

**IMPACT OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT ON
JOURNALISM PRACTICE: A STUDY OF JOURNALISM
PRACTICE IN UYO COMMUNITY- FROM JANUARY TO JUNE
2013.**

BY

**OFFIONG, GLORY MICHAEL
MC/2009/409**

**DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CARITAS UNIVERSITY, AMORJI-NIKE,
ENUGU STATE**

AUGUST, 2013.

TITLE PAGE**IMPACT OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT ON
JOURNALISM PRACTICE: A STUDY OF JOURNALISM
PRACTICE IN UYO COMMUNITY- FROM JANUARY TO JUNE,
2013.****By****OFFIONG, GLORY MICHAEL
MC/2009/409****A****PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED****IN****PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
(B.sc) DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION.
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CARITAS UNIVERSITY
AMORJI-NIKE, ENUGU****AUGUST, 2013.**

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work, titled, “impact of Freedom of Information Act”: A study of journalism practice in Uyo community”, has been approved and certified as having met the requirement in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science Degree (B.Sc.) in Mass Communication of Caritas University, Amorji-Nike, Enugu.

Jude Edeh
Project Supervisor.

Date

Dr. Regina Acholonu
Head of Department.

Date

External Examiner

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Lord almighty for in Him I live and in Him I have my being. Truly He has been my last resort.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give all the glory, adoration, thanksgiving to the Lord almighty who has been my hope even when there was no hope and by His power brought me this far. I also appreciate some intellectuals and authors whose articles, journals, books have been useful in this project research work. My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor, Mr. Jude Edeh and all the lecturers in Mass Communication department of Caritas University whose invaluable lectures and assistance contributed to my success. My heart appreciation goes to my dearest mother, Mrs. A. B. Ekanem, my beloved siblings for all their support, prayers for the success of this work. Am also grateful to my roommates, my church members, my pastor for all their support and prayers.

Abstract

This project on “ impact of Freedom of Information Act: A study of journalism practices in Uyo community – from January to June, is aimed at finding out how Freedom of Information Act impact positively on the life of practicing journalists in Uyo community. In carrying out the study the researcher used survey design method, while questionnaire was the instrument of the study. Simple tables and percentages were used in analyzing and presenting the data collected. The researcher made some recommendations to support that Freedom of Information Act encourage investigative journalism, balance reporting, openness and transparency in the decision making process which will improve citizens trust in government action. The researcher also made few numbers of suggestions for further studies which will continue to inform people about the impact this topic (Freedom of Information Act) has on our society. And from the conclusion drawn from the questionnaire tables, it is shown that Freedom of Information Act impact positively on the life of working journalists in Uyo community and strengthens the constitutional guarantee of freedom to receive and impact information and ideas without any hindrance. Again, the respondents proved that Freedom of Information Act empower the professionalism and the ethics of journalism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	I
Certification	II
Dedication	III
Acknowledgments	IV
Abstract	V
Table of Contents.....	VI
List of Tables.....	VII

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Objective of the Study	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	5
1.6 Significant of the Study.....	5
1.7 Operational Definition of Significant Terms.....	6

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Review of Concepts.....	9
2.3 Review of Related Studies.....	10
2.4 Theoretical Framework.....	21

2.5 Summary.....	40
-------------------------	-----------

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	41
3.2 Research Design or Research Technique.....	42
3.3 Population of Study.....	43
3.4 Sampling Technique/ Sample.....	43
3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques.....	44
3.6 Instrument for Data Collection.....	45
3.7 Validity of Instrument	45
3.8 Method of Data Analysis	46
3.9 Method of Data Collection.....	46

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction.....	47
4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis.....	47
4.3 Discussion of Findings	56

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction.....	58
5.2 Summary of Findings.....	58
5.3 Conclusion.....	59
5.4 Recommendation.....	59

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies.....	60
References:	61
Appendix I:	63
Appendix II	64

LIST OF TABLES

Table 15: Practice of Freedom of Information Act	56
Table 14: Access to government information	55
Table 13: Encouragement of Freedom of Information Act	55
Table 12: Opportunity to probe for information without hindrance	54
Table 11: Journalists improvement on reporting	54
Table 10: Advancement of professionalism and ethics of journalism	53
Table 9: Journalists right to receive, impart information and ideas	52
Table 8: Encouragement of investigative journalism	52
Table 7: Guarantees of journalists to access public information	51
Table 6: Positive impact on journalism practice	51
Table 5: Occupation Distribution of Respondents	50
Table 4: Educational Qualifications	49
Table 3: Marital Status of the Respondents	49
Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents	48
Table 1: Gender of Respondents	47
Demographic tables	47

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Freedom of information is both a concept in journalism an issue in contemporary medical practice. This controversial concept establishes that media practitioners' especially journalist reserve the freedom to probe, to dig, to pry for the purpose of obtaining information, news, opinion and publish same without hindrance. It proposes that the gathering and reporting of news and opinion should operate without any limitation or constraint. In other word journalist, like every other Nigeria have the right to hold opinion, receive information and impact ideas without interference. This is a fundamental human right guaranteed every individual by the constitution including journalists.

Again freedom of information is an essential right for every person; it allows individual and groups to protect their right. It is an important guard against abuses, mismanagement and corruption. It benefits government themselves in terms of openness and transparency in the decision making process and improve citizen trust in government action.

For the important of the freedom of information, survey had shown that nearly seventy[70]countries around the world including Nigeria have not adopted comprehensive freedom of information act to facilitate access to record held by the government bodies and another fifty have pending efforts. A few countries have issued decrees or used constitutional provision. Many countries have adopted others that can provide for limited access their own records held by the government agencies and private

organization, specific statutes that give right of access in certain area such as health, environment, government procurement and consumer protection.

Freedom of information could be traced to the age enlightenment and development of democracy in America.it is a product of libertarianism which derived unarguably from the libertarian theory of the libertarian approach to the ingredient of libertarian approach of media.

Freedom of Information stoutly opposes the authoritarian philosophy of the press in which absolute power and control over ownership, content and the use to which the media could be put resided with the monarch.

As pointed out in chapter five of GOKE R.[2003].mass media and the society. issues and perspectives the authoritarian system pre-supposes that; truth was conceived to be not the product of the great mass of people but a few men who were in a position to guide and direct their fellows thus, truth was thought to be centered near the center of power .The rulers of the time used the press to inform the people of what the rulers thought they should know and the policies the rulers thought they should support.

The role of the press then therefore was chiefly to support and advance the policies and thinking of the government in a society where criticism of the political machinery and officials in power through the media was forbidden.

This contradicts the beliefs of the libertarian that man is a rational being capable of choosing between truth and falsehood, deciding between bad and good, and when face with alternative choices, capable to unerringly choose the truth and the good. The press therefore, must be free to feed the people with information and allow them to judge because they are rational beings. According to Siebert pater so et ela “the libertarian

liable assume that in a democratic society, there would be multiplicity of voices available to, if not actually reaching the public.” Let every man who has something to say on public issues express himself regardless of whether what he has to say is true or false and the public ultimately decided.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Before the signing of freedom of information act (FOI) by president Good luck Jonathan on the 28th may 2011, the press went through a lot of criticism in the hands of people/government especially the military government which as a result many journalist/media practitioners were imprisoned, assassinated and assaulted. However, this research work aim at studying;

- ❖ The effect of government censorship on journalists.
- ❖ Non access to public information kept by government, public institution and private bodies.
- ❖ Criticism and government suppression.

1.3 Objective of the Study

It is a well-known fact that Freedom of Information Act (FOI) was to strengthen the constitutional guarantee of freedom to receive and impart information and ideas. The law encourages investigative journalism, balance reporting, and objectivity, verification of stories, openness, transparency, fairness and accuracy in media presentation. Therefore, the researchers consider the following objective relevant.

