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MASS MEDIA AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

By
Joseph Adepoju Tejumaiye

Abstract

This study examines the role of the mass media in bringing about increased consciousness/awareness and knowledge about the environment. The study asserts that man is environment-dependent; therefore, there is the need for man to be environment conscious. Problems in the environment need urgent attention for the benefit of man and generations. The paper advocates a more organized, purposeful and co-ordinated mass media approach to bring about increased awareness, education and knowledge about the environment; this approach is referred to as the guide-dog journalism approach. This approach is taken to be better than the traditional watch dog approach. The paper also advocates that the mass media adopts a multipolar method of coverage, this it is believed is better than the balance news coverage approach.

Introduction

A school of thought argued that the watchdog role of the mass media is enough for the mass media, while another school of thought posited that the watchdog role of the mass media be replaced with a new role tagged guide-dog role [Tejumaaye 2004B]. There are a lot of debates about the effects of the mass media on man and society. A school of thought posited that the effects of the mass media on man and society are real, while another school of thought is of the position that the effects of the mass media do not exist. The argument of the second school of thought goes thus:

If over sixty years of a considerable amount of research effort, direct effects of mass media upon behavior have not been clearly identified, then, we should conclude that they are simply not there to be found [Gauntlet, 1998]

The first school of thought on the effects of the mass media argued thus:

We dressed for the weather as forecast; we buy products advertised. We go to cinema to watch films mentioned in the mass media. Equally, there are reported cases of people refraining from buying certain products because of media negative publicity concerning the contamination or adulteration of the products. Acts of violence have been recorded consequent upon exposures to media violence just as much policy and regulation have been directed at preventing the media from causing harm [McQuail, 2000]

According to McQuail [ibid: 416], "the study of effects is as old as the entire mass communication discipline". Confirming the significance of the effects of mass communication, Newbold [1995:118] argued: "mass media effects tradition has been the major force behind the development of mass communication research". Perhaps, what is not and has never been doubted includes that the contemporary man and society use the mass media. In view of the above, there is need to study the mass media, particularly, its processes and its effects.

According to Lasswell [1948], the main functions of mass communication in society are: surveillance of the environment, correlation of the parts of the society in responding to the environment and the transmissions of cultural heritage. Wright [1975: 26] added entertainment to this list. Mendelssohn [1966], interpreting the addition of entertainment to the functions of communication, said that entertainment may be part of transmitted culture. He stressed that another aspect of entertainment is that of providing individual reward, relaxation and reduction of tension which makes it easier for people to cope with real life problems and for societies to avoid breakdown. McQuail [2000] added mobilization as the fifth function of the mass media. According to him, mobilization is designed to reflect the widespread application of mass communication to political and commercial propaganda.

Mass media have been found to play role[s] in environmental consciousness and education (e.g. Jensen [1977]; Nelson [1994]; Enemaku [2002]; Ademekan [2001]; Salawu [2004] and Tejumaaye [2007A]). They [mass media] have been found to be almost indispensable in socialization as well as in the dissemination of knowledge (e.g. Josselson, 1976; Brown, 1976). The mass media roles in politics have also been established in studies such as [Seymour 1974; Soola 2003; Keghku 2003; Tejumaaye and Rufai 2007 and Aina 2003]. The mass media roles in societal culture and in cultural dissemination and transformation have been established by studies like Carrey [1975, 1989]; McGuigan [1992]; Schudson [1991]; Wright [1975] and McQuail [2000]. There is hardly any aspect of man's life that the mass media have not played one role or the other.

Definition of terms

The under listed terms as used in this study are as defined below:

Mass Media: Mechanisms put into the communication process to duplicate man's writing (printing press) and to extend man's senses of sight and sound (electronic media). In this study, mass media encapsulates both the print and the electronic media.

Environmental Education [EE]: Environmental Education is education in the environment, on the environment, through the environment and for the environment [Connect 1986].

