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Mass Media and Challenges of Fake News: a Focus on Security in Nigeria.

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Abstract

Mass media are the conventional media of mass communication before the emergency of the new media. The conventional media are empowered and are regarded as the members of fourth estate of the realm whose work among others is to keep the people abreast of information, providing clues on security matters and divulging information leading to insecurity in the country. Since the dream of marshall Mcluhan came through in the late 20th century, the globe has been hit with many positive technological transitions which have transformed society in virtually every facets of human life. The product of the dream (new media technology or Internet) has conquered the barrier of time and space or distance in Communication. However, the indiscriminate use of the new media over time due to divergent interest in many quarters, becomes the brainchild of fake news in contemporary society. In Nigeria, fake news has added to the current challenges of insecurity, leading to the series of social unrest and tensions – violence, conflict and crisis of different categories. Employing a Library research technique(qualitative research design), secondary data was used in the data collection for the study. The researcher utilized four theories for the research: Conspiracy theory, Inoculation theory, Media literacy theory and Social responsibility theory, forming the theoretical framework to guide the study. This paper finally calls on all the stakeholders; every individual and government to put all hands on deck to nip the distribution of fake news in the bud.
Keywords: *Fake news, information, mass media, security, Nigeria.*

Introduction.

In recent times, fake news in Nigeria has undoubtedly sparked up offensive and hateful attributes that degenerate into antagonism across tribal lines, especially spurring up Northern dominated Muslims against their christian counterparts in some of the southern parts of the country and vise versa. This situation has become a great security threat and apprehension across the country as perceived by many. According to (Talwar etal.,2020), fake news not only erodes trust in news source but also has the potential to influence public opinion, disrupt democratic processes and, at times, contribute to real-world harm. Aimeur, In order to lay credence to the above assertion, said that the proliferation of fake news and misinformation on social media platforms presents a significant and growing challenge to the credibility of information in the digital age, (Aimeur etal., 2023;, 2020)**.**

In early 2019, in a symposium on fake news held in Nigeria by the BBC on fake news with some of the notable philosophers, among whom is Wole soyinka, Nigerian Nobel prize laureate was in attendance. Soyinka accentuated the level of threat posed by fake news when he said, " I have said this before that fake news may cause World War 3 and that fake news will be started by a Nigerian" witnessing the forcing of the country's nationalities into ethno-tribal cocoons.

What Soyinka said is in line with what happened during the Gulf war in Iraq in 1990 and some threats of war in 1993, when western journalists and mass media organizations barricaded the real situations in those countries and opened gate to what Lee,(1998) saw as a blatant lies and disinformation whose consequences were cataclysmic: 85,000 loads of bombs shelled at Iraq and Kuwait; 49,000 children under 5 years lost their lives due to the impact of the war; 100,000 Iraqi soldiers equally lost their lives and over 1.8 million people were displaced from their homes.

During an annual UNESCO event on world press freedom Day, a number of media professionals in Nigeria accused the Nigerian government of Its failure to combat the threat imposed by fake news, with the view of protecting journalists reporting from a dangerous environment.

Others have called for a public campaign on social media literacy to help people question more effectively what they read, a point noted by professor Lai Oso of school of media, Lagos state University, "not many people are able to make a distinction between the real media and social media and this has posed a serious challenge to the country at large".

In Nigeria, fake news is prevalent, especially during any national events or political transition. It is commonly a recurring decimal at any given general elections, National Assembly elections, Gubernatorial elections and stäte Assembly elections etc.

Considerably, unlike the good old days, journalism, today, faces greater challenges in the maintenance of its grand norm or ethical standard majorly as a result of fake news engendered by corruption in the country. Technological age and digital society seem to have succeeded in the creation of new ideas of Journalistic styles and fashion.This is the era that would determine media extinction or distinction. However, misinformation, disinformation, greenwashing, and hoaxes generally known as "fake news'' have succeeded in influencing how the public perceive the routine reportage of events. The distribution and redistribution of disinformation new/social media such as web pages, twitter handles,whatsapp platforms, facebook platforms, etc has taken a turbulent turn. (Almeur et al, 2023, Buchanan,2020) corroborated the above when they said that the sharing of disinformation and misinformation on social media channels presents a significant and growing challenge to the credibility of information in the digital age. Hence fake news has become a source of worry to the conventional or traditional media of Mass Communication and is globally causing erosion of unity, peace and progress. In Africa, Nigeria is the worst hit. This is resulting from serious security challenges posed by fake news in the country.