1. To find out the Impacting of Freedom of Information Act (FOI) on journalist practices in Uyo Community.
2. To know the extent of Freedom of Information Act Practice in Uyo Community.
3. To determine how Uyo L G A (local government area) encourages Freedom of Information Act.

1.4 Research Questions

The researcher's attend in the research work will be focused on how to answer the following questions;

1. What are the impacts of freedom of Information Act on journalists in Uyo community
2. What are the extents of Freedom of Information Act among practicing Journalist in Uyo Community
3. How does the government of Uyo community encourages Freedom of Information Act.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is mainly focuses on the residence of Uyo community which include the four clans of Uyo local government of Akwa Ibom state.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study is aim at promoting and encouraging the new law "Freedom of Information Act" in Uyo community and Nigeria at large. The study will be of great

benefit to the researcher, journalist and the entire Nigeria to embrace the law in order to encourage professionalism and the ethnics of journalism.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Freedom: This is the power or right to act, speak etc. as one wants without anyone stopping. It is the permission to use, act, and speak, etc. without restriction in Uyo community.

Information: This is a fact told, heard or discovered about something/ somebody. It is also seen as knowledge gives/ provides/ pass on/ receive/ obtain/ collect about something/ somebody in Uyo community.

Act: This is a law made by a parliament or similar body in Uyo community.

Journalism: This is the activity or product of journalists or others engage in the preparation of written, visual, or audio material intended for dissemination through public media with reference to factual, ongoing events of public concern. It is intended to inform society about itself and to make public things that would otherwise be private in Uyo community.

Uyo community: This is a city in the south eastern Nigeria and is the capital of Akwa Ibom state. The city became a capital of Akwa Ibom state on September 23, 1997 following the creation of Cross River. Uyo is bounded by;

Abak,

Itu,

Uruan,

Ibesikpo Asutan and

Etinan local government all in Akwa Ibom State. She is made up of four (4) clans which includes; Ikono, Etio, Oku, and Offort clan. She has a total population of 309,513(male 153, 11 and female 156,460) according to 2006 National census.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of related studies to the topic ‘impact of freedom of information act: A study of journalism practice in Uyo community’. The chapter is organized under the following heading:

Review of concept.

Review of related studies.

Theoretical framework.

Summary.

2.2 Review of Concept

This research work reviewed the following concept:

- ❖ Freedom of Information Act.
- ❖ Journalism Practice.

2.2.1 Meaning of Freedom of Information Act

Freedom of information act, is a newly enacted law which is an essential right for every person. it allow individuals and group to protect their right. it is an important guard against abuses, mismanagement and corruption. It can also beneficial to government themselves through openness, transparency, fairness, in the decision making process can improve citizen trust in government actions.

The new law is also seen as a fundamental human right which guaranteed every individual by the constitution, journalists not excluded. It guarantees the right of access to information held by public institution, irrespective of the form in which it is kept and is applicable to private institutions where they utilize public fund, perform public function or provide public services.

The law requires all institution to practically disclose basic information about their structure and processes and mandates them to build the capacity of the staff to effectively implement and comply with the provisions of the Act. It did not stop there, it went further and makes adequate provision for the information needs of illiterates and disabled applicants and also provides protection for whistle blowers.

With the new law, according to Ene Enonche, coordinator of the right to know initiative, “Finally Nigerians have vital tools to uncover facts, fight corruption and hold officials and institutions accountable and will profoundly change how government works in Nigeria.” Apart from the few definition above, there are so many other definitions of freedom of information because the variance in the definitions underlines the fundamental reasoning that the nature and socio-political structure of a society defines press freedom. However, the definitions include the following;

In America- This freedom is contained in the “First Amendment” to the American constitution. The “First Amendment” which was adopted by the people of America on the 15th day of December 1797 provides that: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free

exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress and grievances”.

Again, the military government of General Yakubu Gowon instituted a committee in 1968 to look into the issues and problems associated with freedom of information (press freedom) in Nigeria. This committee defined freedom of information (press freedom) as the freedom to gather information, to publish such information, to protect the sources of these information, to inform, educate and entertain society without direct or indirect control, to serve as a forum for free expression of opinion, to circulate freely without hindrance to publish newspapers, periodicals or operate other media without license or similar restrictions, to resist or respond to pressure from economic, political or other interest groups according to its light.

Expatriating on the “First Amendment” in specific terms, Pant.G.Kanper (1956) delivering a lecture title “The Frontiers of constitutional liberty” posited that; “The liberty stated in the first amendment comprises in a general way we refer to as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion”.

Freedom of information could also be defined from the position of Tokunboh Onagoruwa (1998) as “The right of the media practitioner to make his or her views known on any matter without seeking permission or approval from any persons or authority and without being subjected to any form of harassment, molestations, intimidations, persecution or prosecution.

In the same vein, Blackstone Prenown is an English constitutional lawyer who also defines freedom of information. Its brief and succinct definition is; “Freedom of information consists in laying previous restraints upon publication and in freedom of censure from criminal matter when published.

Signing of Freedom of Information Act

Before the signing Freedom of Information Act (FOI) by president Good-luck Jonathan on the 28th of May 2011, the press went through a lot of criticism and hardship in the hands of people/government. Government used censorship which is the act or practice of examining print and broadcast media with the intention of removing any thing perceived to be offensive. This described an undue interference in the performance of the professionals’ duties of the press by government to supply unfavorable thought or opinion.

The censorship is applied to suppress criticism and is often carried out on the basis of directives of policy laid out by such government that establishes it. Although government is not the only institution that censors media, government censorship of the press is the most pronounced and is the most restrictive. Government of the day always seeks to ensure that what is published or broadcast is accurate and in line with their gospel. And this censorship has continuously attracted a lot of stiff criticism because of its implications.

Press censorship was most pronounced during retired General Yakubu Gown’s administration than any other indigenous administration save Abachas regime. This is

why cases of government censorship of the media/press are commenced at the period of Abachas tenure in office.

When the Gown (former Nigeria head of states) came to power in July 1966, it promulgated a decree titled “Emergency Decree of 1966”. The decree provided that any citizen could be arrested without warrant and be detained. It also made it lawful for an inspector of police to search any newspaper office and premises in Nigeria without search warrant or prior notice.

The regime also promulgated “News prohibition of Circulation Decree 1967”.It was the direct regulatory burden imposed on the Nigerian press by military regime.

It is worth of note that a victim of the decree was “New Breed” magazine which was banned in July 1978 when General Obasanjo was the Head of State.

However, the censorship deprived people especially the media practitioners due access to information, free expression of the journalists and even hindered transparency in the country.

In order to liberate journalists from this depriving world which hindered them from practicing their profession effectively, nearly seventy (70) countries around the world have now adopted comprehensive freedom of information Act to facilitate access to records held by government bodies and another fifty have pending efforts. A few countries have issued decrees or used constitutional provision. Many countries have adopted other laws that can provide for limited access including data protecting law that allow individuals to access their own records held by government agencies and private organization.

However, some of the countries that actually signed freedom of information Act include the following to be mention but few.

United State of America – This country signed their freedom of Information Act into law on July 4, 1966 and law went into effect the following year that is 1967. The law was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Coming down to West Africa President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia laid a good foundation for the press by signing into law the freedom of Information Act in October, 2010 .in other word, Liberia became only the fourth country in Africa and the first in West Africa to pass such legislation.

The law allows both the media and individual citizens to demand information from any public authority or any private authority that carries out government functions.

