs’ 16 or (2%). ‘Economic reforms and SMEs’ 13 or (1.6%), ‘Role of SMEs in Economic Development’ and ‘Global partnership and SMEs Development’ have 9 or (1.1%) each while all others score below (1%). However, when tables 5.5 and 5.6 were cross tabulated (see appendix 2, p.314), it is discovered that 135 out of 176 reports on ‘SMEs in general’ were reported as ‘straight news’ while 29 or (16.5%) and 1 or (.6%) each were reported as ‘features’, ‘opinion’ and ‘editorial’ respectively. Cross tabulation of tables 5.5 and 5.8 (see appendix1, p.313) also revealed that 175 out of the 176 reports on SMEs were reported as inside page stories and none made the ‘front’ or ‘back’ page.

Similarly, when table 5.5 and 5.11 are cross tabulated (see appendix 4, p.316), we found that 88 or (50%) were intended to 'Inform' while 53 or (30.1%) and 35 or (19.9%) were to 'Advocate' and 'Educate' the readers.

Table 5.6 however revealed that 512 or (64.6%) and 148 or (18.7%) of the reports were reported as 'straight news' and 'features' as against 'editorial' 27 or (3.4%) and 'analysis' 4 or (.5%) which are believed to carry more editorial weight by most reading public.

Further interesting discoveries were made on research question five where table 5.7 showed that 174 or (22%) of the news items analyzed were sourced from 'event coverage' most of which are social in nature and content. Next in rank is 'Interview' which accounted for 129 or (16.3%) and then followed by 'Press release' and 'Government sources' which accounted for 36 or (4.5%) each while 'Reporters investigation/Analyses' also account for 110 or (13.9%). As observed from table 7, core stakeholders and investors such as 'SMEs Association', 'Bankers Association', 'MAN, NACCIMA, NLC' and 'NGOs' that ought to constitute sources of economic and business stories because of their strategic involvements were down played in the media coverage.

Besides the above findings, table 5.11 equally revealed that 457 (57.1%) of the items studied were actually meant to 'inform' the public. When this is juxtaposed with table 13 where we noticed that the principal characters in most of the stories are government officials, one can then deduce that communication in this regard is one sided that is, from government to the people. This is contrary to 'Advocacy' and 'Educative' reports that scored (21.5%) and (13.3%) respectively.

(6) We examined tables 5.7 and 5.13 and our study revealed the sources and principal characters in SMEs stories reported by the media. Table 5.7 in particular provides evidence showing that 'Event coverage' and 'Interview' accounted for about 303 or (38.3%) of the sources of stories. Apart from 'Reporters

investigation/analysis' that also has (13.9%), no other source has up to (10%). When the findings in table 5.7 is juxtaposed with the result of table 5.13 where government officials including the President/Vice President, Officials of National Assembly, Public Corporations and Central Banks were discovered to constitute about (39%), it can be rightly assumed that the government which is the object of event coverage and interview is also the source of most stories on SMEs.

(7) The influence which press reports on SMEs, poverty and corruption have on public perception towards Nigerian government was also studied. Of the 60 respondents (stakeholders) selected for one-on-one interview, 48 or (80%) believed that the mass media have important roles to play in SMEs development. Nine (9) or (15%) did not anticipate any role from the media while the remaining 3 or (5%) preferred to be neutral. Further probe into public perception revealed that 17 respondents or (28.3%) rated the media performance "excellent", 7 or (11.6%) rated them "good". While thirty two or (53.3%) scored them "poor", the last 4 or (6.6%) remained neutral. On whether the media have failed in its social responsibility to the public on SMEs coverage, 18 respondents or (30%) disagreed with the statement while 33 respondents or (55%) agreed with the opinion because, according to them, "most of the stories reported by the media are majorly what the government or its officials said while they de-emphasize or out-rightly leave out whatever the public said" however, the remaining 2 or (3.3%) would prefer to be neutral. On what the future holds for SMEs in Nigeria, almost all the respondents 58 or (96.6%) believed there is better future for SMEs in Nigeria as in most developed economy, if things are done appropriately.

In their responses to the question if they believe there is no effective coverage of SMEs in Nigeria, 32 respondents (53.3%) agreed while 28 or (46.6%) disagreed. On what they regarded as barriers to effective coverage of SMEs by the media, 56 respondents (93.3%) offered sundry reasons as constituting barriers. These will be fully discussed in subsequent section.

### 5.3 Discussion of Findings

Guided by seven basic research questions, the findings are discussed under seven broad issues. These include volume of coverage given to SMEs, degree of prominence given to SMEs coverage, differences between the extent of prominence given to SMEs by newspapers and magazines, degree of coverage given to privatization issue, the issues highlighted about SMEs and relationship to development, the sources of SMEs stories reported by the media, and the influence of press reports on public perception towards SMEs.

#### 5.3.1 What was the volume of media coverage given to SMEs, poverty and corruption?

The findings confirm that the issues of SMEs, poverty and corruption were grossly under reported within the period of research focus. A total of 2,304 editions of the newspapers and magazines covering 12 years were selected for study and out of 792 stories content analyzed, 176 or (22.2%) were reported on 'SMEs, poverty 60 or (7.6%) and corruption 43 or (5.4%) respectively. When the frequency tables 5.1 and 5.5 'name of newspaper/magazines' and 'subject matter' were cross-tabulated (see appendix 3, p.315) to evaluate the amount of coverage given to SMEs, poverty and corruption by each of the selected media. On 'SMEs in general', we found that for the 12 years, *Punch* reported 60 stories (24%), *Guardian* 76 (23.4%), *Tell* magazine 16 (15.4%) and *The News* 24 (21.2%). On 'poverty' *Punch* published 11 stories (4.4%), *Guardian* 32 (9.8%), *Tell* 9 (8.7%) and *The News* 8 (7.1%). On 'corruption', *Punch* published 11 stories (4.4%), *Guardian* 20 (6.2%), while *Tell* and *The News* magazines published 7(6.7%) and 5 (4.4%) respectively. In all, within 12 years, the four media published 176 (22.2%) stories on 'SMEs in general', 60 ((7.6%) on 'poverty' and 43 (5.4%) on 'corruption'. By observing the above figures critically, we found that for 12 years, none of the four selected media published up to 12 stories per year on SMEs, poverty and corruption. The apparent neglect of such a critical

sector of the economy which has been described as the engine of economic growth (Onugu, 2005) evidently is not a good credential for Nigerian media, an institution that is expected to provide broad platforms for discussing entrepreneurship and development issues, make available valuable information upon which citizens could make informed socio-economic and political decisions (Graves, 2010); pay sustained attention to reporting development ideas, policies and programs (Edeani, 1993, p.126) and assist in deepening the people's understanding and stimulate attitude change to entrepreneurship in order to kindle the fire of commitment in the society (Hang and Weezel, 2005).

A number of factors must have contributed to this minimal coverage. First, the media industry in Nigeria is presently functioning under very adverse economic climate clearly illustrated by rising cost of production yet diminishing the people's purchasing power (Owolabi & O'Neill, 2013a). Most media proprietors depend on personal savings and meagre income from advertisement which oftentimes were grossly insufficient to keep going the medium. Under this financially depressing condition, most frequently, there is lack of funds to pay reporters' salaries and to mobilize them for event coverage especially in distant places. Sometimes too, media houses are so cash-strapped to the point of not able to purchase needed spare parts, newsprints and other basic raw materials required for daily production process thus, keeping the medium on and off the newsstand. This perhaps explains why there is continuous decimation of seasoned professionals from the industry consequently the systematic decline of professional standard. Therefore, to break- even in the face of dwindling resources, most media organizations often resort to serving their readers and listeners with soft sell stories of celebrities, gossips, tragedy and crime, entertainment, and human interest as against investigated hard news, insightful analysis and captivating features stories on issues like SMEs, poverty and sustainable development (Jacklin, 2005 cited by Usher, 2010). By changing the editorial focus as illustrated above amounts to sacrificing public service or development journalism on the altar of profit making.

Second, lack of access to information may also cause this neglect. It is a known fact that most of the businesses of government in Nigeria are carried out confidentially under the guise of 'Official Secrets Act' in order to prevent the prying eyes of the public especially media. The reason is because most of these deals have had corruption built into them. SMEs policy falls within this category. Every year, several billions of Naira is appropriated for SMEs and infrastructural development but at the end of the year, there will be nothing to show for it. It will therefore not be out of place that the mass media are deliberately sidelined when the issue of developing the economy through SMEs are planned and executed, knowing that the inquisitive media will ask questions at some point. To safeguard the government and its officials against the media meddlesomeness is why the government prefers to operate under the cover of Official Secrets Act and that is also why the Freedom of Information Bill was gathering dust in the floor of the House as the parliament refuse to pass it into law throughout the period of focus of this study.

Thirdly, there is what Rogers (1976) referred to as the cunning devices of the multinational corporations to sway the media to its side by using commercial advert patronage. As mentioned earlier that the economic climate in Nigeria is unfriendly to many businesses, some of the multinational corporations are well rooted and are able to survive any economic adversity no matter how harsh. It is also possible these corporations may have bought into the shares of some media organizations as it happened between 1960 and 1970 under the military dictators in some Latin American countries in order to gain full control of the mass media. If this happens, the media can easily be made to downplay reports on SMEs sub-sector so that they (multinational corporations) can continue to sustain the market monopoly. However, the consequences of such possible bargain can be very grave. One, the media as agent of socio-economic change and development would have failed in its social responsibilities of educating, informing and mobilizing the public to participate in small and medium scale enterprises and other developmental activities. And if anything at all, the media can rightly be de-robed of its traditional watchdog title on

both the public and private institutional authorities and instead be branded a “guard dog” (Donohue et al., 1995).

Fourthly, there is a universal acceptance that lack of funds has been acknowledged as a fundamental problem to most prospective entrepreneurs. If the present degree of coverage (176 reports in 12 years) is anything to go by, it then means a large population of potential entrepreneurs must have been denied the right of access to information about how they can source funds to start new business or expand the existing one. The mass media are believed to have subtle influence on the lives of most people and through commercial and product advertisement; their buying habits can be influenced directly or indirectly. Advertisement in the media especially in this day of on-line newspapers/magazines can go a long way to promote both products and services in the local and international markets thus, boosting the market demands. As SMEs have been described as catalyst of employment generation and poverty reduction strategy, to marginalize its reportage by the mass media in any way can make most people to develop apathy for this critical sector. In the main, the cost of allowing the media power to be hijacked by powerful business clique for personal interests can be enormous particularly for Nigeria.

