
Implications of Social Media Censorship on Freedom of Expression: A Critical Analysis of the 2021 Twitter (X) Ban in Nigeria

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Abstract

The June 2021 Twitter ban in Nigeria, imposed after the platform deleted the late President Muhamadu Buhari's tweet, sparked intense debates on national security, freedom of expression, and digital governance among the citizens, especially media scholars in and outside Nigeria. This study examined the ban's implications on citizens, businesses, and government-citizen relations through thematic analysis of selected Nigerian government's policy documents relating to social media regulations. Using digital authoritarianism and networked public sphere theories, the study's findings revealed widespread criticism of the ban, significant economic impacts on businesses relying on Twitter, and strained government-citizen relations, among others. Users highlighted concerns about digital rights, privacy, and the need for transparent regulation. The study argued that the ban was a disproportionate response to perceived threats and recommended respect for digital freedom and citizen's right to free expression, establishing a multi-stakeholder regulatory framework, and prioritizing digital rights and governance, and that Nigeria can foster a more inclusive and resilient digital ecosystem by balancing national security concerns with digital freedoms.

Keywords: Digital Rights, Freedom Of Expression, National Security, Social Media Regulation, Twitter Ban

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The proliferation of social media has revolutionised global communication, enabling individuals to express themselves, mobilise social movements, and hold institutions accountable (Castells, 2015). However, this expansion has also led governments to increasingly regulate online spaces, often under the guise of national security, public order, or moral protection (Deibert et al., 2010). Nigeria's 2021 ban on Twitter, which lasted 222 days, exemplifies this trend, sparking intense debates about the implications of social media censorship on freedom of expression (FOE) in the country. President Muhammadu Buhari's tweet, which was deleted by Twitter, read: *many of those misbehaving today are too young to be aware of the destruction and loss of lives that occurred during the Nigerian Civil War. Those of us in the fields for 30 months, who went through the war, will treat them in the language they understand.*

This tweet was made in response to attacks on government buildings and infrastructure in the southeastern region of Nigeria, which were blamed on the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a banned separatist group. Twitter removed the tweet, citing a violation of its abusive behaviour policy, and suspended Buhari's account for 12 hours.

In a swift reaction to the removal of the statement from Tweeter, the Nigerian government on June 4, 2021 suspended Twitter's operations, citing the platform's failure to address "abusive" content, including tweets deemed threatening to national security (Nwankwo, 2021). This move was widely criticised by digital rights groups, scholars, and international organisations as a disproportionate response aimed at silencing dissent (Article 19, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021). The ban highlighted Nigeria's complex relationship with FOE, a fundamental right enshrined in its 1999 Constitution but frequently contested in practice (Olukotun, 2015). While social media platforms like Twitter have become critical arenas for political discourse in Nigeria, they are also vulnerable to state control (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022). The 2021 ban thus raises urgent questions about the boundaries of digital governance, the role of tech platforms in mediating public speech, and the resilience of FOE in hybrid authoritarian contexts. Despite growing scholarship on digital rights in Africa (e.g., Mutsaers & Rønning, 2022), few studies have critically examined Nigeria's Twitter ban through the lens of FOE, making this research a timely contribution to global debates on social media regulation.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, analyzing policy documents, media reports, and user responses to explore how the Twitter ban reflects broader trends in Nigeria's governance and digital rights landscape. By situating the ban within theories of digital authoritarianism (Glaser, 2021) and networked public spheres (Benkler, 2006), this research argues that social media censorship in Nigeria serves as a tool for state power consolidation, with disproportionate effects on marginalized voices. The findings underscore the need for rights-based frameworks to regulate digital platforms, ensuring that tech governance prioritizes transparency, accountability, and user agency.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The 2021 ban on Twitter by the Nigerian government highlights a critical challenge to freedom of expression (FOE) in the digital age. Social media platforms like Twitter have become essential spaces for public discourse, activism, and information sharing in Nigeria. However, the government's decision to suspend Twitter's operations, citing national security concerns, raises concerns about the limits of digital governance and the potential for state overreach.

