

MEDIA AND CHALLENGES OF MARITIME ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTAGE IN NIGER DELTA REGION, NIGERIA,

By

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Abstract

Media is believed to have been saddle with the responsibilities of Informing, educating, enlighten as well as entertaining the general public. However, Nigerian media over decades have encountered some difficulties in reporting the activities taking place in some communities and villages within the maritime domain. This paper therefore, examines the challenges face by the media in reporting the happenings in Nigerian maritime environment especially in the Niger Delta region. The study also find out that lack of access road in some of the communities in the region, In ability of some media to apply and also utilize Information communication technology of the stakeholders in the affected areas are among other factors that hinder the media to operate Optimally in the region. It was revealed that there is very low participation of the media especially the local once in reporting the happenings in some of these revering areas do to some of these factors mentioned earlier, or it will be reported mostly 2 to 3 days after an event have taken place. It is recommended that the government at all level should come to their aid, by providing access road for the affected communities. It is recommended that the security agencies should leave up to the expectation by creating enabling environment for the media to operate optimally especially in the region. It is however recommended that, the media should embrace the use of ICT in their reportage for easy and wider coverage of the maritime domain.

Keywords; Media, Maritime Environment, Security Agencies, Challenges.

1. Introduction

Mass media in Nigerian claimed to be objective, fair, accurate and unbiased in reporting the happenings across the country, but despite this self acclaimed commitment, it can be argued that these medias has over the years, neglected some rural areas in their reportage, do to one reason or the other. According to (Schramm, 1964) the media are expected to explain, inform, enlighten as well as educate the society on crucial issues affecting the society's well-being and progress. These media consist of the electronic and print media which comprises of radio, television, internet, newspapers and magazines, they have been described by Edmund Burke in the late-eighteenth- century England as the Fourth Estate of the Realm or the Fourth branch of government (Mc Quail, 2006). This assertion supports the popular statement of Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd American president (1801-1809); which state categorically that” were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without Newspapers or Newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter”.

Looking at the Jefferson's statement, one can agree that media played a very significant role in ensuring sustainability development in any society. His assertion has given credence to the fact that a society can successfully operate without any form of government but it would be catastrophic for any society to exist without the presence of the media. The media can serve as the agents for providing constructive Criticism of government policies and programmes through informing the populace about action and inaction of government on a particular issue and how it affect them as it was explained in “Agenda Setting Theory” by (Dr. Maxwell mc Combs and Donald L. show 1968). The theory explained that the” ability (of the news media) to influence the importance placed on the topic of the public”, that is if a news item is covered frequently and prominently the audience will regard the issue as more important, there by generating feedback.

2. Aims and objectives

The general objective of the study is to analyze the challenges faced by some Nigerian media in covering maritime activities in Niger Delta area. The specific objectives of the study are as follow;

1. To find out the challenges that hinders the media from covering maritime domain.
2. To find out the level of satisfaction of the people from the Niger Delta, about the activities of Nigerian media in their domain.
3. To analyze the relationship between the use of ICT and media reportage in the Niger Delta region.

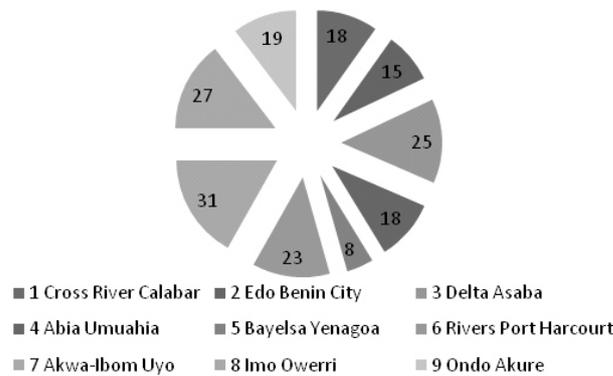
3. Theoretical Framework

The theory set for this research topic is “Media Theory” This theory will be discussed in brief for limited paper frame Media theory which is also called as “**New media theory**” or “**Media-Centered theory** of composition”. The theory focuses on how writing is created, keeping in mind particularly the tools and mediums used in the composition process of communications. It also refers to a range of digital modes of communication, usually incorporating a multi-modal mix of the visual or oral in addition to traditional text. Stemming from the rise of computers as word processing tools, media theorists now also examine the rhetorical strengths and weakness of different media, and the implications these have for literacy, author, and reader. The meaning of the term 'new media' can be confusing and debated over. At times extended to mean any sort of media that is not purely written-text-based, it generally refers to any medium that is technologically 'advanced' from pure text.

