

**VOICE OF INFLUENCE: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SHAPING SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDA IN NIGERIA**

By

**Chinelo E. Ude-Akpeh PhD**  
NTA Television College, Rayfield  
Jos Plateau State,

**Ngozi Comfort Omojunikanbi PhD**  
Department of Journalism and Media Studies  
Faculty of Communication and Media Studies  
University of Port Harcourt,

**Dr. Nnaemeka O. Frank**  
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University,  
Igarlam Campus

And

**Joan Chidinma Nweke**  
University of Calabar

**Abstract**

*The role of the media in shaping security and economic development agendas in Nigeria is pivotal, as it serves as a bridge between the government, the public, and key stakeholders. This paper examines the "voice of influence" wielded by the media in influencing public perception, guiding policy directions, and advocating for reforms on issues related to security and economic development. As a powerful tool for information dissemination, the media contributes to agenda-setting by highlighting security concerns, economic challenges, and potential development pathways. The paper delves into the media and its contribution to economic development in Nigeria which includes; records dissemination and marketplace attention, advertising of entrepreneurship and innovation and advocacy for economic reforms. This paper explore the types of media platform such as; traditional or conventional media and digital or virtual media, also focusing on the strategies including; content strategies and cross platform strategies. Notwithstanding the media are faced with challenges in promoting security and economic development in Nigeria they include; censorship and press freedom regulations, misinformation and fake information and loss of resources and training. The study concludes that the various ways media help in enhancing security were highlighted as well as the ways media enhances economic development. One of the recommendations provided was that media organizations should uphold independence from political or financial influences that may compromise objectivity. Independent media ensures both the government and private sector accountable for actions that affect security and economic growth.*

**Keyword: Voice, Influence, Role, Media, Security, Economic Development Agenda and Nigeria**  
**Introduction**



The media plays a crucial role in directing the security and economic development agenda in Nigeria. It wields a powerful voice of influence that can drive societal change and progress. Media is an umbrella term used to describe all means of communication and information dissemination. Media refer to the channels of communication that involves transmitting information in some ways or forms to large numbers of people (Crosbie, 2002). In the same vein, McQuail (2000) defined media as the formal means of communicating publicly and at a distance to relatively large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience at the same time. They represent the mediums or avenues that are adopted to convey news, messages, ideas or information to a large populace. It takes various modes which include but not limited to prints, broadcast and digital. The fundamental role of the media is information sharing which has a way of affecting the perspectives of the general populace in addition to enhancing their communication. The media is very pivotal in security and economic development agenda as it provides the populace with relevant and timely information regarding issues of concern as well as surveys the perspective of the populace on any matters of interest. This may be the reason why the media is fondly regarded as the fourth eye or the watch dog. In the following subsections of the chapter, the various roles of the media in enhancing security and economic development agendas are discussed.

### Media and Security Agenda in Nigeria

Security is one of the basic needs of humans. It is defined as the state of being free from danger, attack, harm, or any form of harassment. Meerts (2018) defines security as a state of being free from many kinds of dangers and threats such as war, unemployment, illness, or accidents. Everybody strives to be free from any form of harm, threat or danger. Life itself exposes individuals to all forms of threats to life and welfare, and as such security issues have become the dire need of every citizen and government. Leaders of every nation spend large sums of money to ensure the security of lives and properties of their citizens. Now the question is, "how does the media help in actualizing this agenda" ? The media plays a pivotal function in shaping public discourse, raising recognition, and influencing coverage selections associated with protection issues in Nigeria.