Theoretical framework: Agenda setting theory

The construct, 'agenda setting' was coined in 1972 by the duo of McComb and Shaw to describe a phenomenon long observed and studied in the context of electioneering. However, the contemporary view of the construct has gone beyond election campaigns [politics] to such areas as racial unrest, students' riot, crime statistics and inflation. Others areas include drug abuse [Shoemaker et al 1989], the environment [Kaufeld and Fortner 1987, Ader 1995], advertising and even the world of web logs [Delwiche 2005].

Dearing and Rogers [1996] defined agenda setting as "a process of an on-going competition among issue protagonists to gain the attention of media professionals, the public and policy elites". Lazarsfeld et al [1944: 23] referred to it as: "the power to structure issues". McQuail [2000: 491] described agenda setting thus:

A process of media influence [intended or unintended] by which the relative importance of news, events, issues or personages in the public mind is affected by the order of presentation [or relative salience] in news reports. It is assumed that the more the media attention, the greater is the importance attributed by the news audience.

According to Jefrees [1997:11], "agenda setting is the ability of the mass media to increase the perceived importance of issues as a result of increased exposure across time". Like cultivating theory, agenda setting is a general process that occurs over time as media messages accumulate. Agenda setting theory proposes that the public agenda or what kinds of things people discuss, think about, worry about and sometimes ultimately press for legislation about, is powerfully shaped and directed by what the news media chooses to publicise [Wimmer and Dominick 1987: 385]. Extending Wimmer and

Dominick [1987] viewpoint, it means that if the mass media decide to give the most time and space to coverage of ethnic issues in Nigeria, this issue will become the most important on the audience's agenda. Similarly, if the mass media devote the second most amount of coverage to the environment or unemployment, the audience will rate the environment or unemployment as the second most important issue.

Agenda setting research examines the relationship between mass media priorities and audience priorities in the relative importance of news topics. There are some underlying assumptions about agenda setting. These assumptions according to Becker [1982] include that: [1] individuals have a desire to keep themselves informed and they will use the mass media to do so, [2] the mass media deals with issues and provides cues as to which issue[s] are more important, [3] the audience accepts the mass media agenda as their own.

The history of agenda setting by the mass media can be traced to Walter Lippmann. According to Lippmann [1922], "the mass media were responsible for the pictures in our heads". Lippmann published a book titled, 'public opinion' in 1922 in which he discussed the role of mass communication in shaping the 'pictures in our heads'. However, Lippmann's notion, subjected to the contemporary view of what the construct [agenda setting] is, was a much vague one than the rather specific agenda setting theory, besides; the connection with his work seems rather indirect.

In 1963, Bernard Cohen further articulated the idea of agenda setting when he affirmed in his book, 'the press and foreign policy' that the media may not always be successful in telling people what to think, but they are usually successful in telling people what to think about [Lowery, and DeFleur 1998]. Though Cohen did not use the term 'agenda setting', nevertheless, his statement stated the idea in a nutshell. Hardly an article or book appears on agenda setting that does not quote or paraphrase Cohen's statement of the power of the mass media [press].

Lang and Lang [1966: 23] had earlier made reference to the idea of agenda setting when they argued thus:

In a sense, the newspaper is the prime mover in setting the territorial agenda. It has a great part in determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are and what most people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with.

Mills [1951] had drawn commonness between the mass media and man when he wrote thus: "between consciousness and existence stands communication which influences such consciousness as men have of their existence". Mills [1956] again expounded on the almost total dependency of individuals on the mass media for their sense of identity and aspirations. According to Cornstock [1993]:

The influence of the mass media [particularly television] resides not in affecting how "people behave, but in what they think about. The medium becomes a socio-cultural force not because people are what they see, but because what they see and talk about are important parts of their experience.

Lang and Lang [1966] reinforced the notion of agenda setting by observing: "the mass media may force attention to certain issues.... They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about and have feelings about".

McCombs and Shaw conducted the first empirical study of agenda setting in 1972. The duo studied the 1968 Presidential Election in Chapel Hill North Carolina, United States of America [Lowery, and DeFleur 1998]. In their study, they compared actual campaign content of the mass media with what people said were the most important issues. McCombs and Shaw found strong support for the agenda setting theory, that is, there were strong relationship between the emphasis placed on different campaign issues by the mass media

and the judgments of voters regarding the importance of various campaign topics. Since this 1972 classical study conducted by the duo of McCombs and Shaw, several studies have been conducted on agenda setting using variety of variables. The studies include: Davis and Robinson [1986]; Williams and Semlak [1978]; Iyengar and Kinder [1987]; Rogers et al [1993]; Zhu and Blood [1997]; McQuail [2000]; Harris and Kolovos [2001]; Norris [2006] and Valenzuela and McCombs [2007].

