

**PERCEPTION OF MASS MEDIA'S ROLE IN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS REPORTING: A
SURVEY OF CALABAR RESIDENTS**

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Abstract

This study investigates the perception of Calabar residents regarding the mass media's coverage of human rights violations. Citizens' perception of the media's role in Nigeria's complex human rights landscape, is crucial for gauging the media's effectiveness as a watchdog and public educator. Using a survey design involving questionnaire and in-depth interview, this research surveyed 400 residents across Calabar Metropolis, selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. The findings reveal a mixed perception: while residents largely depend on the mass media (primarily television and online news blogs) for information on human rights abuses, there is significant skepticism regarding the objectivity, depth, and consistency of the coverage. A majority of respondents believe the media's coverage is politically motivated depending on who owns a particular media outlet, and others feel that violations involving ordinary citizens receive less attention than those involving prominent figures. Furthermore, the study indicates that demographic factors such as age and educational attainment significantly influence perceptions of media credibility. The study concludes that while the mass media in Calabar plays an indispensable role in highlighting human rights issues, its credibility is undermined by perceived biases and a lack of follow-up on reported cases. It recommends that media organizations invest in specialized human rights reporting, ensure greater balance, and create more platforms for citizen feedback to rebuild public trust.

Keywords: *mass media, violations, human rights, objectivity, perception, coverage*

Study Background and the Problem

Historically, the mass media has served as a primary conduit for the exposure of human rights violations. However, the efficacy of this oversight is frequently compromised by sectarian sentiments—specifically tribal or religious biases—and direct interference from media owners. When institutional constraints impede objective reporting, the victims of such violations are systematically marginalized. Given their capacity for agenda-setting, it is argued that media organizations must maintain a robust framework for managing human rights discourse to ensure societal accountability (Chinaka, 2013).

The influence of media extends beyond simple information dissemination; it permeates the domestic sphere and the individual psyche, shaping opinions and modulating behaviour. This pervasive reach offers a significant opportunity for global human rights enlightenment. Conversely, the "power of the press" can be weaponized with catastrophic consequences, as evidenced by the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. In this instance, media outlets were instrumental in the incitement of ethnic violence. Specifically, the *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) broadcasted dehumanizing rhetoric and explicit directives for extermination (Dallaire, 2007). This orchestrated hate speech contributed to the systematic massacre of approximately **800,000** ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus within a 100-day period (Caplan, 2007).

Journalists, photojournalists, and producers play a critical role in documenting the exploitation of marginalized populations by dominant power structures. Synthetically, the media's contribution to human rights includes:

- **Awareness and Education:** Cultivating a public understanding of fundamental rights.
- **Documentation and Exposure:** Cataloging specific instances of abuse and identifying perpetrators to facilitate moral and legal accountability.
- **Victim Advocacy:** Publicizing the conditions of the oppressed to mobilize external support and compensation.
- **Institutional Support:** Assisting law enforcement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in tracking systemic violations.

Conceptualized as the "Fourth Estate," the media is a foundational pillar of democratic governance, tasked with the surveillance of the socio-political environment and the reporting of state and non-state malfeasance (Norris, 2000). In Nigeria—a nation defined by a legacy of military authoritarianism, contemporary insurgencies, and pervasive police brutality—this surveillance function is vital (Oloyede, 2018). Effective reporting serves to amplify victim narratives and catalyze remedial political action. However, the Nigerian media landscape is fraught with structural challenges, including: **Political Patronage:** Influence-peddling by the ruling elite. **Economic Constraints:** Limited financial independence affecting investigative depth. **Safety Concerns:** High risks to journalistic safety, as documented by Reporters Without Borders (2023).

Calabar, the capital of Cross River State, provides a distinct sociocultural backdrop for examining these dynamics. Although it remains a relatively stable urban center, it is situated within a broader region characterized by resource-based agitation and communal conflict. Consequently, the perceptions of Calabar residents regarding media coverage provide a localized lens through which to evaluate the broader national performance of the media. Assessing these perceptions is essential for understanding how media framing influences civic engagement and the perceived credibility of the press in contemporary Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. How do Calabar residents perceive the mass media coverage of human rights violations?
- ii. How does ownership, religious and ethical factors influence the media coverage of human rights violations in Calabar metropolis?

