

# **CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND IT'S IMPACTS ON PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM IN PROGRESSIVES SOCEITY: A STUDY OF 2019 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION IN CROSS RIVER STATE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The paper aimed to examine citizen journalism and its impacts on professional journalism in progressives society: A study of 2019 governorship election in Cross River State. There is no doubt that citizen journalists play a salient role that compliment professional journalists through their reportage they contribute to the public. For instance, the just concluded 2019 general elections was reported to be characterized by irregularities via the videos and pictures reported online. The paper used Democratic participants media theory to backup its views. The study revealed that citizen journalists played a sacrosanct role during the 2019 governorship election in Cross River State. They reports a lot of stories across the nooks and cranny of the State which shows all manners of irregularities and violent that occurred during the election. Some of which varies from snatching of ballots boxes, multiple voting, vote buying and many more which was posted on social media platforms. The study concluded that citizen Journalism has become an integral part of the modern-day society because it has given voice to the voiceless in the society. The researcher recommend that Journalism profession should fashion out modalities on how to check excesses by its members and they should be campaigns and advocacy that targeted the abolition of fake news reports and they should enlighten the public on the dangers of fake news so that even if they want to participate on news coverage, it will dissuade them from reporting fake news.

**KEYWORDS:** Citizen Journalist, Journalism, Journalist, Progressives Society And Election.

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is quite germane to note that truthful and relevant information is a good recipe for the growth of the society. With the advent of technology, the world has become a global village. Dissemination of information across the

world is much more easier because technology gave birth to internet and other forms of social media platforms which is the major avenue used by citizens journalists to feed the public with information.

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There have been certain issues about citizen journalism that need to be addressed otherwise, it will continue to portend danger to our peaceful coexistence. One of these problems is the treacherous act of reporting undiluted news contents that is tantamount to fueled disorderliness. Citizen Journalism is a form of Journalism that aids or complements professional journalism.

Citizen journalism is an emerging trend in the media industry that has been very instrumental to the success or growth of media industry in the world and Nigeria inclusive. The world is infotech, the new media is fast evolving in such a way that has given credence to citizen journalists to thrive. This form of journalism is the type that gives citizens the opportunity to report events that happened in their environment on social media platforms. They also play the role of sending pictures or report of activities and events that occur in their communities to the mainstream media. For example, Channels television and other conventional media have their handles or platforms such as Tweeter, Facebook and Instagram where the public send in stories and pictures of incidents or events as they break in their areas.

Dugan (2008) concluded that citizen journalism could complement what professional journalists did, but it would not be a replacement for professional reporting nor was it a panacea to the growing reader concerns about traditional media's credibility. Dugan, however, insisted that journalists must be careful to ensure that the ethical standards were followed by both professional and citizen journalists. (Xin 2010) came up with a similar finding that citizen journalism was used by mainstream media as a news source or an alternative channel for distributing politically sensitive information, which showed that citizen journalists could work effectively together with mainstream media to expose social injustice cases.

Citizen journalism research has garnered a growing amount of attention as citizens participate in news-making processes and the production of news-related content, such as stories, photos, videos and comments. These citizen-generated contents (CGCs) can play a pivotal role in prompting democratic conversation in the public sphere. Citizen journalists may offer alternative perspectives from ordinary citizens which otherwise may not have been covered by mainstream news media; thus citizen journalism simultaneously competes with and complements professional journalism. The major line of scholarship in this regard centers on the similarities and differences between citizen and professional journalism such as journalistic role conception.

Citizen journalism has attracted a great deal of attention of media scholars and researchers in recent decades and there have been extensive studies on the phenomenon of citizen journalism, in part because it encourages 'the man or woman in the street' to become a news contributor. By providing the coverage of news on a wide range of issues, these people may be able to tell their stories, expressing their political views with few editorial constraints. They may also be able to address the 'democratic deficits inherent in a corporate-dominated, highly commercialised media system, its inequalities of access, representation and political/ideological power, its economic and structural integration with globalizing capitalism and consumer culture' (Carroll and Hackett, 2006 p. 83). Therefore, it is often suggested that citizen journalism may play a crucial role in conveying alternative opinions on important news issues and at the same time, perform the critical role of a watchdog. Bentley (2008) posited that Similarly, citizen journalists don't want newsroom jobs- they just have something to say and often they want to say it because those of us on the professional side are too busy with the big

stories to see the little items that mean so much to people.

