NEW MEDIA AND THE AFRICA’S DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT:
AN OVERVIEW OF NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVES BETWEEN 1999-2018

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the New media and the Africa’s democratic development with special focus on Nigerian democratic perspectives between 1999-2018. In the dawn of the twenty first century, we are living in a world where technology has resolved the constraint of time, space and distance for the global benefits. We live in a world that is better than the world as it was experienced in earlier phases of human history in terms of the emergence of new communication systems. In Nigeria, this has to do with how New media could help in promoting codification of culture and image of our nascent democracy, engender government policies that have to do with both economic and national development. Above all, New media encourage representativeness of expression in national programmes agenda and serve as systematic weapons to foster political programmes, mobilization and to suppress unwelcome alternative modes of political behaviours and policies. The study looked at the extent in which the succeeding governments utilized New media in the execution and implementation of policies, sensitization of citizenry for massive democratic participation and mobilization. The paper is anchored on democratic-participant media Theory, Development Media Theory and Social Responsibility Media Theory under the theoretical framework. The paper found that the New media expose the unpleasant perceptions of the electorate against the country’s political actors. It revealed that the New media are portent tools for simultaneous dissemination of information that influence the views of the electorate. Finally, it established that the mental picture of Nigerian democracy is significantly shaped by the New media contents and directions. The study concluded that the New media in Nigeria today remain significant to the existence of democracy and that the operators are watchdog of the democratic system that link government and governed together. The paper recommended that government should step up actions on regulation of New media diverse contents, structures and reportage. Social media operators should take proper surveillance and be conscious of the contemporary events and the platform should be a place of rational discussions, debates and expressions of concerns for public interests.

KEYWORDS: New media, Democracy, Development, Nigerian perspectives, Political programmes, Policy

1. INTRODUCTION
Communication has always been critical to the government and maintenance of power over distance, communication network technologies are key to the mechanics of distributed government campaigns and trade. The emerging “infosphere” and its potential as a giant organic culture processor, democratic empowerer, universal connector and ultimate communicator is seen as crucial for Nigeria’s public diplomacy. Promotion of democratic culture, human rights and a free flow political information are to be the proclaimed aims of Nigerian political actors who must strive to
project an imperial of governance. A number of countries are currently going through democratic reforms that aims to improve political service delivery and accountability to citizens. Of course, most African nations have made notable gains in building democratic systems of governance that are based on popular control of leadership decision making and in which the generality of the citizens are treated as important in the tenet of democracy. Often, the aforementioned are achieved through such countries permission and understanding of the objective usage of the New media to showcase their opinions to government. This paper commences from the premise that development and democratic cultures cannot thrive without open and free public space where every issue bothering on people’s lives can be articulated and debated, which gives them opportunity to lend their voices and to participate in policy implementation and decision making thorough effective utilization of New media frontiers.

The declaration of principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa approved by the African Union Commission on Human Rights in 2002 states that “a state monopoly over information is not compatible with right to freedom of expression and called for public service that are premised on people’s participatory will. Nigeria which serves as the major focus on this study, returned to civilian government in 1999 after the first and the second Republics were truncated by military coups. Being a multi-party nation, her constitution provides for the holding of elections every four years for the Federal and State level elected representatives. Today, institution-building received limited attention from the political players since 1999 and it appears that much have not changed in terms of accountability and transparency in governance due to several incidence of corruption that ate deep into the country’s national treasury and at all levels of government ovetimes. Nigerians felt shortchanged, broadly discouraged by the performance of their political systems and believe to have been cheated of the dividends of democracy. These attitudes of the citizenry suggest a growing deficit of popular confidence and fragility of the new democracy. Nonetheless, a large majority of Nigerians prefer democracy over every other option. The questions are; is there any need for better information flow from the governed to the political actors? If the need arises, can the New media platform permeate hitch-free information flow to check maladministration and strengthening the nascent democracy? These questions and others thirst for answers in this study.

1.1 Objectives of the study
1. To determine the role of the New media in the Nigerian democratic systems
2. To establish the political functions of the New media in the development of Nigerian democracy
3. To investigate the New media inherent weaknesses in the development of Nigerian democratic process.
4. To compare the effectiveness of the New media political news dissemination with the conventional media.

1.2 Research questions
1. What are the roles of the New media in the Nigerian democratic systems?
2. What are the political functions of the New media in the development of Nigerian democracy?
3. What are the inherent weaknesses of the New media in the development of the country’s democratic process?
4. Are the political news dissemination by the New media more effective than that of the conventional media?

