

# The 2022 Nigerian Floods: Audience Evaluation of Radio Coverage

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**Abstract:** *This study is titled “The 2022 Nigerian Floods: Audience Evaluation of Radio Coverage”; three objectives were put forward to guide the researcher to examine the extent of coverage given to the 2022 flood disasters in Nigeria on radio, to ascertain the angle of the 2022 flood coverage perceived to be given more attention by radio stations, and to understand the extent to which audience perceive that the flood disaster received adequate prominence on the radio. The study anchored on three theories: The Framing theory, the selective perception theory, and the agenda-setting theory. The study found that the respondents were exposed to coverage of the 2022 flood-related issues on radio, and the audience perceived that flood reportage’s political and economic aspects were more prominent. Also, there was timely reportage, education, and calling for support for the flood victims.*

**Keywords:** Media, Radio, 2022 Flooding, Floods, Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

Floods have been identified as the most common of all natural hazards. Globally, the impacts of natural disasters such as droughts, earthquakes, and floods include loss of livestock and farmlands, destruction of infrastructure, and the displacement of populations and human lives. It has now become a recurrent factor that Nigeria records flooding every year. This is almost always a result of the non-implementation of environmental guidelines, lack of preventive infrastructure, and lackluster attitude in tackling the flood menace over the years. It is as though the authorities would never take pre-emptive measures to address the flooding. As a result, they are always caught napping once the floods appear. The authorities are often quick to place blame. They blame “water spilling from several local rivers, unexpected rainfalls, and the discharge of surplus water from Lagdo Dam in neighboring Cameroon’s northern area” for the annual flood.

In early September 2022, the Director-General National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mustapha Ahmed, revealed that flash floods across Nigeria. The flood affected about 508,000 people, killing about 372, injuring 277, and destroying 37,633 houses (including farmlands and livestock lost within the last eight months). Unfortunately, while the victims of the floods were counting their losses, the rains persisted, and the water levels rose. Sadly, the devastation of flooding remains a big issue in the country.

As a means of point-to-mass communication or broadcasting, radio is the most widely used electronic means of communication on the globe. However, evidence from studies in Nigeria indicates that people seem to have a negative perception of media reportage of issues. For instance, Afolabi (2010) noted that the mass media had not timely reported conflicts and insurgencies. Other researchers also show that the Nigerian media have not effectively played a surveillance function in reporting conflicts and insurgencies. Neither have they displayed a high level of objectivity in their reports.

This can partly be attributed to the fact that most media organizations in the country are owned by state (sub-national) governments and individuals. As such, they are primarily used to promote the interests of their owners. In addition, it has been revealed that the Nigerian mass media do not give significant coverage and provide effective awareness of climate change issues even as they fail to offer adequate explanations for environmental issues.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The press is expected to constantly draw the attention of the government and spirited individuals to the problems around them. The attention will not only keep the citizens abreast of the happening. However, it will also prepare them to manage its menace. Reporting flood disasters as an issue with two sides (truth/falsity; and how much humans cause flood disasters) introduces diversionary debates, uncertainty, and skepticism into the discourse. This, in a way, can negatively affect people’s understanding and government readiness to mitigate flood disasters and their vulnerabilities. Therefore, the press plays a critical and significant function in the country’s

polity. This significance of setting the agenda on political, social, and other public issues influences the people who learn more about their society.

Nevertheless, some researchers have noted that the Nigerian press did not give significant coverage and interpretation to the various issues arising from the 2022 devastating unprecedented flood disaster. This is why some researchers accused the press of ‘vulture reporting’ in connection with flood disasters showing interest mostly when a newsy flood happens. Based on this, that study seeks to investigate the audience’s perception of the coverage radio gave to the 2022 flood in Nigeria.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- 1 To examine the extent of coverage given to the 2022 flood disasters in Nigeria on the radio.
- 2 To establish what coverage area was perceived to be given more attention by radio stations during the 2022 flood disaster.
- 3 To understand the extent to which the audience perceives that the flood disaster received adequate prominence on the radio.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the extent of coverage given to the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria on the radio?
2. What coverage area was perceived to be given more attention by radio stations during the 2022 flood disaster?
3. To what extent does the audience perceive that the flood disaster received adequate prominence on the radio?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Flood**