Conceptual and Theoretical Reviews

The Concept of Human Rights

Human rights are perceived as universal, that is, it is for every person. These rights in national and international law could exist as natural or legal rights. It should be noted that what is meant by "Right" has generated lots of controversy and a subject of ongoing philosophical discourse. Rights are freedom from unlawful imprisonment, torture; harassment and execution are regarded as belonging fundamentally to all persons. Human rights are basic rights and freedom that all people are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or other status. It includes civil and political rights, such as the right of life, liberty and freedom of expression and social, cultural and economic rights including the right to participate in election to work and receive education.

Oraegunam and Ikenga (2007) writes that, fundamental human rights are attached to every human being by virtue of that very fact of being human. They are rights inherent in the essence of man. Right and human rights have always been problematic since antiquity; correlativeness and comparativeness of the two have generated serious debate in the intellectual circle, depending on the school one belongs. Right is that which belong to a particular thing. Human rights are those rights that belong to humans because they are human beings. Thomas Jefferson rightly articulated definition of human right in 1887 and he writes from Paris to James Madison on the imperativeness and necessity of upholding individual liberty and the need for a bill of right. Hence, he writes "a bill of rights is what people are entitled to against every government on earth". Humana opines, human rights are laws and practices that have evolved over the countries to protect ordinary people, minorities, groups and races from oppressive rulers and governments (Humana, 1983)

Human Rights Violations in Nigeria

Despite more than a decade of democratic governance and endorsement of universal declaration of human rights charter, Nigerians still face a lot of human rights violations. This is because contrary to democratic ethos, the state is still largely authoritarian in leadership and security operations (Akhaine & Chizea, 2011). A case of human

rights violations which (Mcculley, 2013) describes as becoming a culture of impunity in the country includes rape, child abuse, human trafficking, kidnaping for ransom and rituals are also alarming (Agbabe 2013, & Atoyebi 2014) Other forms of human rights violations in Nigeria includes, harassment, educational denial and domestic violence.

The issue of human rights violations is not one that should be handled with kid gloves, it goes beyond condemning the acts that amounts to such human rights breach, the need to go further to ensure that the fundamental human rights of her citizen are not violated. A society that encourages human rights violation is giving a way to anarchy and chaos in an era of civilization, a country where citizens' rights are not respected or protected is a grooming ground for communal crisis and violence. Citizens' lives would be at the mercy of those courageous enough to take up arms and violate the rights of another citizen. (dailytrust.com).

Human rights violations in Nigeria in general, cut across the entire spectrum of rights. The abuse comes in different forms and could be direct and indirect. Ifeanyi (2017), opines that, the perpetrators of human rights violations are hardly or never held accountable or brought to justice due to myriads of problems besetting the judicial institutions. Besides, there is an apparent lack of trust and confidence in the courts and general apathy towards the judicial processes among Nigerians as the civil remedies in laws are rarely enforced. Some of the instances of human rights typically violated in the society are; Rape, Child abuse, Human trafficking.

Role of the Media in Combating Human Rights Violations

Ndolo (2006) assert that "people choose to attend to particular media channels or types of content for a varied generality of gratification. These gratifications parallel and compliment the functions of the media for society". The broadcast media have a very crucial role and function to play in the combating of human rights violations in Nigeria.

The media according to Asemah (2011) are agents of social change that can bring about positive attitudinal change in the audience: they set agenda for the people follow in the society. The broadcast media are crucial to opinion formulation and eventual outcome of an event. The broadcast media today are champion of human right from documentary, news, campaign, advert, and drama on human right from violations and its implications or penalties. They act as the eye, ear and the voice of the public. Drawing attention to the abuse of power and human rights in its report, which has made government and civil society organizations to effect changes that will improve the quality of people's lives chiefly among the roles are:

1. Reporting and monitoring of human rights abuse
2. Watchdog of the society
3. Broadcast media as evidence
4. Exposing cases of human rights abuse and violations
5. To expose perpetrators of human right abuses for moral condemnation and legal actions
6. To help secure redress or compensation for victims
7. To enlighten and sensitize the general public on possible human rights violations
8. To educate the people on how to use appropriate communication channels to articulate their views and expression to their aspiration
9. To discourage human rights abuse
10. To publicize the plight of victims for people to know or see, so that they could wake up, react and demand for justice

The media as a watchdog of the society have a crucial role to play in promoting and protecting human rights in Nigeria. The media serves as an effective network for educating and informing the people of human rights violations and also making those ones who often trample on people's rights to know that they are doing the wrong thing. The media generally, could be immense assistance in this direction. Through the media the people can also be aware of their fundamental human rights and the constitutional protection of the rights. Through constant vigilance on the infringement of human rights and by exposing perpetrators, the media a have caused a significant rise in public awareness of these issues.