### **5.3.2 To what extent has the prominence given to SMEs and related development issues reflected the purpose of agenda setting theory?**

The ‘degree of prominence’ given to SMEs and related development issues were observed. From table 5.8 we found that out of 792 stories analyzed, SMEs and related matters were reported 686 times or (86.6%) as ‘inside page’ stories. The number of stories reported in the ‘front page’ (lead) accounted for 10 or (1.3%); ‘front page’ (minor) 4 or (0.5%) and stories in the ‘editorial page’ appeared 26 times or (3.3%). Altogether, the analysis shows that within a space of 12years, SMEs and related development issues only occupied front pages 10times as against 686 appearances as inside page stories. Going by the above breakdown, we can deduce that the media published just about one front page story per year on SMEs and related issues. Although when the coverage given to privatization is compared with



SMEs and related matters 409 or (51.2%), it is evident that SME and related development issues were widely reported by the media than privatization. The findings reveal that the issues of SMEs and development was not given adequate prominence in the selected media especially when viewed against the principle of agenda setting that an important news item must receive wide coverage in space and time. This means such important item must find space in the front page, attract strong and repeated editorial comment accompanied by in-depth analysis as well as making frequent appearance in the feature page. While defining what news is, Gan (1980, p. 148) claims that for an event to qualify as news stories, on one hand “it must impact on the nation and the national interest” and on the other, “impact on a large number of people”. Similarly, Osinuga and Ogbonna (2010, p.28) argue that “every story that bears direct or indirect consequence on a large number of people is news worthy”. Looking at table 5.4a, it was surprising to discover that for a period of 12 years which the research covered; out of the 575 reports on SMEs in the newspapers category, 526 (91.5%) were reported as ‘inside page’ stories. While editorial page recorded 21 (3.7%), only 4 stories (.7%) each were reported in the ‘front page’ (lead and minor) respectively. The level of prominence given to SMEs in the magazines is similar. Table 5.4b shows that out of 217 reports, 160 (73.7%) were reported as inside page stories while the ‘front page’ (lead and minor) recorded 6 (2.8%) and 5 (2.3%) respectively. Besides, only 5 editorials (2.3%) were written on SMEs within that same period. The above statistics confirms that the issue of SMEs is not accorded a prominent position by Nigerian print media. The economic growth and general development of any nation is predicated upon the policies and program designed by the political class which according to the tenet of development media theory must be well projected by the media. The business and the economic class in-turn translate such policies into tangible products and services that constitute the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation. In a country like Nigeria where more than 70 percent of the population live below poverty line, it is the media’s main responsibility to give voice to the voiceless and the neglected members of the society especially women and youth by amplifying their voices. The economic status of a nation determines her significance to the outside world. Therefore business and

economic issues like SMEs must remain important media issues that must be placed at the front burner of agenda setting.

According to James Deane cited by Grave (2010), the press provides useful information that can help the poor to liberate themselves from the bondage of poverty and become economically independent. Since SMEs as economic blueprint involves everybody, the banker, company executives and ordinary man on the street, the mass media therefore owe the public full explanation on why a larger proportion of the population mostly women are not taking advantage of the manifold benefits inherent in it. A business reporter should be able to investigate and report on why the women give so much to the economy and yet earn little, the reasons for the marginalization of female gender and why they are the most vulnerable in time of economic crises. An economic reporter should also be smart enough to evaluate the level of success or failure Nigeria has recorded in her efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) without a vibrant SMEs subsector. Nigerians deserve updates through comprehensive analysis and insightful editorial on the recent economic paradigm like the African Growth and Opportunity Acts (AGOA) as well as providing valuable economic information and trade statistics on how Nigerian SMEs operators can benefit from international trade liberalization. Two factors readily come to mind as the likely cause of the media's misplaced priority of giving low prominence to SMEs report while promoting other things. First is the subtle change in the editorial focus of most media houses. The economic melt-down of the last ten years coupled with the threat pose by the new media has forced many media houses to close shop even among developed nations. For instance, The State of the News Media (2009) and Paper Cuts (2009) confirm the continuous drop in newspaper distribution rate thus leading to mass retrenchment of about 15,000 workforces in year 2008. The Detroit Free Press and New York Times, two most prominent media outfits in the USA have also been affected seriously to the extent of pruning down home delivery services to thrice a week and closing down some of the subsidiaries that are considered unviable ( Lendon, 2008; Pena, 2009; Sanders-Ware, 2009). In the United Kingdom also, there is no dissimilarity as many newspapers

such as *Guardian* and *The Times* were reported to have recorded about 5% and 1.57 percent drop respectively of their circulation run in one year (World Press Trend, 2008). The picture in the United States and Europe suitably captures the media industry's experiences across the globe. In Nigeria especially, the harsh reality of economic melt-down has considerably changed the general outlook of media industry thus reflecting high debt profile, downsizing and significant drop in circulation and in some severe cases, complete closure have resulted. Under this condition, each outfit adopts various methods to bail itself out of this economic predicament. Some media proprietors became card carrying members of political party and therefore turned the outfit to party's political megaphone. One other alternative route taken by some is to change the editorial focus by concentrating more on entertainment, human interest stories, reporting of show business and celebrities while it constricts the coverage of hard news and important business and economic matters. As noted by Curan cited by Harcup and O'Neill (2010), Rupert Murdoch the Publisher of *The Sun* in London adopted similar method to remain in the market and retain its readership after purchasing the paper from the initial owners in 1969. It is no news nowadays that many people have developed apathy for reading and those who still read either do it for academic purpose or just for interesting human angle stories and not hard news of economics and business. The newspapers and magazines selected for study appear to have cleverly changed their editorial focus to capture the shrinking market and remain in business.

Another possible explanation for low prominence given to SMEs is what authorities of mass media referred to as error of news judgment due to lack of professional experience (Akinfeleye, 2011). According to Scruton (1982) cited in Owolabi and Okafo (2011), acquisition of learning or training is a precondition for entry into any profession, journalism inclusive. However, it is a common practice in Nigeria as in some other nations to find a large number of people working in the media industry who did not train as journalist. Unlike other professions where they have pre-requisite qualification before anybody can practice, journalism allows everybody who has flare for writing to answer the name Journalist. It becomes a matter made

worse when those who were supposed to be experienced due to long years of training on the job abandoned the profession in search of greener pasture in other ancillary fields such as advertising, public relations and marketing communication. It is therefore not surprising to see young people becoming Editor after two years of reportorial experience. The concern is how such editor will be able to have the skills needed to grade news into very important, important and less important. Our fear is here confirmed when important economic and business stories like SMEs development that affects more than 70% of the nation's population is either dropped for another or is hid in an obscured corner of the newspaper or magazine. Surprisingly, this development is not peculiar to print media alone, broadcast media also experience such unprofessional peculiarity. There was an occasion when an enlightenment program intended to educate farmers on the use of crop rotation as a way of replenishing the used soil fertility was wrongly aired in Kaduna State radio station. The question in the mouth of many who listened to the program is which Director of program authorized the airing of such informative program at 10a.m when most intended farmers would have gone to the farm. Professional competence should have dictated that such program is better aired between five and six in the evening when farmers must have returned from farm and are relaxing at home.

The social and economic implications of giving no coverage at all or low prominence to a supposed issue of national importance are very huge. Nigeria, though an oil rich state is sadly ranked among the poor countries of the world where about 85 of her 165 million populations live without ability to provide the basic necessities of life. Besides, Aigbokhian (2000) and FOS (2004) observed that there are geographic and gender dimensions to the issue of poverty in Nigeria. About 70 percent of the populations live in the rural communities while about 63.8 percent translating to about 80 million people including women, youth and children are living below poverty level. In addition, 38 percent of Nigeria's 75 million women and girls lack formal education while only 4 percent have higher education (Agu, 2007). Giving Nigeria's present development profile and the poverty index in particular, it should

normally be expected that no other issue ought to have attracted priority coverage from the media than SMEs and other related matters.

According to McNelly (1966, p.345), before the media can make any significant contribution to national development, the following conditions must be fulfilled: (a) mass communication must be available; (b) they must carry reports relevant to modernization; (c) they must have the attention of mass audiences; (d) the content must have effects on the knowledge or attitudes of audiences, predisposing them to accept modern ideas, methods or products. These four conditions, according to Omojola (2011, p.198) can be summarized as “availability, relevance, attention and effect” all of which are interdependent. For instance, media content must be available and accessible to the people before one can be talking about its significance or not. Also, news must be relevant before it can attract attention of the reading public and possibly produce certain effect on them.

We can therefore reasonably infer from the above perspective that the media under focus fell below expectation when their urban news reporting pattern is compared with rural communities’. The rural communities in Nigeria have been neglected for so long by each succeeding governments hence, the social monster they have constituted today. As explained earlier, over 80 million of Nigeria’s 165 million people live in the rural community. Denying this large number of people access to essential business information on how they can participate in SMEs and contribute to national development is not only contrary to the principle of development journalism but also against the principle of social responsibility theory which declares that the media as a whole should be pluralistic, giving voice to the voiceless and reflecting the diversity of the society. This situation perhaps may also explain why Nigeria and her citizens are being threatened by series of poverty-induced social problems. A local government Chairman who was recently kidnapped by a criminal gang but released after four days relives his ordeal in the hand of his abductors in a newspaper report (The Nation, Monday, April 22, 2013). According to him, the boys asked him to take this message to the government –“we are angry, how can engineering graduates not have a job for eight years and the government keeps budgeting billions

of Naira annually for projects that are never implemented?” In another incident, a prominent human rights lawyer, Mike Ozekhome, his son and a lawyer from his chamber were kidnapped for 21 days while the four police men who attempted to rescue them were brutally killed in the process. While recounting his experience in the hideout of his kidnappers, Ozekhome reportedly said “My abductors were angry varsity graduates” (The Nation, 2013). These are just two out of several criminal occurrences where more than 2,500 lives have been wasted and many seemingly “lucky” ones have become permanently disabled within the last five years. Nigerian newspapers could have averted this situation had they given priority attention to development journalism by creating awareness, educate, mobilize and empower the citizens to see the various windows of opportunity in SMEs thereby liberating themselves from the shackle of poverty.

### **5.3.3 What was the degree of coverage given to privatization and economic reforms that occurred about the same time?**

This section discusses two critical economic issues (privatization and economic reforms) that occurred around the same time with SMEs. The research findings according to table 5.5 reveal that out of 792 stories, privatization recorded 259 or (32.7%) while economic reforms scored 13 (1.6%). When the coverage given to privatization 259 (32.7%) is compared with SMEs and related matters 409 (51.2%), it is evident that SME issues were more widely reported by the media than privatization.

Privatization is an International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescription and an integral part of the New World Economic Order (NWEO) which according to Obadan (2000) implies government’s divesting its equity holdings and control in the erstwhile public investments primarily, to create allowance for private sector to assume full ownership and control. The private sector agitation for privatization/commercialization dates back to 1965 at the peak of corruption and gross inefficiency that plagued previously owned public enterprises (Adeyemo and Salami, 2008).