With the introduction of modern technology, people are actively engaging in the news media. From the introduction of emails or emailing lists to the current era of online discussion forums and social media, we are witnessing a rapid growth in the use of the Internet and people are communicating with each other online in many different ways. Using the Internet, people from one continent of the world are able to share their work experience with that of another (Thorsen, 2009). Social media has further changed the mode of communication, making the flow of news and information more dynamic and changing the ways in which news and information are produced, transferred and consumed by the public.

In spite of the enormity of benefits accrued to citizen journalism, there are certain negative implications of citizen journalism noticed in the just concluded 2019 general elections in Nigeria which left lofty doubt about the credibility of elections results in the minds of the public. Fake results were published by citizen journalists even before INEC announced the result. As we all know, it is the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) that is saddled with the responsibility to conduct and announce election results. But with the increase misdemeanor of citizen journalists who report fallacious stories that portend danger to our democracy and corporate existence.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Citizen journalism is a rapidly and evolving form of journalism where common citizens take the initiative to report news or express views about happenings within their community. It is news of the people, by the people and for the people. Citizen journalists are independent, freelancing citizen reporters. They are not constrained by

conventional journalistic processes or methodologies and they usually function without editorial oversight. Citizen journalists gather, process, research, report, analyse and publish news and information, most often utilising a variety of technologies made possible by the internet (Ross & Cormier 2010: 66).

Citizen journalism has played a consequential role in the mass media industry in Nigeria and across the globe. Before now, people solely depend on the main stream media for information. But the nascent technology has turned the pace of information dissemination in the media industry, one of which is participatory journalism which is perceived to be citizen journalism. This form of journalism encourages citizen participation in news coverage / gathering as well as reporting.

Being abreast of happenings and events within your environment is sacrosanct to our individual lives including our social wellbeing. However, the growing concern about the emerging form of journalism is factored on certain infractions occasioned by citizen journalists. There is no ambivalence that they play a key function in complementing the main stream media by reporting incidences and events that happen in their environment. The issue centred on hoax and unverified sources of their news stories. Like in Nigeria, fake news has become a public concern, a situation that has propelled government to rise up and launched a fight against fake news which is perceived to be dangerous to our corporate existence. In spite of all these efforts fashioned to stem the tide of fake news, have there been significant impacts in curtailing the spreads of fake news by citizen journalism? If no, what are they doing to stop it?.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study is focused on citizen journalism and its impacts on professional journalism in

progressives society, with emphasis on 2019 governorship election in Cross River State.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **THE CONCEPT OF JOURNALISM**

Joe (2018) avouched that Journalism is the collection and editing of current interest for presentation through news media. It could also be regarded as the event of the day to day activities with the uses of words, sounds or pictures to satisfy human curiosity with a word that is always interested in knowing what is new. The introduction of journalism and its media are electronic and print which have reduced a lot of ignorance from the society because from the observation both print and electronic media journalists disseminate to the public. The journalists are those that practice journalism. They gather news from the public and send it back the public also. Enwefah (2016,p.17) opined that journalism, which is the investigation and reporting of events, occurrences, issues, happenings, etc. in the society to a large audience, was the exclusive preserve of the men-folk at inception.

The World Book Encyclopedia in Onyeagba (2014) defines journalism as the profession of recording events that maybe of interest to the public. Journalism is the collection, preparation and distribution of news and related commentary and feature materials through such media as pamphlet, news magazines, radio, motion pictures, television, bill boards, the internet and books. Journalism is also defined by (Ganiyu 2004) as the writing and disseminating of news and view about the society through the means of mass media.

According to wikipedia in Onyeagba, (2014) journalism is the discipline of collecting, analyzing, verifying and presenting information regarding current events, trends, issues and people. People who practice journalism as a

profession are called journalists. It is therefore both world-wide in scope and as limited as the territory covered by the smallest weekly paper. Men and women who are engaged in news gathering task call themselves journalist and such modern. Journalists use every means of communication to report the news of the world newspaper, magazine and the news rooms of radio and television.