Chineke E. Uzor, PhD  
Ngozi Comfort Ogojiri, PhD  
Dr. Nnaemeka O. Frank  
Joan Chidinma Nweke

Ugochukwu et al (2023) noted that security challenge in Nigeria has become so sophisticated in frequency of occurrence and mode of operation hence posing a great danger to the Nigerian state. It is unarguably true that, the media is charged with the responsibility of providing security information to the public and as such, the media has a basic function of feeding the society with the latest news and information regarding security in the nation which helps them to take reasoned or informed actions or decisions. The populace depends on the media for updates in security, and the media can do this job through some ways. Information is crucial in security. Security agents rely heavily on intelligence gathering to launch counter attacks to those who may wish to breach security. The needed information is conveyed to the populace by the media. The media gathers, collates and disseminates information to the populace as at when do to help them be well-informed, aware and to take reasonable precautions and actions. Most times , the media helps the society to censor the information being circulated nationwide to decipher fake news from real news. In the contemporary times, the world is ruled by information; however the needed information is made available by the media. When the media fails in this onerous responsibility, the entire society will be thrown



into utter confusion. The above statement presupposes that information guides action, helps people to strategize effectively, it also helps security men and women to be proactive and to do their job effectively. In the views of Pintak,(2008), the media is seen as watch dogs, agenda setters and gate keepers in any nation guiding and feeding them back with information to safe guard the citizens. In the same vein, Wanja and Muna(2021) stated that media is useful in security agenda, citing the case of Nairobi where media played a great role in the spread of information that helped in fighting against crimes. Media is useful in mobilization, data gathering and analysis of situations which provide relevant information to the general populace. Amber (2013) has also argued that the media has two modes which are alarm mode for breaking the stories and a patrol mode for monitoring the stories. The patrolling mode helps to check against fallacy and the spread of fake news which are usually detrimental to peace and safety. Donohue, Tichenor and Olien(1995) admitted that the media is an important set of communication agencies in the social system especially in reporting on major public issues. Continuing, they described the media as a guard dog which suggests that the media perform as a sentry for the nation.

Over the years, the media has continued to provide necessary information to the public regarding security issues. Manaf, Taibi and AbdulManam (2017) documented that media plays important roles in public's voting decision as the media has the power to influence the electorates positively or negatively. Specifically other ways the media is in sync with security agenda in Nigeria are discussed as advanced by Eriksson (2002):

- a). **Information Spreading and Sharing-** The media serves as a number one source of facts, presenting well timed updates on safety incidents, threats, and government responses. This enables to preserve the general public informed and educated about protection demanding situations. The set off and accurate dissemination of statistics by means of the media is vital for keeping the public knowledgeable about safety incidents and government responses.
- b). **Awareness Creation and Enlightenment-** Through information reviews, documentaries, and investigative journalism, the media raises cognizance approximately protection troubles, their root causes, and capacity solutions. This educates the general public and policymakers, fostering a higher expertise of complicated safety challenges. Increasing public focus through media coverage can assist in knowledge safety challenges and potential answers.
- c). **Public responsibility-** Media scrutiny holds government institutions and safety businesses answerable for their moves and responses to security threats. Investigative reporting exposes corruption, inefficiencies, and human rights abuses within security businesses, main to reforms and stepped forward governance. Media scrutiny fosters transparency and duty within protection establishments, in the long run main to progressed governance.
- d). **Community Involvement-** The media enables talk among communities, protection organizations, and policymakers, fostering collaboration and consider-constructing. Systems consisting of communication indices, debates, and town hall meetings provide areas for discussions on safety troubles and network involvement in protection initiatives. The media serves as a platform for talk, fostering collaboration among communities, security agencies, and policymakers.

e). **Early warning systems-** Journalists and media outlets act as early warning systems through reporting on rising protection threats, potential conflicts, and vulnerabilities. This permits early intervention and preventive measures by means of protection groups and policymakers. Media reports on emerging threats provide early warnings, allowing timely interventions via security agencies and policymakers.

f). **Crisis control and reaction-** All through safety crises, the media performs a crucial function in disseminating emergency information, evacuation strategies, and safety precautions to the general public. Real-time reporting allows people make knowledgeable decisions and stay secure at some point of emergencies. During crises, the media plays an essential function in disseminating emergency information and guiding the general public on protection measures.

g). **Promoting Peace building-** The media can promote peace building efforts through highlighting tales of reconciliation, struggle decision, and network projects aimed toward mitigating violence and fostering social brotherly love. High quality narratives can counter divisive rhetoric and sell harmony. nice narratives by way of the media can contribute to peace building efforts, fostering social brotherly love and countering divisive rhetoric.

g). **Advocacy for coverage Reforms-** Investigative journalism and advocacy campaigns by way of the media can push for policy reforms, increased security investment, progressed training for safety personnel, and better coordination amongst businesses to decorate national protection. Media advocacy campaigns and investigative journalism can drive coverage reforms and enhance national security techniques.