Since early 1970s, the government in Nigeria (Federal, State and Local) had invested heavily into the small and medium sized commercial enterprises that cut across the various strata of the economy such as banking and insurance, oil and gas exploration and prospecting, manufacturing and real estate, hotel and tourism, media and telecommunication among others. A survey carried out by the Technical Committee for Privatization and Commercialization (TCPC) revealed that about 600 of such public enterprises belong to the Federal government while an estimated 900 belong to State and Local governments all of which accounted for between 30 and 40 percent of fixed capital investment and employment generation. The investment valued at over N36 billion were found to be run at great loss with about two percent yearly profit, less than 25 percent of the annual subvention from the owner governments (Zayyad, 1996).

As a result of the economic crisis of the late 70s and early 80s which diminished the resources from oil sector and the consequent inability of the owner governments to fund and sustain these unviable ventures, they (government) had to evolve a program of economic reform tagged privatization and commercialization, which was targeted at addressing the socio-economic and political problems of the moment. As experienced in every other nation where the program was implemented, despite its anticipated advantages, the implementation was greeted with loud resistance from the citizens who felt the joint national economic patrimony was going to be “shared” among few politicians and their cronies, the already pauperized Nigerians who quickly sensed that they will pay more for products and services under the new economic order and the labor movement which members may lose their jobs and severance packages immediately the ownerships of those enterprises changed. With these diverse interests at play, it is therefore not unexpected the degree and slant of media coverage given to the issue of privatization. For example, *Tell* magazine’s report of May 25, 1998 reads “Privatization: Government Appears not Serious” – NLC and March 24, 2003 “Privatization: A Policy Mired in Controversy”; also *Punch* story of January 7, 1998 reads “Negative Reactions Trail Privatization of NITEL” and July 10, 2002 “Union Vows to Resist Privatization of NEPA”. All these

stories are negative in their tone and intent; and looking at the headlines from their literal meanings is enough to describe the reality on ground. The media's negative slant for instance can be explained within the context of the fact that two of the organizations slated for privatization are two of the oldest and biggest media groups in Nigeria (*Daily Times* and *New Nigeria*).

According to Asekome 2008, p.282) "the role of the media in economic reform is to provide a feedback for the government and people" this means the media become the conveyor belt through which information passes from government to the people and vice versa. This study believes that what was expected to have been done during tense situations like this is for the media to inform and educate the people properly about the plans and programs of the government and the inherent benefits while on the part of the people, the media should let the government understand their fear and how the government could adjust its policy in line with public interest. The media ought to create a platform for robust debate between the public and the government so as to foster proper understanding on issue of national importance as privatization. Critical headlines with piercing adjectives but lacking in basic information on the way forward out of crises do not portray the media as a "Clearing House" for crises resolution and will not in any way boost national development.

Notwithstanding, we are not advocating that media should not portray issues as truthfully and objectively as they appear but what we are suggesting is that while the media maintain objectivity on one hand, it should also exercise caution in its reporting by being mindful of the likely implication of its negative reports to the outside world especially foreign investors who may want to invest into the enterprises slated for privatization. Operating in this manner is not only patriotic on the part of the media but it also follows a tenet of development media theory by McQuail (1987) cited by Anaeto et al., (2008, p.63) that "the media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy".



### **5.3.4 Do Nigerian newspapers and magazines differ in the amount of coverage given to SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development?**

Tables 5.4a and 5.4b reveal that there is no significant difference between the level of coverage and degree of prominence given to SMEs, poverty and corruption by Nigerian newspapers and magazines. The two tables show that SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development issues were largely reported as inside page stories. In table 5.4a, it was observed that for a period of 12 years which the research covered; out of the 575 reports on SMEs in the newspapers category, 526 (91.5%) were reported as ‘inside page’ stories. While editorial page recorded 21 (3.7%), only 4 stories (.7%) each were reported in the ‘front page’ (lead and minor) respectively. Similarly, the issue of ‘poverty’ appeared on the front page (Lead) only once (1.7%), and 3 times (5.0%) in the editorial page while other stories published on poverty 56 (92.3%) were inside page stories. The appearance of stories on ‘corruption’ is not too dissimilar. Only 3 stories (7.0%) made the front page (Lead) while 2 (4.7%) appeared in the front page (Minor). The editorial page recorded 6 (14.0%) whereas other stories on poverty 31 (72.1%) found a comfortable place inside the pages. The level of prominence given to SMEs in the magazines is also similar. Table 5.4b shows that out of 217 reports, 160 (73.7%) were reported as inside page stories while the ‘front page’ (lead and minor) recorded 6 (2.8%) and 5 (2.3%) respectively. Besides, only 5 editorials (2.3%) were written on SMEs within that same period. Diverse reasons could be adduced for the similarities in the newspapers and magazines’ reports on SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development issues. The economic and profit considerations as well as ownership influence, which oftentimes lead to subtle change of editorial focus from hard business and economic news, and investigative reporting to significantly political and human angle stories of celebrities, gossips, sex and sexuality, social, crime, tragedy and other bizarre occurrences affect both newspapers and magazines management in Nigeria. This usually happens when a medium tries to attract more readerships and advertisement patronage to stay afloat in times of dwindling financial resources. This is in line with Robert Estabrook’s assertion cited in Hulteng (1979) that “country journalism must

first be a business before it can be a profession”. This means that mass media must primarily consolidate themselves as financially viable and stable industry before they can professionally carry out their traditional responsibilities to the society.

### **5.3.5 Were the issues highlighted about SMEs, poverty and corruption aligned with the tenets of development media theory?**

As previously pointed out in the literature review on the relevance of the media in economic development of the nation, two main views of development media theory as outlined by McQuail (1987) cited in Oboh (2004, p.36) are apposite here:

“The freedom enjoy by the media should be opened to economic priorities and development needs of the society; and Media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy”.

Obviously, the economic status of a nation determines the way it is portrayed in the committee of nations. Hence, business reporting remains an indispensable function of the press which focuses on the social engineering of the society through information sharing, public education, advocacy and mass mobilization of citizens for vigorous participation in poverty reduction strategies, health improvement activities, gender equality, infrastructural development, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, ensuring human rights and good governance. However, for the most part of Nigeria’s economic reforms which partly seeks to develop the economy using SMEs as driving force, media reports according to this study appeared working contrary to the economic and development priorities of the nation neither is it in line with the nationally established policy.

Evidences show that the issues reported about SMEs, the volume of coverage, degree of prominence and tone of reporting might never translate to national development. It is an incontestable fact that the greatest challenge confronting SMEs development in Nigeria is lack of funding. Policy makers, entrepreneurs and researchers have

accepted that gross undercapitalization has been one of the greatest challenges of SMEs development in most countries especially, among developing nations though at varying degrees. Funds are needed to establish new business, purchase modern technology and raw materials, and to recapitalize existing business in order to stay afloat and compete favorably with others in the open market (SBA, 2000; UNCTAD, 2001; Ihua, 2009).

For the 12 years period which the research focused, 95 stories were reported by the four media houses on the issue of SMEs funding, translating to about 7 stories per year (see appendix3, p.304). Apart from the fact that 93 reports (97.9%) were published as inside page stories, no report on SMEs funding made the 'front' or 'back' page, there was also none in 'opinion' and 'analysis' while only 2 (2.1%) made 'editorial' page and one (1) or (11.6%) made the 'feature' page respectively (see appendix1, p.302 ). The expectation of this researcher is that the press should be comprehensively inquisitive and intelligent enough to unearth the reasons behind paucity of fund for SMEs development despite the various foreign aids running to millions of United States dollars from the international financial institutions, development agencies and governments at the various levels. For instance, reports in Punch, June 17, 2002 says "Banks' Supports for SMEs Jump to N7billion"; Punch, October 9, 2002 "SMEs to Benefit from US \$135million lending program"; Punch, November 11, 2003 "SMIEIS disburses N221 million to Ogun Industrialists"; Guardian, May3, 2006 "SMEEIS' fund Hits N41.4 billion"; Tell, September 11, 2006 "SMEs face fresh hurdles in assessing N50 billion agricultural loan". The above are some of the reports gleaned from the media which we felt should have prompted the media to probe into how the various funds were disbursed, what were the indices used, who are the beneficiaries, are they real or imaginary, if they are real, how have they invested the fund, were the funds really invested or diverted into an unintended project?. These are various story angles we expect competent development journalists should explore not only to inform the audience but particularly, to investigate claims and counter-claims and discover who did what, when, where and how. There are entrepreneurs who are not enlightened enough about how to access funds from the financial market, it is the responsibility of the

media to educate them by providing vital information to guide them. There are yet many unexpected people who succeeded in obtaining funding for their business through backdoors but eventually diverted the fund to a different project not officially known to the credit granting institution. This is one bad culture the media should be able to discourage and wherever such conduct is discovered, the media as watchdog in the society should be able to blow alarm by mentioning names however well placed the perpetrators.

Another challenge strongly confronting SMEs sub-sector in Nigeria is infrastructural deficit. Infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunication, transport (road, water and rail network) and pipe-borne water are core requirements for economic growth. Constant electricity supply is particularly very critical as power source to run the economy and sustain SMEs expansion. It is however; most discouraging to note that for more than thirty years, Nigerians and indeed business communities have been suffering from epileptic power supply and this explains why most entrepreneurs have to run machines and equipment on diesel or petrol generator at enormous cost. Efficient transport system is another essential social facility that serves as catalyst to the optimal performance of the economy. From North to South and East to West of Nigeria, apart from not constructing new roads and rail lines, almost all the existing roads have become more or less death traps while the railway tracks have been overgrown with weeds. Worse still, the entire locomotive engine bequeathed to Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) by the colonial government at independence in 1960 has become totally unserviceable thus making the cost of moving goods from one part of the country to another unreasonably high. The government all over the states have tactically abandoned the provision of public water and made it the responsibility of individuals to provide boreholes for domestic as well as for industrial use. The cost of providing these services, apart from other costs to be borne by entrepreneurs is prohibitive and these evidently make running businesses in Nigeria financially burdensome and it's not surprising, the stunted growth and high mortality rate that have characterized the industrial sector over the years (Elkan, (1995) cited in Mambula, 2002). The state of infrastructural facilities is so frustrating

to the point that even large companies are relocating to the neighboring Ghana where the facilities are comparatively better (Fatai, 2011). It is no exaggeration that an industry that fuels economic flight and has such huge challenge to contend with will hardly contribute to development.

Expectedly, a problem of this magnitude deserves nothing less than comprehensive and sustained coverage by the media that have accepted national development as its focus. Our research findings however revealed that for 12 years covered by the study, the media reported 16 stories or (2.0%) on 'infrastructural development and SMEs'. The breakdown according to publications revealed fairly skewed distribution. Except one 'editorial' (6.3%), all the other 15 stories or (93.8%) were reported as inside page stories. Findings on the position of stories also reveal that none of the 16 stories was published in the 'front' or 'back' page, while 8 or (50%) and 7 or (43.8%) are 'features' and 'straight news' respectively. The tone of the stories also revealed that 8 stories (50%) were in the 'negative' while 6 or (37.5%) were 'positive' and 2 or (12.5%) were 'neutral'.