Misinformation and disinformation has its own corrosive effects as it spreads at the speed of light, reaching heterogeneous and large audiences at the same time. (Van der Linden; etal.,2017) argued that fake news can get a diverse but Large audience as it swiftly spreads from one person to another person. In the same vein, Hong (2019) corroborated the above argument when he said that, that greatly assists in the promotion of false information.

Empirical studies have it that one of the major causative factors for spread of misinformation is human influence. (Steinmetz, 2018; Anderson and Rainie, 2017), highlighted the fact that fake news spread is usually human-motivated. This means that human beings with untamed emotion just click on their social-media-page button, and the false message is sent without verification or fact check.

The spread of fake news is taking a deadly turn in sowing the seed of disunity, crises, conflict, assassination, killing of different nature and even war- this is a physical dimension. Then, another one is damages it brings on human, psychological, emotional, economical and spiritual makeup of man. Some who are conscious of its rippling effects, after realizing that what is given out is fake, usually follow up with a rebuttal to counteract the early post, despite the level of damage it might have caused. Recently in the US based Research Centre, named pew, established a research whose findings pinpointed that adult in the United States of America whose preference for news is social media are very much prone to dissemination of fake news than those via traditional media such as TV, radio, newspapers or websites,(see Robertson,2016; Wong, 2019). A twin study also showed that social media addicts are less committed and less knowledgeable,(Mitchell, Jurkowitz, Oliphant & Shearer,2020)

From the foregoing, It is worthy to note that the proprietors of technology companies such as Facebook, Whatsapps, YouTube, Instagram etc have engaged in an aggressive movement to battle the anomaly but have so far achieved only but a rare success, since they have not done enough to clamp down upon it ion the whole, Hong,(2019). The preference of anonymity by most social media participants/users make the social media space more challenging to be monitored through censorship.

The conventional media, amist fake news, are still at the receiving end though they are being looked upon as part of the solution to the malady. The danger the fake news poses on the traditional media is that after people consume it on social media platforms, they would lay the blame on Media in general. This, in turn, helps erode fidelity of communication, credibility and trust, the traditional media have over the years. It is one way the concept of fake news is diminishing media trust, (Madrid-morales et al, 2019). Therefore, the fake news situation calls for an urgent measure to combat and curb them, hence the use of government Agencies and every stakeholder through advocacy advertising for reorientation and solutions.

The Research reason(the statement of the problem).
This paper mirrors the content of the new media and their uses and found that they have two sides of the same coin in terms of their pros and cons. Fake news or hoaxes are being amplified and proliferated by the use of the new media. It has led to so many vices in Nigeria, causing chaos, crisis, violence in critical areas like war against terrorism, promotion of national cultural heritage and political formation and development of the country and socio- economic transformations among others. However, this goes a long way to constituting a threat to security challenges and national unity of the country that if not urgently checked may someday, degenerate into full scale tribal or civil war.

Theoretical framework.

Theories are known for concept clarifications and also place such Concepts in perspectives. They explain and clear all the grey areas of studies, thereby juxtaposing the existing theories just to test the positions of the theories. Based on this, this research work dwells on four theories: Conspiracy theory, Inoculation theory, media literacy theory and Social responsibility theory.

The proliferation of fake news carried out by the use of new media follows the pattern of the spread of viral infection (Kucharski,2016). Inoculation theory, therefore, brings an immediate solution to viral infection by giving a vaccine possible to fight against fake News (Van der Linden et al, 2017). The theory first came from william McGuire (1964) while he was trying to induce attitudinal resistance against every form of propaganda and persuasion just like biological immunization. So, in this research work, an inoculation approach is drawn. The theory is relevant here as it attempts to mirror how people perceive fake news via new media platforms; the effects of such fake news on the people and the way they react to it.