### **Media and Economic Development in Nigeria**

Economic development refers to the sustained, concerted actions of policymakers and groups that enhance the living conditions and financial well being of a specific area (Coyne & Peter, 2004). It involves various factors which include improving infrastructure, growing literacy costs, decreasing poverty, and fostering technological advancement. Economic development is geared towards creating conditions that allow for businesses boom, jobs creation, and the overall development of the living standards for individuals within a society. According to Islam (2002), it often includes long-term planning investments in education and healthcare, the establishment of a supportive business environment, and the implementation of guidelines that promote economic growth and stability. Ultimately, economic development seeks to beautify the prosperity and wellbeing of the citizens of a nation by means of fostering sustainable financial boom and lowering inequalities. Regarding how the media facilitates economic development, Coyne and Peter (2004) pointed out that there are certain conditions under which the media contributes to successful adoption of policies aimed at economic progress. Real economic growth requires the coordination of efforts of law makers with the interest of the masses at the center of such on policies that bring about economic growth. Any policies that do not respect the interest of the common man cannot bring about economic development, hence the media brings to the public all the polices of law makers to enable the masses understand such policies and check same vis-a- vis their common interest.

On the issue of how the media helps in promoting economic development in Nigeria, Afolayan (2020) stated that the media plays a significant role in promoting economic

development in Nigeria through various channels and mechanisms. Some of the channels as documented by Nelson (2017) include the following:

- i). **Records Dissemination and Marketplace Attention-** The media serves as a conduit for disseminating economic records, market developments, investment possibilities, and authorities guidelines. This facilitates companies, investors, and buyers to make informed or reasoned decisions which will make for a more obvious and efficient business transactions.
- ii). **Advertising of Entrepreneurship and Innovation-** By means of characteristic testimonies, interviews, and business-associated contents, the media showcases a hit marketers, startups, and innovations. This not only spurs aspiring entrepreneurs, but also draws investment and drives innovation in numerous sectors of the economy.
- iii). **Advocacy for Economic Reforms-** The media acts as a watchdog, highlighting financial challenges, corruption, and inefficiencies. Investigative journalism can divulge malpractices, which will necessitate reforms that promote a conducive business environment, attract investments, and spur monetary increase.
- iv). **Public duty and Transparency-** Through holding government officers, institutions, and businesses responsible, the media fosters transparency, reduces corruption, and guarantees that resources are allotted effectively. This creates an extra strong financial surroundings conducive to sustainable improvement.

Similarly, Kalu-Nwiyu and Nwogu (2014) have highlighted other ways that the media helps in promoting economic development. The ways include that:

- a). The media educates the general public regarding economic concepts, financial literacy, and competencies development. Programmes focusing on entrepreneurship, finance, and vocational schooling can empower people to take part meaningfully in the economy.
- b). **Market Access and Consumer Empowerment-** Advertising via various media platforms assist organizations reach a wider target market, both locally and across the world. This expands marketplace access to goods and services, boosts income, and stimulates financial growth.
- c). **Funding promotion and Overseas Direct Funding -** positive media insurance showcasing Nigeria's monetary capability, funding opportunities, and achievement testimonies can attract foreign investors. This influx of oversea direct funding contributes to job creation, infrastructure improvement, and typical monetary enlargement.
- d). **Community Development and Social Impact-** The media can highlight network improvement initiatives, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and sustainable business practices. Such insurance fosters social obligation among corporations, leading to inclusive growth and improvement.
- e). **Monetary Inclusion and Information Access-** Through economic news, programmes, and content, the media facilitates the promotion of economic inclusion and access to vital



information about banking offers, loans, and investment opportunities. This empowers individuals and small groups to take part in the formal financial system.