### **CITIZEN JOURNALISM**

Rabia, (2017).Citizen journalism is a concept in media that refers to journalistic activities of ordinary people. It means citizens themselves report the issues confronting them. Citizen journalism has enabled people to raise their voice on what they feel need attention. These people are, thus, termed as citizen journalists. Duffy, Thorson and Jahng (2010) have defined "citizen journalist" as an individual, who is not a trained professional, but who nonetheless may report on his or her neighborhood or community. Citizen journalists or amateur reporters are none but the general audience, that is, viewers, readers and listeners of mainstream media. Referring to citizen journalists as "people formerly known as the audience," Press Think blogger Jay Rosen (2006) mentions that earlier they would be "on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly, while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another." He, however, argues that presently they are no more in a situation like that.

Citizen journalists tend to bring themselves into the story; many see themselves as citizen activists. Some happen to be at the 'wrong place at the right time', such as the people caught up in Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, who emailed their personal accounts, pictures and videos taken with their mobile phones to mainstream media like CNN and the New York

Times, as well as dedicated citizen news sites such as Now Public.com. Others are very proactive news gatherers, who attend and report on specific events, ranging from local town hall meetings for a hyperlocal site, to protests at a G8 conference for Indymedia.org. Journalism is usually not their main occupation, and only few get paid for their efforts. In contrast to traditional journalism, which brought news as a completed product to its audience in a vertical way, citizen journalism is a more horizontal and conversational sharing of news, which is "always unfinished, Nadine (2011).

Citizen journalism is also known as participatory and democratic journalism (Baase, 2008). There are various other synonyms used for citizen journalism -"public journalism," "civic journalism," "stand-alone journalism," "networked journalism," "open source journalism," "crowd-sourced journalism," "collaborative journalism," "grassroots journalism," "community journalism," "bridge media" and so on. These forms of journalism are related to "citizen journalism", but each is a unique species that has evolved out of a larger family of social media. All these terms refer to different acts (Cohn, 2007).

Citizen journalism is defined as the process of engaging individuals [not considered professional journalists] who produce, disseminate and exchange a wide variety of news and information, ranging from current topics and common interests to individual issues. One of the most accepted and inclusive definitions of citizen journalism has been put forward by Bowman and Willis (2003) defined citizen journalism as the act of non-professionals, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information. This definition covers all the possible activities of citizen journalists in existence. The authors further write, "The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate,

wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires."

Likewise, citizen journalists are considered to be citizens without professional journalism training who produce such content and/or generate such discussions related to civic, health and other issues relevant to improving communities. Research has found citizen journalism to be a tool for various purposes, including information sharing during risk/crisis events and increasing involvement in political campaigns. Moreover, the citizen journalism act of blogging has been found to be an effective educational tool in classrooms. For example, one study found that at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, blogs facilitate student engagement with materials and with their classmates, Seungahn Kang Rachael and Stephanie (2017).

Nnanyelugo, Diri, and Odii (2013). The concept of citizen journalism has been variously called "public", "participatory", "democratic", "guerrilla" or "street" journalism." (Bowman and Willis 2003) define this brand of journalism as "the act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information", noting that "the intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires." (Radsch 2013) vividly captures the spirit and essence of citizen journalism in his definition of the concept as "an alternative and activist form of newsgathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media institutions, often as a repose to shortcoming in the professional journalistic field, that uses similar journalistic practices but is driven by different objectives and ideals and relies on alternative sources of legitimacy than traditional or mainstream journalism."

Citizen journalism is the reverse of the straight-jacket, near unilateral top-down communication system of the mainstream media. (Bowman and Willis 2003) state that, "Participatory journalism is a bottom-up, emergent phenomenon in which there is little or no editorial oversight or formal journalistic workflow dictating the decisions of a staff. Instead, it is the result of many simultaneous, distributed conversations that either blossom or quickly atrophy in the Web's social network." They observe that "the fluidity of this approach puts more emphasis on the publishing of information rather than the filtering. Conversations happen in the community for all to see. In contrast, traditional news organizations are set up to filter information before they publish it." In its true nature, citizen journalism allows no room for gate keeping. In this brand of journalism, information gets to the members of public who are directly involved in content creation, raw, 'naked' and undiluted.

Burkholder (2005) asserted that citizen journalism Many bloggers consider themselves 'citizen journalists' and believe they are better suited to provide the diversity that today's democracy needs than traditional journalists. By moving away from the established news sources, they weaken the control of major mainstream gatekeepers. They pride

themselves on being the 'watch-dog' of the traditional watch-dog media. Nadine (2011) opined that citizen journalism is varied as the names it is known by: guerilla, networked, participatory, street, or open source journalism, to give a few examples. Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis describe it as "[t]he act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information.