Conspiracy theory is another Theory employed in the study which tends to explain matters as it concerns socio-political occurrences or affairs with claims of intrigue or clandestine schemes by gladiators, Keeley, (1999) as cited in Douglas. This theory is not only associated with government but also has to do with great men and women or groups. Those could come from either comprador bourgeoisie or national bourgeoisie. Mckenzie-Mottarg (2018) cited in (Douglas et al.2019) noted that while conspiracy is all about a true causal link of events, the conspiracy theory then is about an allegation of conspiracy which may be true or false. There are some situations where people believe certain issues. This is referred to as "conspiracy belief" . As Enders and Smallpage put it, up to 60% of Americans believed that John F. Kennedy was killed by the CIA and a greater number of people still maintain and sustain such belief till date, Enders and Smallpage (2018). In the same vein, in Nigeria, a greater percentage of its population believes that the nation was being piloted by a foreigner in the person of Jibrin Al-sudani of Sudan in the wake of the rumored death of the then president Muhammadu Buhari in 2017. This kind of belief is termed a conspiracy belief. Therefore, Conspiracy theory is employed as well here as it tends to also help demystify fake news and how possible it is to bring up some certain falsehoods as though they are true with the sole aim of diverting people's attention or pushing a particular cause which would either have economic, religious, tribal or political undertones.

The third theory is media literacy theory. It is utilized here as an aspect of a tool against fake news. Here, Media is an extension of the notion of literacy that encompasses the capacity to use, examine, test or investigate media contents and also design, give thought to and take action leveraging the strength of information and communication to influence the globe. It is also the capacity to critically and objectively examine media stories from the mass media outlets, weighing their appropriateness, reality or reliability.

Potter(2004) In an attempt to digest the theory, examined the way man cared to be media literate and consequently evolved the theory from the past study on cognitive media literacy

theory. Cognitive media literacy theory spelt out the media literacy process (james potter, 2004). At first, he felt what it was to have knowledge networks and decided to develop it for man which would help them on how to critically go about any media message and whatever effect It could create in the marketplace of ideas. Finally Potter deduced from the theory that if a person is doing well in the media market, that is the same way he would improve on his/ her media literacy and in view of this, the negative impact of media on him/her would be, to a larger extent, low and insignificant. Hence the theory supplied all the structure to assess media literacy education. This also goes a long way to lead any one to what media literacy education can offer.

Social Responsibility Theory is the fourth theory under the political or Classical theories of the press. Since the libertarian or free press theory of the press failed, the social Responsibility theory was introduced. This theory is of the view that the press should be free but responsible. In as much as the press and creators of media contents remain irresponsible (delving into spurious and sordid practices which would normally end in sensationalism, yellow journalism, and defamation) the press should be made responsible (within the context of ethics of journalism in Nigeria) by the government.

Conceptual Review.
New media is a phrase that shows the arrival of Internet devices: comprising information and communication technologies in the late 20th Century. Such networked technologies are Called digital media or digital technology with the potential that is networkable, interactive, manipulable and comprehensible (Ekpemo and igbozuruike, 2018).

The digital media used as tools to achieve new media are smart phones, digital computers (tablet computers) and other digital devices that can access the internet . Other new devices capable of using digital media are: blogs and websites, news applications, feeds, charts, Online newspapers and magazines, podcasts, and social media postings. Based on the above, (Ekpemo and igbozuruike, 2018) said that the only thing that is novel about the new media is their digitality that is interconnected to each other and information processed and stored, transformed, linked, retrieved and Searched for and accessed (p8-9).

According to Nnammuo and Nwafor (2019), the new media are referred to as all platforms empowered by the Internet service which emerged as new information and communication technology. Some of these new media or digital media as enlisted by the authors above are as follows: social media sites or networking sites such as youtube, facebook, WhatsApp, wechat, 2go, etc, mobile Cell phones, es, blogs, wilkis, webcasts, Online newspapers, video streaming among several others.

Looking at it from any side of the prism, the new media are distinct and special and in fact, one of its kind with a myriads of merits and boon. The unique characteristics of the new media such as its global strength, Ubiquity and anonymity status make them good instruments for dissemination of fake news, misinformation, hoaxes and propaganda which are not the original purpose of its invention. They are special interactive platforms with a diverse range of utility

and open-ended features. These are some of the privileges that help miscreants, hooligans and bandits spread fake news through them. Even those whose minds are filled with one evil or the other find the platforms useful and a fertile ground to achieving their selfish goals.