Despite the apparent simplicity of agenda setting hypothesis, several assumptions were therein the construct. According to Zhu and Blood [1997], these assumptions include: [1] agenda setting is a content specific effect. This translates to mean that agenda setting matches what the media report on certain issues with what the public thinks about these issues, [2] agenda setting has an aggregate effect. This translates to mean that agenda setting uses statistics to summarize individual's issues concern. The deductible in the content specific effect and the aggregate effect assumption includes that a content specific effect approach to the study of man and the mass media is superior to a content free approach because the former has more face validity than the latter.

A more central assumption in mass media agenda setting function concerns the ultimate effect of agenda setting. According to McCombs and Shaw [1972], agenda setting research has established that the mass media are capable of telling the public what to think about. What is remarkable and modest about McCombs and Shaw 1972 conclusion includes that agenda setting research can have far reaching consequences. These consequences include: [1] that public concerns about certain issues triggered by mass media coverage can affect the policymaking process, [2] that mass media agenda setting plays a crucial role in the emergence of political personality and forces, [3] that by drawing attention to certain issues over others, the mass media provide cues for the public to judge and ultimately press for legislation about.

According to Lowery and DeFleur [1995: 276], the study of the agenda setting function of the mass media returns research on the influence of mass media to the issues suggested by such pioneer

public opinion theorists as Charles Horton, Walter Lippmann among others. Agenda setting focuses attention on the process by which the media play a significant part in generating a common culture, a consensus and a shared beliefs about certain political aspects of our environment that play a part in bringing us together at election time [ibid].

One argument for the popularity of agenda setting studies among researchers [particularly, mass media scholars] is the key concepts underlying it. These key concepts includes the fact that agenda setting research addresses itself to the way in which the mass media influence people's beliefs concerning what is important in their society. Similarly, as a theory, agenda setting research meets almost all the criteria commonly applied to evaluate theory. These criteria include [1] simplicity of matching two concepts or constructs, media content is matched with public opinion, [2] the internal consistency of the theory, comparisons are made between the rank ordering of two sets of issues [media and public]. [3] heuristic provocativeness, this is evidenced by the volume of research that agenda setting studies have generated. Agenda setting theory also satisfied the criteria of predictive power as well as falsifiability

Environmental problems of Nigeria

Environmental problems are no respecter of political boundaries, they are as varied as the structural foundations of each area and are dependent upon how man manages or mismanages his natural resources. According to Adegoroye (1997:12-14), "environmental problems manifest in various forms and dimensions and the effects are felt locally, nationally, continentally and globally". He emphasized that every state of Nigeria across the various ecological zones suffers from one form of environmental degradation or the other. Perhaps, the problems range from: erosion due to drought and desertification, gully erosion, flooding, sewage problems, deforestation, agro-chemicals, bush burning, oil pollution, gas flaring and mining waste lands. Others include: Industrial pollution, vehicular pollution, noise pollution, ozone layer depletion, toxic waste, banned and expired hazardous chemicals, municipal wastes and general urban infrastructural decay [Adegoroye, 1997:13].

These problems are enormous and threatening greatly to the extent that if efforts are not directed at them and solution found, we shall all suffer. It will be recalled that the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Problems of the Human Environment came about due to noted problems in the environment [Tejumaie, 2008]. While the Stockholm Conference may be regarded as a landmark in the internationalization of efforts to draw attention to the deteriorating conditions of the global environment caused by air and water, pollution, erosion and others; the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit of June 1992 marked the most significant turning point in the history of mankind, especially on matters relating to environmental protection and sustainable development [Tejumaie 2008]. The Rio de Janeiro Summit produced the action plan dubbed Agenda 21, this document called for a new Global Agenda for Environmental Management. While the Agenda is of Environment and Development, it insists that environmental considerations must be infused into development planning and that the environment must be addressed from the perspective of development.