In Nigeria, president Good-luck Jonathan represents a remarkable leap forward in the country's quest to ensure more transparency and openness in government. Considering the long and tortuous road the bill took from 1999 when it was first introduce till 20011 when the two chambers of the National Assembly harmonized their version of the bill and sent it to the President for his assent, it was long but worth wait for Nigerian, especially media practitioners, who had appropriate to themselves the bill because of the vital role of the media play as the fourth estate of the realm.

According to Max-Well Kadiri, Associated Legal Officer, Open Society justice initiative, 'now that the bill has been signed, journalists can use the oxygen of information and knowledge to breathe life into government and it will no longer be business as usual.

2.2.2 Journalism Practice

This is the activity, or product, of journalists or others engaged in the preparation of written, visual, or audio material intended for dissemination through public media with reference to factual, ongoing events of public concern. It is intended to inform society about that would otherwise remain private. The essence of journalism is to provide citizens with reliable information through the discipline of verification.

Access to information can play a key role in a system of checks and balances designed to limit the overreach of powers concentrated in governments, businesses and other entities and individuals. Access to verifiable information gathered by the independent media sources adhering to journalistic standards can also provide ordinary citizens with the tools they need to participate in the political process.

Having seen the important of journalism practice, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosentiel propose several guidelines for journalists in their book, “The Elements of journalism” which states that journalists’ first loyalty is to the citizenry, Journalists are obligated to tell the truth and must serve as an independent monitor of powerful individuals and institutions within society.

According to Lippmann, he understood journalism’s role as a mediator or translator between the public and policy making elites spoke, journalists listened and recorded the information, distilled it, and passed it onto the public for their consumption. However there are several forms of journalism which includes:

- Yellow journalism or Sensationalism: This is writing which emphasizes exaggerated claims or rumors.
- Tabloid journalism: Writing which was an opinionated or wild claim.

- Investigative journalism: Writing which seek to add extra information to explain, or better describe the people and events of a particular topic.
- Gonzo journalism: This is first champion by journalists.
- Drone journalism: This is the use of drone to capture journalistic footage.
- Broadcast journalism: writing or speaking which is intended to be distributing by radio or television broadcasting, rather than only in written form for readers.
- Advocacy journalism: writing to advocate particular viewpoints or influence the opinions of the audience.
- Prestige journalism: this is said to serve the role of a fourth estate, acting as a watchdogs on the working of government.

2.4 Review of Related Studies

This work reviewed the following related studies;

- Meaning of Freedom of Information Act.
- History and development of Freedom of Information.
- Goke, R. (2003), Mass media and the Society: Issues and perspective.
- Oloyede, (1996).
- Status of press freedom worldwide.
- Press freedom and governance.

2.4.1 Meaning of Freedom of Information Act

Freedom of information act, is a newly enacted law which is an essential right for every person.it allow individuals and group to protect their right.it is an important guard against abuses, mismanagement and corruption. It can also beneficial to government themselves through openness, transparency, fairness, in the decision making process can improve citizen trust in government actions.

The new law is also seen as a fundamental human right which guaranteed every individual by the constitution, journalists not excluded. It guarantees the right of access to information held by public institution, irrespective of the form in which it is kept and is applicable to private institutions where they utilize public fund, perform public function or provide public services.

The law requires all institution to practically disclose basic information about their structure and processes and mandates them to build the capacity of the staff to effectively implement and comply with the provisions of the Act. It did not stop there, it went further and makes adequate provision for the information needs of illiterates and disabled applicants and also provides protection for whistle blowers.

With the new law, according to Ene Enonche, coordinator of the right to know initiative, “Finally Nigerians have vital tools to uncover facts, fight corruption and hold officials and institutions accountable and will profoundly change how government works in Nigeria.” Apart from the few definition above, there are so many other definitions of freedom of information because the variance in the definitions underlines the fundamental reasoning that the nature

and socio-political structure of a society defines press freedom. However, the definitions include the following;

In America- This freedom is contained in the “First Amendment” to the American constitution. The “First Amendment” which was adopted by the people of America on the 15th day of December 1797 provides that: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress and grievances”.

Again, the military government of General Yakubu Gowon instituted a committee in 1968 to look into the issues and problems associated with freedom of information (press freedom) in Nigeria. This committee defined freedom of information (press freedom) as the freedom to gather information, to publish such information, to protect the sources of these information, to inform, educate and entertain society without direct or indirect control, to serve as a forum for free expression of opinion, to circulate freely without hindrance to publish newspapers, periodicals or operate other media without license or similar restrictions, to resist or respond to pressure from economic, political or other interest groups according to its light.

Expatriating on the “First Amendment” in specific terms, Pant.G.Kanper (1956) delivering a lecture title “The Frontiers of constitutional liberty” posited that; “The liberty stated in the first amendment comprises in a general way we refer to as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion”.

Freedom of information could also be defined from the position of Tokunboh Onagoruwa (1998) as “The right of the media practitioner to make his or her views known on any matter without seeking permission or approval from any persons or authority and without being subjected to any form of harassment, molestations, intimidations, persecution or prosecution.

In the same vein, Blackstone Prenown is an English constitutional lawyer who also defines freedom of information. It is brief and succinct definition is; “Freedom of information consists in laying previous restraints upon publication and in freedom of censure from criminal matter when published.

2.4.2 History and Development of Freedom of Information

Freedom of information (press freedom) could be traced to the age of enlightenment and development of democracy in America. It is a product of libertarianism which derived unarguably from the libertarian theory of the press. It is one of the ingredients of libertarian approach to the theory of media.

Freedom of information shortly opposes the authoritarian philosophy of the press in which absolute power and control over ownership, content and the use to which the media could be put with the monarch.

As pointed out in chapter five of Goke R (2003). *Mass Media and The Society: Issues and perspective* the authoritarian system pre-supposes that: truth was conceived to be not the product of the great mass of people but of a few men who were in a position to guide and direct their fellow. Thus, truth was thought to be centered near the center of power. The rulers of the time used the press to

inform the people of what the rulers thought they should know and the policies the rulers thought they should support”.

The role of the press then therefore was chiefly to support and advance the policies and thinking of the government in a society where criticism of the political machinery and officials in power through the media forbidden. This contradicts the belief of the libertarian that man is a rational being capable of choosing between truth and falsehood, deciding between bad and good, and when faced with alternative choices, capable to unerringly choose the truth and the good. The press therefore, must be free to feed the people with information and allow them to judge because they are rational beings. According to Siebert Paterson et al the libertarians assume that in a democratic society, there would be a multiplicity of voices available to, if not actually reaching the public, let every man who has something to say on public issues express himself regardless of whether what he has to say is true or false and let the public ultimately decide. In other words as far as libertarians are concerned, the press should be; encourage freedom to express opinion by multiplicity of voices of any public issues, a partner in the search for truth where every individual reserve the natural right to search for truth.

All these are basic ingredients to press freedom and they were first expressed by the libertarian's theory and Social Responsibility theory. The characteristics of the press as regards its freedom expressed under libertarian theory and Social Responsibility theory are succinctly put by McQuail as restated by Oloyede (1996). This theory marked the first attempt at seeking and desiring

freedom, absolute freedom for that matter, for the press. I could therefore, be regarded as the genesis, the source of press freedom. The freedom says Oloyede (Ibid) that is 'based on the notion that individual should be free to publish in the news or mass media whatever they like without interference from government or from the person or group'.

Nigeria constitution pushed it a little further as observed by Oloyede (1996) that 'press freedom only became tangentially partially constitutionalized in Nigeria on the recommendation of the Minorities Commission of 1957 which was set up on the eve of the country's independence to examine how the right and interests of minority groups could be preserved in the emergent independent nation. The commission prescribed the incorporation of a guarantee of fundamental rights, including the right of free expression into the 1958 constitution. By the same token, section 24 of the 1960 constitution.