The idea of fake news has no generally known and approved definitions. A number of authors have come up with numerous explanations to the concept, yet, non has been able to bring out a universally accepted one. Nevertheless, the term "fake news" has had more definitions to the existing ones since the 2016th elections of the United State of America. Carson (2019) noticed that the "term" despite being the most liked term of Donald Trump, the president of the United State of America from the 2016 general elections. The word was also mentioned as 2017 word of the year to his credit. However, the operational definition of fake news in this paper is disinformation or deliberate and intentional misinformation about an issue· McGuire (2017) defined fake news as deliberately fabricated information disseminated with a view to misleading, deceiving and hoodwinking others into believing falsehood or doubting verifiable facts; it is disinformation that is showcased as, and, perhaps, perceived as a news item.

Methodology
The research work employed library research Technique which is a part of qualitative research design that made use literature review and also covers: media age, information society and the spread of fake information; fake information and propaganda in Nigeria; information/ disinformation and war against terrorism in Nigeria; fake information in political space; fake information in Religious circles. Data were collected from secondary sources including journals, online materials, text books and periodicals.

Literature Review
Mass media's significance in the time of crisis or national emergency has been absolutely viewed and discussed by professionals of Mass media. However, fake news can generate violence, insurgence and at extreme, war. It usually succeeds at the time of crisis and during campaigns, national or international engagements. Even when there is nothing at stake to attract fake news, it would be fabricated, cooked up, generated and escalated by the irrational persons, political miscreants and comprador bourgeoisie and disseminated by the irrational new media users. The media of Mass Communication, as part of their functions, must feed the people and keep them abreast of information with full coverage, reportage and updates of events as they unfold.

In the heat of COVID-19 Pandemic, there was news that the invented drugs for prevention of the outbreak, are not healthy. This is as a result of controversies that heralded the manufacturing of the vaccines from different quarters in Europe and Asia and political promotion of some above others. Even today in Africa, especially in Nigeria, there are still insinuations that those that took the vaccine will soon die.

Apuke and Omar (2020) found out from the result of their research carried out on the rationale behind the circulation of fake news in the time of COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria, that altruism was the major brain behind the spread of fake information. The study also showed that social

media users' rationale for disseminating information on cyberspace was to give knowledge to people who may not be aware of their current health issues that might pose a threat to their overall well-being. Unfortunately, those news disseminators do not embark on fact checks before spreading the news on social media platforms. So, the fake news also became pandemic during the COVID - 19 pandemic in Nigeria.

Wasserman and Madris-morales (2019) in their own research, examined the effect of fake news on political campaigns in some parts of African Continent and had a Survey of 1, 900% Well educated, urban dwellers and working classes from across Nigeria, Kenya and south Africa and found out that 93% of Nigerians, 90% of Kenyans and 76% of South Africans are of the view that they are very much vulnerable to fake news about politics of their country on a clearly frequent basis. Wasserman and Madris-Morales also found out that the respondents in the research show no confidence in social media platforms due to the fact that most of their contents are riddled with fake news and misinformation. Despite the fact that the research acknowledges the strength and ability of new media technologies in the circulation of information at a speed of light, the research, therefore, suggested that the government should take a bold step in teaching and socializing the citizens on the better way to use their social media platforms.

Following a research to establish or determine the effect and influence of fake news on the society in the wake of new media technology, Ngwainmbi (2018) discovered that the advantages from technological improvement in the novel media are myriad with their stiff challenges, one of which is the dissemination of untrue and untrusted pieces of information.The researcher, in addition, investigated the consequences of fake news for nation-building, placing side by side the first world countries and the third-world countries. The result of his research indicated that phony news dissemination is more popular in industrialized countries due to the presence or availability of mobile devices and expressed access to them, whereas in developing countries, they disseminate information more on a larger scale and in fraction, due to the fact that they lack what it takes to separate the true information from the untrue ones. Ngwainmbi proved that in either part of the world, the social media users may not be all that interested in trying to fathom the issues of phony news content due to the fact that it supplies complication and secret schemes. The research is of the view that the proliferation of fake news using New media platforms could have far-reaching effects on Nations-building, especially the socio-economic formation and improvement of the nations.