2. METHODOLOGY
This study is an evaluation type with the main objective of assessing the New media and its role on Africa’s democratic culture with special focus on Nigerian democratic system. The evaluation of the variables of interest are elicited through the historical research function which creates and clarifies trend of events within the scope of the study. According to Meyerhoff (1959) as cited in Idemudia (2008):

“The facts of history are peculiar as historism as insisted all along ---- the primary aim of a historical narrative is to reconstruct these events in their unique individuality, not to formulate general laws, To bring out particular differences rather than the common propensities Of the events included in the historical portrait”

Moreover, the study relies on secondary data obtained from the official and non-official documents, from internet, libraries, Newspapers, Magazines and relevant desk study. To make the study more robust, structured interview were conducted among media practitioners and politicians. Ifidon (2007) describes interview as a supplementary tool for data gathering and it is a face-to-face administration of questionnaire to each member of a sample. But instead of writing the response, the interviewee gives the required information verbally in a face-to-face relationship. Focus Group Discussion was also adopted for the study for data gathering among the selected electorates. Priest (1996) opines that Focus Group session values mostly comes from the interactions among the group members as they elaborate on questions or challenge each statement. The aim, therefore, is to have that interaction creating a richer set of data that can sometimes results from a single interview interaction with a single respondent.
3. **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is anchored on the three major relevant theories, these are Agenda-setting Theory, Social Responsibility Theory and the Democratic-Participant Media Theory.

### 3.1 Agenda-setting Theory

The Agenda-setting Theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald, L. Shaw in 1972. The theory assumed that the media set the agenda for the national discourse. This means that the media may not always determine what we think but what we think about since they are ordinarily helping our mindset to go along with those thinking that are highlights as important by the media. The theory proposes that the facts which people know about public issues tend to be those which the media present to them. The theory predicts that if people are exposed to the same media contents, media audience would place more important to such issues. Adepotu (1999) contends that the more audience are aware about an issue by the media, the more understanding they have about government programmes and action plans. The theory agreed that the mass media institution is seen as responsible for raising issues they considered vital to the platform of public discourse and draw public attention to it. The media successfully do this via the quantity and frequency of reporting. Prominence given to the reports through headline displays, pictures, adverts, layouts in Newspapers, Magazines, films, graphics or prime timing on radio and television (Folarin, 1998). Ugboajah (1987) opines that the relationship between media coverage and public thinking influence what people learn about their society.

### 3.2 Social Responsibility Theory

The Social Responsibility Theory was propounded in 1963 by Siebert, S.F, Peterson, T.B and Schramm, W. The principle of the theory is that the media through accuracy, objectivity, truth and balance should fulfil certain obligations to the society and reflects society’s pluralism giving access to various points of view. Based on this, the society has the rights to expect high standards of performance from the media which can only be justified for public good. The theory assumed that whatever that can lead to crime, violence or civil disorder to minority groups should be avoided by the media. In order to achieve this, the media should regulate itself within the framework of law and established institutions to be able to carry out its responsibilities (McQuail, 1987). The major premise of the theory, however, is that freedom of expression carries significant obligations and the media which enjoys a privileged position under the government is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of the media. The theory is of the principle that the media are to serve the political system by disseminating information, organize discussions and to protect the rights of individuals by acting as watchdog over the government and also help the public to take self-determined actions. Under the social responsibility theory, freedom of expression is grounded on the duty of individual conscience which is the society’s sole source of intelligence, the seeds from which the progress springs.

### 3.3 Democratic-Participant Media Theory

This theory that was propounded in 1987 by Dennis McQuail assumes that individual citizens and minority groups have rights of assess to media and rights to be served by the media according to their own determination of needs. It believes that the media should exist primarily for their audience(s) and not for media organizations, professionals or clients of the media. This theory emerged in response to the elitist nature of the press, its responsiveness to political and economic pressures and the professional hegemony in the media systems. It is also emerged due to the ineffectiveness of the libertarian and the Social Responsibility theories because the mentioned theories failed to achieve the social benefits expected of them (Folarin, 2002).

The theory, however, calls for greater attention to the needs, interests and aspirations of the receivers in a political society. In case of monopolization, the theory calls for pluralism in replace of centralism. The theory insists that the media conglomerates be replaced or juxtaposed with the small scale medium enterprises. Under this theory, the individual’s right to communication is defend, this rights entail access to the media as well as self-determination of needs to be served by the media. Therefore, local organizations and communities are encouraged to own and operate their own channels of Mass Communication. In essence, the theory accords priority to the “Association” mode over the ‘Command’ mode and even the service mode of socio-political communication. McQuail (1983), contends equality between the sender and receiver which indicate reciprocity of interests between the two while the command mode assumes superiority of the sender to the receiver in a one-way communication track.