The first attempt at making constitutional provision for the press was in 1960 as document in the independence constitution via section 24. This section provided a constitutional source of power for the press and was as such relied upon to protect the press against any violation of the fundamental human right to obtain and disseminate information and to freely express themselves.

Before the signing Freedom of Information Act (FOI) by president Goodluck Jonathan on the 28th of May 2011, the press went through a lot of criticism and hardship in the hands of people/government. Government used censorship which is the act or practice of examining print and broadcast media with the intention of removing any thing perceived to be offensive. This described an undue interference in

the performance of the professionals' duties of the press by government to supply unfavorable thought or opinion.

The censorship is applied to suppress criticism and is often carried out on the basis of directives of policy laid out by such government that establishes it. Although government is not the only institution that censors media, government censorship of the press is the most pronounced and is the most restrictive. Government of the day always seeks to ensure that what is published or broadcast is accurate and in line with their gospel. And this censorship has continuously attracted a lot of stiff criticism because of its implications.

Press censorship was most pronounced during retired General Yakubu Gown's administration than any other indigenous administration save Abachas regime. This is why cases of government censorship of the media/press are commenced at the period of Abachas tenure in office.

When the Gown (former Nigeria head of states) came to power in July 1966, it promulgated a decree titled "Emergency Decree of 1966". The decree provided that any citizen could be arrested without warrant and be detained. It also made it lawful for an inspector of police to search any newspaper office and premises in Nigeria without search warrant or prior notice.

It is worth of note that a victim of the decree was "New Breed" magazine which was banned in July 1978 when General Obasanjo was the Head of State.

The regime also promulgated "News prohibition of Circulation Decree 1967". It was the direct regulatory burden imposed on the Nigerian press by military regime.

However, the censorship deprived people especially the media practitioners due access to information, free expression of the journalists and even hindered transparency in the country.

In order to liberate journalists from this depriving world which hindered them from practicing their profession effectively, nearly seventy (70) countries around the world have now adopted comprehensive freedom of information Act to facilitate access to records held by government bodies and another fifty have pending efforts. A few countries have issued decrees or used constitutional provision. Many countries have adopted other laws that can provide for limited access including data protecting law that allow individuals to access their own records held by government agencies and private organization.

However, some of the countries that actually signed freedom of information Act include the following to be mention but few.

United State of America – This country signed their freedom of Information Act into law on July 4, 1966 and law went into effect the following year that is 1967. The law was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Coming down to West Africa President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia laid a good foundation for the press by signing into law the freedom of Information Act in October, 2010 .in other word, Liberia became only the fourth country in Africa and the first in West Africa to pass such legislation.

The law allows both the media and individual citizens to demand information from any public authority or any private authority that carries out government functions.

In Nigeria, president Good-luck Jonathan represents a remarkable leap forward in the country's quest to ensure more transparency and openness in government. Considering the long and tortuous road the bill took from 1999 when it was first introduced till 2011 when the two chambers of the National Assembly harmonized their version of the bill and sent it to the President for his assent, it was long but worth wait for Nigerian, especially media practitioners, who had appropriate to themselves the bill because of the vital role of the media play as the fourth estate of the realm.

According to Max-Well Kadiri, Associated Legal Officer, Open Society justice initiative, 'now that the bill has been signed, journalists can use the oxygen of information and knowledge to breathe life into government and it will no longer be business as usual.

After the freedom of information was signed into law by President Good-luck Jonathan on 28 may, 2011, the first two state in Nigeria that adopted the law includes Ekiti and Lagos state followed by the other thirty four (34) states of the federation which includes Akwa Ibom State (Uyo community). On several occasion the government of Akwa Ibom State have organized seminars and workshop in Uyo, the state capital for journalists to educate them on the newly enacted law. They went as far as making it compulsory for all the journalists in the state to have a copy of the act.

How Freedom of Information is Embrace

In one of the seminars tagged “freedom of information: challenges of harmonious working relationship between the press and the civil service for the nation’s Socio-political and economic development”. Mr. David Ekanem former Chairman NUJ Akwa Ibom chapter now the deputy director in the state radio station (AKBC) urged journalists to put the law. He also encourage the public officers to co-operate with newsmen and not to hide under the dock of the secret act to thwart the provision of the FOI act which make information available to the public through the media.

Meanwhile, National President of the union, Mohammed Garba had earlier challenged members of the state council on the application of the FOI ACT, when he visited Uyo on a routine tour.

The above point gives an insight of how the government, journalists and the entire people of Uyo community and Akwa Ibom at large embrace freedom of Information Act and give respect to its provisions.

2.4.3 Goke R. (2003), *Mass Media and The Society: Issues and perspective*, the authoritarian system pre-supposes that: truth was conceived to be not the product of the great mass of people but of a few men who were in a position to guide and direct their fellow. Thus, truth was thought to be centered near the center of power. The rulers of the time used the press to inform the people of what the rulers thought they should know and the policies the rulers thought they should support”.

The role of the press then therefore was chiefly to support and advance the policies and thinking of the government in a society where criticism of the political machinery and officials in power through the media forbidden. This contradicts the belief of the libertarian that man is a rational being capable of choosing between truth and falsehood, deciding between bad and good, and when faced with alternative choices, capable to unerringly choose the truth and the good. The press therefore, must be free to feed the people with information and allow them to judge because they are rational beings. According to Paterson et al the libertarians assume that in a democratic society, there would be a multiplicity of voices available to, if not actually reaching the public, let every man who has something to say on public issues express himself regardless of whether what he has to say is true or false and let the public ultimately decide. In other words as far as libertarians are concerned, the press should be; encourage freedom to express opinion by multiplicity of voices of any public issues, a partner in the search for truth where every individual reserve the natural right to search for truth.

All these are basic ingredients to press freedom and they were first expressed by the libertarian's theory. The characteristics of the press as regards its freedom expressed under libertarian theory are succinctly put by McQuail as restated by Oloyede (1996). This theory marked the first attempt at seeking and desiring freedom, absolute freedom for that matter, for the press. It could therefore, be regarded as the genesis, the source of press freedom. The freedom says Oloyede (Ibid) that is 'based on the notion that individual should be free to publish in the news or mass media whatever they like without interference from government or from the person or group'. Nigeria constitution pushed it a little further as observed by;

2.4.4 Oloyede (1996), that ‘press freedom only became tangentially partially constitutionalized in Nigeria on the recommendation of the Minorities Commission of 1957 which was set up on the eve of the country’s independence to examine how the right and interests of minority groups could be preserved in the emergent independent nation. The commission prescribed the incorporation of a guarantee of fundamental rights, including the right of free expression into the 1958 constitution. By the same token, section 24 of the 1960 constitution.

The first attempt at making constitutional provision for the press was in 1960 as document in the independence constitution via section 24. This section provided a constitutional source of power for the press and was as such relied upon to protect the press against any violation of the fundamental human right to obtain and disseminate information and to freely express themselves. Introduction

Media freedom and access to information feed into the wider development objective of empowering people. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social and political process that helps people gain control over their own lives. This can only be achieved through access to accurate, fair and unbiased information, representing a plurality of opinions, and the means to actively communicate vertically and horizontally, thereby participating in the active life of the community.

However, in order to make freedom of expression a reality, there must be:

A legal and regulatory environment that allows for an open and pluralistic media sector to emerge; a political will to support the sector and rule of law to protect it;

The laws ensuring access to information, especially information in the public domain; and necessary media literacy skills among news consumers to critically analyze and synthesize the information they receive to use it in their daily lives and to hold the media accountable for its actions.

These elements, along with media professionals adhering to the highest ethical and professional standards designed by practitioners, serve as the fundamental infrastructure on which freedom of expression can prevail. On this basis media serves as a watchdog, civil society engages with authorities and decision-makers, information flows through and between communities.