Corruption as an underlying factor has been identified as responsible for infrastructural inefficiency in Nigeria. Corruption, though a global issue, but has become a thriving industry in Nigeria (Dike, 2005). Like a sore thumb, corruption has been recognized as the single most devastating factor crippling not only SMEs but has almost systematically reduced Nigeria to a failed state. What acceptable reason can anyone give that Nigeria as the 6<sup>th</sup> largest oil producing nation in the world with exporting capacity of about two million barrel per day surprisingly resorted to importing fuel for its local consumption? This is the base level to which corruption has dragged Nigeria. All the four refineries built by the Federal government have been wrecked and unable to produce enough to meet the local consumption rate not to talk of having extra to sell to the neighboring nations that are looking up to her for supply. Even while still importing, within a space of two years of the present government of President Jonathan, about N5 trillion has developed wing and flew away courtesy of corrupt government officials in collaboration with

some oil importers (*Punch Newspaper*, 2012). The cost of corruption is monumental. According to Obayelu (2007, p.1),

“Corruption strangles economic growth and reduces economic performance of the country. Corruption diminishes the country’s image and engenders loss of revenue. It devalues the quality of human life, robs schools, agricultural sectors, hospital and welfare services of funds. It discourages foreign investments leading to decrease in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). It aggravates inequality, desecrates the rule of law and undermines the legitimacy and stability of government. It slows down administrative processes thereby making ineffective the implementation of government reforms policies”.

The cost of all underhand dealings when factored into the production process heightens the cost of production and selling prices beyond other competitors in the world market. As a result of this horrible situation, in the month of January 2012 Nigeria was very close to a revolution as millions of Nigerians took to the street in what was christened ‘anti-fuel subsidy removal protests’. The Nigerians in diasporas also joined the angry protesters at home in a solidarity protest ‘Occupy Nigeria Protests’ which occurred in the premises of Nigerian Embassies in London, Toronto, Switzerland and Washington, DC on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2012 respectively (Think Africa Press, 2012; Sahara Reporters, 2012).

Going by our findings from the cross tabulation of tables 5.5 and 5.8, (see appendix 1, p.313) 43 stories or (5.4%) were reported on ‘corruptions and SMEs’, out of which 3 (7.0%) appeared in the ‘Front page’ (lead), 2 (4.7%) ‘Front page’ (minor) and 1 (2.3%) in the ‘back page’. Looking at the ‘position of stories’, there were 6 (14.0%) in the editorial page and 31 (72.1%) appeared inside the pages. The intent of the stories also reveals that 14 or (32.6%) were on advocacy while 22 or (51.2%) and 7 or (16.3%) were actually meant to inform and educate the people respectively. The breakdown according to years shows that less than 4 reports were written on corruption per year by the media selected for study. The

above statistics has thrown up two salient points. The points are that within the period of study, far less than desired attention was devoted to the issue of corruption in the media; an indication that its traditional watchdog role is seriously questionable. The simple derivable truth here is that within the period covered by this research, socio-economic development was not the prime focus of the Nigerian press.

### **5.3.6 What were the sources of SMEs and governance stories reported by the Nigerian media?**

This section details the sources of the stories reported about SMEs and government's development policy by the press. Table 5.13 shows that the principal characters of stories on SMEs in both newspapers and magazines were dominated by 'government officials' 199 (25.1%). This is apart from the stories on 'President' 55 (6.9%), 'National Assembly' 9 (1.1%), 'Public Corporations' 24 (3.0%), 'Central Bank' 25 (3.2%) and 'Officials of SMEs Regulatory Agency' 32 (4.0%) all translated to 344 or (43.4%).

Since government officials constituted the major characters in SMEs stories, it is therefore not surprising as indicated in Table 7 that 'event coverage' 174 (22.0%), 'interviews' 129 (16.3%), government (agencies) 67(8.5%), government (ministries) 36 (4.5%) and press releases 36 (4.5%) formed the largest sources of news stories.

The rational conclusion one can easily make from these configuration is that the press do not give prominence to SMEs issues other than those involving government officials. This is not unexpected the fact that the period under study could be regarded as a transition era from 16 year period of military rule to participatory democracy. The first two years (1977-1999), was the period of civilian struggle with the military that ushered the nation into the fourth republic while 1999- 2008 was a trial period for democratic rule. The media, especially the prints was the arrowhead of the struggle to wrestle the political power from the military establishment. The euphoria that greeted Nigeria's return to participatory democracy is a pointer to the fact that Nigerians appreciate democracy and they want to participate in politics and

wish to be served with balanced and regular political information. That being the case, we may rightly deduce that the media used its right to editorial judgment to give preference to political issues as against economic matters which is the focus of this study. Notwithstanding, it is pertinent to mention at this point that there is a symbiotic relationships between economics and politics which the development media theory attempts to encourage. Perhaps this accounts for why Oboh (2004) posits that the social, political and economic developments of a nation are contingent on the worth of policies and programs evolved by the political class. This also means that to achieve national development presupposes that the media must play impartial role by maintaining a balance of socio-political and economic coverage of the nation's political and economic landscape.

### **5.3.7 What influence does the press report on SMEs, poverty and corruption have on public perception towards Nigerian government?**

In this section, based on the research findings, we shall discuss the influence which press reports on SMEs, poverty and corruption have on public perception towards Nigerian government was also studied. Of the 60 respondents (stakeholders) selected for one-on-one interview, 48 or (80%) believed that the mass media have important roles to play in SMEs development. Nine (9) or (15%) did not anticipate any role from the media while the remaining 3 or (5%) preferred to be neutral. Further probe into public perception revealed that 17 respondents or (28.3%) rated the media performance "excellent", 7 or (11.6%) rated them "good". While thirty two or (53.3%) scored them "poor", the last 4 or (6.6%) remained neutral. On whether the media have failed in its social responsibility to the public on SMEs coverage, 18 respondents or (30%) disagreed with the statement while 33 respondents or (55%) agreed with the opinion because, according to them, "most of the stories reported by the media are majorly what the government or its officials said while they de-emphasize or out-rightly leave out whatever the public said" however, the remaining 2 or (3.3%) would prefer to be neutral. On what the future holds for SMEs in Nigeria, almost all the respondents 58 or (96.6%) believed there is better future for



SMEs in Nigeria as in most developed economy, if the issue of corruption is frontally addressed.

In their responses to the question if they believe there is no effective coverage of SMEs, poverty and corruption in Nigeria, 32 respondents (53.3%) agreed while 28 or (46.6%) disagreed. On what they regarded as barriers to effective coverage by the media, 56 respondents (93.3%) offered sundry reasons as constituting barriers. These will be fully discussed in subsequent section.

The press is an important part of the mass media in Nigeria and on it a significant portion of the population relied for up-to-date reports about business, politics and other issues of life that constantly require taking informed decision. According to McNelly (1966) cited in Omojola (2011), the press can only contribute to socio-economic and political development if among others things it is accessible for use by all regardless of social status; if its report contents are consistent with societal transformation and affects the attitudes and dispositions of the public towards accepting modern ideas, methods and products. This presupposes that before the audience can accept the media as performing its traditional functions of educating, informing, watchdog and entertainment, they must have ease of access to it, such media must constantly report news that are not only relevant but must be attention catching to them.

If the above characteristics are juxtaposed with the ratings of the respondents in the unstructured interview that was conducted; again, it can be easily inferred that the mass media have performed poorly in the coverage of SMEs. This assessment can be confirmed by the respondents' answers to 'question two' where 32 (53.3%) out of 60 respondents rated the media performance 'poor' as against 17 (28.3%) and 7 (11.6%) who rated them 'excellent' and 'good' respectively. Lagos state where these media organizations are domiciled incidentally is also the commercial nerve center of Nigeria where about 45 percent of SMEs operate from. It is however unimaginable that for the 12 years which the study covers, only 176 news reports were published on 'SMEs in general' by the four media under study. For example, the cross-tabulation of tables 5.1 and 5.5 (see appendix 3, p.305) shows that within that period,

*Punch* published only 60 stories and *Guardian* 76. This means that it took *Punch* 73 days or 2 months and 17 days to publish one story while it took *Guardian* about 58 days or 2 months to publish one story on SMEs. The frequency of the magazines series is even more worrisome. While *Tell* published 16 stories, *The News* published 24 stories in 12 years. These translate to only one story in about 274 and 183 days for *Tell* and *The News* magazines respectively.

When asked whether the media have failed in its social responsibility to the public on SMEs coverage, 18 respondents (30%) disagreed with the statement while 33 respondents or (55%) agreed because, according to them, “most of the stories reported by the media are majorly what the government or its officials said while they downplay or out-rightly leave out whatever the citizens and other stakeholders are saying”. This observation finds expression in the critical position maintained by the forces that initially opposed the tenet of development journalism and dismissed it as the journalism of “government –say-so” which they argued usually denies people their freedom of speech and right to information. It is in line with this position that Domatob and Hall (1983) has also pointed out that development journalism gives unnecessary coverage to the government at the expense of the public. This, to a greater extent confirmed our observation in Table 5.13 which shows that ‘government and its officials’ as principal characters dominated the news with 199 reports (25.1%). This finding also exposes the inefficiency of the media in the coverage of SMEs which is observed to be contrary to the tenet of agenda setting theory of the media that has been identified as the process by which the media report an issue repeatedly and extensively until it is recognized by the public as a matter of prime importance. We need to recall here that the fundamental assumption of agenda setting discussed earlier in chapter two of this study is that the more coverage given to the issue of SMEs by the media, the more important it would be perceived by the people and the more significant other media will probably perceive it which is what is referred to as inter-media agenda (Coleman, et al (2009). This connotes that if SMEs is perceived as an important development issue which must be reported, the media will not only limit the coverage to ‘straight and inside page news’ but there

will be follow-up reports in form of analysis, editorial, features and advertorial on regular basis until it becomes registered in the mind of the people. In summary, going by McNelly's four conditions and the frequency of the news report on SMEs, the four publications are believed to have performed below expectation. In other words, there is no way they could have created any positive perception in the public's mind judging by their performance rating.

Notwithstanding, there are possible explanations for the preponderantly low media coverage of SMEs as evident in this study. One is the study's finding which revealed low number of advertisement insertions in the four publications during the 12 year period. The study shows that only nine advertorial slots on SMEs were published by the four media under study. Authorities of mass media have observed that without advertising patronage, the media industry cannot survive. According to Stromberg (2004), mass media organizations derive between 60 and 80 percent of their income from advertisement placement while the remaining 20 percent are generated from the sales of copies and other ancillary services. While corroborating this claim, Tesler (1966) put it more bluntly stating that, newspapers without advertisement hardly survive, adding that the economy of a successful media management is predicated upon its ability to get advertising patronage from its reading or listening public. It follows from this that media outfits will normally want to give generous news coverage to their advert sponsors than those who do not advertise. This much we observed from the frequency of report about government and government officials in our research findings. In Nigeria most media houses, print and electronics are either owned by the government or members of the ruling parties at the Federal or state level and this explains why government sponsored advertisement constitute about 70 percent of media adverts in Nigeria. However, the few independent ones that do not fall into the above category usually have one form of business or the other with the government. It is therefore not surprising why the editorial direction keeps changing times and again.