Factors Militating Against Human Rights Coverage by the Media

The inclusion of human rights issues as news stories is said to be better than how it is used to be. Although human right issues sometimes make it to news stories, Ovsiovitch (1993) argues that news worthy topic, only little attention is being given to then by the media. Research indicates that human rights as a concept often fails to be used as a 'subject' in the heading of media stories, though some terms often used point to human right indirectly. However, this is problematic as they do not enhance a comprehensive understanding of human rights.

The inability of journalists to comprehend what human rights are, as well as the contents of human rights instruments has resulted in them seeing human right from the perspective of war. The lack of knowledge of these human rights instruments instills in them the fear of beings labeled as ‘politically based’ should they incorporate human right issues in their news stories. Unknowingly to some journalist unaware of human rights issues, they do in reality comes in contact with such issues every day. There is a skewed notion about the place where human rights violations occur, such that western journalists reason that these violations only happen outside their countries, without knowing that there are similar issues right around then. Space constraint limits the treatment of human rights issues in – depth by the media. Other constraints include the death of journalists to cover human rights news and the danger paced in a conflict situation impedes the coverage of human rights reporting a case of Congo (Schimmel, 2009).

Journalists believe that they have interest in human rights reporting as long as the stories are news worthy. Besides, there is the notion that human right do not rate high in “readers” survey (ICHRP, 2003) Even if some human right issues do not qualify to be newsworthy.

Audience Perception

Perception plays very important role in making some issues important and some unimportant, this is due to many reasons, sometimes perceptions are affected by lots of other thing. According to Serverin (2001) different psychological factors influence audience perception of media coverage and they include; past experience, cultural expectation, motivations, moods, needs and attitude.

According to Freldman (1999) audience perception of media content is the sorting out, interpretation, analysis and integration of stimuli involving our sense organs and brain. Whereas audience perception means that how audience makes sense of media information, this is related to the phenomenon that how we make impression of and make influences about media messages. Serverin (2001) further suggest that different people react to same message in a very different way, and this is all related to the process of decoding; that how people process media contents.

Studies have shown that audience are not passive recipients but actively interpret message they receive and attach their own meaning to (Chand, Mchombu & Nengomasha, 2018). Thus, they are quite able to make up their own view and opinion on the quality and extent of mass media human rights violations news reporting. As a consumer / audience of the media news items, such outcome will also influence their response to media human rights violations contents and programs. In other words, perception of and response to human rights violations from the media and other sources vary at individual and group level depending on some factors. According to some studies, some of the factors that affect access and attitude to human rights violations stories includes; poverty, geographical location etc. (Wabiri & Taffa , 2013).

Asemah, Edegoh and Ogwo, (2013) in their research to ascertain **mass media for the promotion of human rights in Nigeria** raised two (2) research questions, reviewed literatures related to the context as well as employing social responsibility and agenda setting theories.

This study utilized a **survey research design** to gather empirical data. The sampling process employed a **stratified simple random sampling** technique to select a representative cohort of **200 respondents**. A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection, ensuring standardized responses across the sample. The resulting data were subjected to quantitative analysis using **descriptive statistics**, including frequency distribution tables, simple percentages, and bar charts to facilitate a rigorous interpretation of the variables.

The research findings demonstrate that the media performs a critical function in the promotion and protection of human rights. As primary agents of social enlightenment, media organizations are instrumental in educating the public on their **fundamental human rights**. The data indicates that these rights are multidimensional and central to civic life, encompassing: **The Right to Life, Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Association**. The study concludes that the media’s capacity for mass education serves as a safeguard against abuses, as an informed citizenry is better equipped to recognize violations and demand institutional accountability.

Menon (2005) reported in his research ‘Effective Media and Mass Communication’. The study aim was to ascertain the nature of human rights ethnic perceptions in a Sri Lankan society in relation to the media behaviour. A survey was carried out from 400 respondents, i.e. 60 undergraduates from the University of Colombo and 300 randomly selected respondents.