Natural disasters are classified as climatological (extreme temperatures, droughts, and wildfires), hydrological (floods and wet mass movements), and meteorological (storms) disasters (UNDP, 2013). However, Svensen (2009) argues that there is also a biological disaster, such as epidemics and insect infestations. However, hydrological disasters, according to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), “took the largest share of natural disaster fatalities in 2022, causing over 3,574 deaths and representing 39% of global disaster mortality” (Guha-Sapir, Hoyois, & Below, 2013). In sum, according to the Emergency Disaster Database (EMDAT) as provided by CRED, an event qualifies as a disaster if, at least, one of the following criteria is fulfilled: “Ten or more people are reported killed; 100 or more people are reported affected, injured, and homeless; there has been a declaration of a state of emergency; or there has been a call for international assistance,” (Eisensee & Strömberg, 2007).

Flood, as one of the hydrological disasters, is defined as a state of being underwater: the situation that results when land that is usually dry is covered with water as a result of a river overflowing or heavy rain (Microsoft Corporation, 2009). “Flooding is a catch-all term referring to events of varying magnitude with different causes. A typology of flooding can comprise overflow of rivers produced by prolonged seasonal rainfall, rainstorms, snowmelt, and dam-breaks” (Few, 2003).

Quarantelli (2002) studied the role of the mass communication system in natural and technological disasters. The study aimed at identifying the roles local and regional mass media played during disasters and analyzed two bodies of data. One was a large number of publications on social aspects of mass communication. The other was a series of research projects on mass communication that the Catastrophe Research Center (DRC) at the University of Delaware carried out for around 20 years, nearly all of which were done in a disaster scenario.

The 2002 study found that media organizations providing information about disasters in their communities provide extensive coverage. For example, in one DRC study, local newspapers examined nine communities struck by a disaster. The range of coverage was from 44 to 160 stories, with an average of almost 90 concerning the disaster in each newspaper. Of these news accounts, 33% appeared on the front page and 55% within the first three pages. In addition, almost 700 photographs accompanied the 904 stories (Quarantelli, 2002). In 2012, Houston, Pfefferbaum and Rosenholtz also studied eleven major natural disasters in the US from 2000–2010 to examine mass media depictions of major natural disasters that occurred, specifically on national newspapers and broadcast television news. The study found that, on average, mass media covered natural disasters for shorter periods than other issues; that media coverage tended to focus on the impact of disasters on humans, the built, and the natural environment; disaster economics

was an important topic; disaster media coverage generally focused on the state and region related to the event; and disaster news was mainly about what was happening during the event (Houston, et. al., 2012).

### **Media Coverage of Natural Disasters**

While there is a well-developed literature on media coverage of natural disasters, “there has been little systematic research into media coverage of flooding and other extreme weather events” (Escobar & Demeritt 2014). In a study of British broadsheets, Escobar and Demeritt analyzed 2,707 news stories to explore the framing of flooding in Britain over the past quarter century and the displacement of a once dominant understanding of flooding as an agricultural problem of land drainage by the contemporary concern for its urban impacts, particularly to homes and property. The analysis focused on the national broadsheet newspapers: The Times, Financial Times, Telegraph, Guardian, and Independent, plus their sister Sunday papers. The study found substantial shifts in broadsheet reporting about the flood in Britain over the last twenty-five years. Once an agricultural problem of land drainage, the flood was subsequently understood primarily as a threat to homes and personal property. This urban-economic focus dominates later coverage of the flooding incidence.

Furthermore, the findings also showed that unlike in the past, individual flood events later attract more significant volumes of coverage than a generation ago. The focus of reporting was also broadened to encompass discussion of its broader causes, longer-term impacts, and the responsibilities for dealing with them, so there was sustained discussion of flooding and the risks it poses in the period between significant events (Escobar & Demeritt 2014). In her study, Colistra (2010) examined the flood caused by the Buffalo Creek coal mine of 1972 in West Virginia. The disaster was one of the most tragic events in West Virginia’s history. The study investigated the dominant frames of two regional newspapers with different historical stances on the coal industry and unions. It determined which paper, between Logan Banner and Charleston Gazette, chose to cover the attribution of responsibility/conflict frame most often and which paper gave it the most prominent placement. The study’s findings indicated how proximity, ownership, and the possible views of a coal company came into play while covering a disaster involving the most crucial business industry in the area. The study, which was said to have significantly developed both disaster coverage and framing scholarship, also explained the story of those affected by it while examining how the papers chose to inform their readers throughout the long road to clean-up and recovery (Colistra, 2010). In Nigeria, Mu’azu (1991) used agenda-setting theory and investigated press coverage of environmental issues in Nigerian newspapers. The study found that the environmental issues that received significant coverage in the newspapers were those in which the government had strong involvement. They were among the most essential issues of significant concern. In a 2016 study on people’s perception of and attitude toward mass media reportage of the 2012 flood in rural Nigeria, Ajaero & Okoro (2016) examined the perception and attitude of 300 households in rural communities in Delta and Anambra states. The study found that more than 75% of the respondents received information about the flood from either radio or television; mass media reportage of the flood was not too effective in influencing people’s attitudes, and there were significant spatial variations in perceptions of the flood reportage.

