



## Influence of Government-Owned Broadcast Media Stations in Promoting Political Participation in Ebonyi State

STELLA NELSON-OGBAEJA, Ph.D & NELSON IROABUCHI OGBAEJA, Ph.D

Department of Mass Communication Evangel University, Akaeze Ebonyi State, Nigeria stellaogbaeja@gmail.com Department of Mass Communication Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki ogbaejanelson@gmail.com

### Abstract

This study is to ascertain the influence of government broadcast media in promoting political participation in Ebonyi State using Unity FM Abakaliki, NTA Abakaliki and Ebonyi Broadcasting Corporation (EBBC) Abakaliki as case study. The specific objectives are: to examine the role of Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV stations in promoting political participation in Ebonyi State, to determine the way government radio and television programmes have assisted audience in democratic participation in Ebonyi State, to ascertain the extent ownership affects broadcast media performance in Ebonyi State, and to examine the level of confidence the audience has in political programmes and messages from Unity Fm, NTA and EBBC radio/TV. This study adopts agenda setting theory. Survey design was used and a sample size of 400 respondents was selected and administered with questionnaire for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis approach. The findings made are: Unity FM, NTA and EBBC Radio/TV Abakaliki have played a great role in promoting political participation in Ebonyi State through their various programmes and messages. This study recommends that broadcast media stations in Ebonyi State should improve on quality and people oriented democratic programmes, be guided by the principle of social responsibility so as to promote public interest, should maintain a cordial working relationship with the government and should have professional personnel with requisite skills for the kind of textured and in-depth reporting the new democracy requires.

**Key Words:** Influence, Government, Broadcast Media, Promotion, Political Participation, Ebonyi State

### Introductory background of the Study

In the contemporary society, it could be said that there is a very strong functional relationship between mass media performance and political activities in a democratic setting. This is because it is often said that in an ideal democracy, “the media have a complex relationship with sources of power and the political system” (Mc Quail, 2005). Both politics and the media seem to have a common view on promoting the individual and collective interests of the society.

Although the primary responsibilities of the media are to entertain without slander or libel, inform based on accurate facts and educate on current relevant issues, development scholars and professionals have widely recognized the utility of the mass media in the sustenance of viable political participation. They see political participation as what guarantees and recognizes individual's participation as well as institutional participation. For instance, the mass media are meant to supply political information that would contribute to

building and sustaining an enabling democratic atmosphere (Kadiri, Muhammed, Raji & Rasheed, 2015).

The media is a lifeline of a nation. It provides not only information on what may affect the normal human being in his day-to-day functioning. The reach of the media and the effect that it can have on general public has always been recognized by the society to a great extent. Egbon (2001) in view of an ideal democratic journalism reveals that government without media or media without government may not last. This means that mass media in a democracy cannot be undermined.

Electronic media play a vital role in promoting national democracy. Because of this centrality, the media justifiably focus their attention, in fact, accord high priority on the government and those in it. In the process, the media are partly expected to expose and criticize bureaucratic incompetence, dictatorial tendencies and abuse of power among officials.

As indicated earlier, the broadcast media are

generally engaged in active political reporting necessary for the substances of democracy where the system of checks and balances is required for good governance and democratic sustainability. It affords the media the opportunity to provide an open forum for legitimated interest group” to participate in public affairs. Ebo (1997) historically reveals that the mass media were heralded as the ultimate instruments of democracy. They were designed to unite, educate and as a result, improve the actions and decisions of the polity.

The influence of electronic media in promoting democracy starts from the premise that development and democracy cannot thrive without open and free public space where all issues concerning people's lives can be aired and debated and which gives them room and opportunity to participate in decision making. Democracy is usually described as government by dialogue and electronic media are ideally placed to facilitate the dialogue by providing the space for it – if their services are accessible, independent, credible and open to the full spectrum of diverse views.

This paper considered the influence of electronic media in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State. The media performs vital functions of information, education, entertainment and persuasion. By this, electronic media, through more of government owned at both the federal and state levels are engaged in packaging of developmental programmes and activities with the aim of shaping the attitude of Nigerians.

However, this is not to suggest that the media have been perfect in all circumstances. They have been severely criticized for complicity in truncating and subverting the democratic process at various times. For instance, Enahoro once observed that “whoever and whatever ruined the first republic did so with the active connivance and collaboration of the greater part of the Nigerian press.”