### 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 4.1 Operationalization of the concepts: Democracy and New Media

##### 4.1.1 Democracy

The term “Democracy” laid its foundation in Ancient Greece and the originality of the word was nurtured and developed into a system between the 4th and 6th centuries BC particularly in the City States of Athens. During these periods in the Greeks States, democracy was practiced directly involving people taken direct and active part in the government activities of the states. Aristotle, the legend philosopher between 382-322BC highlighted three major forms of Greek City States democracies- democracy as a rule by many, aristocracy as a rule by a few and monarchy as a rule by one- respectively. Today, democracy as a rule by many is generally acceptable because it is hinged on the ideals of supremacy of the people’s will that revolves round the equality, freedom and majority rule. Hornby (2000) described...
democracy as a system of government in which virtually all people in a country have the right to vote and be voted for. It is founded on the principles of accountability, fairness and equity. (Igbe, 2006) defines democracy as a system where people meet and exercise the government in person.

Nigeria experienced of liberal democracy has inherent contradictions to how it is operated in bigger democracies like UK, USA, France, Germany and a host of others. Where the concept is people – oriented. In practice, Nigeria’s democracy has undergone grievous mutations that eventually subjected it to a government of the elite. Unfortunately, the type of the democracy being practiced between May 29, 1999 till date seems not to be liberal but undermining the needed national integration and development. The democratic culture so far was characterized with corruption, dishonesty and incredibility on the part of the political players who on daily basis retarding the country’s national development while mass Nigerians remain stagnant and languish in poverty. Nigerian 1999 constitution states that “Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this constitution derives all its powers and authorities”. Nigeria political terrain, however, is infested with money syndrome that cut across all levels of Nigerian political structure which is inimical to national development. The struggle for power was so absorbing, fiercely threatened and development marginalized. What matter, therefore, in this type of politics is the calculus of force that can be hardly traced to any constitutional or institutional restraints (Ake, 2001).

4.1.2 New Media

The New media via the internet offers the alternative sources of knowledge to the ICT inclined professionals. Milson (2004) established that New media or cyber News are practiced online and also take a non-linear approach to dissemination of news. New media uses several avenues and most significant are the world wide Web, Inter net Email, CD-Roms, Bandwidths, Histogram, Tweeter, WhatsApp and others. It allows the use of images, video, audio and as well as people to browse at will to solve their problems. It permits news and information to spread at a tremendous speed, reduced only by the wave speed of electron or electromagnetic. According to Osborn (2001), matters of distance and non-access to vital information has become a thing of the past. Another important weapon of New media efficacy is the blogging which has the capacity to share opinion with friends and families with ease. It reduces research stress by enhancing people’s writings and research skills. However, blogs in conjunction with google usually have a way of enticing new audience both at home and abroad. Therefore, New media are good means of getting information and also a laudable route for discussing information items among interested recipients.

Media scholars established that New media facilitate mobilization efforts, create attitudes towards a particular public sphere, cause a shift of public attitudes and help to reinforce already existing public and individual opinions on government activities (Nwosu, 1996). New media is aimed at encouraging the citizenry to be involved in bringing change in the society and open up new opportunities for economic advancement especially for Nigerian youths that are confronted with unemployment scourge, thereby liberalizing the Nigerian political environment. In essence, New media are essential to develop Nigerian democracy in order to keep the nation at par with the socio-economic status of the developed countries. The technologies also allow everyone access to air their views on global trends while all are equal with no distance (Drudge, 1998). In addition, the introduction of internet-friendly cellphones, Ipads and Labtops set new boundaries for Web news that increases the credibility of news websites. Collective efforts should be employed to grow New media in Nigeria in order to ensure a smooth and stable democratic culture in the country.

4.1.3 New Media and the enhancement of dividends of democracy

Egbon (1995), observed that the media system can oil and ease the economic wheels of a country or bring them to a grinding halt. In the same vein, media can be used to maintain social equilibrium, facilitate change or seek radical alternatives. Studies have also shown that most of the national crises experienced in the country were caused with the manner in which most of the events were presented to the public by the media, most of them have the propensity of undermine the country integration. New media in its context should be engaged in constructive criticism of government programmes so long it has the intention towards advancing political and socio-economic benefits of the nation. In essence, the New media users must be development-driven in their news content and presentation. They must eschew from posting negative distractions that can engulf the people daily experience as a nation that are capable of demeaning the good image of the country.