The problems identified in this regard include ambiguous regulatory frameworks of Nigeria's laws governing social media and online content (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022), disproportionate state response to perceived threats, potentially stifling legitimate online expression and silencing dissenting voices

(ARTICLE 19, 2021), the impact of the ban on civic engagement such as online activism, journalism, and public discourse, affecting individuals and organisations, who rely on Twitter for information dissemination and mobilization (Human Rights Watch, 2021), chilling effect on online expression, leading to self-censorship and reduced online engagement, particularly among marginalized groups (Nwankwo, 2021), and lack of transparency and accountability on the part of Nigerian government's decision-making process (Adepetun, 2021).

Stemming from the above, this study examined the implications of social media censorship on FOE in Nigeria, using the 2021 Twitter ban as the focus of the study. It therefore sought to understand the motivations behind the ban, its implications on online discourse and freedom of expression, and the strategies employed by social media users to navigate the censorship era.

Research Questions

Three research questions generated for this study are:

- i. How did the Nigerian government justify the 2021 Twitter ban, and what does this reveal about state attitudes toward digital FOE?
- ii. What were the immediate and long-term impacts of the ban on online discourse and civic engagement in Nigeria?
- iii. How do social media users in Nigeria navigate censorship, and what strategies do they employ to sustain FOE?

Significance of the Study

By examining these issues, this study aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between social media, governance, and FOE in Nigeria, with relevance for global debates on digital rights and platform regulation, address issues in Nigeria's digital landscape, providing insights into the country's evolving governance and digital rights environment. Apart from contributing to global debates on digital rights, social media regulation, and FOE, it will offer a nuanced examination of the reasons for Nigeria's Twitter ban, provide a contextual understanding of the country's digital governance, highlight the tensions between state power and online expression, help policymakers, regulators, and stakeholders to understand the implications of social media censorship on marginalised groups, while the findings and recommendations will help to advance scholarship debates on digital governance, FOE, media platform regulation and the role of social media in shaping public discourse and civic engagement.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The emergence of social media has transformed the way people communicate, access information, and exercise their freedom of expression across the globe (Castells, 2015). However, this expansion has also led to other challenges. For instance, governments now increasingly regulate online spaces, often under the guise of national security, public order, or moral protection (Deibert et al., 2010). This literature review examined existing research on social media censorship, freedom of expression, and digital governance, with a focus on Nigeria's 2021 Twitter ban.

Twitter is a free social networking micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices, thereby facilitating the swift dissemination of information. Tweets and replies to tweets can be sent by cell phone text messages, a desktop client or by posting on the Twitter website (Gerbaudo, P. 2012). In other words, Twitter promotes social interaction and public participation in various issues of human concern. As a result, the unrestricted interactive nature of Twitter has provided numerous opportunities for the public to interact with various issues in their society. Regardless of

Twitter's significant role and opportunities, some countries around the world have, either permanently or at one time or the other, banned its use in their societies. These countries include Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Kingdom, North Korea, Iran, China, and most recently, Nigeria.

Social media platforms like Twitter have become essential spaces for public discourse, activism, and information sharing in Nigeria (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022; Olukotun, 2015). These platforms enable individuals to express themselves, mobilize social movements, and hold institutions accountable (Benkler, 2006). For instance, social media played a crucial role in the *#EndSARS* protests in Nigeria, which called for police reform and an end to police brutality (Onyeji, 2020). Similarly, Twitter has been instrumental in promoting social justice and human rights in Nigeria, with hashtags like *#BringBackOurGirls* and *#JusticeForUwa* gaining widespread attention (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022). However, social media platforms are not without their limitations. Scholars argue that online echo chambers and algorithmic filtering can reinforce existing biases and undermine the quality of public discourse (Sunstein, 2017). Moreover, the spread of misinformation and disinformation on social media can have serious consequences, including the erosion of trust in institutions and the manipulation of public opinion (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Governments worldwide have employed various strategies to regulate online spaces, including censorship, surveillance, and shutdowns (Deibert et al., 2010; Glaser, 2021). In Nigeria, the 2021 Twitter ban exemplifies this trend, sparking intense debates about the implications of social media censorship on freedom of expression (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022; Nwankwo, 2021). Scholars argue that such measures often serve as tools for state power consolidation, disproportionately affecting marginalized voices (Glaser, 2021; Mutsvairo & Rønning, 2022). The Nigerian government's decision to ban Twitter was justified on the grounds of national security and public order, citing the platform's failure to address "abusive" content (Nwankwo, 2021). However, critics argue that this move was a disproportionate response aimed at silencing dissent and stifling online expression (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022). The ban has been seen as a classic example of digital authoritarianism, where governments use regulatory measures to control online spaces and suppress dissent (Glaser, 2021). The regulation of social media is a complex issue, with governments, tech companies, and civil society organizations often at odds over the best approach (DeNardis, 2020). In Nigeria, the government's decision to ban Twitter was criticized for lacking transparency and stakeholder engagement (Adepetun, 2021). Scholars argue that digital governance frameworks should prioritize transparency, accountability, and user agency (DeNardis, 2020; Glaser, 2021).