When Banerjee and Haque (2018) checked the proliferation of fake information in India and how the political class used It to promote selfish goals in the country, the research result showed that the fake news has been used by Indian politicians to perpetrate hate speech in the Country. For example, in 2018, a Video clip was in circulation about a mammoth crowd of Supporters of the Pakistan cricket team celebrating its Victory in a cricket match in India. The message was accusing Indian muslims of being betrayers for giving support to their main opponents. Meanwhile, the video was actually done in Pakistan by Pakistani people themselves and was then posted severally on social media. The video however, got massive viewers and created a negative impression that indian muslims are against their own nation. Thus, it caused a lot of crises in some parts of the country.

Yaraghi (2017) in his own research, says that misinformation on social media platforms is anti-Culture, and tends to take news and good messages away from the people of the world, thereby breaking up their trust. The research acknowledged that the new media Companies pay less attention to what they are supposed to do as in engaging in facts-check before publication of the content on their internet web. However, they have designed and brought various measures following the incessant threats of fake news, including computerized and human-driven methods for editing, filtering and promotion of any publication, a development that has become main sources of knowledge to the users of the new media technologies. This is just a part of a solution in a bid to clamp down upon the menace of fake news.

Media age, information society and the spread of fake news.
There is no doubt that new media technology has brought about a lot of changes in journalism practice all over the world and has also made the profession stand out as it has broken the existing barriers of distance and time. A massage posted on social media reaches a larger audience the world over, at the speed of light. It has also made the interaction between media professionals and the audiences of mass media a global room. One good thing about the new media is that a journalist would post news on it and the same news would equally be accessed on the same platform. Again, the audiences or recipients of the media content before are today active creators and senders of messages using the same new media just like seasoned journalists. Hence, we have what is called citizen Journalism.

Moreover, it is worthy to note that the arrival of new media redefined the media decoders, as it empowers the digital audiences to also engage in news production. Today, there has been a paradigm shift on the part of the receivers from being mere receivers to the co-producers of the media content. (Gilmore, 2004; Bruns 2008; posetti, 2018) described the situation as "the shift of tools of production to the people formerly known as the audience, who became co-producers of the content including news - a function and practice that is referred to as "produsage". The media professionals at first built audiences through emails and chat rooms, before social media platforms dramatically amplified their reach.

The emergency of the new media, with all their welcomed technological breakthroughs and advancement still has serious challenges to the dissemination of real news. Towards the end of 2000, many countries with social media services such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube etc. have gained massive influence on the practice and experts recognition of media professionals and dissemination of news content. The networks of individuals are usually built upon trust and then peer -to--peer group dissemination of news and in this way, the conventional/ traditional methods of sharing the news contents were seriously challenged and threatened (see posetti, 2009; posetti, 2013; Posetti, 2018).

Since social media began to distribute content without any forms of gatekeeping or mediation, unlike the conventional media of Mass Communication, the proliferation of hoax, inaccurate, false, propagandic, malicious and false information in the form of news has become the order of the day.

Bakir & McStay (2017) in their research, have found out that media messages that seamingly emotionally posted by a close family member or a friend has every tendency to be shared over and again on social media channels. It is a known fact that conventional organizations, Media experts and Journalists make use of these platforms to gather and disseminate news content to retain the attention of the listeners or viewers just to stay present in the virtual milieu and to remain relevant in the industry.

Posetti (2018) asserts that despite such presence that conventional news organizations create filter bubbles or echo chambers which have usually minimize several individual users' vulnerability to choice of view in terms of fake news..