Dividends of democracy are core political benefits enjoyed by the electorates provided by the democratic governance. New media should be able to transform the socio-political virtues of the people in the society. There is need, therefore, for the New media users to ensure that government programmes and policies are in line with public needs and yearnings, lend their voices in the process of policy formulation and implementation, incessantly sensitizing people on the required attitudes for societal positive change. FAO (1998) confirmed that New media promote diffusion of development information to widespread geographical areas, a channel of interactive communication for debates and dialogue on crucial national discourse. It is also adjudged as vital avenue for pluralistic expressions and democratic opinion needed for public sensitization on national development. The New media recipients have an important duty to protect Nigeria’s embryonic democratic culture jealously from all forms of socio-political hazards that are mitigating against the nation’s development.
Moreover, some of the incidents that bedeviled the country are the allegation of election rigging, political intolerance and violence, corruption and non-performance. The New media operators must endeavour to educate the political players and the electorates on their responsibility before and during the general elections. The general orientation will provide opportunities for political office seekers to be conscious of their responsibility to provide dividends of democracy for the public. Ufuophu-Biri(2004) contended that the New Media should be seen as the big axe that has the capability to cut down the massive trees of anti-democracy.

4.2 Political functions of the New Media

New media has undoubtedly grown in political importance over the years. It becomes an essential resource for media practitioners and political journalists in their daily routines. New media remain the general news sources which are most often consulted by the public ahead of party or government websites. In recognition of the new technology effectiveness, almost all media outfits are becoming involved in the provision of on-line services to users, consolidating a strong web presence to complement their news and comment supplied by their traditional offline outlets (Coleman,2001). New media do not simply report on an election campaigns across the country, nor are they act as neutral conduits for the transmission of information from parties to electorates, rather they are political actors with the capacity to bring issues on to the campaign agenda subjecting the activities of political candidates and parties to scrutiny, persuade public opinions in support of popular candidate or party Howbeit, usage of the new media are politically increasing at an exponential rate functioning majorly in the following areas;

4.3 Political mobilization

The new media perform a political mobilization function and are extensively used by political actors, parties and pressure groups for the membership mobilization. Of course, they have to a greater extent replaced local political parties as agencies of electoral mobilization in terms of constituency-based campaigns, canvassing and featuring party candidates at public meeting which superseded traditional general campaigns (Palmer, 2000). According to Udoakah(1999), communication for development through mobilization of the public is an attempt to influence new ideas, to win citizens for new ways of doing things and its success depends on the quality of persuasion and form of change the public are mobilized to accept. Nigerians have all along been confronted with serious cases of maladministration and unethical behaviours as a result of which the public have been losing faith in politicians (Barlow,1993). For instance, Nigerians have made several negative comments especially through the New media about late President Yar’Adua government asserting that the basic principle of planning accountability and transparency were violated in most of the contracts awards. As at 1998, Nigeria’s foreign reserves was $7.6 billion but by May 29, 1999 inception of the new government headed by Ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo, it had shrunken to $3.8 billion (The News, April 31,2000). Corruption has quantifiable and unquantifiable cost on public accountability on the economic in general. The amount of lost to the economy through frauds, bribes, kickbacks, direct stealing, embezzlement of public funds in both the private and public sectors ran into billions of naira (Amujiri,2003). New media publicity also helped the pressure groups achieved political results against Ex-President Goodluck Jonathan government bid to increase fuel price in 2013. This campaign was undertaken by the workers unions and students union in their agitation against fuel hike, despite lack of resources and limited institutional authority. The pressure groups were able to use New media to their advantage. The campaign appeared to be one of the determining factors in the collapse of the government.

4.4 Public Watchdog

The media are used to check the excesses of the political public office holders. In performing this function, the New media users can help make political actors accountable to the public, assisting in the empowerment of the public as citizens and voters. Sometimes act to unearth improper behaviours through investigative efforts. A good example of the New media watchdog was the revelation of the NYSC forgery certificate by Mrs. Kemi Adeosun, the Finance Minister in Buhari-led government that was resigned voluntarily. Sean (2010) observed that contract scam is a household name in Nigeria. He concluded by stating that most contract rockets occurred after the political decision to achieve sound and smooth governance has already been made. According to Dalami (2009), Ex-President Obasanjo awarded contracts to his allies to the tune of $16 billion without proper execution. Cooper (2002) agreed that most of the contract decisions are treated as largely a way to accommodate party stalwarts who want a piece of the financial gains. Another good example of the New media watchdog effort was the Mrs. Patricia Olubunmi Ette, first elected Nigerian female Speaker of the House of Representatives contract scandal of 628 million Naira. The scandalous office renovation was confirmed by a nine-member probe panel headed by David Idoko.