The Nigerian government has proposed various regulatory frameworks for social media, including the Social Media Bill and the Cybercrime Act (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022). However, these initiatives have been criticized for their potential to stifle online expression and undermine digital rights (Nwankwo, 2021). The international community has also been grappling with the issue of social media regulation, with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the United States' proposed Online Privacy Act serving as examples of regulatory approaches (DeNardis, 2020).

Nigeria's digital landscape is characterized by a growing online population and increasing government regulation (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022). The country's 1999 Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, but this right is often contested in practice (Olukotun, 2015). The 2021 Twitter ban highlights the tensions between state power and online expression in Nigeria, with implications for digital governance and FOE (Nwankwo, 2021). Nigeria's media landscape is diverse, with a range of print, broadcast, and online media outlets (Olukotun, 2015). However, the government has been accused of using regulatory measures to control the media and suppress dissent (Akinola & Olayiwola, 2022). The Nigerian

Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has been criticized for its role in regulating broadcast media, with some arguing that it serves as a tool for government censorship (Olukotun, 2015).

THE PLACE OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW

The blanket ban on Twitter, In spite of the reasons adduced for it by the Nigerian government, the blanket ban on Twitter is against the tenets of the Freedom of Information Act, meant to provide the foundation for an open system of governance and consequently an open society for the benefit of all sectors of the society, including the government. Devasher (2006) explains that “a Freedom of Information Law can bolster the effectiveness of development and poverty alleviation strategies”. Devasher attributed some failure in development strategies to “non-consideration of citizens' input to whom such policies are targeted.” Access to information makes the government more sensitive and responsive to the needs and demands of the ordinary people. A Freedom of Information Law increases public participation because the public can regularly engage with government officials and parliamentary representatives which can be crucial to national stability. Information sharing and openness help bolster public trust in the political system, by establishing a two-way information flow between citizens and the State. He advocates that “such dialogue can combat feelings of exclusion, fear and victimization and reduce the risk of agitation of marginalization.” According to Egba (2008:11), the Act would, among other things, promote the oversight role of the National Assembly, by facilitating access to public documents and information necessary for the work of the National Assembly and its committees, and improve the record-keeping practice of public institutions. It will ensure that government records and documents are properly kept and reasonably guarantee the integrity of such records and documents, enhance the realisation of the economic reform agenda of the Federal Government as provided for in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document, which provides for the adoption of an access to information law as flagship legislation required for its successful implementation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The study is anchored on digital authoritarianism and networked public sphere theories. According to (Glaser, 2021), digital authoritarianism theory refers to the use of digital technologies used to examine state strategies used to control and manipulate online spaces, suppress dissent, and maintain status quo in power dynamics (Glaser, 2021). This theory suggests that governments are increasingly using digital tools to exert control over citizens, often under the guise of national security, public order, or moral protection. Key features of digital authoritarianism include the use of digital technologies to monitor online activities, track citizens, and identify potential threats (Deibert et al., 2010), block or restrict access to online content, often citing national security or public order concerns, and as propaganda machinery used by governments to spread false or misleading information to manipulate public opinion and undermine opposition (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). According to (Deibert et al., 2010), it is also employed to launch cyber-attacks against opposition groups, civil society organizations, and independent media outlets.