### **Media Expectation**

According to Ebele & Nwamereni (2018), the responsibility of the media is not only to inform and enlighten the citizens but also to galvanize support towards issues of public concern. Although, the citizens often accused it of poor coverage of issues of national interest, more especially flood disasters. Some factors that may contribute to poor coverage include; lack of accessibility to the affected areas, fears of wild aquatic lives that have taken over the affected communities, the problem of finance, inadequate technological reporting appliances, unqualified reporters, and inadequate workforce and skills.

These citizens are who consume media content. Consequently, these media consumers have high expectations from the press. Udoudo (2018) posits that this great expectation and trust from society make the news reporter unique, mainly because of their responsibility to society. Otikor (2018) avers that journalists are committed to accuracy, fair play, and the balance and honest presentation of what they learn in their fact-gathering. Whether possible, they try to see events for themselves rather than rely on the accounts of others. The Nigeria mass media play fundamental roles of disseminating information, educating and entertaining the society. (Nwabueze 2007). The information role includes giving adequate coverage to environmental issues like flood disasters.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

In their work, Akpan et al. (2010), Nigerian Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change found that when incidents with great significance to the environment and people’s health take place in society, the media expose such incidents and make the public aware of them.

Yalaju (2006) argued that the press has an enormous task of moving the government and society towards adopting new strategies for conflicts and disaster resolution that are people-centered. Moreover, the press, on behalf of the society, is in the best position to research the areas of divergence and convergence in such a way as to promote mutual respect and understanding among federating units and communication in the country.

Nwabueze (2007) in Akpan et al. (2010) observe that empirical data show that the Nigerian mass media have not been doing well in the coverage of the environment, with specific reference to environmental pollution in the Niger Delta region, which seems to dominate environmental agenda in Nigeria. However, Uduakah (2004) argued that: Our media of mass information now shoots out issues that are not fundamental to the harmonious co-existence of the various ethnic groups and trade sensational news stories and official explanations that often raise more questions than they answer. Trivial incidents are blown up out of front-page headlines scandals, crime, and disasters are a microcosm of the social and political system and are dramatized to interest the audience, especially when people from a weak political base or without Godfathers

Gambo (2018) studied Nigerian Newspaper's framing of the 2012 flooding disaster in Nigeria. The study aimed to identify the dominant frames used by the selected newspapers and to determine which of the identified frames has the highest coverage by the papers. The study adopted a content analysis research design. However, it was found that the papers focused on framing the disaster stories; they differ in the intensity/depth of coverage given to the disaster. Therefore, it was concluded that journalists should concentrate on practical steps and frames instead of political conditions.

Nwokogba (2018) studied newspaper coverage of herdsmen-farmers clashes in Nigeria. The study aimed to examine the coverage and perspective taken by the newspapers under study in reporting herders and farmer clashes from January to June 2018 to allay the accusations of newspapers. The study adopted a content analysis research design with a sample of 109. It used a code sheet as the instrument of data collection. The finding reviewed that the newspapers did not give the clash stories adequate prominence because most clash stories were unfavorable to the federal government. After all, it did not take the security of life and property of people seriously and portray the federal government in a good light. It recommended that the press continually give objective and neutral coverage of issues, hate all avoid speeches.