4.5 Provision of Information

The New media operators furnish their audience with information and comments about political issues and events at both local and national levels. They act as platforms for the transmission of political information among political elites and citizenry. They serve as a communication channel from the top hierarchy of government to its public and the electorates (Cuilenburg and Slaa,1993). According McQuail (2000), they further function by providing politicians with a source of intelligence about the actual situation of the nation. The New media, therefore, act as a window on the political
world giving background analysis and commentaries intended to help the audience understand and interpret events and political issues.

4.6 Agenda-Setting

Agenda-Setting is another prominent political function performed by the New media operators for public discourse or debate. Agenda-Setting approach established that the visibility of issue by the public, the more visible an issue is in the news media, the more salient for public opinions(Dearing and Rogers,1996). This means that the New media and others make useful contribution to deciding what is or what is not which is a significant subject for public or national debate. Today in Nigeria, there is media agitation for the release of Leah Sharibu from the Boko Haram terrorists camp. Also, agitation for the country restructuring is at the top gear. Agenda-setting provides political actors ample opportunities to select, organize and prioritize their political programmes and agenda.

4.7 Social Legitimization

The New media assist to socialize citizens or electorates into acceptance of prevalent social norms and the institutions that embody them. If this is achieved, then, they contribute to the legitimization of the political system.

4.8 New Media and the peace culture: Building democracy and not hate contents

The media as an important player in the Nigerian democratic project has responsibility of contributing towards the sustainability of a peaceful society. Though characterized by political, religious, tribal and socio-economic problems, the media need to identify the societal forms of socialization via cultural mechanisms essential to promote peaceful interaction among Nigerians. Both the conventional and the New media must develop means by which humans can manage their conflict without having to resort to violent actions and foster campaigns to build attitudes against violence in order to prevent its establishment as a social norm. Journalism practice is formalized and regulated by specific professional rules and ethical conduct which universally guided by the principles of objectivity, balance, fairness and neutrality (Odey,2007). The principle of objectivity and balance refers to granting of equal amount of space and time to conflicting sides in the news and state their case in the process of reporting the news. Objectivity is associated with truth, impartiality and it is embedded within the social reality within which journalists operate.

Hate content is one of the negative activities of the Mass media in the society. It explains the forms of indirect violence which include inflicting harm on fellow humans by verbal attacks or negative contents such as rumour spreading, libel, character assassination, defamation, gossip and others (Gatung, 1965). According to the scholar, these actions could enhance or impede the progress of a society under the guise of Freedom of expression. Gardner (2001) states that a perennial problem associated with the contemporary news media especially during conflict is the issue of hate contents. According to her, hate contents:

- Encouraging violent activities, tension or hatred between race, ethnic, social groups or countries for political goals or to foster conflict by offering a one sided or biased views or opinions or resorting to deception(Pg.304).

This is how freedom of expression could be used to worsen existing tension between or within societies by whipping up nationalistic feelings and inciting ethnic and religious hatred. Today in Nigeria, it is a big dilemma facing media practitioners and the society at large. Often, government is confused on what to do in situations when hateful messages are being spread. Sometimes closing down or prosecution of such individuals and media organizations engaging in these unethical practices are some of the punitive measures taken by government. At the local and international levels, the umbrella body of Journalist Associations usually condemned the misuse of the media contents that are capable of spreading tribal, religious and political hatred against other group of people. In order to reduce the hate contents spate, media professional bodies across borders should embark on Journalists/New media education on conflict reporting and other techniques of preventing hate contents. Also, workshops and seminars on media practice ethics should be organized to sensitize the media practitioners on the evil of unethical media practices.