In practice, this can range from commenting on an existing news piece to publishing an article, podcast, photo or video on a personal blog or on Twitter, a dedicated citizen journalism website like The Huffington Post or on YouTube, or on interactive websites that work as extensions to mainstream media, such as Cable News Network's (CNN) iReport. On sites like CNN iReport, editorial gatekeeping is left to the audience: uploaded content will be published unedited as long as it is considered news (as distinct from advertising, for example) and respects principles of taste and decency. Other sites, such as the South Korean OhMyNews.com, only fact-check hard news contributions before publishing them; and then there are websites that operate like a traditional newsroom, also called pro-am ventures, such as The Huffington Post, where professionals edit all user-generated content (UGC) before publication.

**DIFFERENTIATING CITIZEN JOURNALISM FROM PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM**

<b>Citizen journalism</b>	<b>Professional journalism</b>
Does not operate on the basis of a formal newsroom structure. They practice journalism from anywhere possible and convenient.	Operates in a formalised editorial structure.
Speed is of essence - breaking news.	Speed is curtailed by verification process.
Use of amateur multimedia devices & basic editing.	Use of professional devices & thorough editing.
Information often unverified.	Steps taken to verify information.
No obligation of accountability.	Accountability is a core value.
Use of pseudonym accounts. Ethical practices are in some cases not adhered to.	Ethics are standard.

No regulation, filtering, gatekeeping.	Regulation bodies exist and there is gate-keeping.
Citizen journalists do not necessarily get paid for their work.	Professional journalists are employed and are paid for practicing journalism.

Source: Admire, Henrik, Simbiso, M. & Rashweat, (2018).

### TYPES OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Citizen journalism can take many forms. These include:

1. **INSTITUTIONALISED (SEMI-INDEPENDENT) AND NON-INSTITUTIONALISED (FULLY INDEPENDENT):** Institutional citizen journalism on the other hand, refers to that type of citizen journalism which has a form of organizational structure or constraining ability complete with external constraints however minimal.
2. **NON-INSTITUTIONAL FORMS OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM:** These are extra-institutional, placing the individual at the core of the practice. This appears to be the notion of citizen journalism that readily lends itself to different forms of social networking, where private citizens use a combination of platforms to generate content and disseminate it as widely as possible. Non-institutional citizen journalism revolves around the individual.
3. **SEMI INDEPENDENT CITIZEN JOURNALISM:** It involves citizens contributing in one form or another to existing professional news sites. For example: Readers are posting their comments alongside stories written by professional reporters, essentially a 21st-century version of the letter to the editor. A growing number of media organizations in Zimbabwe allow readers to post comments. In an effort to prevent obscene or objectionable messages, some news websites (like the Herald, Daily News and NewsDay) require that readers register in order to post.
4. **INDEPENDENT CITIZEN JOURNALISM:** It involves citizen journalists working in ways

that are fully independent of traditional, professional news outlets. These can be blogs in which individuals can report on events in their communities or offer commentary on the issues of the day, Admire, Henrik, Simbiso, M. & Rashweat, (2018).

### BENEFITS OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM TO SOCIETY AND PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

First and foremost, there is no doubt as regards to the efficacy of citizen journalism to the society and professional journalism. The introduction of communication technologies has paved way for citizen journalism in the world and Nigeria at large. The just concluded 2019 general elections enjoyed large coverage of citizen journalist, some of which captured events as they broke out within the lengths and breadths of the country. Social media was filled were reports, pictures and and videos of vote buying and other forms of irregularities characterized during presidential, senatorial, house of representative as well as governorship and house of assembly elections. These reports goes a long way to entrenched the role of conventional or mainstream media which aim is to inform, educate and entertain the public.

Demir (2013) stated that the development of information and communication technologies, especially the Internet has led to the emergence of citizen journalism, which means the active role of citizens in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. All citizens create and distribute them with the help of mobile phones, the Internet, ipad,

computer, etc. Thanks to the digital technology, citizen journalism is universally accessible and globally relevant, it becomes an important part of the content within the traditional media-both public and commercial. It has become an important corrections of official sources of information, it helped to create a real and objective view of the world.