Every form of information or news has been made free by the new media. The existence of this freedom comes with a number of shortcomings and pitfalls. Some of them are noted by Posetti (2018) thus:

(1) There is a tendency for the dissemination of sensational news content or information to the listeners or viewers.
(2) It Lacks ability to amend any information incorrectly or wrongly posted or distributed online.
(3) the likelihood of government officials and other agencies to dodge media interviews and confirmation and bump straight to audiences on social media to avoid scrutiny.
(4) promotion of dissemination of misinformation and disinformation enhanced by trust networks and emotional reactions. For example, the one caused by confirmation prejudice or bias.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the Issue of fake news has not been existent before but the new media technologies (Internet and ICTs) exploded the whole matter with reckless abandon. The difference is on the scale with which it spreads which is a threat to security, social cohesion and democracy at a global scale. "fake news is now viewed as one of the greatest threats to democracy, Journalism and freedom of expression," (Zhou and Zarafani, 2019)

Information/ disinformation and war against terrorism in Nigeria.
In Nigeria, war against insurgency has been one of the areas that has suffered a far-reaching consequences from misinformation and disinformation. There are several other areas that are still under the negative influence from fake news. Some of the example of the areas are: Ethnicity, politics, religion, etc. According to AFP ,(2019) before now, ethnicity has also been one of the targets as well as driving forces of fake news in Nigeria, but in recent times a number of variables have been included such as political and religious differences. The joint task forces in Nigeria always lament on the level of fake news carried against them on various social media platforms. They say it affects them as it lowers their moral and image each time they encounter such. They stated that this situation is a disheartening one and does not augur well with security officers as they are being portrayed in an ugly light. Usman, (2018). Military authorities said that insurgent group like Boko Haram usually dish out a number of fake videos and propaganda

images drawing the attention of the masses via their dissemination on social media platforms (see Usman, 2018).

In view of this, the military authorities of Nigeria beckons on the conventional/traditional media to assist also in the war against misinformation and disinformation. The new media are always replete with the news about raids on military bases in the North East by Boko Haram group. Fortunately, the new media users, without verification, always believe and disseminate the information over and over again, in such a way that it assaults and debases them (the military men). The military authorities will always debunk the ideas of such attacks and said that not only that such news embarrasses them but also does so on the government and also threatens national security, Adebajo,(2020). In another hand, the military authority added that there may be a number of cases where their men have been waylaid but not on a magnitude as carried on the social media platforms. There has been an attempt made by Broadcast Organization of Nigeria (BON) for Collaboration with Nigerian military Authorities to War against the threat of fake news in the society in relation to war on insurgent groups (El-Kurebe, 2019).

Fake news on new media platforms is, today, a national problem in Nigeria. It constitutes a huge threat to national security and worsens the existing divisions along the ethnic lines. It also amplifies extreme Views of those ethnic groups. The level of fake news being spread on social media today in Nigeria, which has also aggravated the already existing ethnic and religious crisis before the emergency of new media is quite unprecedented. sometime in 2019, there was a video clip on circulation both on Whatsapp and Facebook, displaying some Northern farmers pouring liquid substance believed to be insecticide (in form of preservatives against pests especially weevils) on to their farm produce (beans) before taking them down to southern part of the country for sales. Unfortunately, the voice-overs of the video interpreted it otherwise, saying that it was poison not Insecticide. This Later version of the news is the most believed among the people. In this kind of scenario, a people of uncritical minds who would never verify issues may eventually ruffle up and before long, a crisis may erupt between Hausa/Fulani people and Igbos, (Hassan and Hitchen; 2020).

Fake information in political space.
One of the major political challenges the world over is the issue of fake news, before, during and even after political transition. Nigeria as the giant of Africa, is one of the Countries that is still giant in terms of fake news in the Continent. However, the effect of fake news in its polity is far-reaching and it could be recalled that in the 2015 general election in Nigeria that All progressive Congress (APC), the then opposition party, was believed to have used fake information to back up its win. That laid a strong foundation for fake news in the country, (see Ogaraku, 2020). To lay credence to the above claim Owkins, (2020) asserted that political gladiators now conceive the power of new media. Because of the foregoing, politicians now resort to establishment of media industries and political parties establishing special control rooms with people being paid working as attack dogs or dissemination of information to disinform or lure people to themselves (BBC News, 2019). Many people, especially the social media leaders are also under that remuneration of the politicians in Nigeria. By and large, the

ugly trend encourages the circulation of fake information beyond control. In the light of this several persons in the society, who have acknowledged the strength of the new media may stop at nothing in disinformation or misinformation of people using the platforms, provided it goes to their favor. In 2015 and 2019, record has it that certain political decisions taken by some Nigerians, were influenced by fake information used as an instrument, (Irenoa, 2017; cheggeman, 2019).

