
 UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG	

**THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS:
An analysis of the BBC documentary, ‘Chocolate: the bitter truth’**

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Declaration Form

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all the material in the Dissertation which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previous conferred upon me.

Signed: Victoria Chioma Nwankwo

Date: 27th May 2011

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the media in promoting human rights. Central to the study is an effort to find out why the media decide to include human rights coverage as part of their programmes as well as the portrayal of human rights elements in such programmes.

A total of five journalists were interviewed, three of them were BBC journalists involved in the production of the documentary which was filmed in the West African countries of Ghana and Ivory Coast. The remaining two were Swedish journalists included to derive a wider perspective on what the role of the media should be. An analysis of BBC One Panorama documentary- 'Chocolate: the bitter truth' was done to ascertain how the documentary enhanced human rights promotion. Both the interviews and documentary analysis provided data needed to answer the research questions

Findings from the interviews and the documentary reveal that the media do have a role to play in human rights promotion. This role is important because the mass media audience is often averse to human rights programmes as they consider them boring. However, the seemingly boring human rights programmes can be made attractive when the media adopt a technique which attracts the audience interest and attention to human rights programmes.

Key words: agenda-setting, BBC, child labour, democracy, duty bearers, Ethnographic Content Analysis, human rights, media, press freedom, programmes, rights holders, social responsibility.

List of abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ICHRP	International Council on Human Rights Policy
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
PRAWA	Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action
RTLM	Radio-Télévision Libres des Milles Collines
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICTR	UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

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Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

In March 2010, BBC One¹ aired a Panorama programme titled ‘Chocolate: The bitter truth’. In the programme, the investigative reporter travelled to the West African countries of Ghana and Ivory Coast where he posed as a cocoa dealer. He successfully traced the supply chain involved in the process of delivering cocoa sold in the United Kingdom (UK), and also discovered that the issue of child trafficking and what was referred to as ‘child slave labour’ still thrive. What does this development portend for the media? To what extent does it make the media a human rights actor? This is an interesting case of a human rights issue in which the media have made an input in exposing human rights violations, if not stopping them. It exemplifies the role of the media in the promotion of human rights issues.

Human rights are ‘generally moral rights claimed by everyone and held against everyone, especially against those who run social institutions’ (Orend, 2002:37). With the advent of the United Nations (UN) and the subsequent adoption of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, the concept of human rights has turned out to be one of the most contemporary issues across the globe. The UN Charter, which was adopted in 1945, was the first international document to recognize the protection and promotion of human rights as an obligation to be carried out by individual, as well as collective states (Langley, 1999). The main reason behind the adoption of the charter was, according to Smith (2007) to forestall the reoccurrence of the horrible events caused by two devastating world wars which were caused by massive violations of human rights and unbridled breach of territorial integrity.

¹ ‘BBC One’ television is one of the channels of the BBC. The BBC is said to be the largest broadcasting organisation in the world, whose mission is to “enrich people’s lives with programmes that inform, educate and entertain”. It has a vision which centres on their quest “to be the most creative organisation in the world”. As a public service organisation, it was established by ‘a Royal Charter’ and funded by a license fee which is paid by UK households, (BBC, no date). Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/purpose/what.shtml>

² it is a state party to international laws and treaties, and therefore remains under obligation to

In addition to the effort of the UN, the state has basically been seen as the main actor in the promotion and protection of human rights². Unfortunately, states, according to Hakemulder et al (1998), are often the very abuser of the rights of the citizens they are required to protect. However, it should be noted that though the state bears the primary responsibility in issues of human rights, other organs of the society, such as corporations (Addo, 1999) are included in the protection of human rights.³

Although there are international human rights instruments which the UN has produced to serve as ‘common standard of achievement for all people’⁴, countless human rights violations occur across the globe. These violations could be committed by non-state actors through direct involvement or indirectly when they consent to such violations. Non-state actors such as ‘individuals, groups, informal or organised, ad hoc or continuous, may pose as ‘violators, protectors or intermediaries’. Consequently, it is imperative that they be examined so that they could be held accountable for these violations. It is also important to ascertain the reasons for state inability to safeguard human rights (Arat, 2006:15-18). The concept of human rights is now widely recognised in several parts of the world, and human rights violations are reported by journalists (Nickel, 2007). However, the 1990s witnessed an increase in the use of the term (Ramos et al, 2000). The importance of the attention given to human rights by the media is noteworthy because their coverage highlights the level of abuses occurring throughout the world (Cole, 2000). Human rights violation is an issue which should be given due attention. This is in line with Orend who argues that ‘[t]he violation of human rights is a vicious and ugly phenomenon indeed and it is something we have overriding reasons to resist and remedy’ (2002:34).

1.1 Aim of study

The aim of this study is to look into the role of the media in promoting human rights by analysing how BBC One Panorama documentary, ‘chocolate: the bitter truth was carried out, as well as the reason behind its production in West Africa.

² it is a state party to international laws and treaties, and therefore remains under obligation to safeguard human rights

³ The preamble of UDHR states that ‘...this declaration of human rights as a common standard of achievement...every individual and organ of society...shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms...’

⁴ Preamble in the Universal Declaration of human rights

1.2 Research questions

In considering the role of the media in promoting human rights, the following research questions which are based on the documentary film will be answered:

1. Why did BBC One choose to promote human rights through the documentary in question?
2. In what ways is the documentary's content shaped to promote human rights?

1.3 Statement of the problem

Journalists often fail to adopt a comprehensive approach in reporting human rights abuses. Even in the absence of such abuses, the media often fail to formulate their broadcast policy to incorporate human rights programmes. The prioritization of profit-making over societal wellbeing dominates media agenda. For instance, Lustgarten and Debix (2005:364) assert that the media's preference for 'flashy audience-grabbing and ratings-soaring image or story' makes them to be nonchalant in matters which are of interest to the public, owing to their inability to pursue events in detail.

Many studies conducted on media and human rights mostly dwell on analyzing the frequency of human rights terms, especially in the print media such as newspapers and magazines. None or few of them centre on an in-depth analysis of television broadcast programmes to find out the possibility of such programmes having an implicit or in-depth treatment of human rights issues.

1.4 Importance of the study

Having learnt from the field of Mass Communication that the media educate and inform the public, and also perform the role of agenda-setting which makes mass media audience to consider as important any issue which the media concentrate on, this study will be important to the field of human rights because it will help in

proposing a strategy for human rights programmes to stand a chance of being given priority in an era when different media programmes are vying for attention. The study will also provide a viable strategy for engaging in human rights activism through the act of reporting on human rights issues. This research will make a contribution by highlighting the intricacies of media's involvement in promoting human rights. It will show that in one way or the other, everybody might either willfully or otherwise be complicit in human rights violations, especially when it comes to the use of some consumer products such as chocolate products.

1.5 Delimitation

This study focuses on the role of the media in promoting human rights, whether within its borders or in other places. Based on this, the documentary produced by BBC One would be analysed and used to show one of the ways through which the media, especially the broadcast media could bring human rights issues to public attention. Other forms of broadcast programmes might be dealing with human rights abuses, but this particular programme was chosen so that a thorough and in-depth analysis could be made of it. However, in the course of the analysis, the impact of the programme on its viewers, to see if they did become human rights-oriented is not considered. The responses from the chocolate companies implicated in the programme are also not part of this research. Interviewees were journalists whose opinions were sought in a bid to answer the research questions. The journalists included staff of the BBC involved in the production of the programme. The other journalists interviewed were Swedish journalists whose views on what the role of the media should be were sought in order to have a broader view of how the media think their role should be.

1.6 Data collection method and analysis

Ethnographic content analysis of BBC One documentary in West Africa was done to extract data based on human rights violations that were revealed in the programme. Additionally, interviews were conducted with the core BBC One staff involved in the production of the programme, as well as some Swedish journalists through face-to-

face, email and telephone interviews which consisted of open-ended questions. The findings and analysis will be a combination of data from the film and interviews.

1.7 Analytical framework

In trying to understand what role the media can play in the promotion of human rights, certain questions would need to be addressed. It will be relevant to find answers to such questions as: Do the media impact or influence? Should the media influence, and in what ways are they supposed to influence? It is also necessary to ascertain if the media should take responsibility for human rights promotion, or if they have the potential to combat human rights violations.

Divergent views surround the ability of the media to impact or influence human behaviour. For instance, while some authors do not believe that exposure to violent media programmes induces violent behaviour, others have found that media violence influence younger children because of their inability to distinguish fiction from reality, which in turn causes them to practice what the media present to them (Bushman , 2001 in Dawursk, no date). Perhaps, the case of media's influence in inducing the Rwandan genocide cannot be overemphasized. Despite the above seemingly overshadowing negative influence of the media, it is the position of this research that the media, as a force in society, is capable of converting this influence into good or positive action which can be exemplified in the promotion of human rights.

In view of the right to freedom of expression⁵, the media rely on the concept of 'freedom of the press' which gives them the right to 'seek, receive and impart information and ideas' in searching and publishing news stories. Thus the application of Press Freedom by the media will be considered. This is important considering that some media outfits have been found to be involved in deception and inaccurate reporting of information, distortion of news stories, faking and lying about them. In some cases, the media are seen to be enmeshed in the exultation of sensationalism at

⁵ Article 19, UNDHR

the expense of serious or important events in information-dissemination (Hargreaves, 2005).

A free democratic society is needed for the media to thrive and carry out their responsibility, for hardly can the media do so in an autocratic rule or dictatorship. Hargreaves (2005:10) argues that '[j]ournalists need to be reminded that it is only through democratic civil society that they have secured and maintained the 'free press' privileges upon which their effectiveness depends'. Therefore, exploring the role of the media in a democracy will help in finding answers to the role of the media in promoting human rights.

The agenda-setting theory of the media will serve as the theoretical framework on which the research is based. Many studies indicate the viability of this theory and have shown that the importance which the public attach to issues is dependent on the level of coverage given to them by the media. The analysis of this theory will be instrumental in understanding the widespread role of the media as well as the likely consequence(s) of their inability to promote the human rights agenda.

Finally, the analytical framework for the film will be based on how the major actors are portrayed –whether they are portrayed as rights holders or duty bearers.

