Assessment of Print Media Contribution to the Political Development of Nigeria

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Abstract : The print media played a major role in the agitation for self-rule in Nigeria in the 1950s. It remains as a bastion of hope in the dark days of military rule in the country. But in the troubled waters of Nigeria's politics, accusing fingers are pointed in the direction of the print media as problematic to the political development of the nation. Thus, Nigeria as a nation is torn between the paralyzing forces of political instability and the building powers of political stability. The press assigned a constitutional role to hold everyone, especially government officials accountable to the public, appears to be at the center of these forays. The paper takes a look at the strength and weakness of the print media as a stabilizing or destabilizing agent to the political development of Nigeria. Engaging in this study is essential and the findings fundamental to the sustainability of Nigeria's nascent democracy. The study draws on the content analysis method. News items from major newspapers across the country were content analyzed to test the validity of the claims that the press serve as agent of political stability or political instability, and whether to accept or reject such claims. The study found that the press has published more stories that unite the people politically as found in the tested hypothesis which shows that $P>0.05$ implying that media publications are not significant to political instability of the nation regardless of the number of published news stories. The study recommends that all issues relating to professional and ethical standards that affect the practice of journalism in the print media should be addressed by regulatory bodies to starve of chances of information that could lead to intolerance being peddled in the print media.