The International Agenda 21 documents expressed a new thinking about sustainable development. It calls for extensive co-operation of states, groups and individuals with respect to the environment and development issues. The agenda calls for nations to develop and to put into effect their own national strategies, legislations, plans and policies for sustainable development. They [nations] should be prepared to deal with the common challenges of humankind. Consequent upon the aforementioned, Nigeria produced a national agenda tagged National Agenda 21. Just like the International Agenda 21, the National Agenda 21 stated that one of the means of implementing the Agenda is increased environmental education, information and public awareness; this no doubt can best be accomplished via the mass media. This conclusion thus asserts the relevance of the mass media to environmental issues and the society.

Implications of environmental problems

The effects of environmental problems are as varied as they are diverse. The impacts are social, economic, health, political, technological disorder etc. Similarly, by criterion of geography, the

implications can be local, state, regional, national, international/continental and global. At the social cum health levels, scientific researches have confirmed that heavy metal poisoning from industrial and vehicular emissions causes various lungs and heart related diseases which weaken the body immune system through the chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and which lowers life expectancy Adegoroye [1997].

It will be recalled that a 2005 Nigerian Medical Association report put life expectancy in Nigeria at 42 years, a full 28 years less than in the developed countries. According to Adegoroye (1997), global new evidences emerge daily that confirm that the twin environmental phenomena of climate change and Ozone Layer Depletion are real. He stressed that climate change is due to the increasing level of carbon dioxide as well as oxides of sulphur and nitrogen—the three most predominant components of the fumes from our industries and vehicles. He continued thus:

Ozone layer Depletion has proven to be due to the increasing build-up of chlorofluoro-carbons and other halons, the same chemical products that form the essential ingredients in the technology of our refrigerators, air-conditioners, aerosol, propellants and sprays as well as foams used for mattresses.

Perhaps, the greatest negative effect of environmental problems is on health. It is a fact that urban air pollution from industries and traffics due to such pollutant as smoke, sulfur dioxide, sulfuric acid, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile hydrocarbon, nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and leads are responsible for innumerable cardiovascular problems in the cities. While carbon monoxide and lead have been shown to have negative effects on the central nervous system with indication of neuropsychological effects on children; it has been proven that CO and Lead are taken up in blood and this reduces oxygen carrying capacity that may cause suffocation, paralysis and death [Adegoroye, 1997].

It will be recalled that in March 2006, there was pandemonium in Lagos due to a very sudden change in the atmospheric condition of the weather. The condition became tense and very damp with heavy, thick and darkish-white stinking smoke enveloping some parts of the state such as the Lagos Island, Ebute-Meta, Bariga, Ojo, Keju, Mushin, Oworonsoki and some parts of Ikeja [Tejumaaye, 2008]. People ran in different directions for their lives because they were not sure of what was happening. Some Lagosians in the midst of the confusion said that the smoke was also discomforting to eyes and driving on some Lagos roads became problematic. The situation caused offices to close early. Later in the day, the Nigerian Television Authority [NTA] reported that the smoke was as a result of metropolitan burning of solid wastes at the Ojo dumpsite. The Lagos state Television [LTV] in the same vein reported that the cause of the smoke was a Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation [NNPC] pipeline that burst on the sea; this claim was corroborated by the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency [LASEPA].

A study in Hong Kong showed that bad air might be responsible for a significant jump in children being admitted to hospital for asthma. The six years study conducted by researchers at the University of Hong Kong between 1997 through 2002 using hospital admission records revealed that a total of 26,663 children were admitted into hospital for asthma during the six-year period. According to Nyong [2005], "if current trends continued, temperatures in sub-Saharan Africa could rise by 2C with rainfall declining by 10 per cent". Nyong, a scientist at the University of Jos made this statement in a paper presented to the Conference on Climatic Change that took place in Exeter in 2005. He noted that there must be substantial and genuine reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by the principal emitters. The scientist said that the G8 countries accounted for almost half of the global carbon dioxide emissions in 1999. He emphasized that while global warming was a crisis for the whole world, Africa was particularly ill equipped to deal with the situation because of water shortages and dependence on agriculture for food and export earnings. "Africa's high vulnerability is not only due to climate change but a combination of other stresses which include poverty, wars and conflicts, limited technological development, a

high disease burden and a rapid population growth rate," Nyong reported.