The broadness of the term is useful in that it allows for the multiple modes that can be encompassed by this definition, instead of being focused on the technical aspect that the term 'digital' would invite. However, there is often a false dichotomy drawn between the 'analogue' media and the 'new' media; media theory invites re-mediation of texts, which often result in a mix of mediums. Gunther Kress remarks on the new responsibilities of writers: "In the new theory of representation, in the present technological context of electronic, multimodal, multimedia textual production, the task of text-makers is that of complex orchestration. Further, individuals are now seen as remakers, transformers, of sets of representational resources

4. An Overview of Niger Delta region

Niger Delta is the delta of the Niger River sitting directly on the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean in Nigeria. The South-South geopolitical zone is typically considered to be located within nine coastal southern Nigerian states, which include: one state (Ondo) from South West geopolitical zone and two states (Abia and Imo) from South East geopolitical zone. Map of Nigeria numerically showing states typically considered part of the Niger Delta region: below pie chart indicating the nine (9) states and their local government in numbers



The Niger Delta, as now defined officially by the Nigerian government, extends over about 70,000 km² (27,000 sq mi) and makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass. Historically and cartographically, it consists of present-day Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States. In 2000, however, Obasanjo's regime included Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River State, Edo, Imo and Ondo States in the region. The region has 31 million people of more than 40 ethnic groups including the Bini, Ohaji/Egbema, Itsekiri, Efik, Esan, Ibibio, Annang, Oron, Ijaw, Igbo, Isoko, Urhobo, Kalabari, Yoruba, Okrika, Ogoni, Ogba–Egbema–Ndoni, Epie-Atissa people and Obolo people, among its inhabitants, speaking about 250 different dialects.

Language groups spoken in the Niger Delta include the Ijaw languages, Itsekiri language, Central Delta languages, Edoid languages, Yoruboid Languages, and Igboid languages.

4. The Concept Of Media Reportage

Media which is generally known as any means of information dissemination while, media reportage refers to process of gathering and disseminating of information to heterogeneous people using a channel or medium. Media reportage can be either in print form which comprises of Newspaper, magazine, journal etc or in electronic form that is broadcasting through Radio, Television or internet (New media). Media reportage help in educating, informing, enlighten as well as educating the people

5. Media and Maritime Environmental

.The effects of oil in the fragile Niger Delta communities and environment have been enormous. Local indigenous people have seen little if any improvement in their standard of living while suffering serious damage to their natural environment. According to Nigerian federal government figures, there were more than 7,000 oil spills between 1970 and 2000. It has been estimated that a clean-up of the region, including full restoration of swamps, creeks, fishing grounds and mangroves, could take 25 years.

Niger Delta, local communities demanded environmental and social justice from the federal government, with Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni tribe as the lead figures for this phase of the struggle. Cohesive oil protests became most pronounced in 1990 with the publication of the Ogoni Bill of Rights. The indigents protested against the lack of economic development, e.g. schools, good roads, and hospitals, in the region, despite all the oil wealth created. They also complained about environmental pollution and destruction of their land and rivers by foreign oil companies. Ken Saro Wiwa and nine other oil activists from Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) were arrested and killed under Sani Abacha in 1995. Although protests have never been as strong as they were under Saro-Wiwa, there is still an oil reform movement based on peaceful protests today as the Ogoni struggle served as a modern-day eye opener to the peoples of the region.

When long-held concerns about loss of control over resources to the oil companies were voiced by the Ijaw people in the Kaiama Declaration in 1998, the Nigerian government sent troops to occupy the Bayelsa and Delta states. Soldiers opened fire with rifles, machine guns, and tear gas, killing at least three protesters and arresting twenty-five more. Since then, local indigenous activity against commercial oil refineries and pipelines in the region have increased in frequency and militancy.