Another reason that may be responsible for low coverage of any government program such as SMEs is what the respondents to question six of the interview called “inaccessibility to information”. This may also be the reason why Ochonogor (2007, p.275) declared that “most government initiated programs in Nigeria are usually conceptualized and executed in secrecy”. However laudable the program may be, government officials usually keep the media at safe distance knowing that if they are too close, men of the press may want to ask certain questions that borders on probity and accountability. This is why government programs are usually enmeshed in corruption and are usually designed to fail right from conception.

In Nigeria today, poverty and hunger remains the greatest problem confronting about 75% of her over 165 million populations and for which solution is still being sought (Nigerian Tribune, May 14, 2013). The study has also discovered that majority of the social problems experienced in most urban centers are products of mass unemployment among young able-bodied Nigerians. It has been observed from the study that there is a strong tie between poverty, SMEs and development. All over the world, SMEs remains the catalyst of employment generation and most potent instrument for poverty reduction and economic sustainability.

The United Nations in year 2000 constituted a global compact group with the mandate to look into the issue of biting poverty affecting most developing nations of the world including Nigeria. The group came up with eight interdependent goals otherwise known as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were adopted by all the member states as framework for building a better world by the year 2015. Incidentally, poverty and hunger eradication was the first among the goals. Nigeria as a signatory to these goals must have prompted Obasanjo, who was then a newly elected President to initiate SMEs development as an economic blueprint to jump-start the comatose economy, generate employment and reduce poverty rate.

As we conclude this discussion chapter, three salient deductions can be made:

Firstly, looking at the number of years (12) covered in this research, vis-à-vis the number of reports on SMEs analyzed, and the study clearly shows that both newspapers and magazines did not give priority attention to the coverage of business issues especially SMEs, privatization and poverty that became popular around the same time. Table 5 of our findings shows that ‘SMEs and related issues’ were reported 469 times (59.2%) ‘Privatization’ 259 (32.7%) while ‘poverty/hunger’ was reported 60 times (7.6%) respectively.

Secondly, the study also shows that the amount of coverage and the degree of prominence given to SMEs and related issues were not intended to translate to national development. For example, within the 12 years period which the research focused, 95 stories were reported by the four media houses on the issue of ‘SMEs funding’, translating to about 7 stories per year (see appendix 3, p.313). Apart from the fact that 93 reports (97.9%) were published as inside page stories, no report on ‘SMEs funding’ made the ‘front’ or ‘back’ page, there was also none in ‘opinion’ and ‘analysis’ while only 2 (2.1%) made ‘editorial’ page and only one (11.6%) made the ‘feature’ page respectively (see appendix 1, p.311). Also, within the 12 years covered by the study, the media reported 16 stories or (2.0%) on ‘infrastructural development and SMEs’. The breakdown according to publications revealed fairly skewed distribution. Except one ‘editorial’ (6.3%), all the other 15 stories or (93.8%) were reported as inside page stories. Besides, none of the 16 stories was published in the ‘front’ or ‘back’ page, while 8 or (50%) and 7 or (43.8%) are ‘features’ and ‘straight news’ respectively (see appendix 1, p.313). The tone of the stories also revealed that 8 stories (50%) were in the ‘negative’ while 6 or (37.5%) were ‘positive’ and 2 or (12.5%) were ‘neutral’ (see appendix 5, p.315). Also on the subject of ‘corruption and SMEs’, (see appendix 1, p.311) 43 stories or (5.4%) were reported out of which 3 (7.0%) appeared in the ‘Front page’ (lead), 2 (4.7%) ‘Front page’ (minor) and only one (2.3%) in the ‘back page’. Looking at the ‘position of stories’, there were 6 or (14.0%) in the editorial page, and 31 (72.1%) appeared as inside page stories. The intent of the stories also reveals that 14 or (32.6%) were on advocacy while 22 or (51.2%) and 7 or (16.3%) were actually meant to inform and

educate the people respectively. The breakdown according to years shows that less than four reports were written on corruption per year by the four media selected for study. Going by the above statistics, the level of coverage and the degree of prominence given to SMEs in this study could not translate to national development.

Thirdly, the study reveals that although business and economic issues were not adequately reported by Nigerian media within the period covered in this research nevertheless, 'SMEs and related issues' were comparatively reported than 'privatization issue' that occurred around the same time. The research finding shows that out of 792 stories analyzed in the data, reports on privatization accounted for 259 or (32.7%). This is comparatively lesser than the reports on SMEs and related matters, which recorded 469 or (59.2%).

## CHAPTER SIX

### Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 6.1 Summary

The study titled ‘media coverage of SMEs in Nigeria: the imperative for national development’ is generally aimed at evaluating the amount of coverage and the degree of prominence given to SMEs by the Nigerian press through their reports and by extension, determine whether the reports in any way has translated to socio-economic development of Nigeria.

To achieve the above outlined objectives, seven research questions were drawn for which the study provided answers. The questions are:

1. What was the volume of media coverage given to SMEs, poverty and corruption?
2. To what extent has the prominence given to SMEs and development issues reflected the expectation of agenda setting theory?
3. What was the degree of coverage given to privatization and economic reforms that occurred about the same time?
4. Do Nigerian newspapers and magazines differ in the amount of coverage given to SMEs, poverty and infrastructural development?
5. Were the issues highlighted about SMEs, poverty and employment generation aligned with the tenets of development media theory?
6. What were the sources of the stories on SMEs and governance reported by the Nigerian media?
7. What influence does the press reporting of SMEs and governance have on public perception towards Nigerian government?

In order to ensure the systematic progression of the study, it is divided into six different chapters. The first is the introductory chapter which detailed the fundamental problems foundational to this research topic. The issue of poverty as a

product of bad governance is portrayed as a national problem that needed to be addressed through nationally evolved socio-economic policy. SMEs as it were, are universally believed to be the main engine of economic growth and a catalyst for employment generation and poverty reduction. The chapter also tried to see if there is any relationship between the mass media organ and the economy and specifically, it attempted to evaluate whether the press through its mass dissemination of business and economic information has played any role in strengthening SMEs to achieve the desired growth rate thus, leading to national development in general and specifically, by reducing the rate of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. The chapter is subdivided into nine parts for easy systematic discussion.

Chapter two focused on the theoretical framework. The study was housed under three different theories: the agenda setting by McCombs and Shaw, the social responsibility theory by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm and the development media theory by McQuails. As media working theories, they offered customized experience; guidelines, techniques, tradition and principles that simplify the arrangement of facts, discuss and put them in perspective in order to predict the outcome of the study. The major premise of the social responsibility theory (SRT) is that the freedom which the media relish demands concomitant obligations. SRT specifically emphasized that the press which enjoys a privileged position in the state is obliged to be responsible to the society by influencing socio-economic changes and by paying sustained attention to reporting all issues that affects the society particularly the developmental issues. Using development media theory (DMT) as a construct for this study is to provide a direction through which the media performance is evaluated in relation to giving priority attention to news and information on what Folarin (2005, p.34) refers to as “national development tasks of integration and socio-economic modernization”. In other words, DMT presupposes that the press freedom must be used to advance economic gain for the society. On its part, the agenda setting theory (AST) decides in advance what matters are considered most significant at a particular time in a society. The press does this by heightening the amount of coverage and degree of prominence given to SMEs growth and related



matters through headline display, editorializing and analyzing issues and the collective media-effect on the audience over time. In the main, we explore how the mass media have been able to operate within the principles and tenets of the three theories in view of more recent developments. For example, the development media theory stipulates that “the media must carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy”. The media definitely ran into problem of properly defining a national policy in a multilingual and multi-ethnic society like Nigeria where there are nations within nation. Since independence in 1960, attempts by the Federal government to formulate national policies has always been burdened with difficulties and complexities resulting from ethnic misunderstanding. The media ownership configuration is another perspective which if juxtaposed with the multi-ethnic make-up of the country made matter more complicated. Nigeria is divided into six geo-political zones each with six states. Apart from the South-west and the South-east zones that are homogenous in language and culture, the other four are largely heterogeneous. Another related issue that created more complexity is the fact that Nigeria, though a Federal Republic but does not practice true federalism. Instead, it operates a unitary system of government where every policy evolves from the Federal government thus making the 36 states and 774 local governments its annexes.

This ethnic composition coupled with the political structure have constituted significant problem in the way of every national policy and this has remained a clog in the wheel of national development. Every supposed national policy is usually interpreted with ethnic bias and if it appears unfavorable to a group of people, it will be strongly opposed. Besides, each of the media houses is owned by different people from the different ethnic units that constitute the states or geo-political zones; all with different views and idea of national policy. Incidentally, the media have to operate under these complex arrangements. This explains why the media in Nigeria oftentimes have problem with the government when trying to define national issue based on many factors that are not truly national. Despite the seeming obstacles, the

media has continued to carry out its traditional roles and contributed its quota to the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

The second part of chapter two traced the historical background of the media in Nigeria from the 'pre-press age' to the 'media era', before and after independence in 1960; it evaluated and reviewed the role of the mass media in the build-up to independent and the post-independent time. The study also had a retrospective view of media performance in the face of limitations to its freedom and how the media fought and won several battles with the post-independent military governments and its anti-democratic stand to install a democratic government, which later enthroned freedom of information regime that the media and everybody cherishes today.

The third chapter which dealt with the review of literature isolated each component part of the research topic for easy definition and characterization, and it explored how each is knitted together to engender meaningful interrelationships. To accomplish this, the study had a deeper look at the concept of SMEs from global perspective; it identified and appraised the roles it plays in employment generation, reduction of poverty and socio-economic inequality, general industrialization and development of many advanced economies. While the study did an overview of Nigeria's economic policies between 1960 and 1999, it embarked on SMEs comparative assessment to determine whether or not it has played similar role in Nigeria's economy and if not what factors were responsible for its low performance. The study observed that several major and minor researches have been done on SMEs internationally but discovered a gap in the passive involvement of women in national development through SMEs activities. The issue of poverty in relation to national development also constituted a core issue in this study and the position of the study is that the old school definitions and perspectives of development that brandished huge foreign reserve, gross development product (GDP), gross national product (GNP) and such highfalutin economic jargons while a significant proportion of the populations live in abject poverty is nothing but modern economic deception initiated and orchestrated by western scholars. Lastly, this chapter also traced the

origin and growth of development journalism and its interface with investigative journalism to foster sustainable development among the developing nations. Particularly, it examined the roles which communication media had played in achieving national development goals among developed economies and why it could not play anything less among developing nations including Nigeria. As a conclusion to this chapter, the study observed certain factors that constituted obstacles to media effectiveness in the coverage of development issues and how it can be strengthened to overcome them. The review was done in order to identify what areas were covered in previous researches, the disparity between what they did and the present work and by extension; it attempted to construct a solid background and a model for the conduct of this research.