There are a number of known and notorious handles on Twitter and facebook pages where once an information is posted by one of them, the same information would be disseminated across the rest of other pages and in this way, it keeps spreading Busari, (2019). The new media platforms have assumed a tragic trend and It is really unhealthy development in Nigeria. It is recalled, for example, that sometime In the past there were trending photographs on facebook over killings in certain segments of the Country. An immediate fact-check disclosed that there might be actual killings somewhere else but photographs being circulated on the social platforms are old ones under the guise of new ones with the aid of new media technology. For instance, during president Buhari's administration, the APC campaign organization was alleged by the PDP to have spread false information about Atiku Abubakar during a campaign rally in Sokoto State. One of the Buhari's aide, Onoche Louretta during his administration, posted a photo of boxes wrapped together with Nigerian Currency notes in Sokoto state captioned, "keep them in poverty, then give them handouts- yesterday", however, the campaign team of president Buhari denied disseminating such false information, but the reality check employed, revealed that the Photo was at a ceremony organized by the Kokun foundation which was a campaign against hunger and that the photo was already two years then, (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa,2019).

Moreover, a short video was shared from a facebook page called "make Nigeria worse Again" accusing Atiku Abubakar of serving as an agent of Boko Haram for a deal in exchange for land and oil. The page was viewed by over 200, 000 people. However, it has no details as to where and when the Atiku campaign was supposed to have marshaled out the arrangement. This campaign team, therefore, told BB Reality check that the deal was non-existent rather than a plan by some unscrupulous elements to denigrate the image of the presidential candidacy of Atiku.(http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa,2019).

Fake news in Religious circles.
Perhaps,due to competition with or scout for membership or pure knowledge of the profession of faith, some religious institutions tend to use fake news against other religious groups. This brings about ethnic sentiment among one people. It is the new media technology that is used as a tool to actualize this goal. It is a thing of great concern especially if we begin to look at its rippling effect in the past and what it is still causing in the present. Imaging, sometime in the history of Rwanda, even before the understanding of the power of new media technologies in Africa, the then popular traditional media, with state censorshing and all the gate-keeping processes, was still used to cause full-scale ethnic war in Rwanda. The genocide committed affected the foundation of the country and some other countries in Africa.

AFP (2019) once quoted the immediate past former minister of information, Lai Mohammed, when he said, " when you go by social media, the impression you get is as if Nigeria is at war and as if Muslims are killing Christians" The meaning of this is that there is a sharp division between Nigerians along ethnic and religious lines and it has gone a long way to affecting the unity, progress and common goal of Nigeria as a country and one people. In Nigeria today, based on religiosity, some engage in what I may refer to as 'holy killing' as a result of the nature of teachings. Today the whole story is worse, following the emergency the new media technologies. What this implies is that for example,a facebook post done in Nsukka here can cause chaos or tension in Kano state in a matter of minutes. Some time last year,there was a circulation of a video on social media platforms saying that Fulani Herders were killing people along Benin-Ore road with machetes. However, a quick fact-check said otherwise -- fake news (Falsehood), (Olabode, 2020; Olatunji, 2020). This brought up a heavy uprising and tension in the Hausa/Fulani domains in Northern Nigeria. It is FRCN. and NTA with sponsored messages that counteracted the fake news before tensions were finally doused. In July, 2018, a picture of a woman dressed in a traditional muslim clotting was shared on Christian Arise Networks, training with an AK-47 rifle . The whatsapp group captioned it " Fulanis teaching their wives how to handle a gun but we are busy calling on the UN to come and help us". The picture started trending in Northern Nigeria on Social media in the 1990s and was later discovered to be fake news as it was uploaded from a YouTube video clip. The people in the video were sounding like native Arabic Speakers as their original language, not even Hausa or Fulani. This Means, they were not Nigerians, hence, the description explained them as sudanese. Egbunike, (2018), opined that beyond complete misleading information such as this, there are perilous and injurious hyperbole or disruption of the actual but concealed stories.

Fake News and Propaganda in Nigeria.