1.8 Content of chapters

Chapter 1 of this research introduces the background of the study and the analytical framework. Chapter 2 will explore related literature on the media, the act of reporting, and the functions that the media perform in the society. Chapter 3 will explain the methodology and ethical issues arising from the research. Chapter 4 will contain the presentation and analysis of findings, while chapter 5 will provide conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2

Analytical framework

2.0 Introduction

This chapter positions the study within existing research and provides a framework for understanding the role of the media in the promotion of human rights. It draws on different themes which have already been studied and which connect the aim and research questions in this study to a wider research perspective. In this study, the definition of the term ‘media’ is adopted from that provided by the International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP), which defined the media as ‘individuals and organisations that communicate with the public via print, radio, television and internet broadcast, and video and film production’ (2002:20)⁶.

2.1 Is the press free to write what it wants?

The freedom of the press is an important concept in considering the role of the media in all aspects of the society. It is a necessary condition for the media to be effective in carrying out their functions. The right to press freedom warrants the media the right to determine the form which their programmes will assume, as well as the appropriate form of reporting (Jacobsen, 2008). Article 19 guarantees press freedom,⁷ but, authors such as Becker and Vlad (2009:65) argue that the concept of press freedom is controversial because it is unclear to ascertain the meaning of press freedom in terms of ‘freedom from what and freedom for whom?’

⁶ Available at: http://www.protectionline.org/IMG/pdf/journalism_media.pdf (accessed 08/03/11)

⁷ UDHR, it states that ‘[e]veryone has the right to freedom of opinion...to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers’.

The concept is not explicitly defined (Merrill 2009:10; Fleshman, 2005).⁸ For Merrill, going by the First Amendment to the U.S constitution, which states that ‘[congress] will make no laws to abridge freedom’, no clear instances were given of what constitute the press, or what the press is not. He notes that the ‘American Model’ of press freedom which could be seen as freedom from government interference, has become the dominant model for the globe⁹. Whitten-Wood (2009) gives a comprehensive checklist of what constitutes ‘free media’¹⁰ which has been subsumed into four major indicators: the legal, political, economic and professional environments¹¹. Thus a free press is a necessary condition for the exercise of human rights. Similarly, media organisations need to be independent for them to carry out their roles in society (IFJ, 1999; Keel and Wyss, 2008).

Is the press free in reality? The press, apart from being autonomous and independent of government (in most democratic countries) is often not free from interference by corporate powers, advertisers, civil press groups, publishers and editors, and these are seldom taken into account (Apodaca, 2007:10). For instance, Burton (2005:54) while commenting on the sources of income for media outfits, notes that the BBC could be said to be independent of market forces only in principle, but not in reality because it derives its income from license fees paid by television owners¹². Again, some corporations have been known to sponsor media programmes. This

⁸Fleshman notes that both human rights instruments allow ‘for the right to receive and disseminate information’, but the term ‘freedom of the press’ is never mentioned. However, in what seems to be a correction of an oversight, NEPAD⁸ initiative Declaration on Democracy explicitly refers to freedom of the press.

⁹ Merrill also points out that not even the so-called U.S constitution totally exonerates the press from government interference, noting also that what is meant by the constitution is that congress should not dictate to press through laws, ironically, the system has been such that the “president and the courts can have a merry old time abridging press’s freedom” (ibid: 10), since the constitution was silent on the executive and the judiciary.

¹⁰ The term, ‘free media’ seem to be interchangeably used with ‘free press by some authors.

¹¹ A further breakdown of these categories indicates that the legal environment entails the ability of media freedom to be constitutionally protected, as well as being free from restrictive laws against reporting. The political environment enables media freedom from government censorship, “access to competing resources”, and freedom from intimidation and violence directed against journalists. The economic environment ensures freedom from any form of financial manipulation by any actor, and, the encouragement of plurality for competition among media organisations. The professional environment ensures that journalists carry out their roles as watchdogs on government, reporting on issues of dissent, speaking for the marginalized, and, discouragement of self-censorship. Self-censorship should not be utterly discouraged by the media, unless in exceptional cases. Just as it is appropriate to limit freedom of expression in certain cases like hate speech or slander, so it is appropriate for the media to exercise reasonable caution in their practice.

¹² This fee set by the various governments is not meant to deter the media from competing alongside the commercial sector in terms of ‘quality, ratings and public approval’

development, according to Burton, causes media interest to be attached to commercial interests. One of the consequences is the displacement of the public interest by profit motives, and, the homogeneity of perspective (Proffitt, 2007). Besides, there might be the inability of the media to objectively and fearlessly carry out their role without being influenced. How freely would any media outfit carry out an investigative report on any of its customers in terms of advertising patronage, when there are indications that they are involved in rights abuses or other corrupt practices which the media need to uncover?

2.2 What are the real constraints on press freedom?

Although the media could be seen to be entitled to the right to freedom of expression, in reality, this right is not totally free. Becker and Vlad (2009) have noted some factors which pose as threats to press freedom including censorship and political instability. In the case of censorship by government, authoritarian regimes characteristically tighten their control in monitoring media contents. Contents which question their policies are often removed. Media outfits may either be owned or subsidized by the government whereby the government reads or views the contents before they are published. In some cases, they are involved in the appointment of the editorial board of media organisations. For instance, in China, the communist party owns the media which serve as its ‘mouthpiece’. Only positive stories are free to be published (Hong, 2008). As a result of the tight control of the media, some journalists lost their jobs (Branigan, 2011). In self-censorship, media outfits on their own decide to publish or broadcast their news stories depending on how the contents might impact on their survival as organisations.

Political instability¹³ and economic consideration¹⁴ can limit the exercise of press freedom. The concentration of media into groups as a result of the influence of oligarchs whose economic and political interests displace those of the public and the society at large also impinges on press freedom.

¹³ in which case the media decide to abstain from reporting issues capable of upsetting the political environment

¹⁴ In most developing democracies, the government or big companies can interfere in the advertisement of their respective organisations as a punitive or reinforcement measure based on the content of the advertisement

The application of the legal system can deter the media from exercising their freedom fearlessly. Unlawful practices meant to be uncovered through investigative journalism could be hindered by privacy laws; however, these should not be used to displace important developments which are beneficial to the public interest (Human Rights Education, no date). It is still problematic to determine what the public interest is, or to determine exactly what the public wants. Laws on libel and defamation which have legal consequences may also discourage them from doing so. Any constraint on press freedom is a constraint on human rights, except in cases where such freedom might violate human rights. According to Cohen-Almagor, ‘the values of not harming others and respecting others should play a prominent part in the consideration of journalists’ (2001: xvii).

This could be achieved by the media if due consideration is given to media ethics. Ethics deals with the act of differentiating between right and wrong. The qualification of an act as ethical is dependent on the criteria or framework on which it is justified or what values are considered important (Waisbord, 2001), and the media, in their nature ‘are moral agents that can potentially behave ethically or unethically’ (Oosthuizen, 2002:5). It then becomes imperative that they give attention to their method of information gathering and dissemination to avoid unintentional violation of human rights.

Waisbord (2001:15) argues that information garnered through dubious means such as ‘deception, false identities’, and other unethical methods are counterproductive to public trust¹⁵ in the media. Corrupt practices such as bribery are also unethical journalistic values. These unethical practices are capable of discrediting information on human rights stories, or violations reported by the media. It is important to note that some of the worst forms of human rights violations are uncovered when investigative journalists work under false or hidden identities because such violations would almost be impossible to uncover should journalists reveal their real identities. For example, in the case of the BBC Panorama investigative report on child slave labour in Ghana and Ivory Coast, the investigative reporter was able to uncover what happens in the cocoa plantations by posing as a cocoa trader. Therefore, the question

¹⁵ Most times, the public question the truth in media news stories; White, cited in Burns(2002) notes that as a result of the inability of the media to separate “comment from fact”, public confidence in the accuracy and objectivity of information from journalists seem to be waning.

of false identities might not be automatically said to undermine public trust in the media.

2.3 What should the social responsibility of the media be?

The notion of the social responsibility of the media is derived from the social responsibility theory of the press which arose as a result of the ability of the media to influence the belief, ideas and behaviour of people on very important issues. It came about as a result of the view that since the press (newspapers) was influential, it had social responsibilities. Hence, every media ought to deliver accurate and unbiased news to meet the divergent needs of the heterogeneous public, without confining their role to being the ‘mouthpiece of those with special interests or political agendas’.

The impact of the media in society is tremendous (Herdís, 2003; Marsh and Melville cited in Wolferman, 2010)). The social responsibility of the media is fostered when the media engage in what is referred to as ‘committed journalism’, in which priority is placed on values such as ‘democracy, free choice, openness, morality, and serving the common good’, thereby informing the public ‘about political, social, economic, and cultural affairs’. ‘Committed journalism’ would best manifest when the media undertake to be the public watch dog (Lusgarten and Debrix, 2005:365). In terms of human rights promotion or protection, the concepts of media social responsibility, ‘committed journalism’ or ‘watchdog journalism’ (ibid)¹⁶ are perhaps irrelevant fragmentations of the role expected of the media as long as the media make sincere efforts in clinging to their professional codes of ethics. Nevertheless, all are useful to the media in forestalling human rights abuses, as well as uncovering the abuses, especially through investigative journalism. It is the role of investigative journalists to search and uncover the truth, the exposure of the truth is in harmony with the public interest, which, when effectively carried out may be productive in bringing about change (Hugo de Burgh, 2000). The roles performed by the media in the society (Wasserman, 2009) are instrumental to the promotion of human rights. The media provide most of the information about human rights, and in the event of failure

¹⁶ There seems to be multiple division of the act of journalism based on the different roles expected from journalists

of the media to do so ‘fairly, accurately, or consistently, public perceptions will be unfair, inaccurate and inconsistent’ (Heinze and Freedman, 2010: 492).

2.4 To what degree can the media influence the public agenda?

Agenda-setting theory sees the media as instruments used to influence public opinion by ‘setting the agenda in public discourse’¹⁷. The theory states that when issues are covered by the media as often as possible, the public would take them to be important (Wanta 1997, cited in Wallinger, 2010).