Chapter four detailed the systematic approach adopted in gathering data for this study. Since the research is set to study the manifest contents of the selected publications' coverage of SMEs, qualitative content analysis was used in conjunction with interview method to gather the required data, summarize code, interpret and discuss the findings. The study populations were all the newspapers and magazines published in Nigeria during the period of study but only two newspapers and two magazines were purposively selected for the study. Altogether, a total of 2,304 editions of the four publications were selected over a period of 12 years.

The fifth chapter is where the data collected were analyzed and the findings discussed using descriptive qualitative technique with simple tables and bar graphs showing the frequency distribution of variables. The discussion of the findings was guided by seven basic research questions drawing inferences from the literature review while building arguments for and against the findings.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

In all, the study found that the Nigerian press did not perform their responsibilities creditably well especially in the areas of business and development reporting. The amount of coverage and the degree of prominence given to 'SMEs growth',

'privatization' and 'poverty/hunger' as illustrated in tables 5.5, 5.6 and 5.8 is abysmally low in view of the 12 years covered by the study. This is contrary to the assumptions of the Social Responsibility Theory by Siebert *et al.*, and Development Media Theory by McQuail which state that the freedom of information which the media enjoy must be used to advance the economic priorities and development needs of the society in line with national interest. Although this study agrees with the part of the assumption which mandates the media to give priorities to economic and development needs of the nation however, from this study's findings particularly in Nigeria, this study disagrees with the part of McQuail's assumption that says 'development tasks must be carried out in line with the national interest'. Nigeria as a country is heterogeneous and the populations are diverse along ethnicity, culture, religion, language and political lineage. In this plural-ethnic society with over 400 groups according to (Omu 2008), what is national interest, who defines it and how is it defined? This is the problem Nigeria has contended with since its amalgamation in 1914 by Sir Lord Lugard. This is also the challenge facing the media as it attempts to carry out its statutory roles. The controversial issues of Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and Sharia court debates as they affect the Northern region, the clamor for resource control as it affects the South-East and South-South oil producing regions, and the incessant call for fiscal federalism or regional government autonomy from the South-west are different contentious issues that became nationalized at various times depending on where the ruling President of the nation comes from. These also form part of the complex national issues which the media find difficult to deal with. Oftentimes, the media have been labeled rebels as they seek to report and analyze economic or developmental issues contrary to what the government of the day believes. This is because development needs of each region and state are not the same. Even in the same state where there are more than five ethnic groups, their development needs differ. If the development media therefore carry out its role in line with McQuail's assumption on national interest, it will create more problems than it attempts to solve. The reason being that national interest is a complex issue to define especially in a multilingual and multi-ethnic

society like Nigeria. In fact, it becomes matter made worse if such nation operates a Federal system of government as in Nigeria and India.

It is important to mention that the complexity of defining national issue and using it as working guide according to McQuail has international implications for the practice of development journalism in most developing nations of Africa and Asia where ethnicity and language diversity are widespread. For many years, India has been a multilingual and pluricultural society with hundreds of mother tongues, 18 constitutionally-recognized official languages of the states, and two official languages of the Union of India, Hindi and English (Parasher, 2001). Giving this heterogeneity and complex political structure of India, it is therefore not unexpected the difficulties and complications that usually attend the task of formulating national development policy let alone communicating the policies among the constituent ethnic groupings in the North and South.

The situation in Africa is not different. In the Democratic Republic of Congo for example, with a population of about 77 million, there are about 200 ethnic groups although; Lingala, Kikongo, Kiswahili and Tshiluba are the four nationally recognized languages apart from French which is the official language but altogether, about 242 languages are spoken in DRC. How does the press report development issues within these ethnic configurations?

It is pertinent to note that many of the countries having complex heterogeneity across the world are observed to have similar problem while attempting to formulate and execute national development policies. The preponderance of poverty in a plural-ethnic society is therefore not unexpected because every policy put in place to foster development however good, are usually misinterpreted on the ground of society's diversities and in most cases, good policies have been sacrificed on the altar of ethnic parochialism. According to Oboh (2004) it is also a known fact that the economic growth and general development of any nation are dependent on how well the private sector is able to implement the policies and programs designed by the political class.

It is necessary to mention that no matter how good a policy may appear to be, its success can only be determined by the degree of understanding and active participation of a united people. This is where the role of the media becomes relevant to, through professional standards of in-formativeness, truth, accuracy; objectivity and balance give equal voice to every segment of the society in news coverage and reporting (Anaeto *et al.*, 2008).

### **6.3 Contributions to Knowledge**

The study has made some modest contributions to knowledge which are worthy of mention. First and foremost, this study has provoked a theoretical debate that questions the workability of McQuail's principle in development media theory as it affects Nigeria and all heterogeneous nations having structural complexity. The issues of poverty and poverty reduction are foundational to this thesis. Poverty as a product of bad governance has been portrayed as a national problem that needed to be addressed through nationally evolved socio-economic policy. The nature and origin of poverty in Nigeria necessitated its explanation using development media theory by McQuail, which is believed to possess customized experience, principles and guidelines relevant to providing a direction through which the media performance can be evaluated. According to McQuail (1987, p.121) development media theory states that "the media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy". Going by this assertion, McQuail holds that the freedom which the media savor should be subjected to the overriding national interests of social, economic and political development priorities. Specifically, from the literature review (see page 77-78) it has been observed that the concept of national policy is complex and difficult to define especially in heterogeneous societies like Nigeria, India, Democratic Republic of Congo and some other nations of the world. This is because there are policies that often present itself as "national" but which, if analyzed properly are nothing but sectional. Attempts to objectively differentiate between real national interest and sectional concern usually pitch the media against the government. There is great possibility that the government may formulate a wrong policy in name of "national interest" and if the

media accept such as working guide, it will produce negative development. Germaine to the above is the study's discovery that the national mass media (prints and electronics) as are presently structured are not only elitist in contents and coverage but appear not to give voice to the rural populace who constitute a significant percentage of Nigeria's population (Akinleye and Ojebode, 2004). The position of this study is that while the media accept to carry out poverty reduction tasks in a country, it must critically and professionally evaluate such policy so as to ensure it falls within the ambit of true national development policy. Besides, the media among others must examine the relevance of a development project to national and local needs; differentiate between a policy and its actual implementation; and distinguish between its impacts on a larger population as claimed by the government and as it was actually experienced by the people. This practice transcends the level of ordinary development reporting to the border of investigative journalism. Against the above backgrounds, this thesis has established that national mass media (prints and electronics) are incapable of discharging McQuail's expected roles effectively in a plural society especially where ethnicity is wrongly mixed with politics, religion and other variables. Instead, it believes that only community media can accomplish that goal. The use of community media to communicate development messages runs contrary to McQuail's prescription of press reporting in line with national ideology (Aggarwala, 2005). This is because community media can easily see through the deceptions embedded in national programs as they will always do critical questioning and evaluation of any seemingly national policy that appears to only benefit certain section of the nation. Therefore, for development messages to reach the widely divergent grassroots, community media have to be encouraged and strengthened to serve the information needs of the host communities.

Secondly, another contribution is the reality of recapitalization of the media industry in Nigeria so as to withstand adverse economic situation. The study has revealed the challenges confronting the media industry, which is most vividly illustrated by high mortality rate resulting from a number of factors such as under-funding, shrinking advertisement patronage, threat from the new media, dearth of committed media professionals, soaring cost of equipment and raw materials, a combination of which

leads to poor editorial outputs and escalated cost of production with its adverse consequences on the general performance and economic sustainability of most media organizations. For example, it has been revealed in this study that the lifespan of most newspapers in Nigeria is between two and nine years. According to Omu (1978) cited by Owolabi and O'Neill (2013a), a total of 51 newspapers were established between 1880 and 1937, a period of 57 years. Of all the 51 newspapers, except *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Service* that survived till early 1960s, only one (1) *Daily Times* survives till date, all others were rested. Also, between 1937 and 1960 a period of 23 years, 39 newspapers were established, only *Nigerian Tribune* is still publishing. Out of 168 newspapers and 48 magazines established between 1960 and 2008, only 43 newspapers and 15 magazines are currently circulating (Owolabi and O'Neill, 2013a). Besides, of all the existing media houses still operating in Nigeria today, only six newspapers and three magazines can truly be classified as national because of their wider circulation and coverage network. Others are better seen as either regional, state or community based publication. In a nation of about 165 million people and with about 56 percent literacy rate, that statistics is not good for development. By juxtaposing this background with the evidences of low press coverage and less prominence given to SMEs as observed from the findings and discussion chapter, this study believes that an industry that experiences such high level of instability and mortality rate will not contribute significantly to national development.

This study has observed that recapitalization will make the media well grounded, self-sustaining, independent and objective in reportage, and to checkmate the prevalence of high mortality rate. Recapitalization which is the changing of the financial structure of a company to make it viable and profitable involves injecting funds into an organization's financial base through issuance of new security, and merger and/or acquisition of two or more related media to form bigger partnership. Recapitalizing companies through the stock market has been recognized internationally as a very efficient way to shore-up an organization's capital base. Globally, many companies that would have become extinct as a result of



underfunding have become thriving conglomerates today. As earlier discussed in this study, (see page 187) corporations that cut across manufacturing, engineering, banking, insurance among others have had their capital base soared through the stock market. Nigerian media can also follow the same recovery pathway to catapult itself to financial independence where it will be able to contribute to national development.

Thirdly, in this modern day of satellite technology coupled with a wide range of information and communication organs, development communication has become rather multifaceted and complex to the extent that the traditional mass media (prints and electronics) are believed to be grossly inadequate to carry development messages to the grassroots which is the bedrock of development. It has been discovered that traditional media alone cannot make much development impacts in a nation like Nigeria, which is so diverse and polarized along ethnic, religion, language and culture. Other factors such as illiteracy level, infrastructural deficit especially electricity, have also been identified as clogs in the wheel of prints and electronic media as they attempt to reach the rural communities. The study has revealed the inability of the prints and electronic media to carry the doctrine of poverty reduction through SMEs growth to the rural communities. This study therefore believes that development communication can only be effective by using a combination of both traditional mass media (print and electronic), new media (face book, YouTube, Internet, websites, computer multimedia, CD-ROMS and DVDs), and indigenous media (gong, town-criers, market, village and age-grade forums, mobile theatre and drama group); youth groups, mass campaign, workshops and opinion leaders).