Ukaonu et al. (2010) studied Nigerian newspaper coverage of climate change in 2009 and 2010. The purpose of the study was to situate Nigerian newspaper reportage on climate change with the global discourse on climate. The study adopted content analysis. It was found that the newspapers paid significant attention to climate change issues. News stories constituted 55% of stories analyses; non-news 45%. The newspapers portrayed climate change as human-induced. It was reported that Nigeria was reported as dependent on foreign aid to fight climate change. The study recommended that Nigerian newspapers use lots of non-news stories in reporting climate change to enable them to handle the analysis needed to portray the essential issues in climate solutions.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Framing theory**

Framing theory involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue. De-Vreese (2005) states, "The notion of framing has gained momentum in the communication discipline, guiding both investigations of media content and stories of the relationships between media and public opinion." He further argues that most previous framing studies focused on content (e.g., frames in the news) or framing effects.

Entman (1993) says frames define problems-determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of shared cultural values; diagnose causes-identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments-evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies-offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects (Entman, 1993). From Entman's definition, framing is a communication source presenting and defining an issue (De-Vreese, 2005). For example, framing theory describes how the radio stations presented some aspects of a perceived reality and made them salient in communicating issues related to the 2022 flooding in Nigeria.

### **Selective Perception Theory**

This work is anchored on the selective perception theory. The selective perception theory came up when scholars discovered that the audience of mass communication is not passive as the all-powerful media effects theory proposed. RIBA (2011) subsequently identified four factors that determine the effects of floods on humans: the level of predictability of floods, the rate of onset of the flood, the speed and depth of the water, and the duration of the flood.

In this study, the level of predictability involves the timing, accuracy, and communication of warnings given before a flood. McCarthy & Dolfsma (2014) argued that the media shape our opinion “by choosing what events to report on, how much and how frequently to report on a subject and what language to use when describing an event, thus the media can influence public perception.” Although some scholars believe in the persuasive power of the media, others go a step further to look at specific elements that can also shape the perception of an individual; Friedman (2015) believes that several factors, such as socio-demographic characteristics, can influence people’s perception as “the mass media are not the only source of environmental information for people.” Subsequently, Sampel & Aoyagi-Usui (2009), after their study on media coverage and the influence of public opinion on climate change in Japan, suggested that “effective communication of climate change, strategies aimed at maintaining mass-media coverage of global warming are required,” Folarin (2002) therefore argues that “each of us tends to perceive and then decode communication messages in the light of our previous experiences and current dispositions-our needs, moods and memories. Therefore, the language we speak and the words we use tend to circumscribe our perception”. Okunna & Omenugha(2012) assert that “how people understand or interpret mass media messages is important in deciding their responses to the messages and the influence of the messages.”

Selective perception means that different people can react to the same message differently. No communicator can assume that a message will have the intended meaning for all receivers or even that it will have the same meaning for all receivers.

Consequently, the selective perception theory “has been conceptualized as a four-part process consisting of selective exposure, attention, comprehension, and retention” (Taylor et al., 2006). Therefore, people can selectively expose themselves to media messages, selectively pay attention to some aspects of a message, select how to perceive or interpret a message, select what to retain and recall, or learn from the media (Werder, 2009).

Perception, therefore, entails the interpretation an individual gives to specific events around them. A study of people’s perception of the 2022 flood will go a long way in assessing the impact of radio reportage on the people. How did they interpret the messages they received from the media? Did this lead to a change in perception about the floods and possible attitudinal change? This work will proffer answers to these questions.

### Agenda Setting

Historically, Walter Lippmann stated agenda-setting theory in 1922, Cohen developed it using his epigram in 1963, and McCombs and Shaw popularized it in 1972 after their research 1968 presidential election of America.

The agenda-setting expresses the connection between the media and issues that warrant the attention of members of the public (Usua 2018). Lavraka (2008) classifies agenda-setting as one of the media effect processes that lead to what is perceived as the most critical problems and issues facing society. Agenda-setting implies that the mass media pre-determine what issues are regarded as necessary at a given time in a given society (Falarin, 2002). Raman (2012) is of the view that the amount of attention given to an issue in the media attracts the level of importance the public assigned to that issue, but Baran (2013) argues that the agenda-setting power of the media resides on more than the amount of space or time devoted to a story and its placement in the broadcast or on the page. This supposes why Wogu (2008) posits that people consider those things reported in the media as essential and that the media introduce significant issues discussed in society. The various angles of the 2022 flood presented in the press set the agenda for the citizens of Nigeria.

The theory holds that most of the pictures we store in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about, and most of the issues we discuss are based on what we have read, listened to, or watched in different mass media (Asemah, et. al. 2017). The press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. Cohen did not use these terms individually but refined and established Lippmann’s ideas, which led to the birth of the agenda-setting theory.