Recently foreign employees of Shell, the primary corporation operating in the region, were taken hostage by local people. Such activities have also resulted in greater governmental intervention in the area and the mobilization of the Nigerian Army and State Security Service into the region, resulting in violence and human rights abuses. In April 2006, a bomb exploded near an oil refinery in the Niger Delta region, a warning against Chinese expansion in the region. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) stated: they warn the Chinese government and its oil companies to steer well clear of the Niger Delta. The Chinese government, by investing in stolen crude, places its citizens in our line of fire.

6. Study Area and Data Collection

This research was conducted within the stipulated time frame from April 2021 to August 2021. The target populations were both male and female leaving within the selected area of research study in order to prevail the constructive questions on media and challenges of maritime environmental reportage within their entity. Thus, they are various challenges of media reportage such as utilization of information communication technology (ICT), insecurity, bad accessible road network etc. Three (3) states were selected out of the nine (9) states in Niger Delta region and three local governments from each as well. These are, Bayelsa (Ogbia, Brass, Sagbama), Delta (Warri South, Sapele, Ukwuani) and Rivers (Okirika, Nembe, Onnne). These Rural local governments' communities are considered during the selection processes and scope limitation of the research study. The research design for this work was the survey method, and the instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. A well-structured cross section questionnaire was used to assess people's taught and perception of an attitude toward the Media and Challenges of Maritime Environmental reportage in many domain of Niger Delta. In each of the rural community selected, 40 constructed questionnaires were administered in a simple random format. All questionnaires are returned in good faith as the researcher carefully follow-up door-to-door step of each respondent. Interpretation as well for those who are not educated enough to read and understand the message in the questionnaire

7. Data Analysis and Discussion

All data gathered from the field survey are descriptively analyze below using a statistical table to highlight the demographical factor of all respondents from the nine (9) local governments communities selected in order to ascertain what challenges that hinder journalist or media reporters from reporting activities taking place in the maritime

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the study population

Demographic Factor	Bayelsa	Delta	Rivers	Total
Sex				
Male	88	91	64	243
Female	32	29	56	117
Total	120	120	120	360
Age				
-	4	12	17	33
21-25	16	18	24	58
26-35	32	36	50	118
36-45	44	39	11	94
≥46	24	15	18	57
Total	120	120	120	360
Marital Status				
Single	11	24	8	43
Married	79	76	89	244
Divorced	23	6	7	36
Widow	5	2	10	17
Widower	2	12	6	20
Total	120	120	120	360
Educational Status				
Primary Level	18	31	23	72
Secondary Level	34	42	68	144
Tertiary Level	68	38	28	134
None	-	9	1	10
Total	120	120	120	360

Field Survey 2021

The above table which shows the demographic factor of all respondents from nine (9) local governments selected from three (3) states. 243(360) respondents are all male ranging of different ages while 117(360) are females. This implies that male respondent's oversweet the females and it also took a line that males in Niger Delta roam more than females. The table also shows the age categories of respondents viewing from different age groups. Ages that befall in between $\geq 20-30$ are 33(360), 21-25 are 58(360), 26-35 are 118(360), 36-45 are 94(360) and ≤ 46 are 57(360). This has shown that respondents' whom ages lay in between 26-35 answer more than the other.

From the angle of marital status, 43 respondents from the nine local government selected are single, 244 are married, 36 are divorce while only 20 are widow. This implies that married people living in Niger Delta during the field research answer more of the questionnaire than others. From the table least geographic factor above which took the respondents Educational status, out of the 360 questionnaire distributed to nine local government selected from three states, 72(360) are primary level intake, 144(360) are on secondary status, 134(360) are in the class of tertiary while 10(360) respondents belongs to none group. In that aspect, respondents fall in the status of Tertiary pay more attention and were given more privilege than others during the research.

Table 2: Do you have access to media or is there active media reportage in your community?

