

## INTRODUCTION

There are two key sections in the 1999 constitution that contain the key provisions on freedom of expression and the media. The right to freedom of expression and the press is articulated in Chapter IV which deals with Fundamental Rights. Section 39(1) states that -

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.

While the above could be said to be the cornerstone of Nigeria's information policy, subsection 2 states that-

Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions:

Provided that no person, other than the Government of the Federation or of a State or any other person or body authorised by the President on the fulfilment of conditions laid down by an Act of the National Assembly, shall own, establish or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station for, any purpose whatsoever.

The above section provides the argument for the regulation of the media, as it places licensing and other legal controls in the hand of government.

## THE PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVE OF NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Philosophy or ideology is generally a coherent set of fundamental principles enunciated to underpin a people's way of life and aspirations. Those principles are, by and large, structured statements of goals, objectives, hopes and aspirations. The purpose of philosophy or ideology is not only to ensure uniform control over most processes of interactions among citizens of a state but also to orient thought and action in a unidirectional path towards stated national goals.

The "philosophy" of a national communication policy is therefore founded on a national ideology or philosophy where it exists. Although Nigeria does not have an ideological blueprint couched in one of the capitalism/socialism/welfarism categories, it does have structured statement of goals, objectives, hopes and aspirations enshrined in chapter 11 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as the fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy which provide enough foundation upon which the National communication policy can be built.

Edeani (1989) in his article-patterns of media ownership and control states that a national mass communication policy is a set of standards meant to guide communication decisions and actions of a nation. He notes that in a number of places, communication policies are written down in clearly specified documents and carefully implemented and modified from time to time in consonance with the realities

of social conditions. In other places, he notes that such policies are half haphazardly formulated and are found scattered in disparate writing and their enforcement may as well lack any clear cut coordination.

Nwueli,(1998) states that communication policy can be defined as set of principles and norms established to guide the behavior of communication systems, depending upon the character of the society from which they originate, they may be general or specific mandates. But in every case they have to be framed in order to express a nations total diverse communication activities, projecting these into the future while reflecting the needs of both the society and individuals. They have therefore political, social, technical, administrative, legal, and economic dimensions.

Nnaemeka (1998) in Issues in National Communication Policy-Parameters of Theory and Experience ,notes that the fundamental philosophy of the social order within which the news media processes and the communication needs of the society and appropriate resources-human and technological-can be organized and harnessed and systemized must be clearly delineated in policy. He continues that the world view to be advanced must not only be those that advance our vision of life but those that do not run counter to our ethical and moral notions of human existence, corporate relations and collective conscience.

Prince Tony Momoh in A framework for National Communication Policy (1998) suggests the following points in evolving a communication policy-