Fourthly, the study also discovered that the gender discriminations embedded in Nigeria's socio-cultural, religious and political structure are the reasons why women participate less in SMEs and as such, become vulnerable in times of economic crisis. With Nigeria's population of about 165million, about 79.2 million (i.e. 49%) are females. Of this aggregate, 60% that is 47.52 million reside in rural communities where they constitute the rural workforce; are uneducated, poor, disadvantaged and are denied of basic rights. Bhasin (1992) cited in Lanahun (2003) notes that women work two-thirds of the total daily work hours in the world but get paid for only one-

tenth thus; they own only one-hundredth of the properties in the world. The United Nations Development Funds for Women UNDFW (2001) also notes that women constitute two-thirds of the 876 adults globally who cannot read or write while 60% of the 77million children not attending school or drop outs are girls. Women in Nigeria lag far behind men in most socio-economic and political development indicators. Although more women than men registered during voters registration exercise, yet only 9% of those who stood for elective offices in the April 2011 elections were women. While the upper chamber of the National Assembly has 109 members, 8 (7.3%) are females; the lower chamber has 360 members and only 22 (6.1%) are females. Out of 36 Ministers appointed 6 (25%) are women the same is for Permanent Secretaries and Directors of government ministries and parastatals (NBS, 2011; Owolabi and O'Neill, 2014). The gender discrimination is no less visible in this study (see Table 5.14, p.222) where only 98 stories (12.4%) as against men's 446 (56.3%) were reported about women participation in SMEs for a period of 12years. This lopsidedness can be explained within the context of educationally disadvantage state of most women and girl child. This study therefore concludes that women have to be empowered educationally and financially to participate in SMEs activities as a way of breaking the web of poverty that has long plagued and incapacitated them from contributing to socio-economic activities and national development in Nigeria.

Fourthly, this study has observed a disturbing incidence of rural-urban information imbalance, a domestic replica of New World Information and Communication Imbalance (NWICI) experienced between developed and developing nations. For some years, a lot of development messages are being propagated but with marginal benefits to Nigerians simply because the messages, apart from not tailored to Nigeria, the marginalized groups are not properly empowered to benefit from it. Most of these messages did not take cognizance of Nigeria's peculiarities especially on ethnic, cultural, language and religious diversities as well as her infrastructural deficits. As a result, the messages are either lost in transit through the channels, not getting to the users or are misinterpreted and the intended receivers unable to make

any good use of it. The same lopsidedness that is observed in the flow of information through international communication channels is being replicated in Nigeria between urban and rural centers. The print media have been found to be unable to effectively carry development messages to the grassroots. This is because the traditional mass media organs are concentrated in the hands of the rich power brokers whose understanding of development is different from reality. This also explains why the mass media especially prints, are believed to be elitist in contents and focus with little coverage devoted to the rural communities where about 80% of the populations reside. This study observes that for development messages to be evenly disseminated there must be balanced flow of information from rural to urban communities and vice versa.

In summary, it is evident from the outcome of this study that the scope of development journalism in contemporary time has widened and its practice has become sophisticated. The reason is that the concept of development itself has changed from mere flaunting of statistical figures of GDP and per capital income to focusing on Human Development where the economy and the population are managed to foster growth, and the basic necessities of life such as housing, food, water, job and security are provided. It was the failed development attempts in the third world states that prompted the United Nations to initiate the MDGs as blueprints for building a better world. To actualize the goals however, requires active collaboration of the media (traditional, new media and indigenous) as changed agents to mobilize for people's participation in development activities.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

The study has revealed a number of challenges confronting the media industry particularly in Nigeria, part of which is responsible for its inability to contribute maximally to national development. Therefore to rescue the troubled industry from total collapse and for it to remain socially responsible, this study makes the following suggestions.

First, the Nigerian Guild of Editors, Newspaper Proprietors Associations of Nigeria and the Nigerian Union of Journalists must urgently make a move to safeguard the

beleaguered media industry and minimise high mortality rate by encouraging their members to take advantage of windows of opportunity available in the stock and financial markets, and put in place merger and acquisition framework so that distressed members can recapitalise and strengthen the industry. Secondly, the government must provide an enabling environment for businesses including media to thrive. For example, the problem of moribund infrastructural facilities especially electricity, transportation and telecommunication system must be urgently addressed through privatisation so as to stabilise the economy. Thirdly, the government must relax its multiple tax policies for the media industry while it also exempts them from paying import duties on production equipment, spare parts, ink and newsprint because of the social service they render to the public. Fourthly, Clinton (2010) observes that, “investing in the potentials of the world’s women and girls is one of the surest ways to achieve global economic progress, political stability and greater prosperity for women and men globally”. According to her, the issues of poverty, women empowerment, political stability and national development are interrelated. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will remain a mirage unless Nigerian government makes strong determination to promote gender equality and women empowerment by initiating appropriate policies and sustained actions that will among other things make productive assets (capital and land) available to women, invest in the girl child to acquire qualitative education through adequate funding and scholarships, improve reproductive health and provide easy access to family planning, increase enhancement of women’s voice and participation in political process while discriminatory culture and outmoded belief that limit women potentials must be overruled. Fifthly, as we think of a new world information order and the possibility of enhancing poverty reduction program among developing nations, it is imperative to put in perspective the rural-urban information imbalance. There is urgent need to establish true community media that can cater for the development information needs of Nigeria’s sharply divergent urban-rural populace. The national or regional media as are presently structured have been found to concentrate on urban centres to the disadvantage of rural communities. Community

media should be located in, owned and managed by the community to give adequate focus on their development needs both in news coverage and other programs.

### **6.5 Suggestions for Further Study**

In this contemporary time of information and communication system propelled by satellite technology, the concept of communication media in relation to development widens daily and has assumed wider dimension. As such, more research efforts are still required in the area of development communication in order to achieve development goals especially among developing countries. Although there have been series of research work on SMEs and related issues in Nigeria but research attention appears not to have been shifted on the role of mass media in SMEs growth and national development.

It has also been observed in this study that print media in Nigeria unlike radio and television, cannot make much impact in propagating development messages particularly those involving micro, small and medium scale enterprises primarily because of the literacy level and the degree of coverage which is mostly concentrated on urban centers. Given this circumstance therefore, the study suggests that future research should be done on the role of broadcast media in SMEs growth and sustainable development.

Finally, as a common experience in most developing nations when carrying out a study like this, this researcher acknowledges a few limitations which, identifying them may be of assistance to future researchers. First, the size of study population (two national newspapers and two magazines) was purposively selected for the study because they were considered to be truly national and due to their high rate of circulation and extensive coverage across the country.

One other limitation which cannot be glossed over is that the researcher could not access all the editions of the selected publications. Certain factors were responsible for this. One, as independent media that are sometimes critical of the government, there were occasions when the military, on the order of the government shut down

their press to hinder production while at some other times, carted away the printed copies. Secondly, within the last three and half years, Nigeria has been experiencing serial attack by an internationally recognized Islamic terrorist gang, *boko-haram* that operates in Nigeria. Two of these media houses have been attacked for reporting about their activities during which their offices were bombed and property destroyed. Although these limitations are identified, yet they are not strong enough to nullify the result of the study.

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**Appendix 1**

Subject Matter	Position of Stories						
	No story	Front Page (Lead)	Front Page Minor	Back Page	Editorial Page	Inside Page	Total
No Report	64 100 %	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	64 100.0%
Privatisation	0 .0%	4 1.5%	2 .08%	1 .4%	9 3.5%	243 93.8%	259 100%
SMEs in General	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 .6%	175 99.4%	176 100.0%
Int'l Finance Institution And SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 100%	3 100.0%
Poverty and Hunger	0 .0%	1 1.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 5.0%	56 93.3%	60 100.0%
Economic Reforms/SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	1 7.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	12 92.3%	13 100.0%
Roles of SMEs in Economic Dev.	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	9 100%	9 100.0%
Challenges of SMEs	0 .0%	1 6.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 6.3%	14 87.5%	16 100.0%
Sources of SMEs Funds	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 2.1%	93 97.9%	95 100.0%
Infrastructural Dev. & SMEs	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 6.3%	15 93.8%	16 100.0%
SMEs & Environmental Sustainability	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	4 100%	4 100.0%
Taxation & SMEs	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 17.6%	14 82.4%	17 100.0%
Global Partnership & SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	9 100%	9 100.0%
Corruption and SMEs	0 .0%	3 7.0%	2 4.7%	1 2.3%	6 14.0%	31 72.1%	43 100.0%
ICT & SMEs	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	8 100.0%	8 100.0%
Total	64 8.1%	10 1.3%	4 .5%	2 .3%	26 3.3%	686 86.6%	792 100.0%

\*Count % within subject matter

## Appendix 2

Subject Matter	Type of Stories										
	No story	Straight News	Columnists	News Analysis	Features	Opinion	Editorial	Letter to the Editor	Advertorial	Others	Total
No Report	64 100%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	64 100%
Privatisation	0 .0%	190 73.4%	0 .0%	1 .4%	47 18.1%	8 3.1%	10 3.9%	2 .8%	1 .4%	0 .0%	259 100%
SMEs in General	0 .0%	135 76.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	29 16.5%	1 .6%	1 .6%	0 .0%	9 5.1%	1 .6%	176 100%
Int'l Finance Institutions & SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	3 100.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 100%
Poverty and Hunger	0 .0%	26 43.3%	0 .0%	1 1.7%	26 43.3%	3 5.0%	4 6.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	60 100%
EconomicReforms/SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	5 38.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	6 46.2%	2 15.4%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	13 100%
Roles ofSMEs in Economic Dev.	0 .0%	7 77.8%	0 .0%	1 11.1%	1 11.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	9 100.0%
Challenges of SMEs	0 .0%	11 68.8%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 18.8%	0 .0%	1 6.3%	0 .0%	1 6.3%	0 .0%	16 100%
Sources of SMEs Funds	0 .0%	81 85.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	11 11.6%	1 1.1%	1 1.1%	0 .0%	1 1.1%	0 .0%	95 100%
Infrastructural Dev. & SMEs	0 .0%	7 43.8%	0 .0%	0 .0%	8 50.0%	0 .0%	1 6.3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	16 100%
SMEs & Environmental Sustainability	0 .0%	2 50.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 50.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	4 100%
Taxation & SMEs	0 .0%	9 52.9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 29.4%	0 .0%	3 17.6%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	17 100%
Global Partnership & SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	9 100.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	9 100%
Corruption and SMEs	0 .0%	20 46.5%	1 2.3%	1 2.3%	10 23.3%	5 11.6%	6 14.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	43 100%
ICT & SMEs	0 .0%	7 87.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	1 12.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	8 100%
Total	64 8.1%	512 64.6%	1 .1%	4 .5%	148 18.7%	21 2.7%	27 3.4%	2 .3%	12 1.5%	1 .1%	792 100%