### **Media Platforms and Strategies**

There are various media platforms and strategies that are used by the media industry to promote security and economic development agenda. Some of them and their examples are discussed below.

### **Traditional or Conventional Media**

Traditional media can facilitate protection and economic development through wide area audience coverage of a broad target market with detailed reports of relevant issues. By means of investigative reporting and informative packages, conventional media can create awareness about security threats, authorities rules, and financial possibilities, fostering public engagement and duty.

#### **Examples of traditional media are:**

- i). Television: Television remains a powerful medium for reaching large audiences with visual content. It offers opportunities for commercials, news programs, talk shows, and documentaries.
- ii). Radio: Radio is a cost-effective medium that reaches a wide audience, particularly in remote areas. It is used for news, music, talk shows, and advertisements.
- iii). Newspapers: Print media like newspapers provide in-depth coverage, analysis, and opinion pieces. They are still popular for local news and classified ads.

### **Digital or Virtual Media**

Digital also called virtual media platforms including offer actual-time information dissemination and interaction opportunities. By leveraging virtual media, stakeholders can have interaction with audiences, proportion updates on safety features and monetary development, and inspire civic participation. These systems also allow targeted communication and remarks mechanisms, improving transparency and responsiveness. Examples are:

- i). Social Media: Platforms like Face book, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn enable direct interaction with audiences. They are used for brand promotion, customer engagement, and content sharing.
- ii). Websites and Blogs: Websites and blogs provide a platform for organizations and individuals to publish content, showcase products/services, and engage with audiences.
- iii). Email Marketing: Email campaigns are effective for direct communication with subscribers. They are used for newsletters, promotions, and updates.
- iv). Podcasts: Podcasts have gained popularity for sharing audio content on various topics. They offer a convenient way to reach audiences on-the-go.

## Visual Media

Visual media offer enticing approaches to bring complicated security and financial statistics. Through films, infographics, and photographs, visual media systems can simplify principles, showcase success memories, and enlarge key messages. Visible storytelling can evoke feelings, drive engagement, and spark conversations, making security and economic topics greater available and relatable. Examples are:

- i). YouTube: YouTube is a dominant platform for video content. It is used for tutorials, entertainment, vlogs, and advertisements.
- ii). TikTok: This platform is popular for short-form video content, reaching a younger audience and enabling viral trends and challenges.
- iii). Instagram: Known for visual content, Instagram is used for photo sharing, stories, IGTV, and influencer marketing.

## Interactive Media

Interactive media structures facilitate two-way conversation and engagement. These structures give room for dialogues, discussions, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders charged with security-related tasks and financial improvement initiatives. Interactive media allows for participation, comments, and co-creation of solutions, enhancing inclusivity and innovation. Examples include;

- i). Webinars: Webinars are online seminars that allow for live interaction with participants. They are used for training, education, and product demonstrations.
- ii). Virtual Events: Virtual conferences, summits, and trade shows provide opportunities for networking, presentations, and engagement in a digital environment.
- iii). Interactive Websites: Websites with interactive elements like quizzes, polls, and calculators engage users and enhance user experience.

## Mobile Media

Mobile media, offer personalized and ubiquitous channels to reach diverse audiences. With the aid of delivering focused content, alerts, and offerings through mobile devices, stakeholders can enhance protection focus, provide economic opportunities, and empower groups. Mobile media techniques can bridge virtual divides and empower underserved populations to have access to information and sources. Examples include:

- i). Mobile Apps: Apps enable businesses to provide personalized experiences, services, and products to users on their smart phones.
- ii). SMS Marketing: Text messaging is used for promotions, reminders, and customer engagement. It is a direct and immediate communication channel.
- iii). Mobile Games: Gaming apps offer opportunities for advertising, brand placements, and interactive marketing campaigns.