Many people who indulge in fake news could be aware or unaware of its authenticity before sharing them in order to divert the attention of the public to a specific cause. It then comes in the form of misinformation and disinformation. Majority of politicians, leaders and governments the world over are the defaulters or partners in the crimes of this nature. Most of them use propaganda or share fake news in the form of propaganda on social media in their own selfish interest. Basically, propaganda abinitio, was on the lane of neutrality until a body established by the Roman Catholic, instituted to propagate a particular teaching on it. Thereafter, propaganda parted with its original meaning and its application became derogatory (Jowett and O'Donnel, 2012).

However, propaganda could say to be a kind of persuasion that gives a special attention or prominence to selfishness. It becomes a tool in the hands of propagandists to propagate falsehood or disengage truth to gain or accomplish their heart desires. Propaganda causes a lot of political problems and at the end, leaves an indelible scar on those affected. Jowett and O'Donnel (2012) asserts that propaganda is an intentional and systematic effort made to shape perception, play upon the thoughts of people; and direct their behavior to meet up with the desired goal of the propagandists.

Government and institutions also use false flag operations and war advocacy in the same category as propaganda to drive home their set objectives and goals. Before now, they make use of traditional media to propagate, promote and disseminate government programmes and policies to the citizens despite the fact that contemporarily, new media Setups have always taken precedence. Even the citizens prefer the latter. For instance, US democratic party-hacking run-up of 2016 in the US election of 2016 is an instance of a propaganda operation. This was perpetrated by the suspected government influence of the time in the US. The hacking became a topical issue that even attracted the comment of Russian president, Vladimir Putin and others who insinuated that the Hilary Clinton campaign hacking during the election might have been a false flag operation of CIA planned to get Russia into the mess zilber, (2017). VOA and CNN were the two big media Instruments employed to air and disseminate the false flag about the hacking through commentaries etc to convince the world that the Kremlin was part and parcel of the act. Poseti (2013) also projected an instance of propaganda carried out by one organized group. She referred to it as "wartime propaganda". She cited an instance where journalists were fed with disinformation and false tweets on the Afghanistan crisis by the Taliban.

Conclusion

Fake news, no doubt, has eaten deep into the fabrics of the society and the danger It possesses has been laid bare in this paper. This Topical Seminar work has been able to mirror the contribution of new[1]media in the spread of fake news and also established that social media platforms would remain viable but easier instruments for the distribution of fake information owing to the easiness of interactivity and also the speed at which it roams messages, hence challenging security formation in the country. It is worthy to note that if this ugly situation is not nipped in the bud, then, Nigerian, in no distant time, would be plunged into a deep crisis and insecurity ranging from uproar, violence, egocentrism, favoritism, nepotism, tribalism that will degenerate into full scale war - loss of lives and property and that of the unity of the country. The above variables are typically the remote causes of war in most parts of the globe.

Recommendation

Therefore in view of all these corrosive effect of false information in the society and Nigeria in particular, the following
are recommended for the apt and immediate solution to it:

1) Advocacy advertising should be adopted to promote media literacy among the new media users. Government should embark on strategic communication and education programmes to socialize and reorientate the masses on the risk and harmful effect of fake news. It may use the National Orientation Agency (NOA) with planned programmes broadcast on national Televisions such as Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) designed to fight the menace of proliferation of fake news. It can still partner with some viable non-governmental Organization to win the fight.

2) The Owners of new media platforms such as facebook, whatsapps, twitters etc. must develop a software application capable of revealing a source of any news or information on their platforms to checkmate the cancanworm instead of the use of a mere wordcraft or rhetoric.

3)   The new media users must acknowledge the efficacy and potency of fact-checking any issue on Social media to ascertain its true nature–whether it is fake news or real news. Information posted on social media is not yet deadly until it is distributed over and over again. They should understand the rippling effect of any shared post and be cautious of the certainty of it before sharing.

4)   To clamp down upon this malaise, there is a need for a holistic approach. Everyone must be on his or her duty post if eradication or reduction of fake news is something to go by. All the stakeholders in the country must come together and form a formidable force to defect the monster called fake news.

5)   False information that amounts to defamation with substantial evidence should attract legal action against the defamer to serve as a deterrent to potential victims.

6)   Inclusion of Media literacy education in the Curriculum of both primary education and tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

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