Freedom of Information

The fuel that drives this engine is information and therefore access to information is critical. Freedom of information laws, which permit access to public information, are essential, but so are the means by which information is made available, be it through ICTs or the simple sharing of documents.

Information can change the way we see the world around us, our place in it, and how to adjust our lives in order to maximize the benefits available through our local resources. Fact driven decision-making can significantly alter our political, social and economic perspectives. Therefore, open and pluralistic media are, perhaps, most precious when they simply provide the mirror for society to see itself. These moments of reflection are instrumental in defining community objectives, making course corrections when society or its leaders have lost touch with each other or gone astray.

The right to access information can be interpreted within the legal frameworks that support freedom of information as it applies to information held by public bodies, or

in a wider sense to encompass both access and circulation of information held by other actors, where it becomes intrinsically linked to freedom of expression.

2.4.5 Press Freedom and Governance

Ensuring freedom for the media around the world is a priority. Independent, free and pluralistic media are central to good governance in democracies that are young and old. Free media:

Can ensure transparency, accountability and the rule of law; promote participation in public and political discourse, and

contribute to the fight against poverty. An independent media sector draws its power from the community it serves and in return empowers that community to be full a partner in the democratic process.

Freedom of information and freedom of expression are the founding principles for open and informed debate. New technology will continue to evolve and allow citizens to further shape their media environments as well as access a plurality of sources. The combination of access to information and citizen participation in media can only contribute to an increased sense of ownership and empowerment.

Freedom of information and the transparency it promotes, has a direct consequence on fighting corruption, which in turn has a tangible impact on development. Former World Bank president James Wolfensohn often identified government corruption

as the primary hindrance to development and an independent media sector as the number one tool to fight public corruption.

Freedom of the press or freedom of the media is the freedom of communication and expression through mediums including various electronic media and published materials. While such freedom mostly implies the absence of interference from an overreaching state, its preservation may be sought through constitutional or other legal protections.

With respect to governmental information, any government may distinguish which materials are public or protected from disclosure to the public based on classification of information as sensitive, classified or secret and being otherwise protected from disclosure due to relevance of the information to protecting the national interest. Many governments are also subject to sunshine laws or freedom of information legislation that are used to define the ambit of national interest.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers" This philosophy is usually accompanied by legislation ensuring various degrees of freedom of scientific research (known as scientific freedom), publishing, press and printing the depth to which these laws are entrenched in a country's legal system can go as far down as its constitution. The concept of freedom of speech is often covered by the same laws as freedom of the press, thereby giving equal treatment to spoken and published expression.

2.4.6 Status of Press Freedom Worldwide.

Beyond legal definitions, several non-governmental organizations use other criteria to judge the level of press freedom around the world:

Reporters without Borders considers the number of journalists murdered, expelled or harassed, and the existence of a state monopoly on TV and radio, as well as the existence of censorship and self-censorship in the media, and the overall independence of media as well as the difficulties that foreign reporters may face.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) uses the tools of journalism to help journalists by tracking press freedom issues through independent research, fact-finding missions, and firsthand contacts in the field, including local working journalists in countries around the world. CPJ shares information on breaking cases with other press freedom organizations worldwide through the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, a global e-mail network. CPJ also tracks journalist deaths and detentions. CPJ staff applies strict criteria for each case; researchers independently investigate and verify the circumstances behind each death or imprisonment.

Freedom House likewise studies the more general political and economic environments of each nation in order to determine whether relationships of dependence exist that limit in practice the level of press freedom that might exist in theory. So the concept of independence of the press is one closely linked with the concept of press freedom in 2011-2012, the countries where press was the most free were Finland, Norway and Germany, followed by Estonia, Netherlands, Austria, Iceland, and Luxembourg. The country with the least degree of press freedom was Eritrea, followed by North Korea, Turkmenistan, Syria, Iran, and China.

Every year, Reporters without Borders establishes a ranking of countries in terms of their freedom of the press. The Worldwide press freedom index list is based on responses to surveys sent to journalists that are members of partner organizations of the RWB, as well as related specialists such as researchers, jurists and human rights activists. The survey asks questions about direct attacks on journalists and the media as well as other indirect sources of pressure against the free press, such as non-governmental groups. RWB is careful to note that the index only deals with press freedom, and does not measure the quality of journalism.

Freedom of the Press

Freedom of the Press is a yearly report by US-based non-governmental organization Freedom House, measuring the level of freedom and editorial independence enjoyed by the press in every nation and significant disputed territories around the world. Levels of freedom are scored on a scale from 1 (most free) to 100 (least free). Depending on the basics, the nations are then classified as "Free", "Partly Free", or "Not Free". In 2009 Iceland, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden topped the list with North Korea, Turkmenistan, Myanmar (Burma), Libya, Eritrea at the bottom.

Non-democratic states- According to Reporters without Borders, more than a third of the world's people live in countries where there is no press freedom.[3] Overwhelmingly, these people live in countries where there is no system of democracy or where there are serious deficiencies in the democratic process.[4] Freedom of the press is an extremely problematic problem/concept for most non-democratic systems of government since, in

the modern age, strict control of access to information is critical to the existence of most non-democratic governments and their associated control systems and security apparatus. To this end, most non-democratic societies employ state-run news organizations to promote the propaganda critical to maintaining an existing political power base and suppress (often very brutally, through the use of police, military, or intelligence agencies) any significant attempts by the media or individual journalists to challenge the approved "government line" on contentious issues. In such countries, journalists operating on the fringes of what is deemed to be acceptable will very often find themselves the subject of considerable intimidation by agents of the state. This can range from simple threats to their professional careers (firing, professional blacklisting) to death threats, kidnapping, torture, and assassination.

Reporters without Borders reports that, in 2003, 42 journalists lost their lives pursuing their profession and that, in the same year, at least 130 journalists were in prison as a result of their occupational activities. In 2005, 63 journalists and 5 media assistants were killed worldwide:

England- The Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England established parliamentary sovereignty over the Crown and, above all, the right of revolution. A major contributor to Western liberal theory was John Locke. Locke argued in *Two Treatises of Government* that the individual placed some of his rights present in the state of nature in trusteeship with the sovereign (government) in return for protection of certain natural individual rights. A social contract was entered into by the people.

Until 1694, England had an elaborate system of licensing. No publication was allowed without the accompaniment of a government-granted license. Fifty years earlier, at a time of civil war, John Milton wrote his pamphlet *Areopagitica*. In this work Milton argued forcefully against this form of government censorship and parodied the idea, writing "when as debtors and delinquents may walk abroad without a keeper, but inoffensive books must not stir forth without a visible jailer in their title." Although at the time it did little to halt the practice of licensing, it would be viewed later a significant milestone as one of the most eloquent defenses of press freedom.

Milton's central argument was that the individual is capable of using reason and distinguishing right from wrong, good from bad. In order to be able to exercise this rational right, the individual must have unlimited access to the ideas of his fellow men in "a free and open encounter." From Milton's writings developed the concept of the open marketplace of ideas, the idea that when people argue against each other, the good arguments will prevail. One form of speech that was widely restricted in England was seditious libel, and laws were in place that made criticizing the government a crime. The King was above public criticism and statements critical of the government were forbidden, according to the English Court of the Star Chamber. Truth was not a defense to seditious libel because the goal was to prevent and punish all condemnation of the government.

John Stuart Mill approached the problem of authority versus liberty from the viewpoint of a 19th-century utilitarian: The individual has the right of expressing himself so long as he does not harm other individuals. The good society is one in which the greatest number of persons enjoy the greatest possible amount of happiness. Applying

these general principles of liberty to freedom of expression, Mill states that if we silence an opinion, we may silence the truth. The individual freedom of expression is therefore essential to the well-being of society.