## Content Strategies

Content strategies relate to creating applicable and compelling content materials to engage audiences and force preferred actions. With the aid of growing informative and impactful content materials on top-notch security practices, economic growth strategies, and success memories, stakeholders can train, encourage, and mobilize groups. Content material strategies allow storytelling, notion leadership, and advocacy, shaping perceptions and influencing behaviors toward accomplishing safety and monetary goals. Examples include:

- i). Content Marketing: Creating valuable and relevant content to attract and engage audiences.
- ii). SEO (Search Engine Optimization): Optimizing content to improve visibility and ranking on search engines.
- iii). Influencer Marketing: Collaborating with influencers to reach their followers and promote products/services.
- iv). User-generated Content: Encouraging users to create and share content related to the brand or product.

## Cross Platform Strategies

These techniques entail integrating a couple of media channels to deliver cohesive and regular messaging. By aligning other forms of media namely; conventional, digital, visible, interactive, and mobile media structures, stakeholders can amplify their coverage, give a boost to key messages, and create synergies in promoting security tactics and monetary improvement initiatives. Cross-platform strategies allow omni-channel engagement, data-driven insights, and holistic approaches to address complicated challenges efficiently. Examples include:

- i). Omni-channel Marketing: Consistent messaging and branding across multiple platforms to create a seamless customer experience.
- ii). Integrated Campaigns: This entails coordinating campaigns across various media platforms for maximum reach and impact.
- iii). Data Analytics: Using data to track and measure the effectiveness of media strategies, enabling optimization and targeted campaigns.

## Challenges to Media in Promoting Security and Economic Development in Nigeria

In the preceding session, the various ways the media promotes security and economic development agenda in Nigeria have been highlighted. However there are some factors that have impeded the extent or the effectiveness to which the media performs these roles. Some of the challenges are discussed.

- a). **Censorship and Press Freedom Regulations-** The Nigerian media faces censorship and regulations on press freedom, proscribing its capacity to document independently on security issues and financial developments. This hampers the dissemination of correct



statistics and crucial analysis, potentially leading to misinformation and shortage of transparency.

**b). Safety Threats to Reporters:** Newshounds (journalists or reporters) in Nigeria regularly face threats, harassment, and violence, specially while reporting on sensitive security problems or exposing corruption. The fear of reprisals can cause self-censorship, hindering investigative journalism and uncovering of essential information.

**c). Misinformation and Fake Information:** The proliferation of incorrect information and fake information on social media structures can distort public notion, in particular regarding security incidents and economic traits. False narratives can incite violence, create panic, and undermine agree with in institutions, affecting both security and economic balance.

**d). Loss of Resources and Training:** Many media shops in Nigeria battle with limited assets, outdated device, and a lack of training for reporters, affecting the standard and depth of reporting. Insufficient assets can hinder investigative journalism, facts-driven reporting, and in-intensity analysis of protection and financial issues.

**e). Political Interference and Bias:** Political interference and bias in media ownership and editorial decisions can skew reporting on security and economic topics, compromising objectivity. Biased reporting can cause polarization, hinder constructive discussion, and undermine efforts to deal with safety challenges and promote economic development.

## Conclusion

This paper has dealt with how media helps in security and economic development agenda in Nigeria. The various ways media help in enhancing security were highlighted as well as the ways media enhances economic development. In the same vein, the various forms of media utilized were highlighted which include traditional, visual among others were equally explained with their various examples. Finally some of the challenges of media include safety threats, misinformation among others.

## Recommendations

1. Media organizations should uphold independence from political or financial influences that may compromise objectivity. Independent media ensures transparency, holding both the government and private sector accountable for actions that affect security and economic growth.
2. Media outlets should invest in investigative journalism to expose corruption, mismanagement, and policy lapses that undermine Nigeria's security and economic goals.

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