YouTube has launched a special channel called YouTube Reporter's center, where citizens are able to look at a number of video tutorials in which, by some of the leading experts in the field of journalism explaining how to do amateur journalism, ie. civic journalism. It is covered a number of topics, from finding ideas for stories, technical implementation, presenting stories and etc. Then is open YouTube Direct, a channel where media can download or order a few of the amateur journalism works, in which are involved some major media companies such as The San Francisco Chronicle, NPR, The Huffington Post and Politico.

Ayres (2016) informed that it addresses the gaps in mainstream media. The idea behind this form of journalism is that people without professional training are able to use modern technology tools and the internet to fact-check augment or create media. This entails that anyone who has access to the web can start a blog or can report some events across the digital world. This is significant in a way that it addresses the gaps within mainstream media. It empowers local communities. Citizen journalism enables individuals who are previously excluded from essential information to increasingly participate in disseminating information to advance their well-being. This journalistic innovation is said to help improve local economies, sharing substantial information to remote corners of the globe. With it, many ordinary people are now able to play a part in telling stories including their own

that are usually understated by mainstream media.

## **EFFECTS OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM TO SOCIETY AND PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM**

According to Ayres (2016) it poses difficulties to the audience about what to believe. One big problem with this type of journalism is that it will be difficult for people to decide what to believe unlike traditional journalism where it is safe to assume the information disseminated is factual. This means that citizen media should be checked and re-checked for accuracy to produce news that is suitable to print. As you can see, anyone these days can record and write anything and then present it as fact, so it is important to remember that we are dealing with humans here and it is our nature to edit information to our own likeness which can make unofficial news unreliable.

It has limited audience in some cases. By publishing their work on social media, citizen journalists will have limited audience such as only to their friends. And while blogging will make their audience a bit greater, it would never be as widespread as international broadcast on radio or television. Basically, citizen journalism just do not have an audience that is large enough to make a real change across the world.

The hazards of citizen journalism are quite enormous to the society and professional journalism. This is because, citizen journalists are not trained. Therefore, they lack the ability to report professionally. Also, fake news is one of the major implication of citizen journalism. Fake news as we all know is misinformation and it is capable of causing war, disunity, chaos and genocide. Jeremy (2009) opined that the only real problem with citizen journalism is that it gets more difficult for all of us to decide what to believe. With traditional journalism, it was



safe to assume for a long time that the information we were getting was factual. Checked and re-checked for accuracy. Stories were edited in an inverted pyramid, giving us all the news that fit to print up front in the first three paragraphs

## **CHALLENGES OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM**

Citizen Journalism is passing through its evolutionary stage in different parts of the world and is facing a lot of problems, pressures and criticism. In CJ we listen more and more voices but more voices in the public arena do not necessarily add to a more lively democracy. The decisive question is: how do people or companies best serve the and not only in the world wide web. Illiteracy, poverty and non-availability of the internet and other new technology is yet a big hurdle in the development of Citizen Journalism. CJ does not represent all of the citizens rather it represents only a limited class of citizens.

A market economy depends on professional business journalists. Individual statements by shareholders and various stakeholders are no substitute for company profiles delivered by independent professional journalists. Healthcare reform is another example. It is such a complex issue. Citizens who make the effort to express themselves might be angry about the costs they must bear, be it in form of insurance premiums, taxes or other healthcare costs. Only professional journalists can perform their duties with a sense of responsibility and credibility.

The credibility of the CJ reporters has always been a big challenge worldwide. Many people believe that this kind of 'street reporting' is not reliable. They argue that CJ reports are most of the time exaggerated and biased and the facts presented are not trustable. Sometimes, these reports are based on opinions. Lasica (2003) narrates that many newspapers and TV stations

had passed many years to establish the trust of their audiences. However, participatory news sites, with their obvious and more cherished nature, are attracting citizen journalists that contribute and collaborate with one another and most of the times, their content is not reliable. Therefore, citizen journalism needs potential to develop a more reliable relationship with their audiences.

Moreover, citizen journalists usually don't obey any code of ethics which is a requirement for the mainstream media. (Itule & Douglas 2000) described the code of ethics and responsibility for journalists as the issue was highly concerning since 1970s. They noted, "A code of ethics hanging on the wall is meaningless; a code of ethics internalized within the journalist and guiding his actions is what is meaningful.