Mill's application of the general principles of liberty is expressed in his book *On Liberty*: "If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and one, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind".

Sweden- One of the world's first freedoms of the Press Act was introduced in Sweden in 1766, mainly due to classical liberal Member of Parliament Anders Chydenius. Excepted and liable to prosecution was only vocal opposition to the King and the Church of Sweden. The Act was largely rolled back after King Gustav's coup d'état in 1772, restored after the overthrowing of his son, Gustav IV of Sweden in 1809, and fully recognized with the abolishment of the king's prerogative to cancel licenses in the 1840s.

Denmark–Norway- Between September 4, 1770 and October 7, 1771 the kingdom of Denmark–Norway had the most unrestricted freedom of press of any country in Europe. This occurred during the regime of Johann Friedrich Struensee, whose first act was to abolish the old censorship laws. However, due to the great amount of mostly anonymous pamphlets published that was critical and often slanderous towards Struensee's own regime, he reinstated some restrictions regarding the freedom of press a year later, October 7, 1771.

Nazi Germany (1933-1945)-In 1933 Freedom of the Press was suppressed in Hitler's Germany by the Reichstag Fire Decree of President Paul Von Hindenburg, just as Adolf Hitler was coming to power. Hitler largely suppressed freedom of the press through Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. As the Ministry's name implies, propaganda did not carry the negative connotations that it does today (or that it did in the Allied countries); how-to manuals were openly distributed by that same ministry explaining the craft of effective propaganda. The Ministry also acted as a central control-point for all media, issuing orders as to what stories could be run and what stories would be suppressed. Anyone involved in the film industry—from directors to the lowliest assistant—had to sign an oath of loyalty to the Nazi Party, due to opinion-changing power Goebbels perceived movies to have. (Goebbels himself maintained some personal control over every single film made in Nazi Europe.) Journalists who crossed the Propaganda Ministry were routinely imprisoned or shot as traitors. The Sicherheitsdienst and other Nazi police organizations also created a network of internal, domestic spying, so that for example, the White Rose Society was in constant fear of discovery and execution.

Asia India-The Indian Constitution, while not mentioning the word "press", provides for "the right to freedom of speech and expression" (Article 19(1) a). However this right is subject to restrictions under sub clause (2), whereby this freedom can be restricted for reasons of "sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, preserving decency, preserving morality, in relation to contempt, court, defamation, or incitement to an offense". Laws such as the Official

Secrets Act and Prevention Of Terrorist Activities Act (POTA) have been used to limit press freedom. Under POTA, person could be detained for up to six months for being in contact with a terrorist or terrorist group. POTA was repealed in 2006, but the Official Secrets Act 1923 continues.

For the first half-century of independence, media control by the state was the major constraint on press freedom. Indira Gandhi famously stated in 1975 that All India Radio is "a Government organ, it is going to remain a Government organ..."[18] With the liberalization starting in the 1990s, private control of media has burgeoned, leading to increasing independence and greater scrutiny of government.

Implications of New Technologies-Many of the traditional means of delivering information are being slowly superseded by the increasing pace of modern technological advance. Almost every conventional mode of media and information dissemination has a modern counterpart that offers significant potential advantages to journalists seeking to maintain and enhance their freedom of speech. A few simple examples of such phenomena include:

Satellite television versus terrestrial television: Whilst terrestrial television is relatively easy to manage and manipulate, satellite television is much more difficult to control as journalistic content can easily be broadcast from other jurisdictions beyond the control of individual governments. An example of this in the Middle East is the satellite broadcaster Al Jazeera. This Arabic-language media channel operates out of Qatar, whose government is relatively liberal with respect to many of its neighboring states. As such, its views and content are often problematic to a number of governments in the

region and beyond. However, because of the increased affordability and miniaturization of satellite technology (e.g. dishes and receivers) it is simply not practicable for most states to control popular access to the channel.

Web-based publishing (e.g., blogging) vs. traditional publishing: Traditional magazines and newspapers rely on physical resources (e.g., offices, printing presses) that can easily be targeted and forced to close down. Web-based publishing systems can be run using ubiquitous and inexpensive equipment and can operate from any global jurisdiction. To get control over web publications, nations and organizations are using geolocation and geolocation software.

Voice over Internet protocol (VOIP) vs. conventional telephony: Although conventional telephony systems are easily tapped and recorded, modern VOIP technology can employ low-cost strong cryptography to evade surveillance. As VOIP and similar technologies become more widespread they are likely to make the effective monitoring of journalists (and their contacts and activities) a very difficult task for governments.

Naturally, governments are responding to the challenges posed by new media technologies by deploying increasingly sophisticated technology of their own (a notable example being China's attempts to impose control through a state-run internet service provider that controls access to the Internet) but it seems that this will become an increasingly difficult task as journalists continue to find new ways to exploit technology and stay one step ahead of the generally slower-moving government institutions that attempt to censor them.

In May 2010, U.S. President Barack Obama signed legislation intended to promote a free press around the world, a bipartisan measure inspired by the murder in Pakistan of Daniel Pearl, the Wall Street Journal reporter, shortly after the September 11 attacks in 2001. The legislation, called the Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act, requires the United States Department of State to expand its scrutiny of news media restrictions and intimidation as part of its annual review of human rights in each country.[19] In 2012 the Obama Administration collected communication records from 20 separate home and office lines for Associated Press reporters over a two month period, possibly in an effort to curtail government leaks to the press. The surveillance caused widespread condemnation by First Amendment experts and free press advocates, and led 50 major media organizations to sign and send a letter of protest to American attorney general Eric Hold.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

A theory serves as a background for the empirical adventure into any research study. However, research cannot be successful without theory to guard in the understanding of the topic under study. Base on this, the researcher anchored this study on a theory that is relevant to the study, “Social Responsible theory”.

Social Responsibility theory is an ethical theory which an entity, be it an organization or individual, has an obligation to act to benefit society at large. It is a duty every individual or organization has to perform so as to maintain a balance between the economy and the ecosystem.

This theory is relevance to this research work with the topic “Impact of Freedom of Information Act on Journalism Practice” in the sense that it is associated with the commission of the freedom of the press and it support all the aims of “Freedom of Information Act”, such as, it allows free press without any censorship but at the same time the content of the press be discussed in public panel and media should accept any obligation from public interference or professional self-regulations or both. It allows everyone to say or express their opinion about the media, it also encourages media practitioners/ journalists to take care of social responsibility and if they do not, government or other organization will do it.

Social responsibility theory helped in creating professionalism in media by setting up a high level of accuracy, truth, and information. Improve the standards of journalism, safeguarding the interest of journalism and journalists.

2.6 Summary

The content of this chapter shows that the Freedom of Information Act is a constitutional guarantee of freedom to receive and impart information and ideas. It would empower the professionalism and the ethics of journalism.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the method used in the study; it contained and explained the followings:

Research design

Population of the study

Sampling technique

Sample

Instrumentation as well as the validity and reliability of the instrument used. This chapter also states the method of data collection and method of analyzing the collection.

3.2 Research Design

This is the plan blue print which species how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed or the procedural out line for the conduct of any given investigation.

The research design used for this study is the survey research method. According to Babble (1986,p 203-204), “survey is probably the best method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly. Survey is excellent vehicle for measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population”.

3.3 Population of Study

This refers to all case or individuals that fit a certain specification. Ohajo (2003) states that it is also the aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specification. Frey et al (1991, p30), “population of the study refers to all people who possess the characteristic of interest. Babble (1986, p88) “also views population of the study as that group casually of people about whom we want to be able to draw conclusion”.

According to the data obtained, the population of this study was the residents of Uyo community giving an estimate of 309,573 according to the National population census 2006.