The theory was derived from the work of Walter Lippman in 1922, who argued that ‘the public responds not to actual events in the environment but to the pictures in our heads’ (LittleJohn and Foss, 2008: 293), that the ‘news media construct our view of the world’ (Coleman et al, 2009: 147). Later, McCombs and Shaw (1972) conducted a study which gave validity to the idea which Lippman described. They discovered that various campaign themes which were emphasized by the media had a relationship with how ‘undecided voters’ judge how important the campaign themes were. Media personnel then ‘shape political reality’ (Brown and Deegan, 1998:25). ‘Agenda-setting is a theory about the transfer of salience from the mass media’s pictures of the world to those in our heads’, such that whatever is given prominence in the media’s picture also becomes prominent in the audience’s picture (McCombs and Ghanem, 2006:67). Public opinion is ‘shaped and influenced’ as the media choose and sift certain elements of news, which makes the audience of the media think along a certain pattern. Hence the media’s choice of topics and how the topics are presented are elements of the theory (Fourie, 2001). The news gatekeepers such as reporters, writers and editors (Sanchez, 2002) are responsible for determining what counts as news (Dainton and Zelly, 2011). The importance of news items in a newspaper could be known by the particular position they occupy, where the important ones are used as headlines, written in bold characters and placed on the front page of the paper. For the broadcast media, important stories are reported first, and in detail before others, thus ‘stories judged [by editors or news directors] to be of

¹⁷ Available at: http://www.articleworld.org/index.php/Agenda_setting_theory (accessed 5/9/10)

some what lesser importance or newsworthiness occupy the back pages, or the last part of the broadcast' (DeFleur, 2010:159). As a theory of mass communication, it has stood the test of time, and proved to be 'deep and wide' (Coleman et al, 2009: 147) because many studies have confirmed its validity (Shehata, 2010; Uscinki, 2009).

The two major assumptions of agenda-setting theory are:

- The news media do not mirror reality, but instead filter and shape it.
- Emphasis by the media, over time and on relatively small number of issues, leads the public into perceiving these issues as more important than other issues (Weaver, 1984. Cited in Wanta, 1997:2).

Although the media are said to set the agenda for the public, it is believed that the reverse could be the case, in the sense that sometimes, 'the public's agenda occasionally influences the media's issue agenda', (Uscinki, 2009:797). Uscinki argues that as a result of this, two 'competing frameworks' compete among researchers: the agenda-setting framework, 'in which the news agenda influence the public agenda', and, 'the audience driven framework, in which the audience agenda influences the news media,' (p.2).

In reporting news stories, journalists will consider the relevance of the news story and how appealing the news is to the audience who often prefer 'exciting spectacular events [like] violence, conflict, scandal or disaster' (Graber, 1980, cited in Uscinki, 2009). If news stories are reported based on their relevance to the audience, it then means that the audience will exert influence on the media agenda. Uscinki argues that the interest of the public to issues such as 'environmental cleanups' will make reporters to report environment-oriented stories. For Straubhaar et al (2010), media agenda could also be influenced by the actions of prominent people such as the president of a country, whose comment on national agenda could be picked by the media and used as news stories or some interest groups capable of setting the agenda through their stand on an issue. LittleJohn and Foss (2008:295) concur and argue that when the media have relationships with the elite, the influence of the elite will affect the media agenda. Besides, the 'dormant ideology often reflects in the public agenda'.

Even though the news media would tend to report stories based on the preferences of the audience, the audience might develop such preferences based on the information they might have got from the media. In the case of the ‘environmental cleanups’ cited by Uscinki, one could ask: what triggered the concern from the audience, how and where did the audience get the knowledge about the environment? Therefore, although the public could be said to set the agenda for the media in some cases (on a minimal level), it all rests on the media. In the case of the audience preferring ‘stimulating, entertaining and compelling content’ (Uscinki, 2009:798), the media still decide which news stories are deemed stimulating. It shows that the public ‘think about what they are told’, rather than ‘think what they are told’ (Mcquail, 2010:512-)¹⁸.

2.5 Can the media influence the human rights agenda?

If it can be argued that the media can set the public agenda by reporting one news story in place of another, then, the media can take up the human rights agenda by publishing or broadcasting human rights programmes. In the words of Apodaca, ‘[t]he media can disseminate human rights information, mobilize human rights NGOS, strengthen popular participation in civil society, promote tolerance, and shine a light on government activity’ (2007:151).

The media and human rights NGOs are helpful to each other in the fight against human rights violations. These NGOs serve as ‘monitors’ and ‘sources of information’ for human rights stories. The NGOs can use the global media to highlight abuses, which in turn will ‘shame’ abusers to put an end to their attitude (Cmiel, 2004, cited in Apodaca, 2007)¹⁹, while information released by them could be used by the media as news stories (ICHRP, 2002). In Nigeria, an NGO- Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA), with the help of a donor organisation, produced a film titled: ‘The rights of Prisoners’. The film was ‘aimed at increasing

¹⁸ According to Mcquail the theory influences the opinion of the public, though, not attitude, because attitude is not something that responds swiftly to change, as they are ‘slow’ to change and often ‘resistant’

¹⁹ The use of the internet by notable human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House and a host of others attest to this.

awareness on the condition of Nigerian prisons and the plights of inmates' (Okafor, 2006:132).

2.6 The interplay of media and democracy in safeguarding human rights

Although there has been the assertion that 'every citizen can be a reporter', especially in terms of having access to the modem (Hargreaves, 2005:132, 14)²⁰, the journalists intended here are the professionals 'with commitment to the essential shared values of the practice of journalism...' (Elliot, 2009:28). Thus, 'journalism requires active learning, critical and creative thinking', in which they are equipped to 'gather information of significance to the task at hand, accessing its credibility and validity' (Burns, 2002:33).

There is a common belief that 'human rights and democracy are mutually supportive or related to each other by definition' (Freeman, 2002:71). Freedom of expression, and press freedom in particular is an important factor in democracy because of the media's ability to provide information which serve as link between 'mass publics', elites and government (Whitten-Woodring, 2009:595).

Manzella and Leon (2010:71) argue that the press proved its capacity to be 'a force for change' in Venezuela, when a group of journalists uncovered the hidden scandals of President Carlos Andres Pérez, and this eventually led to his ouster. Recently, the authoritarian government in Egypt was dismantled by protesters as a result of the use of the social media. The protesters were connected with each other and the outside world through the use of gmail and twitter (Himelfarb, 2011), hence the social networks served as 'socio-political tool' in the pursuit of democracy (Menon, 2011). The media can 'control the gateway to the electoral market'²¹. They can also elevate the credibility and authority of new politicians, thus enhancing their acceptability by voters (Ellinas 2010:3). It is therefore evident that the media are useful in ensuring that there is a feasible mechanism for democracy to thrive. The media foster the

²⁰ The assertion was made by Matt Drudge after his comment on the web triggered the discovery of the scandal that engulfed the former American president, Bill Clinton.

²¹ Small political parties could reach out to audiences which ordinarily would not be easy as a result of their seemingly limited organisational and financial resources.

concept of ‘collective rights’ when minority social groups are given the chance to partake in public discussion (Erni, 2009). This in turn provides a safe environment for the protection and promotion of human rights. However, the role of the media in nurturing democracy can be hampered by ‘growing commercial constraints prompted by media deregulation and privatization’ (Chambers, 2000:92).

2.7 The Media: violators of human rights?

Despite the widespread knowledge of the contribution of a free press to a healthy democracy, Fallows (1996) cited in Rosenberry and St. John III (2010:2) argues that democracy has ceased to benefit from the news media, because the media make it difficult in tackling ‘public challenges’. Besides, the philosopher, Dr Onora O’Neill in a lecture noted that public discussion has been hijacked by media conglomerates under the pretext of press freedom, and that

misinformation may be peddled uncorrected and in which reputations may be selectively shredded or magnified...When the media misleads... the wells of public discourse and public life are poisoned (Hargreaves, 2005:6).

What is the implication for human rights promotion? The media are expected to spearhead the fostering of ‘peace, international understanding and fighting racism, apartheid and incitement to war’ (Masmoudi, 2008). The reach of the media transcends the home, up to the human mind where they shape human opinion and influence behaviour. The media can serve as powerful instruments for violence (Frohardt and Temin, 2007), and if not controlled, could induce large-scale human rights violations through hate speech²² and violence as exemplified by the Rwandan Genocide.

2.7.1 The media’s role in the Rwandan genocide.

The Rwanda Genocide which occurred in 1994 is a typical case of where the media were involved in perpetrating hatred and violence, especially against an ethnic minority (Mitchell, 2007).

²² This contravenes article 20 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that
1. ‘Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.
2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

The genocide lasted for about 100 days, and about 800,000²³ ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus (BBC News, 2011) were murdered. Millions were internally displaced or escaped to other neighbouring countries where they became refugees. Many thousands of people were raped, tortured, maimed, and subjected to cruelty (Caplan, 2007).²⁴ Prior to the genocide, the local media, especially the Radio-Télévision Libres des Mille Collines (RTLM) transmitted hate messages about how to exterminate people not fit to live in Rwanda (Dallaire, 2007). Both the RTML and the extremist newspaper, *Kangura* referred to the Tutsis as ‘Inyenzis’, meaning cockroaches (Des Forges, 2007) to be totally wiped out. People listened to their radios in their homes, bars, and sometimes in groups, waiting for the next action they would take (Li, 2004). One broadcast by Radio Rwanda urged the people (Hutus) to take it as their responsibility to kill Tutsis or they themselves would get killed. The message was such that the killings were referred to as ‘work’²⁵ (Sindikubwabo, 1994, in Des Forges, 2007).

Various commentators on the Rwandan genocide noted the clear absence of both local and foreign journalists. Thus, due to the absence of ‘real time’ coverage, coupled with the dearth of report and unavailability of images of the killings, the massacre was erroneously interpreted as a tribal warfare instead of genocide (Thompson, 2007: 5)²⁶. Thompson argues that because of ‘the absence of [the journalists] and failure to adequately observe and record events, journalists contributed to the behaviour of the perpetrators of the genocide – who were encouraged by the world’s apathy and acted with impunity’. Photos from the event

²³ There have been discrepancies on the exact number of the people killed. In some cases, it has been estimated that about one million were killed, while in some cases, authors use the figures between 500,000 to one million

²⁴ These victims were basically deprived of all or some of their fundamental human rights. Right to life (Art.3), as well as right to freedom from “torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment” (art 5).