This theory is significant to the study because it helps to explain the Nigerian government's motivations behind the Twitter ban, highlighting the role of power consolidation and control, provides a framework for analysing the mechanisms of censorship employed by the Nigerian government, including blocking access to Twitter and restricting online content. Digital authoritarianism theory also helps to highlight the potential consequences of the Twitter ban on freedom of expression in Nigeria, including the suppression of dissenting voices and the stifling of online discourse.

The networked public sphere theory, proposed by Yochai Benkler (2006), suggests that digital technologies have transformed the way people communicate, access information, and engage in public discourse. The theory argues that online platforms have created new spaces for public deliberations, mobilization, and

participation. This theory is characterised by its ability to decentralize communication, allowing individuals to access and share information without intermediaries (Benkler, 2006), to foster a participatory culture, where individuals can contribute to public discourse and engage with others (Jenkins, 2006). The theory also facilitates online platforms for networked activism, by allowing individuals to mobilise and organise around social causes without hindrance (Castells, 2015).

This theory is significant to this study in that it provides a framework for understanding the role of Twitter in shaping online discourse and public opinion in Nigeria, helps to analyse the levels of participation and engagement among Twitter users in Nigeria, including the ways in which individuals contribute to public discourse and mobilize around social causes, as well as highlights the potential of social media to enhance civic engagement and promote democratic participation in Nigeria.

Digital authoritarianism and networked public sphere theories provide complementary perspectives on the role of social media in shaping online discourse and freedom of expression in Nigeria. While digital authoritarianism highlights the risks of government control and censorship, the networked public sphere theory emphasizes the potential of social media to enhance civic engagement and promote democratic participation.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study is the critical discourse analysis of policy documents and media coverage. Critical analysis of policy documents and media coverage, according to Ball, (1993) and Bacchi (2009), is an important qualitative research design that enables deeper understanding of how policies are constructed, communicated, and perceived. It reveals hidden assumptions, power relations, and framing strategies that shape social outcomes. As a result, it is essential for promoting informed debate, democratic accountability, and meaningful social change (Fischer, 2003). It is used to examine how social, political, and economic issues are framed, justified, and communicated. This approach goes beyond simply describing policies or news content; it systematically evaluates language, assumptions, power relations, and underlying ideologies that influence decision-making and public perception. It is desirable for this study because it can be used to understand policy intentions and power structures, reveal media framing, link policy discourse and public perception, provide contextual insight, and inform policy improvement and social change required by policymakers, journalists, and advocacy groups to understand weaknesses in policy design or communication.

Policy documents related to the Twitter ban reviewed in the study

The 2021 Twitter ban in Nigeria was implemented through a number of official policy directives and regulatory instruments issued by the federal government and related agencies, which include the followings:

- i. Federal Government press statement/policy directive suspending twitter (June 4, 2021) issued by the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, announcing the indefinite suspension of Twitter operations in Nigeria that the platform was allegedly used for activities “capable of undermining Nigeria’s corporate existence”.
- ii. Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC) regulatory directive and compliance order to telecom operators to block Twitter access in order to enforce the federal government’s suspension policy.
- iii. National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) circular to broadcast stations (June 7, 2021, instructing radio and television stations to uninstall Twitter and stop using it as a source of news and prohibition on using Twitter-generated content.

- iv. Attorney General's directive on prosecution of Twitter users, criminalizing Twitter usage, directs federal prosecutors to begin prosecuting individuals who continued using Twitter during the suspension.
- v. Presidential Committee on Nigeria-Twitter Engagement - executive administrative mechanism to dialogue with Twitter on legal registration in Nigeria, tax compliance and regulation of harmful content.
- vi. Technical Committee on Nigeria-Twitter Engagement Report (2021-2022) – a technical agency to set conditions for restoring Twitter operations, local incorporation and content moderation compliance with Nigerian law.
- vii. Presidential Approval Lifting the Suspension Order (January 12-13, 2022), announcing the lifting of the suspension after negotiations and restoring Twitter operations after confirming that Twitter agreed to the government's conditions.

Other Policy Documents Relating to Social Media Regulations

Efforts were made by the researcher to analyse some policy documents relevant to this study in order to provide informed perspectives for the study. They are:

- i. ***Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulations Law (2019)***: This bill aims to criminalise spreading of false information online, but critics argue it was a thinly veiled attempt to suppress dissent.
- ii. ***Hate Speech Law (2019)***: Enacted to prohibit hate speech, but its ambiguous provisions raised concerns about stifling free speech.
- iii. ***National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Regulations***: Directed social media platforms to register and obtain licenses before operation, sparking fears of censorship.