Other health effects of environmental problems include: poor sanitation that results in infections and flooding. Chemical mis-handling can result in various forms of birth defects and deaths (e.g. the Agege case in 2004 in which five people died) and other unwarranted hardships to sight, movement and hearing. It will be recalled that in 2006, torrential rain in Abuja caused parts of the city to be flooded and this hampered movement of people and goods for some days; the same thing happened in Port Harcourt Rivers state in 2006. Indigenes of Ogun and some parts of Lagos states cannot forget the torrential rainfall in July 2007 leading to a heavy flooding and caused thousands of people to abandon their homes. The world cannot forget in hurry the Love Canal Episode of the 1950's in the United States of America, the Union Carbide Episode in India, the Birds' Flu issue and its attendant negative effects on human health in various parts of the world, the Tylenol Capsule issue in the United States of America as well as the Gombe State flood in August 2004 which led to loss of lives and cash crops.

The impact of environmental problems on the economy is easy to identify. Once the manpower needs of a country is disturbed due to ill health, then, such a country economy will be adversely affected. A situation whereby able-bodied men who are supposed to be active, alive and functioning are not, then, that is doom for such a country's economy. Besides, a country with environmental problems cannot have a good and sound economy in that such a country will have to allocate scarce resources to fight the noted environmental problems and once this is being done, other indices of economic development such as: savings, investment, trade and human capital are adversely affected. At the political level, it is doubtful if when a country is said to have environmental problems as has been identified in this paper, such a country can hardly be politically settled. This conclusion is premised on the argument that a healthy nation is a happy nation. Some decades ago, Somali, Ethiopia and Eritrea and some East African countries were labeled disaster zones, that is, a no-go area for foreigners. Albeit, a critical examination of the problems of these nations shows that their

problems are not solely because of terrible unfriendly environment characterized by natural disasters such as flood, famine etc and man made disaster such as mismanagement of the nations' economy, but more because of political problems. In all, the impacts of environmental problems include: Unhealthy living, Drought and famine, Short life span, Bleak future, Epidemics, flooding, Sudden death of man and animals and social disorder. Other effects of environmental problems include: Poor economy, Confusion, Infant mortality and Diseases.

environmental education: the role of the Mass Media

Globally, environmental reporting is a relatively new area in journalism. According to Jensen (1977), "environmental reporting is presumed to have been laid in the Nineteenth Century with stories about parks and wildlife appearing in journals". Albeit, the seed of modern environmental journalism actually started in the early 1960s when Carlson (1962) raised the issue of health risks from such chemicals as DDT (Dichloro Diphenyl Trichloroethane) widely used then as an insecticide. Earlier, stories about other hazardous materials such as PCBs (Polychlorinated Biphenyls) had made news in the 1970s. In the same decade (1970s) and (1980s), acid rain, harmful effects of logging and pulp, the ozone layer depletion, population growth, the loss of species and climate change, natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and forest fires appeared in the mass media. The most spectacular development in environmental "mediaism" was the Chernobyl accident in the Soviet Union in 1986. The frenzied attention that the accident attracted stimulated environment reporters to recognize the challenge of keeping abreast of increasingly complex environmental issues in the ecosystems and of communicating these effectively to individuals, policy makers and policy pressure groups.

The milestone in environmental journalism in Nigeria was the dumping of toxic waste in Koko, Delta State in 1988. It will be recalled that an Italian newspaper first exposed the Koko toxic waste issue. Some Nigerian students in Italy who read the report translated it and sent it to some Nigerian newspapers. The Guardian Newspaper carried the story and the whole nation was alerted of the danger.