²⁵ Messages warned that anybody who did not want to do so should be killed as well, or they give others the chance to do so, Killers were reported to be singing an anti-Tutsi song which they learned from the media as they moved to carry out the ‘work’. There were also accounts of government commendation of Hutu killers by broadcasters on air, government denunciation of those unwilling to take part in the killings, as well as instructing them when to reduce the intensity of the killings

²⁶ Journalists left the country having considered the situation to be too dangerous. Others who arrived immediately after the commencement of the killings only concentrated on the evacuation of expatriates. Apart from the issue of risk, there were political factors which hindered intervention in Rwanda. The UN was unwilling to cooperate with the UNAMIR commander in giving him support or other tools he requested. The political interest of countries like the US whose soldiers previously were humiliated in Somalia, lack of political interest from other countries also played a part in the failure to stop genocide.

were almost irrelevant with virtually insignificant second-hand accounts of the atrocity submerged inside newspaper pages. Thompson believes that the genocide would have been abated were there 'more comprehensive and accurate' coverage capable of 'changing the behaviour of the perpetrators', thereby ameliorating the killing (p. 3). The UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (UNICTR) has been prosecuting the 'hate journalists' for their involvement in genocide and crimes against humanity (Landreville, 2003). This marked the first time in which journalists have been summoned to testify in trials of genocide (Kellow and Steeves, 2006). Three media executives were convicted by the UN tribunal in Arusha for their engagement in media campaigns on the genocide (BBC News, 2003). A synthesis of the themes from the role of the media in the Rwandan genocide points to complicity through acts of omission and commission by the media. But would it have been sensible for journalists to stay put in the face of a supposedly dangerous conflict? On this, Kuperman (2003) argues that no moral requirement binds journalists to make personal sacrifice, but rather, they should provide the real story, being mindful of the likelihood of information manipulation by different actors. Individual journalists should also exert their influence by working hard to play active roles in gathering information (Plourde, 2007).

In addition to the systematic engagement of the media in human rights violations, the media sometimes breach the right of private individuals to privacy. For instance, the phone-hacking scandal trailing the British newspaper- *News of the world*, shows the extent to which the media go in their role in gathering and disseminating information for public interest. In the alleged scandal, some former employees of the newspaper were encouraged by their editors to hack into mobile phones (Burns, 2010). The incident led to the suspension of one of the newspaper's reporters (Bentham et al 2010; Robinson, 2010). This is a clear violation of the rights of the victims to privacy by the very media expected to promote them

2.8 Factors militating against human rights coverage by the media

The inclusion of human rights issues as news stories is said to be better than how it used to be²⁷. Although human rights issues sometimes make it to news stories, Ovsiovitich (1993) argues that as a newsworthy topic, only little attention is being given to them by the media. Research indicate that human rights as a concept often fails to be used as a ‘subject’ in the heading of media stories, though some specific terms often used point to human rights indirectly²⁸. However, this is problematic as they do not enhance a comprehensive understanding of human rights (ibid).

The inability of journalists to comprehend what human rights are, as well as the contents of human rights instruments has resulted in them seeing human rights from the perspective of war. The lack of knowledge of these human rights instruments instills in them the fear of being labeled as ‘politically biased’ should they incorporate human rights issues in their news stories. Unknowingly to some journalists unaware of human rights issues, they do in reality come in contact with such issues every day. There is a skewed notion about the places where human rights violations occur, such that western journalists reason that these violations only happen outside their countries, without knowing that there are similar issues right around them. Space constraint limits the treatment of human rights issues in-depth by the media (ICHRP, 2002). Other constraints include the dearth of journalists to cover human rights news and the danger posed in a conflict situation impedes the coverage of human rights reporting as in the case of Congo (Schimmel, 2009).²⁹

Heinze and Freedman (2010:493) note that ‘pressure to attract reader interest, and to respond to the most topical and controversial issues overpower any priority that might be placed on comprehensive human rights coverage’. Another problem with

²⁷ While the International Council on Human Rights Policy maintain that there has been an increase in the number of human rights angle in the traditional media, others argue that little coverage is done on human rights issues. This might be perhaps due to the criteria used in determining what constitute human rights topic.

²⁸ The research was carried out by Hanson and Miller (1987)

²⁹ Schimmel (2009) notes that about 5 million have been killed, and, starvation, disease, lack of shelter among other things have only attracted an insignificant attention from the mass media

human rights coverage by the media is the prioritization of civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights, which are hardly reported (ICHRP, 2002).

For instance, Leonard Henny notes that:

there was no information on the survival of the culture and heritage of numerous indigenous people[s] living in remote areas around the globe. It is only since the United Nations year of the World's Indigenous People[s] (1993) that some information has begun to trickle through the media about the threats under which Indigenous People[s] live around the world (1997:335)

Perhaps, this might be as a result of the notion that news organisations do not have the 'inherent obligation' to report every aspect of human rights; they only choose what to report, as they have 'no duty to privilege human rights stories over other stories'. Journalists believe they have interest in human rights reporting as long as the stories are newsworthy. Besides, there is the notion that human rights do not rate high in 'readers' surveys' (ICHRP, 2002:17-50).

Even if some human rights issues do not qualify to be 'newsworthy', the question is: are the media not supposed to make them 'newsworthy', going by the fact that they are specially trained professionals? It is the stand of this research that the media are expected to put their skills to good use by making human rights issues attention-getting news stories, no matter how insipid they might appear to be.

2.9 Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has highlighted the right of the media which they need to promote human rights. Although the media play crucial roles in the society, especially in the promotion of human rights, they sometimes violate human rights. With a consistent approach to ethical guidelines, the media can stop being violators of human rights.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodologies which were employed in the study. It includes the limitations of the study, as well as the ethical issues which were given due consideration. Ethnographic content analysis was used to describe and analyze the documentary film titled ‘Chocolate: the bitter truth’, while in-depth interviews were used to gather data from some journalists in order to answer the research questions. This chapter also describes the various criteria and techniques used in collecting and analyzing data for the study. Based on the aim of this research, which is to examine why and how certain mass media chose to play a role in promoting human rights, by analysing the case of the BBC One documentary, ‘Chocolate: the bitter truth’, the nature of the research falls under the qualitative method.

Other possible angles to approach this study could have been based on media responsibility, especially media-corporate relations or the ability of the media to influence other actors to uphold certain kinds of human rights, the study of all types of media or the reception of media programmes by the society or to see if a particular media programme actually changed discussion on media’s perception of child labour. However, the study was mainly based on the awareness-raising techniques of the media and the media’s perception of the nature of their roles in the society.

3.1 Research method

The qualitative method unlike the quantitative has the advantage of giving room for flexibility (Silverman, 2005; Priest, 2010) and allows for an in-depth focus on the study (Patton, 2002). The data obtained from the research ‘is in the form of words rather than numbers’, while the majority of the data contain verbatim quotes from the respondents (McNeil and Chapman, 2005: 20). In its analysis, the qualitative data is not limited to one particular method, as different approaches can be used to analyze

the study depending on the nature and purpose of the study (Dey, 1993). It uses 'descriptive and critical techniques to interpret observations that have been preserved' (Frey et al, 1990:36). Furthermore, in dealing with qualitative data, the main purpose should centre on the identification of the relevant themes contained in the data. It is also important that the analysis should be 'guided by theory' (Priest, 2010:162).

3.2 Selection of interviewees and the documentary film

A total of five participants were interviewed. They were the only ones who could be reached for interviews. Three of them - BBC One Panorama staff who were directly involved in the production of the documentary programme were purposively selected. The purposive sampling technique was instrumental in selecting the interviewees because they were considered to be very relevant in facilitating the study (Alder and Clark, 2008).

The remaining two were Swedish journalists who were recruited to add a wider perspective on the core question of what the role of the media should be in human rights promotion which kept recurring. Swedish rather than British journalists were recruited for convenience due to the researcher's location in Sweden. Besides, Sweden and the UK are both developed societies and they could not be contradictory in offering better insight into the role of the media during a single study.

The Swedish journalists were selected using the snowball sampling method. This technique 'involves using some members of the group of interest to identify other members' (ibid: 122). Their inclusion was suggested by a Swedish media researcher on the basis of their experience. They were then contacted and informed via email on the need for their willingness to participate in the study. Initially, the researcher recommended three of them, but only two agreed to participate in the study. Response from the automated email of the third journalist indicated that she was away.

The documentary film used in this research was selected based on the aim of this study which was to examine why and how the media choose to promote human rights. The documentary and the interviewees were considered necessary in providing answers to the research questions (Kemper et al, 2003). The film was selected purposively, having being judged to be relevant to the study after it was viewed. Although there might be other similar films dealing with the same issue, only one documentary film was selected in order to have a researchable topic (Shuttleworth, 2008). A focus on one documentary provided a better understanding of the topic and a deeper understanding of how the media promote human rights. The selection of multiple cases of the documentary film might have made a thorough analysis difficult due to time constraints (Gerring, 2007).

3.3 Data collection

The main sources of data for this study consisted of primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources refer to ‘reports of a phenomenon by those who have not directly experienced the phenomenon of interest’ (Merriam, 2009: 152). Data from these sources were derived from relevant literature to the study, including books, journals, and internet sources. There was a review of the policy document of the BBC. Primary sources of data are ‘those in which the originator of the document is recounting firsthand experience with the phenomenon of interest’, (ibid). These data were collected from interviews and the documentary film, ‘Chocolate: the bitter truth’.

3.3.1 Interviews

The use of interviews involves the act of speaking to respondents who are selected to provide answers to research questions based on a particular topic under study (Hart, 2005). Keats (2000:72) defines interview as ‘a controlled situation in which one person, the interviewer asks a series of questions of another person, the respondent’. Some instances in which the use of interview could be efficient include the need ‘to know what people are thinking’, and, the need to ‘explore the reasons and motivations for the attitudes and opinions of people’. There is an element of specificity in the use of interview. For example, it is meant for a ‘specific purpose’, ‘specific individual and specific group of respondents’. It is a means through which

the rationale for the interviewee's responses could be ascertained, and enhances the verification of the reliability of the responses when the interviewer asks probing or follow-up questions (ibid).

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. They consisted of open-ended and flexible questions, which, according to Byrne (2004:182) '...are likely to get a more considered response...and therefore provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretations of events, understandings, experiences and opinions'.

Out of the three BBC staff, the questions used in conducting the interview varied according to each participant. That is, the questions for the chief investigative reporter were slightly different from the other two participants because his level of involvement in the documentary was considered more extensive and intensive than others who participated in its production. He was believed to be in a better position to answer some important questions which others might not be able to do so. Only one of the overarching research questions which centred on the role of the media was asked the Swedish journalists. This same question was also asked to all five interviewees.