The policy documents listed above employ language that prioritises national security and stability over individual rights with the key features presented in the following tables:

Table 1: Analysis of issues raised in Nigeria's policy documents relating to the twitter ban examined in the study.

Item	Discourse Analysis
<i>Ambiguous terminology</i>	Terms like "falsehood and manipulation", "hate speech" and "false information" are not clearly defined, allowing for arbitrary interpretation and abuse of power by the government.
<i>Criminalisation of online expression</i>	The laws would criminalize online activities of certain individuals who are critical of the government. This is seen as capable of undermining freedom of expression by putting fear in the minds of critics.
<i>Lack of transparency</i>	Policy-making processes lack transparency in Nigeria because most policies are formulated without or with limited stakeholders' engagement.
<i>Implications</i>	Some of these policies, especially those on media freedom and citizens' right of expression may aim to stifle dissent, suppress critical voices and limit civic engagement; undermine digital rights by eroding online freedoms and privacy. This may harm democracy and weaken Nigeria's democratic institutions.

The table above indicated the various issues identified in the policy documents used for this study.

Table 2: Analysis of selected media coverage of the Twitter ban in Nigeria

Newspaper	Analysis of Coverage
<i>The Punch</i>	<i>The Punch</i> newspapers reported that the Twitter ban was a "needless distraction" and criticized the government's decision, stating it was a "deliberate ploy to take the minds of Nigerians off the raging economic woes" (<i>The Punch</i> newspapers, June 7, 2021). The reports also highlighted the potential job losses and economic implications of the ban by social media users, especially social media content creators.
<i>The Nation</i>	<i>The Nation</i> newspaper described the ban as "unfortunate" and an infringement on Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution, which guarantees freedom of expression. They quoted the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) President, Olumide Akpata, who stated that the government's action was a "disguised attempt to regulate social media, restrict freedom of speech and shrink civic space" (<i>The Nation</i> newspaper, June 7, 2021).
<i>This Day Live</i>	<i>This Day Live</i> reported that the Twitter ban was a response to the platform's deletion of President Muhammadu Buhari's tweet, which referenced the Nigerian Civil War. The government claimed the tweet was a threat to national security, while critics argued it was a violation of freedom of expression (<i>This Day Live</i> , June 7, 2021).
<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Guardian</i> newspaper reported that the Twitter ban was part of a pattern of attacks on free expression in Nigeria, citing restrictions on the Feminist Coalition's website and crackdowns on social media users (<i>The Guardian</i> , June 5, 2021).

A critical examination of these reports reveals that the Nigerian media largely criticized the government's decision to ban Twitter, citing concerns about freedom of expression and the potential economic impact. The reports also highlighted the government's justification for the ban, which was based on national security concerns and allegations of Twitter allowing divisive content on its platform. The ban was also widely condemned by international organizations, including Amnesty International, and domestic groups like the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and the Nigerian Bar Association. They argued that the ban was an unjustified restriction on freedom of expression and access to information.

Table 3: Thematic Analysis of User-Generated Contents on Twitter Ban in Nigeria

Theme	Analysis of User-Generated Contents
<i>Criticism of government actions</i>	Internet users strongly criticised the government's decision, citing concerns about freedom of expression and suppression of dissent. Many saw the ban as an abuse of power, undermining democracy and limiting citizens' voices. Example of tweet: "The Twitter ban is a clear attempt to silence dissenting voices and stifle free speech in Nigeria. "Citizens should not be punished as a result of the error committed by the President because he's just an individual" "Instead of apologising to the nation for the President's racist comment and insensitivity on the slain Nigerians during the Civil War,