While opinions are divided on the influence of the mass media in shaping government policies and programs (including environmental issues) it is worthy to note that the role of the mass media is not to enforce their views but to consistently highlight issue(s) so that the issue(s) will attract attention and public discourse which will eventually lead to policy decisions or policy changes/modifications. According to Binger (1991:152) "..... in spite of the of sound social developmental policies to the formulation of environmental issues are yet to attract the quantum of editorial attention they clearly deserve". Adenekan (2001) argued that the media is involved in framing public understanding of environmental issues in Nigeria. According to Salawu (2004:64), "the Nigerian mass media may not have developed a strong tradition of environmental journalism – one comparable to those of other countries in the developed economies, but they have nonetheless made occasional, though sporadic impacts on public policy and the consciousness of environmental degradation".

According to Sandman [1974], the goal of environmental education is that of producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems. However, the fact needs stated that the awareness and knowledge of the biophysical environment is not enough, citizens need to be empowered and they need the skill in how to be involved in finding solution to societal environmental problems for the benefit of the [2004], "articles on how to work effectively for environmental quality are exceedingly rare and that as for the educational goals of knowledge and motivation, a large majority of the print media content is designed solely to entertain and much of the media audience selectively expose themselves primarily to entertainment".

There are four barriers to mass media effectiveness as environmental educator. They include: those of news sources, those of news quality, those of publishers influence and those of resources allocation (Adenekan, 2001). In addition to the identified barriers, Salawu (2004) added the following: unethical attitude of reporters, lethargic attitude among the reading public and bureaucracy in

government establishments. A critical examination of these barriers as identified by Adenekan (2001) and Salawu (2004) shows that the problem is that of loss of general societal interest in general societal problems, for the sake of emphasis: the problem is lack of interest in societal or collective interests. The belief includes: what belongs to everyone belongs to no one. This in the main calls for a reorientation and a new thinking in societal problems and challenges, not only societal progresses, thus, the need for the mass media to review their roles since they have been accepted to be a force in the shaping and the reshaping of the society. This study is therefore recommending a role change for the mass media. The study recommends a replacement of the watchdog role to that of a guide-dog role. The basis for this recommendation includes that the mass media watchdog role has been misunderstood and interpreted to mean meddlesomeness by both the government and the governed [see Tejunaye 2004A and 2004B]. Again, a guide dog role is suggested because journalists have failed to elevate the watchdog role. Today, you often hear the sources of information claiming: "ho I was misquoted", "no, I never said that", "impossible, I could not have said that", etc.

Guide dog journalism takes active cognizance of the diversities of interest, geography and culture in Nigeria by reporting in MULTIPOLAR ways, not BALANCED ways. Balance suggests middle. Multipolar reporting ensures that all persons affected by issues have a voice in the story not just the proponents of the most extreme viewpoints. This brand of journalism does not advocate abandonment of the watchdog role; rather, it is encompassing and greater in scope than watchdogging. It however stresses the total relinquishing of the attack dog role and accommodates some elements of the crusade dog role. Guide dog journalism places the mass media as an indispensable socialization force in the society. Guide dog journalism advocates that citizens should take-up ownership of societal problems – social, political, economic, technological, cultural and environmental – and that the more we take up societal problems, the better for us all. In all, the task of Guide dog journalists is to elevate societal problems such as the need for environmental awareness, education and knowledge to the level of societal and general discussions, the end result of which is

formulation of policies or modifications of public policies for the betterment of all. This can be achieved in news stories, feature articles, news analysis, editorials, cartoons, crossword puzzles and even paid spaces. Other ways are: drama, documentary, docudrama, soap operas, children programmes, news cast, home videos, stage shows, etc [see Tejumaiye 2004A, 2004B and 2007A for more of the guidedog principles]

Albeit, correlating and surveying the environment is no little task. It requires much more than the traditional criteria for assessing what is news. It goes far more than the guidelines for news gathering identified by authors. Environmental reporting is different. In the words of Nelson (1994:6):

Environmental reporting is broad, embracing nothing less than life itself. It is interdependent with other fields, such as politics, culture and the economy. It is complex and therefore resistant to simple explanations and equations. It is technical, which means it requires some expertise. Environmental news reporting is imprecise because environmental science is imprecise – imprecise in its sources, data, scientific methodology and solutions and it is emotional in the effect it has on people.