3.3.2 Ethnographic Content Analysis

Ethnographic Content Analysis is a methodology in which data collection is done through the use of 'dialogue and visual images in part to identify the themes and frames'. This contrasts with traditional content analysis in which 'specific count categories' are created (Altheide, 1996, cited in Cecil, 2008: 265). It is 'used to document and understand the communication of meaning, as well as to verify theoretical relationships. Its distinctive characteristic is the reflexive and highly interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection and analysis' (Altheide, 2008:97). The 'investigator is continually central although protocols may be used in later phases of the research'. It is based on 'constant discovery and constant comparison of relevant situations, settings, styles, images, meanings and nuances' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, in Altheide, 2008:97). Data collection is done as the study goes on, as the analysis could give rise to 'reconceptualisations' in which more data could be needed, depending on whether the data is contemporary or historical. The inclusion of more data is only possible in the former (Tesch, 1990:

26). The method is flexible and descriptive, and also makes use of ‘printed, audio and visual material to gather information about people, organizations, cultures and societies’ (Hall, no date).

Huge documentary accounts such as ethnographies, allow for the use of content analysis in giving ‘in-depth, detailed accounts of social situations’ (Hodson, 1999: 6). The method is ideal for studying ‘news media coverage and policy analysis’ (Tesch, 1990: 26). Data was collected by watching the film a number of times, and the important human rights issues raised in the film were noted. The main theme noted was the portrayal of the different human rights actors.

The combination of data collection through interviews and the documentary film was considered necessary based on the research questions needed to be answered- one of the questions could only be answered through interviews. Data from the interviews and the documentary could strengthen each other because this study tried to understand the journalists’ interpretation of their reasons for producing the film, and, what they conveyed in the documentary since the documentary could serve as an example of the techniques used by the media in the promotion of human rights. A variety of methods was used to conduct the interviews. For instance, while face-to-face interviews, which were audio-recorded and transcribed, were conducted with two of the BBC staff, the remaining participant preferred to have the questions emailed to him because he was away. He provided his responses via email. The interviews with the Swedish journalists were done over the telephone at their request because of their busy schedules. Notes were taken during the interviews and written up afterwards.

All the interviews lasted for 25 minutes approximately. Although the interview methods varied, the use of a core interview question for all the interviews ensured that relevant data are obtained. Both the responses provided via the email and the ones provided verbally were written as texts before being used as data.

3.4 Data analysis

The approach used in the process of analyzing the film as a visual media data was based on ‘close reading’³⁰, which means ‘to experience a piece of media material (such as a text, a program, a film, or an advertisement) in the same way that a participant observer might experience a particular social setting’ (Priest, 2010: 172). Priest notes that the analysis of visual data is such that ‘no single, well accepted, widely tested, systematic social scientific approach to the study of visual content predominates’, consequently, the analysis of visual data should be guided by a theoretical perspective and a specific research question to limit the number of the seemingly boundless observable themes inherent in visual analysis (ibid: 171).

As the guiding criterion for the selection of themes considered to be important in the documentary was the focus on human rights promotion, the analysis was specifically tailored so that the different human rights actors and their positions as rights holders or duty bearers and how they are portrayed in the film were analyzed. Thus, the analysis was done through an intensive description of data from the film based on the theme of human rights actors. The questions which helped in the description of the themes include: Are human rights referred to? How were they referred to? Were rights holders and duty bearers portrayed? Who were the rights holders and duty bearers?

The analysis of the other data collected through the interviews was based on the model proposed by Miles and Huberman. The model consisted of ‘three concurrent flows of activity’, namely: data reduction, data display, and, conclusion drawing/verification (1994:10).

Data reduction ‘sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organises data in such a way that the final conclusions can be drawn and verified’ (ibid: 11). Thus, the volume of the data collected was first abridged and refined in a way which enhanced the conclusion drawn from the analysis. This was done by noting the main ideas from the interviewees while seemingly irrelevant information or expressions from them were

³⁰ Priest notes that ‘close reading’ is equivalent to the ethnographic approach in studying media content. It could be referred to as ‘ethnographic reading’ of media material (p. 170). It could also be seen to involve the concept of participant observation in reading or viewing media content.

left out. After the reduction, the data were organised and displayed so that they could be accessible, meaningful, understood and used by others in evaluating the analysis and conclusions emerging from the study. The data display mostly consists of verbatim responses from the interviewees. This was considered important in retaining the main ideas expressed by them. The conclusion and verification as the 'final' part of the analysis was the last to be done (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 11). It involved 'drawing definitive conclusions from the data'. The conclusions were made after the data were reduced and displayed (Lancaster, 2005: 171). There was a review of the analysis to enhance the verification of the data. The final conclusions emerged as syntheses of findings from the documentary film and the data from the interviews.

3.5 Ethical issues

During the course of this study, ethics were given due consideration. According to Walliman (2006:148), 'ethics are the rules of conduct in research'. The following ethical norms served as guide in data collection and analysis:

The ethical issue of informed consent was considered. Israel and Hay (2006:61) state that informed consent means that 'participants need first to comprehend and second to agree voluntarily to the nature of the research and their role within it'. The participants were informed about the research through emailed requests for interview. Therein, they were informed that the research was being conducted solely for academic purposes. One of the participants was concerned about the use of the data. For instance, he complained that a student once requested an interview with him and promised that the data would be used for academic purpose. He later found out that one of the student's teachers used some of his statements from the interview to publish a book. However, he admitted that the student might not have been aware of the action of the teacher.

The participants whose responses were audio-recorded were also informed prior to the commencement of the research. They willingly consented to have their views recorded. All the participants were assured of confidentiality. This was done to protect them (Parker, 2005) cited in Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Hence, to ensure that the principles of anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, there was no collection of the details of the personal information on the participants (McMurray et

al, 2004); their names were not revealed in this study. However they are traceable to the documentary in this study since their identities are clearly indicated in some websites, especially the Panorama website.

3.6 Limitations of study

This research has limitations which are associated with the qualitative methodology employed in data collection and analysis. There are concerns about the validity and reliability as well as the generalizability of qualitative research (Sullivan and Spilka, 2011).

Qualitative research might not be generalizable because the number of samples involved is often small (Green, 2005). This had a bearing on the external validity, which is ‘the degree to which the results can be generalized to the wider population, cases or situations’ (Cohen et al, 2007:136). The number of the documentary film and the interviewees was based on the judgment that they were relevant to the study. This especially applied to the BBC staff selected because of their involvement in the production of the documentary. Similarly, the Swedish journalists were selected through the snowball sample technique, as it was the only viable option in getting more journalists to participate in the study. Thus, the use of one single film is limited in serving as a representative of the vast media documentary programmes produced by different media outfits around the globe; neither will the five journalists be easily seen to represent other journalists and their views.

The use of interview could cause the researcher’s bias to interfere with the research process because interviews permit flexibility in accordance with the situation. This in turn influences the respondents’ answers to the interview questions (Mouly, 1970 in Newman and Benz, 1998). Due to the flexibility involved, reproduction of the research may become problematic. The use of email by one of the participants limited the depth of his responses because his responses were very brief, and there was no opportunity for probing questions which would have enriched the data. Circumstances did not permit the use of the same interview method, and this could pose as a problem. However, the use of a core interview question for all the interviews ensured that relevant data were obtained. Both the responses provided via

email and the ones provided verbally were written as texts before being used as data. The journalists interviewed came from different backgrounds. A couple of more journalists should have been interviewed because that would have been in the same context or area. The use of different interview methods might also pose as a limitation, but, these seeming limitations were handled by the use of an important core question.

Selection of participants through purposive sampling constitutes a threat to the external validity of qualitative research. To reduce this, this study tried to give an in-depth description of the sampling techniques used, as well as of the participants in the study (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1996).

Chapter 4

Findings and analysis

4.0 Introduction

The following chapter describes the findings and analysis from the interviews, documentary film, and other secondary sources such as relevant literature and BBC documents. These were all analyzed in accordance with the research questions. As stated earlier, the responses from the interviews and other sources were analyzed based on the aim of the study, and relevant literature. The film was viewed a good number of times in order to determine the important themes that are consonant with the questions. This study chose to highlight the themes in the documentary based on the portrayal of human rights actors involved in the concept of human rights promotion.

4.1 Presentation of the findings and the analysis of the interviews

4.1.1 Background to BBC public purpose: This section attempts to determine how the BBC frames its policy documents. This is done to situate human rights discourse in such documents. Doing this would help to have an insight into what the documents state, what the BBC journalists interviewed said, and what the documentary embodies so as to ensure a coherent analysis of the data.

The mission of the BBC is '[t]o enrich people's lives with programmes that inform, educate and entertain'. According to the organisation, 'the Royal Charter and Agreement sets out six public purposes' in a bid to realize the mission. The Royal Charter serves as the constitution on which the BBC is based and also states what role the Trust³¹ and Executive Board should perform. The Charter is accompanied by

³¹ The Trust serves as the public voice, to ensure that the opinion of the public which pays for the organisation is taken into consideration by the BBC.

the Agreement which elaborates its contents. It also states how the BBC should be funded, and 'its regulatory duties'. Both the Charter and Agreement ensure the independence of the BBC from the government (BBC, 2011). The six public purposes include:

- Stimulating citizenship and civil society
- Promoting education and learning
- Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence
- Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities
- Delivering to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services

The BBC's source of fund remains the licence fee, which ensures that the public interest is considered paramount; it also ensures that the BBC is free from competition for funds, thus enhancing the production of quality public-oriented programmes (BBC, 2005). The licence fee funding for the organisation is important because it can affect the organisation's policy. For example the document states that '... any change could lead to a fundamental shift in the BBC's role and its relationship with the public' (p. 36).

Each specific public purpose is further elaborated to highlight the areas intended to be focused on, as well as the mechanism or 'purpose plan' through which it could be achieved. It is noteworthy that most of the public purposes on close examination could be seen to be human rights issues and what they entail relate specifically to the UK. The BBC could be understood to be mainly concerned with events happening within the UK, and the promotion of the human rights of its citizens. However, the role of the BBC might not be said to be limited within the borders of the UK, but transcends them, and goes as far as promoting human rights and change in other countries. For example, the public purpose: 'promoting education and learning' is further broken down into three 'purpose priorities', and, included among them is to 'engage audience in activities targeted to achieve specific outcomes that benefit society'. Most importantly, the public purpose of 'bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK', according to the document, entails that the BBC audience would be made aware of issues in other parts of the world, especially how the people of the world live their lives.

The BBC document, '*building public value*' (2005)³² contains some statements on what the organisation intends to achieve, and the mechanisms through which it would do so. It states, among other things, the 'commitment of the BBC to independent and strong investigative journalism', as well as its plan 'to invest strongly in newsgathering at local, national and international levels', including the use of the documentary in the understanding of the world (p.32- 67).