	Buhari's government rewarded the citizens by mocking the Civil War victims and stifling means of free speech.
<i>National security versus freedom of expression</i>	The debate centered on balancing national security concerns with the need to protect freedom of expression. Some argued the ban was necessary to prevent misinformation, while others saw it as an unjustified restriction. Example of tweet: "National security is important, but not at the cost of our freedoms".
<i>Economic impact</i>	Users highlighted potential economic losses, including job losses and disruptions to businesses relying on Twitter. The ban was seen as hurting Nigeria's digital economy. Example of tweet: "SMEs are already struggling. The Twitter ban will worsen the economic crisis" of the average citizens.
<i>Social media regulation</i>	The ban sparked calls for transparent, rights-based frameworks to govern online spaces in Nigeria. Users debated the need for regulation versus freedom. Example of tweet: "We need clear rules for social media in Nigeria, but not like this".
<i>Government-citizen relations</i>	The ban strained relations, with many seeing it as authoritarian. Users questioned the government's motives and approach. Example of tweet: "This is what happens when you have a government that doesn't listen to its people".
<i>Digital rights and governance</i>	Users raised concerns about digital rights, privacy, and governance in Nigeria. The ban highlighted the need for protections. Example of tweet: "Nigerians deserve better digital rights".
<i>Impact on Nigerian citizens</i>	The Nigerian government's policy documents on social media regulation have significant implications for citizens, including restrictions on freedom of expression, suppression of dissent, erosion of digital rights, and limited access to information
<i>Digital rights and governance</i>	Users raised concerns about digital rights and governance in Nigeria, highlighting the need for more protections for online freedoms and privacy.
<i>Support for the ban</i>	Some users, especially government officials and those apologetic to the government, supported the ban, arguing that it was necessary to prevent the spread of misinformation and promote national security.
<i>International reactions</i>	The ban was widely condemned by international organizations, including the EU, US, Britain, Canada, and Ireland, which saw it as a restriction on freedom of expression.

From the above table, the impact of the Twitter ban was felt across various sectors, sparking debates about freedom of expression, digital governance, and the role of social media in Nigerian society. This analysis suggests that user-generated contents related to the Twitter ban in Nigeria were largely critical of the government's actions and highlighted concerns about freedom of expression, digital rights, and government-citizen relations.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Without doubt, studies in the past have established the general and obvious advantages of freedom of expression, some of which focused on social media platforms. Social media sites have the potential to expose citizens and users to more diverse sources, and as a consequence, citizens may have a wider, more

diverse picture of events and versions of relevant and transcendent stories for civic participation and social events. Suffice it to say that the citizens are incidentally exposed in social media to news and sources they wouldn't actively choose in other environments. That is, social media have the potential to expose individuals to varieties of information, not only about socio-economic issues, but also political and government activities on matters that affect their lives and wellbeing. This also has far reaching consequences because users who spend more time on social media are exposed to more news, and also show a higher degree of political participation and social engagements.

CONCLUSION

The ability to sensitize individuals on the decision of the federal government on how their involvement in some social activity affects the freedom of expression of the citizens by the involvement. In this study, the focus was to carry out an investigation of social media and the challenge of freedom of expression: A case of twitter ban in Nigeria. This study specifically aimed at ascertaining the challenge of freedom of expression and how the twitter ban has affected the lives of twitter users within Owo Metropolis. This study reviewed and anchored its framework on cognitive balance theory.

The study adopted the survey research design and randomly participants in the study. A total of 350 responses were validated from the enrolled participant where all respondents were twitter users within Owo Metropolis Owo, Ondo State. The findings revealed that the Twitter ban in Nigeria is a dint on the quest for freedom of expression in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the response obtained, the research proffers the following recommendations. In the first instance, the government should be more accountable to its citizens when making huge decisions because they do not serve themselves but the citizens as is meant to be in a democratic state.

The government should also take down the twitter ban and allow for freedom of expression on social media platforms without taking aggravated decisions and relationships with the public and conflict resolution should be one of the primary responsibilities of the government to its citizens on communication executive.

In addition to the above, Twitter users should use other means and other social media platforms to pass across information and conduct their business and count the ban on twitter as not worthy of challenges to their freedom of expression. Apart from the foregoing, the government should resolve the problem identified for this study (freedom of expression) and give citizens full access to their rights to prevent recurrence of the situation or similar ones.

These will facilitate review of existing regulations, such as the Cybercrime Act to prioritize human rights and freedom of expression; establish clear guidelines; promote digital literacy and foster multi-stakeholder dialogue.

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