In a democratic setting, New media operators/Journalists must maintain balance between their views and the public interests. As the public confidence, media practitioners should be mindful of their reports that could make or mar the outcome of any election. It could enhance or stunt the actions towards democratic advancement. In essence, the New media operators should always be alive with their conscience during elections and struggle to protect their integrity. In addition, the New media should play a significant role in the promotion of peace in Nigeria’s multicultural and diverse socio-political environment. It should promote the benefits of peace by bringing together the rival political and social groups that are involving in the nation’s recurrent political conflicts. Moreover, they are to contribute to peace efforts in reconciling warring factions by standing up to the intellectual challenges of harmonizing and articulating all the divergent views to assist the erring parties in advancing the peace process for the total benefits of society. The New media operators/Journalists owe it as a responsibility to the society to report the basket of events that make up of the peace process responsibly, impartially and accurately in order to achieve the ultimate goals of peaceful political co-existence.
The New media as a major institution in contemporary democratic government in Nigeria, needs to embrace the ideals of peace-journalism and strive to examine carefully its agenda-setting functions in order to bring up and highlight burning issues that can advance the interests of the society during elections instead of focusing on the interests of political groups. Finally, the media generally must be non-partisan and should maintain an attitude of impartiality towards electorates, political groups and the political players

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings of this study indicated the true representation of the Nigerian democratic systems in the New media era, which indicate that a corresponding influence of such pattern of representation of Nigerian democracy negatively affected the electorates perception of the country’s political actors. To this end, results showed that the more public are expose to the New media contents about Nigeria’s internal democracy, the more they know more of the internal happenings and the more they perceive the political players in negative light.

In line with the findings of this study, the study reported that the New media is, therefore, a potent medium for simultaneous dissemination of information and influencing the views of Nigerian electorates. Though, the respondents agreed that not all the New media stories are real situational events but mostly sourced from the country’s elites which is one of the most important criterion for news selection.

The study also established that the electorates mental picture of Nigerian democracy is significantly shaped by the contents and directions of the New media. Respondents affirmed that the New media contents exerted influence on the way the Nigerian public perceive their country’s political players and office holders. The study indicated that the Nigerian democratic systems since 1999 till date is characterized with poor governance, corruption, bad leadership and socio-economic misnomer. The study showed that the New media predominant tone on the country’s democratic culture has direct positive effects on the political behaviours of the political players and the governed.

6. CONCLUSION

The impeccable activities of the media made them to be significant to the existence of democracy, they remain a watchdog of the system and also serve as a link between government and the people occupying position as the Fourth estate of the Realm. The media performs an educational role by exposing scandals, inefficiency, poor governance and corrupt practices in government which is essential to the democratic body-politics. Nigerian Mass media has grown in capacity such that it becomes the catalyst for the enhancement of democracy. Democracy tends to be people oriented and its programmes geared towards integrating the downtrodden in African civilized societies.

This study revealed that between 1999 and 2018, the Nigerian democratic system was in the control of few cabals while the watchdog role of the media did not receive government response. Meanwhile, act of negligence and deprivation by high ranking state officials have fueled ethnic clashes, social unrest and eroded confidence in the security forces as well as the judiciary. The emergence of a democratic system since May 29, 1999 did not change these ugly trends. Massive unemployment which has negated the people’s right to work and the right to an adequate standard of living including the right to food, housing, health and education are of common place in the polity. It seems that the conventional media needed to be supported by the new means of disseminating of information, watch the activities and exposing the nauseating acts of the political actors otherwise known as the New media. Nigerians are tired of the terrible situation of the country and are determine to push for accountable administration and good governance through this New media concept. In achieving this, more Nigerians are getting actively involved in the operations of the New media to enhance the information process of the system.

The inception of the New media was very timely as it was coming at a period in Africa’s political history when most states, based on the renewed energy of their leadership were pursuing substantial reforms and development programmes. Looking at the modest merits of the New media as a supportive tool for the traditional media between 2005 and 2018, Africa’s policy makers will realize that there is a need to further re-engineer the relationship between the media and democracy which tend to chart the way forward on several fronts of our democratic life. This study is convinced that this New media initiative would blossom into a major agenda-setting and poverty eradication tools for Nigeria and Africa by extension in the very near future. In addition, New media is the synergy needed to be supported and adequately nurtured to grow Nigeria’s democracy and Africa at large.

Recommendations

Based on the forgoing, the following are recommended:

1. Since the media are political communicators and with the capacity to bring issues on to the campaign agenda, government should step up actions on the regulation of New media diverse contents, structures and reportage across various dimensions of political discourse.

2. Social media operators should take proper surveillance and be conscious of contemporary events that are likely to affect citizens negatively.
3. Social media platform should be a place of rational discussions, debates and expression of concerns for public interest but not diminish into a place of political and commercial transactions by dominant political gladiators and economic elites

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