\*Count % within subject matter

## Appendix 3

Subject Matter	Name of Newspapers & Magazines				
	Punch	Guardian	Tell Magazine	The News	Total
No Report	8 3.2%	10 3.1%	26 25.0%	20 17.7%	64 8.1%
Privatisation	90 36.0%	108 33.2%	28 26.9%	33 29.2%	259 32.7%
SMEs in General	60 24.0%	76 23.4%	16 15.4%	24 21.2%	176 22.2%
Int'l Finance Institution And SMEs Dev.	1 .4%	0 .0%	1 1.0%	1 .9%	3 .4%
Poverty and Hunger	11 4.4%	32 9.8%	9 8.7%	8 7.1%	60 7.6%
Economic Reforms/SMEs Dev.	3 1.2%	7 2.2%	1 1.0%	2 1.8%	13 1.6%
Role of SMEs in Economic Dev.	6 2.4%	3 .9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	9 1.1%
Challenges of SMEs	5 2.0%	6 1.8%	2 1.9%	3 2.7%	16 2.0%
Sources of SMEs Funds	36 14.4%	45 13.8%	3 2.9%	11 9.7%	95 12.0%
Infrastructural Dev. & SMEs	4 1.6%	7 2.2%	5 4.8%	0 .0%	16 2.0%
SMEs & Environmental Sustainability	1 .4%	1 .3%	1 1.0%	1 .9%	4 .5%
Taxation & SMEs	1 .4%	9 2.8%	4 3.8%	3 2.7%	17 2.1%
Global Partnership & SMEs Dev.	8 3.2%	1 .3%	0 .0%	0 .0%	9 1.1%
Corruption and SMEs	11 4.4%	20 6.2%	7 6.7%	5 4.4%	43 5.4%
ICT & SMEs	5 2.0%	0 .0%	1 1.0%	2 1.8%	8 1.0%
Total	250 100.0 %	325 100.0%	104 100.0%	113 100.0%	792 100.0%

Count % within name of newspapers/magazine

## Appendix 4

Subject Matter	Intent of Stories					Total
	None	Advocacy	Informativ e	Educative	Entertainm ent	
No Report	64 100.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	64 100.0%
Privatisation	0 .0%	40 15.40%	195 75.3%	24 9.3%	0 .0%	259 100.0%
SMEs in General	0 .0%	53 30.1%	88 50.0%	35 19.9%	0 .0%	176 100.0%
Int'l Finance Institution And SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 100.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 100.0%
Poverty and Hunger	0 .0%	25 41.7%	23 38.3%	12 20.0%	0 .0%	60 100.0%
Economic Reforms/SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	2 15.4%	6 46.2%	5 38.5%	0 .0%	13 100.0%
Roles of SMEs in Economic Dev.	0 .0%	1 11.1%	5 55.6%	18.8%	0 .0%	9 100.0%
Challenges of SMEs	0 .0%	1 6.3%	11 68.8%	3 18.8%	1 6.3%	16 100.0%
Sources of SMEs Funds	0 .0%	15 15.8%	69 72.6%	11 11.6%	0 .0%	95 100.0%
Infrastructural Dev. & SMEs	0 .0%	8 50.0%	7 43.8%	1 6.3%	0 .0%	16 100.0%
SMEs & Environmental Sustainability	0 .0%	3 75.0%	1 25.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	4 100.0%
Taxation & SMEs	0 .0%	7 41.2%	8 47.1%	2 11.8%	0 .0%	17 100.0%
Global Partnership & SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	0 .0%	8 88.9%	1 11.1%	0 .0%	9 100.0%
Corruption and SMEs	0 .0%	14 32.6%	22 51.2%	7 16.3%	0 .0%	43 100.0%
ICT & SMEs	0 .0%	1 12.5%	6 75.0%	1 12.5%	0 .0%	8 100.0%
Total	64 8.1%	170 21.5%	452 57.1%	107 13.3%	1 .1%	792 100.0%

Count % within subject matter

## Appendix 5

Subject Matter	Tone of Stories				
	None	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
No Report	64 100.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	64 100.0%
Privatisation	0 .0%	84 32.4%	104 40.2%	71 27.4%	259 100.0%
SMEs in General	0 .0%	122 69.3%	23 13.1%	31 17.6%	176 100.0%
Int'l Finance Institution And SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	3 100.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 100.0%
Poverty and Hunger	0 .0%	24 40.0%	32 53.3%	4 6.7%	60 100.0%
Economic Reforms/SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	6 46.2%	3 23.1%	4 30.8%	13 100.0%
Roles of SMEs in Economic Dev.	0 .0%	8 88.9%	0 .0%	1 11.1%	9 100.0%
Challenges of SMEs	0 .0%	8 18.8%	11 68.8%	2 12.5%	16 100.0%
Sources of SMEs Funds	0 .0%	66 69.5%	16 16.8%	13 13.7%	95 100.0%
Infrastructural Dev. & SMEs	0 .0%	6 37.5%	8 50.0%	2 12.5%	16 100.0%
SMEs & Environmental Sustainability	0 .0%	2 50.0%	2 50.0%	0 .0%	4 100.0%
Taxation & SMEs	0 .0%	8 47.1%	7 41.7%	2 11.8%	17 100.0%
Global Partnership & SMEs Dev.	0 .0%	9 100.0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	9 100.0%
Corruption and SMEs	0 .0%	6 14.0%	34 79.1%	3 7.0%	43 100.0%
ICT & SMEs	0 .0%	7 87.5%	0 .0%	1 12.5%	8 100.0%
Total	64 8.1%	354 44.7%	240 30.3%	134 16.9%	792 100.0%

\*Count % within subject matter



**Appendix 6****Coding Schedule for Coverage of SMEs stories in Nigeria's  
Newspapers/Magazines****(1) Name of Newspapers/Magazine**

Punch.....	1
Guardian.....	2
Tell Magazine.....	3
The News.....	4

**(2) Year of Publication**

1997.....	01
1998.....	02
1999.....	03
2000.....	04
2001.....	05
2002.....	06
2003.....	07
2004.....	08
2005.....	09
2006.....	10
2007.....	11
2008.....	12
2009.....	13

**(3) Months of Publication:**

January.....	1
February.....	2

March.....	3
April.....	4
May.....	5
June.....	6
July.....	7
August.....	8
September.....	9
October.....	10
November.....	11
December.....	12

#### 4. Subject Matter

1 Privatization	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 SMEs in general	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 International Financial Institution and SMEs	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Poverty / Hunger	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Roles of SMEs in Economic Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Challenges of SMEs	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Policies relating to SMEs growth	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Sources of SMEs funding	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Infrastructural development a	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 SMEs and Environmental sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Taxation and SMEs	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 Global partnerships for SMEs development	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 Corruption and SMEs	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 ICT and SMEs	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 5. Type of Stories

1 Straight news	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Columnists	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 News Analyses	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Features	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Opinions	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Editorials	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Letters to the Editor	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 8 Rejoinders
- 9 Cartoons
- 10 Advertorial
- 11 Others (Specify)

**6 Position of Story**

- 1 Front pages (Lead)
- 2 Front Pages (Minor)
- 3 Back pages
- 4 Editorial pages
- 5 Other inside pages

**8. Sources of Story**

- 1 Event coverage / happening
- 2 Interviews
- 3 Financial Institutions (CBN, Banks)
- 4 Press release / Statement
- 5 Reporter's investigation / analysis
- 6 Research findings / Report
- 7 Other (media) News Agency
- 8 Professionals/ Professional Associations
- 9 Diplomatic Communities
- 10 Governments (Federal, State, Local)
- 11 Members of Parliament
- 12 MAN, NACCI
- 13 Government Agencies (CAC, BPE, SON, SMEDAN)
- 14 Bankers Association of Nigeria
- 15 International Organizations (IMF, World Bank, DFID)
- 16 Non-Governmental Organizations
- 17 Associations of SMEs Owners
- 18 Others

**8. Dateline of Story**

- 1 South-west
- 2 South-east
- 3 South-south
- 4 North-central
- 5 North-west
- 6 North-east
- 7 Unknown / not specified
- 8 Foreign

**9. Tone of Story**

- 1 Positive

	2 Negative	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Intent of Story</b>	
	1 Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Informative	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Educative	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4 Entertainments	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Principal Characters</b>	
	1 President/ Vice-President	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Government Officials (Minister, Commissioner)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Principal Officers of National Assembly	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4 Public Corporations or its official(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5 NGO or its official(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6 CBN Governor or Representatives	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7 Bank CEOs/Other Officials	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8 Business Executives	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9 Official of International Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10 Professional/ Experts	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11 Individual citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12 Foreigners / foreign investors or office	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13 Officials of SMEs Regulatory Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Others	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>. Sex of Principal Character</b>		
	1 Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 No sex Indicated	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Appendix 7****Coding Sheet**

Serial Number	<input type="text"/>	1
Name of Newspapers/Magazine	<input type="text"/>	2
Year of Publication	<input type="text"/>	3
Month of Publication	<input type="text"/>	4
Type of Story	<input type="text"/>	
Total column of story in inches	<input type="text"/>	6
Position of story	<input type="text"/>	7
Total Number of Paragraph	<input type="text"/>	8
Contents of Story	<input type="text"/>	9
Name of Establishment involved	<input type="text"/>	
Principal Character	<input type="text"/>	
Gender of Principal Character	<input type="text"/>	
Source of Story	<input type="text"/>	
Frame (tone) of Story	<input type="text"/>	
Sex of Principal Character	<input type="text"/>	

## **Appendix 8**

### **Name of Respondents during Structured Interview**

#### **Member of the Nigerian Union of Journalists**

Charles Okonji	Olusola Fabiyi
Olufemi Makinde	Akeem Oladejo
Emeka Obi	Aluko Olaleye
Rasaq Bamidele	Femi Adesina
Ifeanyi Onukaba	Kayode Idowu Adebawale

#### **Members of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria**

Alhaji Remi Bello	Dr. Martins Olufemi Thomas
Mr. Vincent Nwani	Mr Muda Yusuf
Mr Dele Alimi	Mrs Toyin Idowu
Mrs Foluke Oloniyo	Mr Tope Oluwaleye
Mr Abimbola Oluokun	Mr Sunnie Omeiza-Michael

#### **Members of National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture**

Chidi Obiefule	Mr. Ibrahim Akinwale
Mr. John Isemeye	Mrs. Esther Nenadi Usman
Mr Oluyenuwo Olabisi	Mr Omolade Owoseni
Mr Edwin Chukwuma	Mr Bayo Kelani
Mr Adegoke Ogunniyi	Mr Joseph Oladele

#### **Members of the National Association of Small Scale Industrialists**

Mr. Duro Kuteyi	Mr Olu Arikawe
Mrs Oladeji Soare	Mr Akintude Oladayo
Mr. Idris Oladunni	Mr Seun Ogunleye

Mr. Emeka Augustin Okika

Engr. Ife Philips

**Officials of Bankers Association of Nigeria**

Olusoji Salako

Adeleke Adekunle

Mrs Nike Joseph

Olurotimi Odufote

Olarotimi Gbamiro

Okuchemiya Daniel

Odeh Michael

Mohammed Garba

Mercy Dominic

Rotimi Odufote

**Officials of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria**

Adebayo Olubanjo

Samuel Ochagu

Solomon Ebi

Kayode Shode

Nnayelugo Obasi

Ambrose Oruche

Mohammed Shehu

Mrs Zainab Abdumalik

Abdulahi Ndayako

Mrs Toyin Abajo