The study shows a consensus and concludes that the role of media in fighting against violations depends on many things, such as a structure of a society, ownership, control and structure of editorial staff, tolerance and freedom of speech, and the type of government in power versus conflicting forces versus the media.

The reviewed studies revealed the role and importance of media in promoting and protecting human rights abuses as they are agents of information that educate the public on fundamental rights, but failed to examine audience attitude to the role of media in covering and reporting human rights issues. To this end, this study will cover the gap and assess audience perception on media coverage of human rights violations and find out how the mass media has been able to report human rights violations in the society.

Theoretical Framework

The Individual Differences Theory

According to Raymond (1972) the individual differences theory sees an individual as behaviorally and culturally figure as a unit of judgment, and learning taking place on a stimulus response basis. Each individual audience member is affected differently in terms of the personal psychological make-up he brings from his past experiences. Also, human beings, because of their different learning orientation vary one's cognitive field of selective perception and attention.

According to this theory individual respond directly to the mass media according to their psychological needs and that individual consume the media to satisfy those needs. The theory gives importance to the individual audiences and states that an individual's value, needs, belief and attitude play a major role in how they react to media content. Therefore, different people will react differently to the same information or message.

Despite the widespread knowledge of the contributions of a free press to a healthy democracy, people argues that democracy has ceased to benefit from the media, because the media makes it difficult in tackling public challenges and opinions. The concept of human rights and its violations is now broadly recognized in in the world and issues related to human rights violations are reported by journalist at large scale. Despite the remarkable attention given to human right by different media platform, the level of human right violations keep occurring more throughout the world.

Why the important of human right violations coverage by the media is clear, it is difficult to evaluate how well it's reported coverage has been criticized as been biased against open societies (Reisman, 1984) audience interest, while not a jar determinant of news selection, can influence the reporting of news. The need of audience and reporters interest affect the amount of coverage given to human rights violations as audience react to media content based on their personal belief, interest and personal opinion.

The Information Processing/ Meaning Theory

The informational approach is focused on how effortlessly audience or potential consumers may understand and respond to information presented in a specific language (Dada, 2012). The theory is based on the idea that human processes the information they receive, rather than merely responding to stimuli. This perspective equates the mind to a computer, which is responsible for analyzing information from the environment e.g. attention, perception, short term memory. These processing systems transform after the information in systematic way. The information can be stored, retrieved and transformed using 'mental programs' with the result being behavioral responses.

For a number of reasons, public cynicism about the media in general and human rights violation coverage is widespread and increasing. Public attitude are not consistent or coherent. There is little doubt for example, Journalists are always blamed for the news they bring. If journalist sometimes attract justly the opprobrium, it is also important to consider changes in the behavior of audience. Goldium (2000) maintains that media has expanded coverage of human rights into new areas, many human rights issues are under reported, issues that are less visible or slow processes are rarely covered. Though data in human rights violations are not lacking but the impact of the information on the public is not as great as might be expected.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, a survey design was employed to investigate audience perception on the coverage of human rights violations by the media. The research covered the geographical zone of Calabar and how human rights violations are being covered in NTA Calabar. Calabar is the capital of Cross River State, Nigeria. It was originally named Akwa Akpa, in Efik Language. The city is adjacent to the Calabar and great Kwa river and creeks of the cross river. It has an area of 406square kilometers (157sq mi) and a population of 501,400 both municipal and

south. Copies of questionnaire were administered to selected audience of Calabar Municipal and Calabar South to know their opinion on media coverage of human rights violations in the city of Calabar.

Within the content of the study, population comprised residents of Calabar municipal and Calabar South who are adults (both male and female), and audience of the media. The respondents were randomly selected from various categories of samples from media, victims, security, lecturers and residents of Calabar South. The questionnaire was administered to a sampled population of 100 respondents of Calabar metropolis. The data gotten from the respondents were presented and analyzed using simple table and frequency distribution method.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussions

Data presentation and analysis is based on the successfully retrieved number of questionnaire and it is presented in a simple table frequency distribution method.

Table 1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	31	31.6%
Female	67	68.4%
Total	98	100%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 1 above shows that the majority of respondents are female.

Table 2 Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-20	13	13.3%
20-30	34	34.7%
30 and above	51	52.0%
Total	98	100%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 2 above shows that majority of respondents are adults of 30years and above.

Table 3 Occupational Distribution of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Civil servants	28	28.6%
Public servant	18	18.4%
Traders	33	33.7%
Students	19	19.3%
Total	98	100%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 3 above shows that majority of respondents are traders.

