

ANOTHER LOOK AT PRESS FREEDOM IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper takes another look at the state of press freedom in Nigeria, given fifteen years of uninterrupted democracy in the country. In order to attain a measure of conceptual clarity, three key expressions – press freedom, development and democracy have been defined. The paper relies on two theories, namely, the four theories of the press and the dependency theory to explain the relationship that often exists between the press and the state in many countries, especially Nigeria. The paper takes a historical approach by tracing the existence and development of the press gag laws to 1903. The paper is of the position that since independence, infractions on press freedom were mostly experienced during the military era with the enactment of many press gag laws. The paper notes that there have been improvements in the level of tolerance by post 1999 civilian administrations but notes that much still has to be done to attain a reasonable level of press freedom. In this regard, it is recommended among others, that an unambiguous constitutional provision should be made to safeguard press freedom in the country.

Keywords: Press Freedom, Development, Democracy.