Although (Ndolo 2006, Usua 2017, Asameh et al. 2017, & Nwala 2019) traced agenda setting to Walter Lippmann 1922 in his book *Public Opinion* where he argues that the mass media are the principal connection between events in the world and the images in the minds of the public. McCombs (2014) supports these views and opines that Walter Lippmann sketched the main outlines of this influence in the 1922 classic “Public Opinion,” which began with a chapter titled, The world outside and the picture in our heads.” In addition, (Usua, 2017, in McQuail et al. 2005) notes that the media can shape the pictures in our heads.

When an audience focuses extraordinary attention on a particular issue, it becomes an essential issue to them (Omego et al. 2013), primarily the result of their mediated view of the world is that the priority of the media strongly influences the priority of the public (McCombs, 2014). For example, the knowledge the citizens got in the press about flood disasters helped them take proactive measures to mitigate the flood menace.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the survey research design, which involves the study of a sample taken from a population to know their significant characteristics, which can be generalized to the whole population.

The scope of the study is limited to residents of the Port-Harcourt metropolis; therefore, The population of this study is residents of the Port-Harcourt metropolis who are exposed to radio coverage of the 2022 flood in Nigeria. Therefore, the population from which the target sample was drawn is 3,171,076. The population of Port Harcourt, as projected by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) using an annual growth rate of 2.41%, is 3,171,076; this estimate represents the urban area and adjacent suburban environments that constitute the Port Harcourt metropolis. Therefore, 3,171,076 people make up the study's population. Although this study's sample size of three hundred and eighty-four (384) was calculated using the GeoPoll sample calculator, the requisite respondents were chosen from the population using a purposive sampling technique.

The questionnaire was used in this study's data collection methods. Most of the questionnaire's questions are closed-ended to make responding to the items more accessible and speed up the coding process.

### Research Question one: What is the extent of coverage given to the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria on the radio?

| S/N | ITEMS                                                                 | SA  | A   | D   | SD  | TOTAL |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 1   | I listen to messages concerning the 2022 flood in Nigeria on radio    | 50% | 25% | 10% | 5%  | 100%  |
| 2   | Flood stories captured in the news reports                            | 32% | 30% | 20% | 18% | 100%  |
| 3   | There are special programmes dedicated to discussing the flood issues | 12% | 28% | 29% | 31% | 100%  |

Research question one aimed to determine the extent to which radio coverage was given to the 2022 flood disaster in Nigeria; three items were put forward to help answer the research question. Item one on the questionnaire, which sort to find out if the audience was exposed to radio coverage of the 2022 flood in Nigeria, showed that the majority of the respondents were exposed to radios coverage of the 2022 flood in Nigeria, with 50% and 25% of the respondents strongly agree, and agree that they have had some level of exposure to radio messages concerning the 2022 flood situation in Nigeria. In contrast, only a meager 10% and 5% percent of the respondents were not exposed to radio coverage of the 2022 flood.

### Research question two: What coverage area was perceived to be given more attention by radio stations during the 2022 flood disaster?

| S/N | ITEMS                                                           | SA  | A   | D   | SD  |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 4   | The political aspect of the flood was given more prominence     | 40% | 25% | 20% | 15% |
| 5   | The economic aspect of the flood was given more prominence      | 37% | 20% | 14% | 29% |
| 6   | The health implications of the flood were given more Prominence | 15% | 10% | 42% | 33% |
| 7   | The social implications of the flood were given more Prominence | 14% | 25% | 32% | 29% |

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Research question two concerned the angle from which radio stations covered the 2022 flood situation in Nigeria. Item 4 of the questionnaire sort to find out if the audience perceived radio coverage to be more concerned about the political aspect of the flood; the study returned with 40% of the respondents strongly agreeing that the political aspect of the flood was given more prominence, 25% agreed, while 20% and 15% respectively were on the other end of the divide.

Item 5 of the questionnaire was more focused on if the economic aspect of the flood situation in Nigeria was given more prominence. Again, the item returned, with 37% of the respondent agreeing to the statement on the item, and 20% agreed that the economic aspect of the flood was given more prominence. In comparison, 14% and 29% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement on the item.