The foregoing points to the role which the BBC has chosen to play in the society in which it belongs, and this role could be interpreted within the human rights framework. The public purposes could be seen to serve as a guide for the BBC in the pursuit of its mission.

4.1.2 Why BBC One chose to produce a documentary on child labour

Respondents to this question provided their answers in slightly different fashion, but similar on a close look. The first interviewee was first asked about his experience as an investigative reporter. This question was meant for him only due to his level of involvement as pointed out earlier. In his response, he stated that he had been a reporter for 20 years. Out of this number of years, he had been involved in investigation for 15 years. The investigations were carried out all over the world –in Cambodia, South East Asia, Africa, the UK, and around Europe. His interest is in human rights abuses such as corruption by large governments, wealthy individuals, and large companies. He has also done a lot of exposés over the years. One of the tactics used in the course of these investigations, according to him, is a lot of secret filming. Secret recordings and leaked paper work are good ways of making the programme as the evidence is shown to the audience, but the leaked paper work is not to encourage people to engage in an illegal activity. At the end, the character or individual who has been proved to have done something wrong would be confronted.

³² Available at: <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/policies/pdf/bpv.pdf>

Analysis: From the data gathered, it is evident that successful human rights coverage is dependent on the ability of journalists or human rights journalists in particular to be solidly grounded in the knowledge of human rights standards. The ICHRP (2002) notes that the extent of human rights coverage could be dependent on an organisation's structure and the inclination of a reporter's career.

In providing answer to the reason why the BBC chose to produce the documentary, he said that 'somebody came to the BBC and said we have evidence there is a lot of children working in West African cocoa plantations'. The second interviewee said: the 'programme wasn't our idea..., it was brought in by an external company that had done a lot of films about the environment and they came across child trafficking and child workers obviously when they were making their own programmes, we had then to look at it....' He said the management decided to ascertain if the information qualified as story by giving development money to the company. It went to Africa and brought a footage showing children working in various plantations in Ivory Coast. Finally, modalities for the investigation were then worked out for the filming of the documentary. The third respondent wrote: '[b]ecause it was clear from the ongoing work of [NGOs] in the area that child trafficking was happening and that trafficked children were still widely in use'.

Analysis: The responses indicate that the idea to investigate child labour activities in cocoa farms in West Africa originated from a tip-off. For human rights issues to have a place in journalism, journalists are expected to follow up on any information received from any news source. The tip-off received by the BBC One was duly verified and established, just as Burns (2002:39) notes that

...the first thing is to establish if a tip-off is true, if the incident happened...if the account you have been given is accurate and not exaggerated, because once it is published the story will take on a credibility it did not have before

The BBC chose to produce a documentary on child trafficking and labour because of the requirements of the public purpose. It was able to follow up the tip off because the contents of BBC public purpose give room for such issues to be easily pursued, in which case the BBC journalists are not hindered in their attempts to produce such documentary. This might also be due to the effort of the BBC to enhance its public image. And, since the Public purpose has a plan to bring the world to the UK, the

journalists might not have fought for the resources they needed to make the documentary.

4.1.3 Challenges encountered during the production of the documentary

Interviewees provided answers which seemed to be specific to each individual's experience. One said that the act of secret filming was governed by rules in the UK and the BBC. He said that 'in order to secretly film people, you have to have what is called 'primacy evidence'. He gave an example of a situation which might involve a person such as a drug dealer, where more information has to be provided, enquiries made, and then finally having to do a covert operation by pretending to be somebody who takes drugs and goes to where drugs are sold before secretly filming the suspect in order to get conclusive evidence. The challenge is that it takes a lot of time. He also said that a particular investigation needs a particular type of person in order to be more convincing. In addition, he said that in the past, one of the risks he encountered was when he was beaten up while secretly filming during an investigation into fixing of horse races. The second interviewee said they encountered roadblocks from the police in Ivory Coast, and they had to pay some money before being allowed to go through. In addition, in some of the villages, the villagers were sometimes unfriendly on getting to know that the team was investigating child labour practice. The third wrote that '[i]t doesn't necessarily get seen by everyone who needs to see it. It's made for UK transmission so is seen within Britain and is then only shown elsewhere in the world if broadcasters buy the rights to show it from BBC Worldwide'.

Analysis: The act of human rights coverage perhaps is not an easy task – one devoid of encumbrances. Just as the interviewee pointed out, a lot of time is needed to achieve a remarkable investigation of human rights abuses. This is demanding. The third interviewee pointed out the limited reach of the documentary which could only be viewed by the audience outside the UK if it is only paid for by other broadcast outlets. This is more of an economic hindrance to effective coverage and transmission of human rights stories to the public.

4.1.4 Why the documentary was successful

One of the interviewees said it was successful because of the money and independence of the BBC. According to him, one of the most important things about the BBC is that it is independent. Secondly, 'the BBC is prepared to invest quite a bit of money in stories like that to expose them, if we didn't a lot of television companies can't afford it. So it's to do with the BBC knowing it is worth the investment'.

The second respondent provided a similar response by saying that the documentary was resourced well, as the BBC put a lot of money as well as a lot of time for it. He added that the element of luck aided them: 'I think we were lucky that day we found Fatao and his friends working. That wasn't planned, but sometimes it's part of the luck in an investigation, but we did put a lot of time and effort...obviously spending money...it was a well-resourced programme which is what the BBC is quite good at'.

The third respondent wrote:

I think people were able to identify with the children in the film and with the farmers using them. It was not a clear tale of right and wrong. The farmer using his children to work for him did so because he lives on the edge of subsistence and can't afford to pay for additional labour. The trafficked child we identified Fatao Ouare and were able to reunite with his mother who had not been party to his trafficking also caught viewers' imaginations. I can say that with some authority as viewers donated money which meant we were able to pay for his school fees for the next year and buy him a bicycle to get there and back.

Analysis: On media independence, The IFJ (1999) argues that editorial independence is needed in both public and private owned media organisations for the media to produce good journalism. In addition, Keel and Wyss (2008) observe that the independence and freedom of the media are important for the media to play a harmonious role in the society despite the fact that this independence does not exclude the media from being regulated to forestall abuse of the power of the media, to encourage diversity or to protect minors. And as stated earlier, the Royal Charter and Agreement guarantees the independence of the BBC in its operations. The documentary was also well resourced perhaps as result of the consistent funding system which ensures the organisation is not starved of the necessary funds it needs

to carry out its functions. The exposure of human rights violations by the BBC is therefore consistent with its mission statement and the Royal Charter. Apart from the elements of luck and the audience identification with the children, the success of the documentary was attributed to two main factors namely: the money factor, and independence. The money factor reveals that investigation into human rights abuses or the promotion of human rights by the media is capital-intensive. Limited financial resources might make it difficult for small media stations to engage in effective human rights promotion, especially when uncovering human rights abuses.

4.1.5 Approaching the documentary as a human rights story

A question on the documentary approach was asked as a follow up question. An informal pre- interview chat was going on before he said that ‘people don’t like watching human rights stories’. According to him, human rights type stories and immigration programmes don’t get very good viewing figures. He said that although this is not important, that even if the viewing figures are low, it’s about the impact and how significant it is to expose that particular practice. He added:

when you do human rights stories quite often, not many people watch, but the difference with this one was because it was about chocolate which everybody eats practically every day. We all have a relationship to it. So if you do human rights stories about mining copper for instance, not many people will be too interested in that because they think we don’t have anything made of copper, but the reason that programme is successful at Panorama was because it was looking at a type of food which everybody eats, so we all have a relationship to it, we’re all guilty in a way of exploiting those children in West Africa

He said that the decision to do the story was based on the need to find out the truth about some major products, that if people knew about how their chocolate is made, they might be prepared to pay a little bit more to change the conditions of the people on the ground. According to him, people don’t normally refer to a story as a good human rights story because people find the phrase ‘human rights’ boring. He said:

It isn’t boring to me but it doesn’t sell our story. If you say tonight on Panorama we’re going to show you some abuses of human rights, people sort of [say] it doesn’t sound like the kind of programme which is going to lift your spirit and improve your life. So you might not want to watch it, but if you say, this is a programme about how the condition of your chocolate is made, then people would want to watch it...it’s something we all eat everyday ...

The other interviewee recounted that some of the things discussed in the documentary include: human rights angle and free trade, the people that make products and ensure that ethically, they don't use child labour. He said that human rights issues are important. In what seems like an attempt to highlight the intricacies surrounding the use of child labour, he stated:

obviously, I can't remember [the] UN clause on it but it's quite important that people realize that children will be involved...there has to be an understanding by the West that sometimes families need their children to work. It might be apparent to us but to some of those people in those poor areas, that's the only way they could make a living...

He cited an example of two children whose father couldn't send them to school, but instead needed them to work on his cocoa farms because he had no money to employ labour from outside.

Analysis: It has been stated earlier that human rights issues do not rate high in 'readers' surveys' (ICHRP, 2002:17-50) and they hardly get adequate coverage by the media, but even when they are covered by human-rights-inclined journalists, media audiences (who prefer exciting spectacular events, see Uscinki, 2009 in chapter 2, 2.4) hardly appreciate their importance. The view of the interviewee on the media audience's lack of interest in human rights media programmes which they find boring resonates Harrop's argument that in regard to the public's right to be informed, there are studies which have found out that the public is averse to the information it has a right to (cited in Wolfermann, 2010). It is in this situation that the expertise of journalists becomes useful in gaining the attention of the audience no matter how they might shun human rights programmes. The ability of the BBC journalist to connect the audience (chocolate consumers) to the rights of children working in cocoa plantations succeeded in making the documentary valued in many parts of the globe. Even the title of the documentary has no human rights terms just as Ovsiovitich (1993) notes that human rights as a concept often fails to be used as a 'subject' in the heading of media stories (see chapter 2, 2.9). This approach is very important for journalists, especially the editorial board who, according to Burns (2002: 37) 'predict the audience reaction to the news they are covering. They discuss whether the audience is tiring of a topic and how and if their interest could be regained'.