3.4 Sampling Technique/Sample

This is the selection of some members of element from the population for actual investigation. It is also a selection of part or an entire population of people or things which are studied to obtain information about research variables using simple random sampling technique.

Berenson (1952) explained that a sample of relevant content that is carefully selected is capable of producing a result as valid as that obtained from a great deal of sample. Therefore the choice of the technique was based on the ability to provide each member of the larger population equal chance of being selected. The researcher however adopted simple random technique because of its simplicity and easy probability in terms of application.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A systematic random sampling was adopted to reflect the four (4) clans in Uyo community of Akwa Ibom state which includes;

Ikono

Oku

Etoi and

Offort clan.

The systematic and random sampling was chose to ensure that each clan in the community is represented and also every member of each clan have equal chance of being selected.

Therefore, a sample size of (100) hundred was drawn from the population, this was considered as critical minimum needed to carry out the study, which has it population as 309,573.sample of questionnaire will be administered.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection.

Data was collection through the administration of questionnaire to respondents in the community. The questionnaire was designed to elicit demographic data for specific question for the study.

To facilitate data collection, questionnaire was administered directly to the respondents and efforts were made to instantly collect as much completed questionnaire as possible.

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

Questionnaire was the valid instrument for the study. The survey questionnaire was right structured to measure the independence and dependent variables identified in the research questions.

The questionnaire consisted of close ended question appropriate to elicit the desired information. The questionnaire was chosen as the instrument for this study due to its ability to standardize the research questions to ensure uniformity of answers from respondents' case coding data processing and also to bring out the desired correlation between questions asked. The question was brief and direct for easy responses allowing roughly thirty (30) second for each question. The questionnaire theoretically took about two minutes to complete.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

Data was collected by administering some copies of questionnaire administered by the researcher to respondent face to face.

Out of hundred (100) copies of questionnaire distributed to the respondents eighty (80) copies were returned. This represents a return rate of eighty (80) percent.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Statistically percentage of the data analysis was chosen because of the simple approach and understanding to the responses of data were classified according to units they were collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to determine the “Impact of Information Act”. The chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data collected through the use of questionnaire.

During the research, a hundred (100) copies of questionnaires were printed and distributed to respondents (residents of Uyo community). Out of the above figure, eighty (80) copies were returned and twenty (20) copies were wrongly filled, this reduce the total number of questionnaires collected to eighty copies. The data collected is shown in the tables below.

Demographic Data Analysis:

TABLE 1: GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

<u>GENDER</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Male	45	56.25%
Female	35	43.75%
Total	80	100%

The table above shows that the gender of the respondents, 45(56.25%) were male while 35(43.75%) were female. Therefore, there were more male respondents than female.

TABLE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

<u>VARIABLE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
16-20	15	18.75%
21-25	17	21.25%
26-30	21	26.25%
31-35	11	13.75%
36-40	11	13.75%
41-45	5	6.25%
Total	80	100%

In the age distribution table the respondents, 15(18.75%) were between the ages of 16-20, 17(21.25%) were between the ages of 21-25, 21(26.25%) were between the ages of 26-30, 11(13.75%) were between the ages of 31-35, 11(13.75%) were between the ages of 36-40, while 5(6.25%) were between the ages of 41-45.

TABLE 3: MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

<u>MARRITAL STATUS</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Single	25	31.25%
Married	26	32.5%
Divorced	14	17.5%
Widows/widowers	15	18.75%
Total	80	100%

In Marital Status table above, 25 respondents representing 31.25 percent were single, 26 respondents representing 32.5 percent were married, 14 respondent representing 17.5 percent were divorced while 15 respondents representing 18.75 percent were widows/widowers. Therefore, single respondents were more.

TABLE 4: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
WAEC/NECO	13	16.25%
ND/HND	10	12.5%
B.Sc.	25	31.25%
Masters	22	27.5%
Ph.D.	10	12.5%
Total	80	100%

In Education Qualification, no respondents had only primary education. 13(16.25%) respondents had WAEC/NECO qualification, 10(12.5%) respondents had ND/HND qualification, and 25 (31.25%) respondents had B.sc qualification, 22 (27.5%) respondents had Masters Qualifications while 10(12.5%) respondents had Ph.D. qualification. From the result above, B.sc holders were more.

TABLE 5: OCCUPATION DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

<u>VARIABLES</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Students	30	37.5%
Civil servant	26	31.25%
Self-employed	15	18.75%
<u>Business men/women</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12.5%</u>
Total	80	100%

In Occupation Distribution of Respondents, 30(37.5%) were students, 26(31.25%) were civil servant, 15(18.75%) were self-employed while 10(12.5%) were business men/women. However, students' respondents were more than others.

Data Analysis from Survey (Questionnaire)

Research question one: What are the impacts of Freedom of Information Act on journalism practice in Uyo community?

Item 1, 2, 3 and 4 answers the above research question.

Table 6: response to item one (“**Does Freedom of Information Act impact positively on practicing journalists in Uyo community?**”)

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	75	93.75%
No	5	6.25%
Total	80	100%

From the table above, 75 respondents with 93.75 percent said YES that Freedom of Information Act impact positively on journalism professions in Uyo community, while 5 respondents with 6.25 percent said No to the fact.

Table 7: Response to item two (“**Do you agree that Freedom of Information Act guarantees journalists access to public information without hindrance?**”)

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	70	87.5%
Disagree	10	12.5%
Total	80	100%

Table seven shows that 70 respondents with 87.5 percent agreed to the question above while 10 respondents with 12.5 percent disagreed to the question.

Table 8: Response to item three (“**Does Freedom of Information Act encourage investigative journalism?**”)

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Yes	73	91.25%
No	7	8.75%
Total	80	100%

From the table above, 73 respondents with 91.25 percent said YES that Freedom of Information Act encourages investigative journalism while 7 respondents with 8.75 percent said NO to the question.

Table 9: Response to item four (“**Does Freedom of Information Act gives journalists the right to receive, impart information and ideas?**”)

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Yes	77	96.25%
No	3	3.75%
Total	80	100%

Table nine, 77 respondents with 96.25 percent said YES to the question above while 3 respondents with 3.75 percent said NO. The YES respondents were more which shows a positive support that Freedom of Information Act gives journalists the right to receive, impart information and ideas.

Research Question Two: what are the extents of Freedom of Information Act on practicing journalists in Uyo community?

Item 5, 6, 7 answers the above research question.

TABLE10: RESPONSE TO ITEM FIVE.

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Agree	65	81.25%
Disagree	15	18.25%
Total	80	100%

In table 10, 65 respondents with 81.25 percent agreed with the question above while 15 respondents with 18.75 percent disagreed to the question. Therefore, the agree respondents were more than the disagree respondents.

Table11: Response to item six (“**Do practicing journalists in Uyo community improve on their reporting?**”)

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Yes	66	82.5%
No	14	17.5%
Total	80	100%

Table11, 66 respondents with 82.5 percent said YES in support of the above question while 14 while 17.5 percent said NO to the question. Therefore, practicing journalists has improved on their reporting.

Table12: Response to item seven (“Do you agree that journalists can now probe, dig, pry for the purpose of obtaining information, opinion and publish same without hindrance?”)

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Agree	50	62.5%
Disagree	30	37.5%
Total	80	100%

In table12, 50 respondents with 62.5 percent agreed to the question above while 30 respondents with 37.5 percent disagreed to the question. The agreed respondents were more than disagree once.

Research question three: How does government of Uyo encourage Freedom of Information Act?

Item 8, 9, and 10 answers the above research question.

Table13: Response to item eight (**Does government of Uyo encourage Freedom of Information Act?**)

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Yes	55	68.75%
No	25	31.25%
Total	80	100%

From table 13 above, 55 respondents with 68.75 percent said YES while 25 respondents with 31.25 percent said NO.