States/LGs?	Responses		
	Yes	No	Total
BAYELSA			
Ogbia	32	8	40
Brass	17	23	40
Sagbama	28	12	40
DELTA			
Warri South	40	-	40
Sapele	30	10	40
Ukwuani	12	28	40
RIVERS			
Okirika	12	28	40
Nembe	18	22	40
Onne	38	2	40
All States	227	133	360

Field Survey 2021

From the above table, which carries respondents question on having access to media or any active media reportage within their community? 227(360) of the entire selected local government population strongly agreed and said “Yes” to an active media reportage function while 133(360) respondents totally disagreed “No”. In a north shell, respondent with highest support of “Yes” know their reasons or this may be due to functions and value of media reportage person within their community.

Table 3: which of the following media do you have access to?

States/LGs	Television	Radio	Internet	Others	Total
BAYELSA					
Ogbia	27	12	1	-	40
Brass	35	4	1	-	40
Sagbama	14	17	9	-	40
DELTA					
Warri South	10	12	16	2	40
Sapele	15	12	8	5	40
Ukwuani	6	5	23	6	40
RIVERS					
Okirka	21	11	4	4	40
Nembe	34	1	5	-	40
Onne	39	1	-	-	40
All States	203	73	67	17	360

Field Survey 202

In view of the above table, respondents were asked on their based of media access. 203(360) of the entire population across the selected communities clinch on television accessibility, 73(360) chooses radio, 67(360) chooses Internet while 17(360) chooses others. This has shows out that many of the Niger Delta community choose television as their favorite.

Table 4: Demographic respondents based on structure

Question	Responses		
	Yes	No	Total
Are you satisfied with the media reportage in your community??			
BAYELSA			
Ogbia	12	28	40
Brass	11	29	40
Sagbama	16	24	40
DELTA			
Warri South	31	9	40
Sapele	22	18	40
Ukwuani	17	23	40
RIVERS			
Okirka	26	14	40
Nembe	7	33	40
Onne	20	20	40
All States	162	198	360

Due to the Maritime environment, Is there any relationship between the ICT in terms of journalist reportage in your community?

BAYELSA			
Ogbia	12	28	40
Brass	1	39	40
Sagbama	13	27	40
DELTA			
Warri South	18	22	40
Sapele	14	26	40
Ukwuani	21	19	40
RIVERS			
Okirka	30	10	40
Nembe	19	21	40
Onne	6	34	40
All States	134	226	360

Field Survey 2021

Table 4 above indicate respondents demographic structures of “Yes” or ”No” answer. Respondents express their view on technical WHO question which 162(360) dwelling satisfied with the media reportage within their community while 198(360) dissatisfied. From that angle of respondents interpretations, it has shown that many of Niger Delta communities are not well been with the nature of media reportage. The table also shows the relationship of ICT with Journalist due to the maritime environment of communities, 134(360) of the entire selected study area agreed on ICT relationship with the Journalist despite the fact that there are some maritime environmental challenges while 226(360) which carried the highest population disagreed.

Table 5: How does Maritime environment affect your accessibility in terms of media reportage?

State/LGs	Good	Bad	Average	Total
BAYELSA				
Ogbia	12	27	1	40
Brass	3	36	1	40
Sagbama	6	30	4	40
DELTA				
Warri South	18	18	4	40
Sapele	10	29	1	40
Ukwuani	-	40	-	40
RIVERS				
Okirka	-	36	4	40
Nembe	17	15	8	40
Onne	9	26	5	40
All State	75	257	28	360

Field Survey 2021

The table above shows the effect of maritime environment on media reportage, out of the nine local government communities selected for this field research exercise, 75(360) regarded this effect good, 257(360) sees it as Bad while 28(360) chooses average. In that aspect, respondents with highest factor (Bad) knows/have their concrete reason.

Table 6: What are the challenges that hinder Journalists reporting activities taking place in your community?