Stressing further, Nelson (Ibid) argued that in some areas however, good environmental reporting should be the same as any other good journalism: make it interesting; write it clearly; explain the complexities to the audience, raise solutions and not just problems. He suggested the under-listed ten tips:

- (1) **Write Original Stories;** Be original in thought and be creative in your approach. There is always new news angle to that press release or what your sources gives you.
- (2) **Build and Maintain Good Sources;** Considering the complexities of covering technical subjects such as the environment, you cannot do without experts in the field. Remember, you cannot survive without sources. Therefore, ensure you not only have sources, but you maintain them as

well. This requires that you be truthful; do not misquote them; be courteous and also establish ground rules with your source.

- (3) **Prepare in Advance:** You should be student of the subjects you cover. Remember that it enables you to develop a certain degree of expertise in the subject areas. A reporter with a reputation for not being prepared risks being cut out of future interviews. The point is: Do your homework.

- (4) **Translate Environmental Jargon:** This is very important; you must be able to turn scientific gibberish into clear, concise language. To avoid troubles, sometimes ask the source to do the translation so that he will not accuse you of being misquoted.

- (5) **Make the story alive and relevant:** Here, remember to give enough background information that will make your story meaningful and easily understood.

- (6) **Think Twice about Statistics:** Use simple and easily understood figures to communicate if you must use figures. But remember to evaluate your statistics carefully before passing them along to your audience.

- (7) **Report Science Carefully:** Good science reporting is essential to good environmental reporting. A look at environmental issues (air, pollution, biodiversity, toxic chemicals ozone layer etc) shows that describing each depends on scientific research. Many scientists have complained with the way science is reported. Therefore, you need to be careful in the way you report science. You must as of necessity interview as many scientists as possible before you write your stories.

- (8) **Look for Hidden Interest:** You must let your journalistic instincts work for you when reporting the environment. This is because environmental journalism has such political and economic implications that if you are not aware you run the risk of being labeled incompetent. For example, an oil company that claims drilling in a rain forest will cause little environmental harm should face a barrage of critical questions. The interests of the oil company are obvious.

- (9) **Seek Balance:** This is the old debate of objectivity versus subjectivity. While there is an element of subjectivity in what you write however, strive for objectivity always. Remember that the world is full of conflicting values. Also, avoid being an advocate of interest: it leads to loss of credibility.
- (10) **Don't forget the follow-up stories.** The best, concise and well-written story will have a minimal impact if it appears once in a newspaper or a newscast. You need to follow-up stories. Remember that environmental news lends itself more to what has been called "process" journalism than "episodic" journalism. The issue is: keep environmental stories alive. According to Nelson (Ibid) the way to keep environmental stories alive are:
 - (a) Look for environmental stories in other beats
 - (b) Look for connections between events reported and environmental news
 - (c) Be creative. This is indispensable in reporting the environment. You must be creative in the way you get your stories; your sources; in your interview and also in your write-ups.

Conclusively, ask yourself these ten questions when writing an environmental story/report. The questions according to Nelson (Ibid) are: (1) Have I made the story "local" so that people can relate to it? (2) Have I added new sources to my list this week? (3) Are the most important aspects emphasized and the trivial discarded? (4) Is my presentation clear and concise? (5) Have I made people "feel" the analogies explain the numbers? (6) Do the descriptions and (8) Am I asking and answering enough questions? (9) Have I been fair to my sources and the subject? (10) What would make a good follow up story to this topic?

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TARGETS, PERPETRATORS AND EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SELECT MASS COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

BY

Jude Terna Kur

Abstract

The survey of female undergraduates of mass communication in South-east Nigerian Universities aimed at determining the targets, perpetrators and effects of sexual harassment on the harassed. It used a sample of 240 final year undergraduates drawn through simple random sampling. Findings suggest that targets of sexual harassment are younger in age, single, of low and average academic statuses and of parents of low socio-economic status. The perpetrators are mostly senior academics. Sexual harassment adversely affects the academic well-being of the harassed. The findings support feminist theory that sexual harassment is an exercise of power. It is recommended, among others, that a policy against sexual harassment be formulated in mass communication departments of universities and other institutions of higher learning.