4.1.6 The role of the media in improving human rights situations in general

(All the five interviewees were asked the question centering on this theme. This was as result of the focus on the aim of the research). The first interviewee said that it is not in the interest of the chocolate companies to look too closely into how their labour is being used and treated in Africa, that the police and local politicians in Ghana kept saying ‘there were no children working here’. According to him, the police, the government, and the chocolate companies will not investigate the matter because it is embarrassing for them, that if journalists do not investigate abuses such as child labour, nobody else would do it. He added that in terms of the role of the media in examining human rights abuses like that, the media are policing some of the effects of globalisation which nobody else does and since there is no world police force to investigate it, it is the key responsibility of journalists to do real service to individuals and help improve their lives. In a related development, he stated that the organisation through an informal discussion with people working in the chocolate industry learnt that the industry ‘has started to tighten their rules on how to treat people on the ground,’ and that a young boy was reunited with his mother. After the programme, the BBC sent some money to the mother to pay for him to go to school, and to buy a bike for him. According to him, ‘it is a very difficult area for journalists ethically. If you go in and expose it, and then walk away..., so we have researchers and phone up to make sure things work...afterwards’.

The second interviewee believed that the media have a role to play. He disclosed that he ‘had conversations from Canada, America, Australia, and the Far East’. For him, ‘it has had certain impact and that is good because it should highlight what is going on as a reality and the big Western chocolate companies have responsibility to check [...] they now argue they do that thoroughly...’ He was of the opinion that the documentary helped to highlight what happens when chocolate companies and brokers make huge profit from cocoa, without the profit passing to the poor families that produce them. He concluded by saying that the ‘West makes a lot of money out of other people’s suffering when they are not properly being paid of their wage’. He said ‘a lot of consumers didn’t understand this was going on, and the chocolate companies said they didn’t know this practice, and that they were going to stop it. So

it had an impact'. He concluded by saying: 'it's good the programme was done. We feel justified by the people who have seen the programme come back to us which is good. It doesn't happen in all the programmes'. The third interviewee, responding on the role of the media, especially the BBC wrote:

I think the BBC's journalism – both in current affairs and in news more generally – has a reputation for fairness, balance and objectivity throughout the world. That is our weapon. If by revealing what others might wish to keep secret we can show injustice where it occurs then people can ... have the knowledge they need to decide what needs to be done. It is not our job to engineer or instigate change. If people/institutions or governments are breaking the law then we should bring them to public attention. What happens next is up to others.

The next interviewee stated that the media have a role to play in all societies, to tell the truth and find out what is happening. According to her, the special role played by the media on the promotion of human rights depends on the type of country in which a mass media operates. She cited the case of Vietnam where there has not been the freedom of the press as a result of the communist party. Consequently, there have been human rights abuses and difficulty in freedom of expression. As an example of where the media was able to promote human rights, she stated that in Sweden, violence against women was brought to people's attention as a big problem –many women were killed and beaten. By telling these stories, the media made the Swedish citizens aware of the problem. Most Swedish people today have much better understanding of the problem.

The fifth interviewee said that the role of the media is 'to report and give people knowledge'. By reporting, the media expose something. According to him, the media should not campaign, because reporting and campaigning are different. When further probed if the media should help victims as the BBC did by helping the trafficked boy pay his school fees, he said that although TV crews can take a stand to help individuals, the normal way is not to get involved because doing so leads to loss of credibility. He believed that getting involved causes credibility to be questioned, that the media should not campaign but give their stories to NGOs and others to do so.

Analysis: The comment by the third interviewee that: 'It is not our job to engineer or instigate change. If people/institutions or governments are breaking the law then we should bring them to public attention. What happens next is up to others', failed to acknowledge that by mere taking up the role of bringing people's or governments'

trampling of the law to public knowledge is perhaps, the first and the most crucial step in ‘instigating change’. Change does not just happen; it might start from even the slightest move.

Similarly, the fifth interviewee argued that the involvement of the media in human rights campaigns undermines their credibility. However, as long as the media merely report human rights abuses, it is a sort of campaign in itself, though the difference will hinge on the magnitude or approach of the campaign. For any mass media to inject a huge amount of money or extensive time in uncovering human rights abuses in any corner of the globe amounts to campaign in itself. The production of the documentary by the BBC cost a lot of money and time; yet, the fact that the BBC was able to help in raising money to help the rescued boy get back to school has not led to the loss of credibility by the BBC. Instead, it solidified the importance of the media in the promotion of human rights. Again, it is noteworthy that the BBC seem to have an interest in improving the lives of the less disadvantaged. For instance, there is ‘BBC Children in Need’ which is stated to be ‘the BBC’s UK corporate charity’, and, it is used to ‘improve the lives of disadvantaged children and young people across the UK’ (BBC, 2011). It has a website which explains its activities in fundraising and calls for donations³³. How this has affected the credibility of the BBC is yet to be seen.

Although the first interviewee tended to limit the ‘policing of globalization’ to the media, there are also human rights organisations or NGOs which often express concern about the effects of globalisation on human rights. For example, the policing function of the media as a result of the effects (negative) of globalisation is one that hinges on the notion by Freeman that globalisation ‘has complex implications for human rights’, and therefore, it is required that ‘human- rights activists should be cautious in criticizing globalization’ (2002:173). This might be due to the fact that globalisation as a concept has been subjected to opposing debate by many authors- where there have been arguments in favour and against the impact of globalisation. A look at some literature would reveal that globalisation has improved human rights in certain ways, but its negative consequences remain. The BBC documentary shows

³³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey/aboutus/about.shtml>

how transnational chocolate companies make millions of dollars in profit, while the primary sources of their labour or materials never benefit from the high price of cocoa beans. The media have the capability to wade in and reverse this trend.

The opinion of the interviewees on the role of the media in human rights promotion centre on the creation of awareness for human rights and the provision of security for human rights. Three of the interviewees stated that the media should report what is happening, or reveal issues kept secret. All point to the idea of the role of the media in creating awareness on human rights issues. The IFJ (1999:4) observes that the importance of awareness of human rights is that: '[a]wareness is [the] key to the promotion of rights. Citizens must be able to celebrate achievements and successes. Media have a role to play in reporting good examples of tolerance, peace and respect for human rights. It is not all bad-news dominated by conflict and strife'.

4.2 Findings from the documentary

4.2.1 Synopsis of the documentary- 'Chocolate: the bitter truth'

The following gives a summary of the documentary. From this, the various human rights themes embodied in it are examined for a better understanding of the human rights actors and how they are portrayed in the documentary.

The documentary which lasted for sixty minutes approximately centres on the investigation of the use of child labour in cocoa farms in Ghana and Ivory Coast in West Africa. The narrator in the documentary points out that the UK consumes half a million tons of chocolate annually, and questions if the consumers would still retain their appetite on finding out that what they eat as chocolate is produced with child labour. In the documentary, the children are said to be not going to school, they use hazardous tools, and are deprived of childhood life. This is an allusion to ILO Convention 182, and Convention on the Rights of the Child, CRC. The children used in child labour are trafficked from Burkina Faso, which is faced with lack of the basic necessities of life. Some women whose children were used in child labour said they had no option other than to give their children to work. Others claim they were not directly responsible for their children's trafficking to cocoa farms.

The investigative reporter was able to trace the cocoa beans from the farms to their use by multinational chocolate companies in America and the UK. They buy child labour cocoa beans as they buy directly from the various cooperatives in Ghana and Ivory Coast. The cooperatives buy directly from farmers who used children in the production of the cocoa beans. Although these companies denied the existence of child labour in their supply chain, they however promised to invest some millions of dollars in the cocoa industry to help the cocoa farmers. One of the children seen to be working in one of the cocoa farms is a 12-year-old boy named Fatao. He was given away by his uncle in Burkina Faso without the knowledge of his mother. Through the efforts of the Panorama team, he was reunited with his mother after the team ran some radio appeal through the local radio station in Burkina Faso.

With the help of the team, some men responsible for trafficking the children, and others using them as child labour were arrested and handed over to the police in Ghana. The deputy commissioner of police in Ghana resolved to prosecute whoever might be convicted of breaking the law. The documentary ends with the call by the narrator on the need for consumers in the West to buy *fairtrade* chocolate which is chocolate certified to be child labour-free, and which will help in the betterment of the lives of the cocoa farmers.

4.2.2 The media as rights holders

The documentary portrays the media as actors in human rights promotion. By producing the documentary, the BBC exercises the right to press freedom. The filming of the documentary in Ghana and Ivory Coast buttresses the right to freedom of movement³⁴. This is important considering the distance between the base of the BBC and the two countries where the documentary was filmed.

It then means that distance does not pose as a barrier to the enjoyment of the right of the media to press freedom and the right to freedom of movement. As pointed out in chapter 2, 2.1, the right to press freedom warrants the media the right to determine the form which their programmes will assume, as well as the appropriate form of reporting (Jacobsen, 2008). BBC One could have chosen to run a mere superficial

³⁴ (Article 13, UDHR).

news report on the abuse or even to produce a totally different programme showing gross violations of human rights which might not be similar to child labour in West Africa. Rather, it chose to produce an investigative reporting on the plight of children working in harsh conditions in cocoa plantations in West Africa. The ability to do this might be partly because of the advancement in technological development which, according to Wasserman (2009: 23) has resulted in ‘global media reach’, in which the world becomes ‘more interdependent and interconnected’, thus making people aware of what happens in distant places around the globe.

4.2.3 Children as rights holders

The film portrays the children as victims of human rights violations, who are in need of help. According to the narration of the documentary, some of the children were trafficked and used as child labour. They were not paid any wage. In some cases, a close relative received the wage. The documentary explicitly states that ‘trafficking is illegal and a serious breach of global standards’. It states that ILO Convention prohibits the worst forms of child labour: work likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children, which includes the use of hazardous tools. It also prohibits work which interferes with schooling³⁵. The children are aged between 7 and 14 years. They use machetes which are hazardous tool, and since they are not paid, they are subjected to economic exploitation.³⁶ The plight of these children seem to be exacerbated by structural poverty, in which case, the children come from communities which are said to be poor and lacking the basic necessities of life such as water, electricity and sanitation. Consequently their human rights are violated in a number of ways that lead up to the violation in focus.

There seemed to be no desire on the part of most cocoa farmers to deliberately violate the rights of the children. For instance, one of the cocoa farmers who had two children working with him (one was his son while the other was his little brother) could not have done so any other way, as he had no money to hire labour. The cocoa farmers do not earn income commensurate to their products. The result was their inability to improve their living standards, or send their children to school. Therefore,

³⁵ Articles 3a and d

³⁶ article 32, CRC

the violations of the rights of the trafficked children engaged in child labour remains a complex issue which require comprehensive approach to tackle.