Table14: Response to item nine (**Do government of Uyo give journalists access to their information?”**)

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Yes	53	78.75%
No	17	21.25%
Total	80	100%

Table 14, 63 respondents with 78.75 percent said YES to the question while NO respondents were 17 with 21.25 percent.

Table15: Response to item ten (**Does government of Uyo encourage journalists to practice Freedom of Information Act?**)

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Yes	74	92.5%
No	6	7.5%
Total	80	100%

Table 15, 74(92.5) percent said YES that government of Uyo encourage journalists to practice Freedom of Information Act, while 6 (7.5) percent said NO to the fact.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

In this section, the data collected from survey on the topic “Impact of Freedom of Information Act: A study of journalism practices in Uyo community” would be

discussed. Out of hundred (100) copies questionnaire distributed eighty (80) copies were returned. Responses to the data in relation to the research questions would be discussed.

Research question one: What are the Impacts of Freedom of Information Act on journalism practice in Uyo community? The aim of this question was to know how freedoms of information act impact on the life of journalists.

The table above which answer this research question (item 1, 2, 3, and 4) shows that the respondents which agree and said yes were more than the disagree and the No respondents. This gives a positive support to the question above.

Research question two: What are the extents of Freedom of Information Act on journalism practices in Uyo community”? This aimed at knowing the extents of which FOI has improve on journalist?

The table that answers this question shows a high rate of response in support of the question above.

Research question three: how does government of Uyo community encourage Freedom of Information Act? This research question aimed at knowing if government of Uyo community encourages freedom of information act or not. From the table it is shown that the response in support of the above question were more than the No and disagree question.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

5.2 Summary

This research work was carried out in order to reveal the Impact of Freedom of Information (FOI) on working journalists in Uyo community. In carrying out the study, the researcher used the survey research method using the questionnaire as her measuring instrument, but before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher introduced the topic, “Impact of Freedom of Information Act (FOI)” on journalism practices: A study of journalism practices in Uyo community- from January to Jun 2013”, stated the research objectives, the significance of the study, drafted the research questionnaires, made some assumptions and the study was limited to Uyo community.

However, it was discovered during the findings that Freedom of Information Act strengthen the constitutional guarantee of freedom to receive, impart information and ideas and also empower professionalism and ethics of journalism.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the study concluded that freedom of information act encourages investigative journalism, balance reporting, and objectivity, verification of news (stories). Most importantly, bestowed on the journalists/press/ media practitioner, the mandate, authority to journalists to probe, to dig, to pry for the purpose of obtaining

information, news and opinions and publish same without hindrance. It presupposes that the gathering and reporting of news and opinion should operate without any limitation or constraint. In other words the practicing journalists of Uyo community like every other Nigerian “Has the right to hold opinion, receive and impart ideas and information without interference.

5.4 Recommendations

In respect of this study and from the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations could be made;

- Full participation of journalists in the newly signed law (Freedom of Information Act).
- Journalists should try and break loose of the censorship mentality in order to practice the Freedom of Information Act effectively.
- Government support of Freedom of Information Act is what will give journalists boldness to practice the law and archive the goal/ objective of the law.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Studies

The researcher suggested the following topics for further studies.

- Influence of freedom of information act on government activities.
- Impact of freedom of information act on media content.

Reference

- Arens, E. (1997). *Discourse Ethics and Universal values*. Enugu: Marrice Production.
- Biernatzki, W. (1996). *Communication Research Trends*. New York:
McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Biernatzki, W. (1996). *Intercultural communication: In communication Research Trends*.
New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Denis, M. (2003), *Media Accountability and Freedom of Publication*, London: Oxford
University Press.
- Alig, N. (2002). The need for community journalism. *Discourse journal of Umuahara
Community*, page 6(7), 159-165.
- Goke, R. (2003), *Mass media and the Society: Issues and perspective*. Enugu: New
Generation Ventures limited.
- Raymond K. (1994). *The Media in France*, France: Rout ledge.
- Galtung, J. (1985), *Social Communication and Global Problem*. In *Communication for
All: New World Information and Communication Order*.
- OXFORD Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, London: Oxford University
Press.
- Ndolo, S. I. (2006). *Mass Media and Society*. Enugu: Rhycee Kerex Publishers.
- Okunna, S. C. (1999). *Introduction to Mass Communication*. Enugu: New Generation
Ventures limited.
- Okunna, S. C. (2002). *Teaching Mass Communication (A Multi-Dimensional Approach)*,
Enugu: New Generation Ventures limited.
- Baran, D. S. (2003). *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture*.
New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

- Bittner, J. (1989). *Mass Communication "An Introduction" 5th Edition*. Eaglewood Cliffs: New Jersey Prentice Hall.
- Church, S. A. (2002). *Broadcasting and Journalism Foundation*. Enugu: Joen Printing and Publishing Company.
- Owuamalam, E. (2008). *Elements of Broadcasting " An Introduction."* Owerri: Top Class Agencies Ltd/ Image and Slogan Consultant Limited Plaza.
- Ugboajah, F. (1997). *Communication Development Issues in the Nigerian Media*. In Georgy Gerbner et al. *Mass Policies in Changing Cultures*. New York: John Wiley and sons.

Appendix I
Questionnaire

Faculty of Management and Social
Sciences
Department of Mass Communication
Caritas University
Amorji-Nike
Emene, Enugu
PO.BOX 01784

Dear Respondents,

I am a final year students of the above institution in the address, who is currently carrying out a research on the topic “impact of Freedom of Information”. This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Science (B.sc) degree in mass communication at Caritas University Amorji-Nike, Enugu state.

To accomplish this research work, you are expected to help the researcher by responding to these questions. This is purely an academic exercise and the confidentiality of information you give is assured. Thanks for your co-operation.

Yours' faithfully

Offiong Michael Glory.

Appendix II

Please tick appropriately in the space provided. The questionnaire is divided into two parts namely part A which contain demographic data and part B.

Part A:

(1) Gender:

(a) Male [] (b) Female [].

(2) Age:

(a) 16-20 [] (b) 21-25 [] (c) 26-30 [] (d) 31-35 [] (e) 36-40 [] (f) 41-45 [].

(3) Marital Status:

(a) Single [] (b) Married [] (c) Divorced [] (d) widows/ widowers [].

(4) Educational Qualification:

(a) WAEC/NECO [] (b) ND/HND [] (c) B.sc [] (d) Masters []

(e) Ph.D. [].

(5) Occupation:

(a) Students [] (b) Civil Servants [] (c) Self-Employed []

(b) Business Men/Women [].

Part B:

(6) Does Freedom of Information Act impact positively on journalism practice in Uyo community?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [].

(7) Do you agree that Freedom of Information Act guarantees journalists access to public information without hindrance?

(a) Agree [] (b) Disagree [].

(8) Does Freedom of Information Act encourage investigative journalism?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [].

(9) Does Freedom of Information Act give journalists the right to receive, impart information and ideas?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [].

(10) Do you agree that Freedom of Information Act has upgraded professionalism and ethics of journalism in Uyo community?

(a) Agree [] (b) Disagree [].

(11) Do the practicing journalists in Uyo community improve on their reporting?

(a) Agree [] (b) Disagree [].

(12) Do you agree that journalists in Uyo community can now probe, dig, pry for the purpose of obtaining information, opinion and publish same without hindrance?

(a) Agree [] (b) Disagree [].

(13) Does government of Uyo community encourage Freedom of Information Act?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [].

(14) Does government of Uyo give journalists access to their information?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [].

(15) Does government of Uyo encourage journalists to practice Freedom of Information Act?

(a) Yes [] (b) No