Item 6 on the questionnaire was more concerned with the health angle of the radio coverage of the 2022 flood in Nigeria. Unfortunately, this item did not get enough agreement from the respondents, with 15% and 10% on the agreement part. On the other hand, 42% and 33% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Item 7 on the questionnaire showed more interest in the social implications of the flood, seeking to find out if the respondents perceived that the social implication of the flood was given more prominence. Again, 14% and 25% of the respondents Strongly agreed and agreed with the statement on the item, while 32% and 29% were on the other end of the divide.

**Research question three: To what extent does the audience perceive that the flood disaster received adequate prominence on the radio?**

| S/N | ITEMS                                                                                                         | SA  | A   | D   | SD  |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 8   | 2022 flood disaster was given adequate prominence on radio via timely reportage                               | 28% | 11% | 51% | 10% |
| 9   | 2022 flood disaster was given adequate prominence on radio via educating the masses                           | 10% | 38% | 46% | 6%  |
| 10  | The 2022 flood disaster was given adequate prominence on radio via calling for support for the flood victims. | 25% | 30% | 17% | 28% |

Research question three is bothered on determining to what extent the audience perceived that the flood disasters gained adequate prominence on the radio. Three items were put forward to help answer the research question; item 8 on the questionnaire looked at timely reportage of flood issues to give adequate prominence to the flood issue. Again, 28% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. In comparison, 11% of the respondents agreed, 51% and 10% disagreed, and strongly disagreed.

Item 9 checked to see if radio reportage of the flood disaster was prominent enough to educate the masses on the implications of the flood socially, health-wise, economically. Otherwise,. 10% and 38% strongly agreed and agreed, respectively. In comparison, 46% disagreed with the statement, while 6% strongly disagreed.

Item 10 on the questionnaire sought to determine if the flood disaster was given adequate prominence by radio by calling for support for flood victims. Again, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 30% agreed, 17% and 28% disagreed, and strongly disagreed. Sonet (2016) outlined ways in which Media can be highly effective during disasters:

**Educational:** Before a disaster, educating people about the hazard, prevention, and self-help during the disaster. During rehabilitation, media can be beneficial in providing accurate and unbiased coverage of post-disaster impacts and needs.

**Guiding:** guiding people in preparing resource disaster calendar, resource mapping, and preparation of community contingency plan.

**Critical:** By evaluating the emergency plan and benefit from being transferred to the people. This may include a review and improvement of any existing plan.

**Suggestive:** Media can suggest long-term suggestions in the form of structured measures like enacting specific legislation and adopting a code of conduct.

## CONCLUSION

The thriving economic, social, and academic atmosphere enjoyed over the years in Nigeria was in 2022 again taken away by the unprecedented devastating flood. This demonstrates the current risk, warning messages, and information about the flood in our media. However, flood disasters have continued to rock the nation every rainy season. Floods threatened not only the peace but the economy of the communities in Nigeria. Therefore, the press is projected to maintain its surveillance function (i.e., reporting flood) and societal watchdog in all parts of the country.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made on the subject:

**Press:** The press should give timely, objectively, and accurately sensitive information and communications before, during, and after the flood. This will ensure adequate means of saving lives, reducing property damage, increasing public understanding, and empowering people to take proactive and practical steps to protect themselves from the flood. To ensure better performance in the coverage of floods and related disasters, reporters should be trained on contemporary ways of covering the disaster. Such training and institutions should be included in every Mass Communication department in Nigerian Universities. This will help the students get acquainted with ways of reporting disasters like floods. Furthermore, the press should discourage subjectivity, negative approach to reportage on national issues like floods should be avoided. The journalist's code of ethics should be the guide of the press.

**Environmental agencies and disaster organizations:** These agencies should address the people about flood prevention and reduction in the country. They should communicate to the public the specific measures taken that had either succeeded or failed to reduce the impact of the flood at a certain point. The agencies and disaster organizations should create opportunities of working with media organizations to provide the necessary training for reporters and personnel to encourage flood preparedness, mitigation, relief efforts, and its vulnerability to the people. They should provide reliable information early to the press in concise forms, especially in places prone to flood and where drainage has been blocked.

**The Public:** The people should be conscious of their environment, and weekly or monthly sanitation exercises should be taken seriously. People should stop dumping refuse close to the drainage system to ensure free water flow. They should avoid building on waterways and plant vegetative plants around their houses.

**Government:** The government should construct more roads, drainage systems, and dams around the areas that are usually flooded.

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