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- Indigenous Journalism Formats
- Law and Mass Media
- Popularizing Population Information
- Mass Communication and Incommunication
- Development Communication Training

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Comment on the contents of this issue

Concern with the quality of journalism and journalism training in Africa continues to be a subject of much critical and normative comment by African communication scholars and researchers. In this issue, Sybil James suggests that proficiency in the receptive and expressive language skills should be made an integral part of journalism education since language as the vital tool of journalists has to be utilized in ever more complex and subtler ways in contemporary communication environments in Africa.

In the second article, Okoth-Owiro discusses the important issue of the law and the mass media. He says that in Kenya, several legal and administrative instruments exist for controlling the press, a state of affairs which has not always permitted smooth government-press relations, irrespective of the legitimacy and justifiability of such controls. Kwame Karikari examines the issue of mass media policy and the social environment within which it would lead to greater democratic pluralism. He says, for instance, that in addressing issues of media policy, one cannot escape addressing the larger issue of how and who rules society.

Alfred Opubor analyses the aspect of project support communication in population. He disaggregates the population information, education and communication sector into its various components and describes the typology of population information end-users as being characterized by the fact of their being non-demographers, hence requiring the services of information 'brokers' to translate specialist population material into non-specialist form for their consumption. It is after such a process that the mass media would be useful in disseminating the information with minimal distortion. Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie takes a broad swipe against the mass media in Nigeria for perpetuating the 'structural oppression of women' and their 'subordination in society'. She calls on women journalists to take the lead in reversing the trend in which women are portrayed in such stereotype roles as to hinder their free participation in national affairs and development.

The mere prevalence of mass media institutions and 'paraphernalia' in a country does not guarantee enhancement of mass communication unless the broad masses have access to the media. This is what Festus Adesonaye finds in Nigeria where the structure of mass media ownership and distribution, reflecting a typical pro-urban bias, has denied a vast majority of the population access and use of the media thereby falsifying the notion of mass communication among the population. He calls this a state of 'mass incommunication'. Finally, Jubril Bala Mohammed looks at the mass communication and journalism training syllabi in Nigeria and finds that, with very few exceptions, Nigerian training institutions have put little stress on social science theory that is so crucial in equipping would-be African development communicators for their task. He commends the inclusion of such theoretical courses in communication and journalism syllabi for a clearer understanding of the development problematique and its imperialist antecedents in Africa.

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