Table 4 Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	24	24.5%
Married	70	71.4%
Divorced	4	4.1%
Total	98	100%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4 above shows that majority of respondents are married.

Table 5 Educational Background of Respondents

Educational background	Frequency	Percentage
FSLC	0	0%
SSCE	17	17.4%
ND	29	29.6%
HND/BSC	34	34.7%
MSC	7	7.1%
PHD	11	11.2%

Total	98	100%
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Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 5 above shows that respondents are all literate and they understand the aim of this study.

Table 6 Respondents who are viewers of NTA

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	72	73.5%
No	26	26.5%
Total	98	100%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 6 above shows that majority of respondents watch NTA Calabar.

Table 7 Respondents who Support Human Right Violations

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	98	100%
Disagree	-	-
Total	98	100%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 7 shows that 98 respondents which represents 100% agreed to the coverage of human rights violations by the media.

Table 8 Respondent's Response on Human Rights Violation Coverage by

NTA Calabar

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	17	17.3%
Good	57	58.2%
Bad	18	18.4%
Very bad	6	6.1%
Total	98	100%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 8 above shows that majority of respondents think the coverage of human rights violations by NTA Calabar is good.

Table 9: Respondents' Response of NTA Calabar Human Rights Violations Coverage

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	6	6.1
Weekly	62	63.3
Monthly	5	5.1
Sometimes	25	25.5
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 9 above shows that majority of respondents said NTA Calabar report human rights violations stories daily.

Table 10: Audience Response on NTA Calabar Human Rights Violations Report in the society

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	29	29.6
High	61	62.2
Low	1	1.0
Very low	7	7.2

Total	98	100
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Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 10 above shows that majority of the respondents agreed that the report of human right violations in the society by NTA Calabar is high.

Table 11 Media Report of Human Rights Violations

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Effective	59	60.2
Non-effective	39	39.8
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 11 above shows that majority of respondents agreed to media effectiveness on human rights violations report.

Table 12: Respondents Response on Media Fairness on Human Rights Violation Reports

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	50
No	31	31.6
Undecided	18	18.4
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 12 above shows that majority of the respondents agreed that the media are fair with their report.

Table 13: Role of Mass Media in Covering Human Rights Violation in the Society

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	72	73.5
Good	18	18.4
Bad	8	8.1
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 13 above shows that majority of the respondents think the role of the mass media in covering human rights violations in the society is very good.

Table 14: Respondents Response on the Effect of Media Report and Reduction Rate of Human Rights Violations

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	32.7
No	47	47.9
Maybe	19	19.4
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 14 above shows that majority of the respondents said that media report did not reduce the rate of violations in their area.

Table 15 Respondents response on the common abuse in the society

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Rape	42	42.9
Child abuse	26	26.5
Human trafficking	10	10.2
All of the above	20	20.4
None	0	0
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 15 above shows majority of the respondents have more of rape complaint.

Table 16: Effect of Ethical, Ownership and Religion Intervention on Human Rights Violation Report

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	71.4
No	28	28.6
Total	98	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 16 above shows that majority of the respondents think ethical, ownership, and religious factors affect the covering and reporting of human rights violations.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What is the audience attitude to the role of mass media in covering human rights violation issues?

To answer this research question item 6, 7,8and 9 of the questionnaire were used to answer the research question. Audience attitude to the role of mass media in the covering and reporting of human rights issues was clearly stated in table 6,7,8,9. The majority of the respondents agreed that the media do report human rights violations issues frequently and their coverage is good enough to eradicate human rights violations in the society. Respondents that watch NTA Calabar human rights violation programs are 95%. Meaning they identify and acknowledge the role of mass media in fighting human rights violations.

According to Wellings and Macdowall (200,p.3) drawing on tones (1990) “ the strength of the mass media lies in helping to put issues on the public agenda, in reinforcing local efforts, in raising consciousness about issues and in conveying simply information, teaching and shifting attitudes, believes and changing behavior in the society, human rights violations campaign /reporting are targeted to the society with a view to encouraging positive attitude toward victims and stopping abuse or prevent reoccurrence in the community.

Research Question Two: To what extent has the media been able to report human rights violations in the society?