State/LGs	Insecurity	Bad Road Network	Maritime Env.	Others	Total
BAYELSA					
Ogbia	22	16	-	2	40
Brass	14	13	12	1	40
Sagbama	18	17	4	1	40
DELTA					
Warri South	31	8	1	-	40
Sapele	22	9	9	-	40
Ukwuani	16	17	5	2	40
RIVERS					
Okirka	29	8	3	-	40
Nembe	8	6	22	4	40
Onne	12	10	16	2	40
All States	172	104	72	12	360

Field Survey 2021

Responses from table 6 above shows the challenges hinder with Journalist reportage on different dimension. 172(3660) gear to insecurity, 104(360) magnified on bad road network, 72(360) on maritime environment while 12(360) are others means of challenges. Is figure out that most of journalist challenges based on field survey findings lies on insecurity.

Table 7: How do you rate the effectiveness of media reportage in your community?

State/LGs	Very Strong	Strong	Very Weak	Weak	Total
BAYELSA					
Ogbia	2	17	5	16	40
Brass	11	5	11	13	40
Sagbama	9	18	9	4	40
DELTA					
Warri South	10	19	7	4	40
Sapele	16	19	1	4	40
Ukwuani	8	8	9	15	40
RIVERS					
Okirka	8	12	7	13	40
Nembe	2	9	12	17	40
Onne	17	12	2	9	40
All States	83	119	63	95	360

Field Survey 2021

From its findings, it can be seen and believe that effectiveness of media reportage in local government communities selected, 83(30) of respondents grade it has very strong, 119(360) strong, 63(360) very weak while 95(360) weak.

4. Conclusion

From the analysis and inception of discussion above, the study has reveal and shown that media challenges in maritime environment can never be over emphasize. The research study looks into the conclusion

➤ Lack of Proper Utilization of ICT

The emergence of information communication technology has brought about profound changes in our daily lives especially in the media operation. It has change the way think, behave as well as react to some certain issues in our day to day activities. Chuku (2018), citing Tiamiyu (2003), defined information Communications technology (ICTS) as “an electronic technology for creating. Storing, acquiring, processing, communicating and using information”. Kante (2008), defined it as Information Technology (IT), is the use of computers, the internet and telecommunication tools such as mobile phones, Drones etc for capturing, storing, analyzing and distributing information of all kinds, including text (words), numbers and pictures. Base on the above definitions, it believed that ICT is simply the used of an electronic device to capture, store, retrieve, as well as communicate the information acquire to the audience. Therefore, there is need for the media to apply these mechanisms in there reportage especially in the Niger Delta region for effective and efficient coverage

➤ Lack of Access Road

The Nature and terrain of some of the rural areas in Nigerian are the bedrock of poor performances of some media coverage in the country; Niger Delta region not an exception. Most of the communities in the region are island in nature (Surrounded with water), thereby making it difficult for some media to access these areas to cover some events taking place in the region.

➤ Insecurity

Niger Delta has been described as one of the deadly zone do to militancy, sea pirate and other crisis taking place in the region, which make most Nigerian media difficult to operate within the axis.

However, Maritime environment is also very vital to the Nigerian Economic development. Media can be used to sample public Opinion with Positive news report from the maritime Security Operations and Ceasefire agreements with Military, which will give hope for Investors to have Confidence and invest on the maritime Businesses taking place in the region. Militancy and sea pirate are some of the reasons believe to have hindered some journalist from covering such areas.

➤ **Knowledge**

Most of Nigerian journalist are quack, they lack the professional knowledge to operate effectively, you will see a situation where somebody that read History, Public Administration or even some sciences course operating in media houses as journalist, sometimes you will even find undergraduate, somebody who only attend secondary school being employed by some media houses.

5. Recommendations

Base on the issue discussed the following recommendations are made.

(a)Media houses should always employ qualify and professional personnel to work in their station as well as in the field for a very robust outcome.

(b) Information and communication technology facilities have profound effects in the media operation. Therefore, Nigerian media should embrace the ICT facilities and its usage for effective and efficient service delivery.

(c)Media should collaborate with Security Agencies to enable them cover some areas that are volatile like Niger Delta region.

(d)Journalist should acquaint themselves with ICTs and other related skills that would help them in the discharge of their duties.

(e)Media should be properly funded as well as equip with up to date ICT facilities. Furthermore, workers remuneration should be given utmost priority to reduce the issue of brown envelop if not totally abolish in journalism industry.

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