Good Ethical values area acquired all thorough life from a number of sources, such as Church, family and friends. Reporters can't separate the ethics of journalism from the values they hold as individuals" (p.201).Considering the ethical boundaries in practical journalism citizens' involvement in news process sometimes produce ambiguity with their shared contents. During 2009, a mobile video clip on national TV channels in Pakistan, portrayed the brutality of the "Taliban" (religious extremists) by beating a women captured by the others was launched abruptly and then discussed internationally without checking the authenticity about video. Later on investigations proved the fakeness of video but until the negative intuition of the nation and the religion stretched worldwide. Many other reports of the citizen journalists are against the media ethics and the basic norms of the society. Lack of proper training is yet another problem of the Citizen Journalism and that's why their reports don't fulfill the basic journalistic requirements. There should be some proper arrangement of the training of the citizen journalists. If they are trained properly, they can produce better reports.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPANT MEDIA THEORY**

This study is anchored on the Democratic Participant Media Theory and the Public Sphere model. The emphasis of this theory is on the basis of society and on the value of horizontal rather than vertical (top-down) communication (McQuail, 1987: 122). The main thrust of the theory lies in its insistence that the existing bureaucracy as well as commercial and professional hegemony in media systems be broken down, so as to guarantee easier media access for all potential users and consumers (Folarin, 2005: 43).

(McQuail 1983) proposed this theory to take account of many ideas expressed to take care of the needs of citizens. The theory found expression in the 1960s and 1970s in pressure for local and community radio and television. It challenged the dominance of centralised, commercialised, state-controlled and even professionalised media (McQuail 2000: 160). Making a reference to Ezensberger (1970), McQuail notes that the key to applying this theory was seen to lie in the new technology of the times. It favoured media that would be small in scale, non-commercial and often committed to a cause. Participation and interaction were key concepts.

The theory has been against the system of parliamentary democracy which has seemed to become detached from its grassroots origins, to impede rather than facilitate movement in political and social life. It also takes exception to a 'mass society' which is over-organised, over-centralised and fails to offer realistic opportunities for individual and minority expression. McQuail (1987: 122) says "the central point of a democratic-participant theory lies with the needs, interests and aspirations of the active 'receiver' in a political society. It has

to do with the right to relevant information, the right to answer back, the right to use the means of communication for interaction in small-scale settings of community, interest group, sub-culture". Essentially, the theory's cautions that communication should not be left in the hands of professionals alone find practical expression in the structure and general operations of citizen journalism orchestrating the tenets of the democratic participant media theory is the public sphere model, Nnanyelugo, Diri and Odii (2013).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Citizen Journalism has become an integral part of the modern-day society because it has given voice to the voiceless in the society. This nascent form of journalism is growing rapidly owing to the advancement in technology. People now stay at the comfort of their homes and report events as it unfold, for example, the 2019 governorship, presidential and other elections were said to be marred by all forms of nefarious activities that portends danger to our democracy. Some of these reports were made known by citizen journalists who took out time to reports stories of events from their various localities.

The study revealed that citizen journalists played a sacrosanct role during the 2019 governorship election in Cross River State. They reports a lot of stories across nooks and cranny of the State which shows all manners of irregularities and violent that occurred during the election. Some of which varies from snatching of ballots boxes, multiple voting, vote buying, and many more which was posted on social media platforms.

Citizen journalism is very important in our present day society because of its advantage of allowing the public to capture and disseminate information on events that occur in their areas. Traditional media should encourage and train

the citizen journalists who can be an asset for them. Their reporters cannot be available everywhere. This deficiency can be overcome by encouraging and engaging citizen journalists. They can complement the traditional media organizations in obtaining the best quality news stories around them.

1. Traditional media should encourage and train the citizen journalists who can be an asset to them. Their reporters cannot be available everywhere. This deficiency can be overcome by encouraging and engaging citizen journalists. They can complement the traditional media organizations in obtaining the best quality news stories.
2. Journalism profession should set modalities on how to check excesses by its members and they should be campaigns and advocacy that targeted the abolition of fake news reports, they should enlighten the public on the dangers of fake news so that even if they want to participate on news coverage, they should ensure they report good news report.
3. There should be a proper synergy between citizen journalists and professional journalists to ensure effective news gathering in the society. This can be possible through mutual cooperation and collaboration of the two types of journalism, this can produce the best results. Both should not be taken as rival rather they should complement each other.
4. Effective mechanism should be put in place by government and technological experts that can checkmate fake news and misdemeanor of citizen journalists who deliberately report fake news to mislead the public.

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