4.2.4 The media as duty bearers

Using the right to freedom of expression, the BBC produced a documentary on the abuse of the rights of children working in cocoa farms in Ghana and Ivory Coast. The BBC did not make reference to human rights in its list of public purposes. It has ‘a wide range of factual subject matter’ through which the audience would be helped to ‘build key literacies’. Again, there is no explicit mention of human rights in the organisation’s corporate responsibility or as one of the factual subjects matter. Perhaps, the role of the BBC as human rights promoter as exemplified in the production of the documentary seemed to be embedded in the organisation’s mission made manifest in the activities of Panorama programme especially the documentary under study which exposed the use of child labour.

4.2.5 States as duty bearers

Although both Ghana and Ivory Coast are State Parties to ILO Convention No.182 (ILO, 2011) and some other international legal instruments prohibiting the violation of the rights of children such as the CRC (UN, 2011) the governments have not been able to stop child labour. If the governments of the two countries had carried out their responsibilities in providing adequate care for their citizens, especially the children and the cocoa farmers, their living conditions would have not been subjected to pathetic conditions.

4.2.6 Corporations as duty bearers

Two chocolate companies, Nestlé and Cadbury, are said in the narration to buy child slave cocoa beans for use in their production processes. The farmers seem not to receive a fair price for their cocoa beans. From the documentary, the two industries made about \$20 billion the year before the airing of the documentary. The cocoa brokers also make between \$100,000 and \$500,000 in a day without regard to the source of the cocoa beans or the conditions under which they are produced.

The companies and cocoa brokers might not have been directly involved in human rights violations in this case as the farmers sell to cooperatives who in turn sell to the companies, but *the UN Norms on the responsibilities of transnational corporations and other business with regard to human rights* requires them not to engage in activities that economically exploit children and to ensure that workers receive commensurate pay for their work³⁷. The fact that the companies later disclosed that they were investing some millions of dollars to help the cocoa farmers points to the duty of multinational corporations in contributing their quota for human rights promotion, especially in the cocoa producing countries. This is because when they do so and the amount is used judiciously by the farmers, they could use the money to employ labour to work on their farms, and perhaps also send their children to school instead of using them for labour.

There has been argument by the International Organisation of Employees (IOE) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) that,

“[t]he State is the duty-bearer of human rights obligations under international human rights law. Only States have legal obligations, so only States can fulfil human rights. And, conversely, only a State can violate human rights. Private persons are not the duty-bearer of the rights in the UN human rights treaties³⁸... (2004)

The scope of this study does not include an examination of this claim. However, it is believed that non-state actors do have obligations to respect and promote human rights. Thus they cannot shy away from doing so. As ‘duty-bearing institutions’, Addo (1999) notes that multinational corporations should work towards the promotion of human rights standards and not jeopardize them.

4.2.7 Consumers as duty bearers

³⁷Article 6 states that “ [t]ransnational corporations and other business enterprises shall respect the rights of children to be protected from economic exploitation as forbidden by the relevant international instruments and national legislation as well as international human rights and humanitarian law”, while article 8 states that “[t]ransnational corporations and other business enterprises shall provide workers with remuneration that ensures an adequate standard of living for them and their families. Such remuneration shall take due account of their needs for adequate living conditions with a view towards progressive improvement”.

³⁸Available at: www.ioe-emp.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents_pdf/papers/statements_resolutions/english/state_2004march_su_bcomm.pdf (accessed 05/01/11)

Consumers of chocolate in the UK are said to consume more than 500,000 tones of chocolate. They do so with little knowledge of how the source beans are produced. Consumers are encouraged to buy *fairtrade* labeled chocolate which would ensure they do not buy products made with traces of child labour. This entails ‘paying a fair price’ for the chocolate. Consequently, the price will trickle down to the farmers in such a way as to improve their lives and discourage their use of child labour. Since everybody, according to Orend (2002), holds human rights, everybody is likewise required to help in their achievement without violating them. In relation to the global economy, the Panorama documentary links consumers of chocolate products in Europe and America to complicity in human rights abuse when they buy the products produced with traces of child labour.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study has tried to look into what role the media play in the promotion of human rights. This was done by looking into the case of BBC One and the documentary, ‘chocolate: the bitter truth’, which it produced. The documentary dwelt on the use of child labour in cocoa farms in West Africa. The cocoa beans produced are often bought by big chocolate companies in the West. The study was aimed at finding the reason why the BBC chose to promote human rights through the production of the documentary. It also tried to find out how the contents of the documentary are shaped to promote human rights.

The review of related literature highlighted the importance of press freedom, media social responsibility, and the power of the media in enhancing human rights through the nurture of democracy which is considered a *sine qua non* for the respect of human rights. This highlights the symbiotic relationship between the media and democracy. However, though the media are considered important in the promotion of human rights, which is a positive aspect of the media, the same media have often been entangled in human rights violations at various times. In its methodology, the study adopted the qualitative method as a result of the nature of the research questions. Interviews were conducted, and five participants provided responses to the interview questions. The interviewees were selected through the purposive sampling, and snowball sampling methods while Ethnographic Content Analysis of the documentary was done to extract the human rights themes in it.

Data from the interviews and the documentary indicate that the media do have impact although the impact might be a bit difficult to prove. Responses from the BBC journalists show that they believe that the documentary had an impact. For example, an interviewee commenting on the programme said the chocolate industry ‘has started to tighten their rules on how to treat people on the ground’. Another

other said ‘a lot of consumers didn’t understand this was going on, and the chocolate companies said they didn’t know this practice, and that they were going to stop it. So it had an impact...’ The belief in the potential impact of the documentary might be one of the factors which prompted them to proceed with its production. The media should therefore make a positive impact in the promotion of human rights by exposing any abuses and bringing the knowledge of human rights to media audience.

It is not the aim of this research to prove the impact of the documentary programme. The core issue is that the BBC has gone beyond the role of being just a mirror of society and graduated to actively taking up a role as a human rights actor by investing both material and human resources in its efforts to expose human rights abuses. The BBC journalists chose to produce the documentary after a tip from a source, but the underlying reason that gave impetus to the production of the documentary emanated from the public purpose of the organisation which could be seen as its action plan. This gave the journalists the leeway to successfully expose the abuses in West Africa. In addition, the mission of the organisation- ‘to enrich people’s lives with programmes that inform, educate and entertain’ is an evidence of the choice of the BBC to put the necessary mechanisms in place in the production of the documentary. Thus the BBC chose to produce the documentary because it was in agreement with its stated public purposes.

The BBC obviously have some kind of moral thinking that there are more duty bearers, in which case, more people should be concerned and involved in the promotion of human rights. In regard to the question of how the documentary was shaped to promote human rights, the analysis of the documentary shows that BBC One does this through the use of inclusive format, by using chocolate which one of the interviewees said, everybody has a relationship to. Rather than approaching the case for ending child labour from a strictly legal perspective, which would have seen the governments of Ghana and Ivory Coast as the only actors responsible for ending it, BBC One in the documentary implicated every chocolate consumer as having to help in ending child labour by buying *fairtrade* labeled chocolate products which would help in improvement of the lives of West African cocoa producing communities. By adopting a multiple-duty-bearer approach, the documentary portrays everybody as a duty bearer.

The media have been shown to play a dual role - as a promoter of human rights in view of their coverage of human rights abuses, and, as abuser of human rights as shown in the Rwandan genocide. Should the media then stay put in the promotion of human rights in view of the power they wield, or, should they stay out of human rights because of their occasional violations of human rights? But it seems the positive role of the media far outweighs any violations which might have marred their role. As indicated by the action of the BBC in producing a documentary on child labour in Ghana and Ivory Coast, the media will continue to be important in human rights promotion because they are needed to enthrone and nurture democracy which is in turn needed to guarantee respect for human rights. The media, in addition, create awareness on human rights and human rights abuses to help individuals whose rights have been violated to seek redress.

5.2 Recommendations

This research as pointed out earlier has some challenges related to validity and generalizability associated with qualitative research. This could be seen in the inability of one case of a documentary film to serve as a representative of a myriad of media programmes by many other media outlets, just as the five journalists interviewed could be a limitation in serving as representative of other journalists. However, it can still serve as resource material for future research on a similar field, especially research on human rights and the media. Future research should strive to include more journalists to ascertain their views on what the role of the media should be. Other media organisations should also be studied to know the extent they go to in incorporating human rights issues in their programmes, as well as how far they are prepared to invest in such programmes.

One of the interviewees believed that journalists should not be involved in human rights campaigns but to leave the work for NGOs to do to avoid loss of credibility. Therefore, further research should test the hypothesis that media involvement in human rights campaign will lead to loss of credibility. This is necessary considering the fact that the media are also rights holders in order to know if the organisations should set a limit to any positive contribution they make in regard to human rights promotion. Therefore, media involvement in charities or nonprofit organisations

should be investigated to find out the impact of such involvement on media credibility and expertise.

This study did not include the impact of BBC One documentary either on the chocolate companies or the consumers of chocolate programmes. Information from some of the interviewees indicates the resolve of the chocolate companies referred to in the documentary to invest some money for the good of the cocoa farmers. Although determining the level of the impact on chocolate consumers could prove problematic, further research should look into the impact on the chocolate companies to determine the extent to which they have complied in implementing their promise to help the cocoa farmers.

Media institutions should be interested in human rights promotion by formulating their policies to make them conducive for human rights coverage. They should be prepared to invest in human rights programmes and also encourage their staff to get acquainted with the various human rights instruments to be able to effectively engage in human rights reporting. They should also devise feasible techniques for reporting human rights issues to make them receptive to media audience just as BBC One journalists did by using chocolate to convince chocolate consumers that they have the duty to promote human rights by paying for a fair price for the products to help in stopping child labour.

One of the interviewee's interests in human rights issues, perhaps, can be said to be instrumental in the success of the documentary. This could be as a result of the interviewee's interest and experience in human rights issues which could have enhanced the human rights angle in the documentary under investigation. For example, the documentary made explicit reference to international human rights instruments especially ILO Convention 182, of which some provisions can be seen in the CRC.

Finally, considering that the BBC public purpose contains implicit reference to human rights issues, a Discourse Analysis of BBC's policy documents and other media stations should be carried out by researchers to determine the framing of such documents and the place of human rights within them. Similarly, the analysis could be extended to investigation into the corporate social responsibility of companies in

terms of human rights promotion. This is necessary to show if the companies' practices constitute potential threat to human rights.

Justification for excess words

Total words: 16,997

The study adopted two different research methods in a bid to answer the research questions. Consequently, all necessary data had to be included to ensure a meaningful research project.

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