To answer this research question, item 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the questionnaire were used to answer the research question. The table shows that the media are very effective in reporting human rights issues. The table shows that the role and impact of the mass media in putting stop or reducing the rate of human rights violations in the society is very high and they are being fair in their report.

Goddard and Saunder (2001) drew attention to the essential role of the media in increasing society’s awareness of, and response to rape, child abuse and human trafficking. Of particular note was the part played by news and features that are reported on specific human rights violations cases, research and intervention strategies. Such media attention to Rape, Child abuse and Human trafficking has positively influenced public, professional and political responses to the circumstances in which children, young people and ignorant people find themselves.

For several reasons, however the effectiveness of these campaigns remains contentious. The effectiveness of mass media in the protection and promotion of human rights through media campaign and coverage perform an important and significant role in placing issues such as rape, child abuse and human trafficking on public agenda.

Research Question Three: How are religious, ownership and ethical factors responsible for the coverage of human rights violations?

To answer this research question item 14, 15, 16 of the questionnaire were used to answer the research question. The table shows that religious, ownership and ethical factors do affect the coverage of human rights violations stories. Which means some abuses are not being reported the way they happened. “He who pays the piper calls the tune” is a common statement in the media. Ownership, ethical and religion factors have continued to play an influential role in the editorial policies of media organizations.

It is so bad in some media organizations that the ethics of journalism are exchanged with the opinions and decisions of the proprietors of the organizations. McQual (2007) said “there is no doubt that owners in the market-based media have ultimate power over content and can ask for what they want to be included or left” the intervention of owners of media houses, religion leaders, government has massively weigh down the reporting of human rights violations in the society and this has increase the rate of violations in the country.

The findings corroborate the individual differences theory in which Raymond (1972) sees an individual as behavioural and central figure as a unit of judgment, each audience member is affected differently in terms of personal

psychological make-up from his past experience. The findings are also reinforced by the notion of information processing theory which Dada (2012) argues that it focused on how effortlessly audience or potential consumer may understand and respond to information presented in a specific language. Individual or audience respond differently to media to satisfy their need. In the view of audience perception on the coverage of human rights violations by the media, Howard and Donnelly (1986) claim that peoples attitude toward human rights violations reports are shaped by the level of media coverage of human rights in the society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study indicate that media audience identify and acknowledge the role of mass media in fighting against human rights violations through their reports. It further reveal that the media, in addition create awareness on human rights abuses to help individuals whose rights have been violated to seek redress. The intervention of owners of media houses, religious leaders, government has massively weighed down the reporting of human rights violations in the society. However, human rights violations campaigns are targeted to the society with a view to encouraging positive attitude toward victims and stopping abuse or prevent reoccurrence in the community.

In view of the findings of this study it can be concluded that the mass media put so much effort in the coverage of human rights violations stories. It is evident that media ownership, ethical and religious factors do affect the coverage. Despite the challenges, the media still creates awareness on human rights violations to help individual whose rights has been violated to seek redress. Indeed as Wellind and Macdowall (2000) put it, the strength of the mass media lies in helping to put issues on the public agenda, in raising consciousness about issues, in conveying simple information and shifting attitude that changes behaviours in the society. Thus, the media is a sword that can be used to fight against any form of violations in the society.

Based on the findings of this study, the recommendations below are addressed to journalist, media organizations, human rights organizations in the spirit that they can be used as pointers for action to improve the way media outlet conceive of, research, cover and report human rights violations and how human rights organizations interact with journalists.

1. Journalist should be given opportunities to become better informed about human rights instruments. This can be done through a range of awareness raising from activities including specific pre-entry courses on human rights issues as a part of curriculum, internal editorial programmes to review coverage of human rights issues e.g. rape, child abuse and human trafficking actions to promote exchange of views between journalists and human rights organizations.
2. Media organizations should also be studied to know the extent they go to in incorporating human rights issues in their programmes, as well as how far they are prepared to invest in such programmes. Future researcher should strive their views on what the role of the media should be especially research on human rights violations.
3. Media institutions should be interested in human rights promotion by formulating their policies to make them conducive for human rights violations coverage. They should be prepared to invest in human rights programmes and also encourage their staff to get acquainted with the various human rights instruments to be able to effectively engage in human rights reporting. They should also devise feasible techniques fir reporting human rights violations to make them receptive to media audience.
4. Government, owners of media houses, should commit themselves to eliminating all forms of official interference in the work of journalist and should remove all obstacles to the exercise of free media.

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