Similarly, James (1984) decries on the high degree of professional rascality exhibited by the media organs, as “they have become megaphones and machineries of propaganda to political parties and vested interests to the extent that the unity of this country was shaken to its very foundation”.

Several other writers and scholars have expressed similar opinion (Akinfeleye, 2004).

It is on this note that the Nigerian media, particularly the broadcasting channels with their advantages of reach, cost timelines, and acceptability was assessed in this paper with a view to promoting sustainable democratic system in Ebonyi State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The broadcast media in every society are often set to educate, inform and entertain. For effective reportage of democratic activities, the broadcast media are usually chosen as the most influential and effective media of communication. Their power emanates from their attributes like immediacy, wider reach or coverage, language friendly, portability in terms of radio, audio visual impact in terms of television and so on. It is assumed that where those roles are adequately carried out, broadcast media are bound to be free and fair.

It is obvious that broadcast media in Ebonyi State have in one way or the other been influencing cum promoting democracy. However, research has not been carried out on the influence of the broadcast media in Ebonyi State on promoting democratic issues and programmes. On this note, this study was done to ascertain the influence of Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV in promoting democratic issues affecting them in Ebonyi State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to determine the role of broadcast media in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State. However, the specific objectives are:

1. To examine the role of Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State.
2. To determine the way radio and television programmes have assisted audience in democratic participation in Ebonyi State.
3. To ascertain the extent ownership affects broadcast media performance in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State.
4. To examine the level of confidence the audience

has in political programmes and messages from Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV.

### Research Questions

1. What is the role of Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State?
2. In what way have radio/TV programmes assisted audience in democratic participation in Ebonyi State?
3. To what extent does ownership affect broadcast media performance in Ebonyi State?
4. Do the audiences of mass media in Ebonyi State have confidence in political messages from Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV?

### Significance of the Study

This study will help to create awareness on the role of Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State and bring to the limelight the responsibility of electronic media as aids to government and electoral commission in integrating urban and rural dwellers into political process and life style to enhance national democracy.

Furthermore, the findings and recommendations of this study will be of immense benefit to students, academic, policy formulators, planners and executors in government. It will also serve as a point of references or consultation for, present and future studies in the same area.

### Scope of the Study

This work covers the whole of Ebonyi State. Three local government areas were selected, namely: Abakaliki, Ikwo and Afikpo South Local Government areas respectively. These local government areas were randomly selected from the three senatorial Zones of Ebonyi State, one Local government area from each senatorial zone.

In order to make the study manageable and more purposeful, the researcher has chosen to study the audience of Unity FM, NTA and Ebonyi Broadcasting Co-operation (EBBC) in general. Because of time and other reasons, the research concentrated on Ebonyi State. The research effort was only limited to survey research.

### Review of Related Literature

#### Broadcast Media and their Operations

Broadcast media are the media organs or channels such as radio and television that produce and transmit media messages for public reception or consumption (Ogbuoshi, 2011). As electronic media, they are known as been very powerful in instant and prompt dissemination of information to their heterogeneous audience simultaneously. This they do successfully, especially in the area of informing, and educating their audience on the right things to do concerning any issue of public interest just like this female genital mutilation practice.

The broadcast media are expected to provide an imperative check on the various institutions of the society by instilling a sense of order and stability to the society (Wogu, 2009). It is generally recognized that the first radio transmission was made from temporary station set up by Guglielmo Marconi in 1895 on the Isle of Wight. The radio broadcasting of music and talk intended to reach a dispersed audience started experimentally around 1905-1906 and commercially around 1920 to 1932. VHF (very high frequency) stations started 30-35 years later.

According to Ogbuoshi (2011), broadcasting in Nigeria began December 2, 1932 with a station built in Lagos as a monitoring relay for BBC which started Radio Distribution Service and later metamorphosed into the Nigerian Broadcasting Service. "Programmes were originated and transmitted from London to subscribers in Nigeria by telephone wires and were purely British though sometimes they were tailored to suit the taste of colonial listeners". Aliede (2003) also confirmed this when he says that "most of the programmes were European Oriented".

"Regional broadcasting according to Nwanze (2003) began in 1959 with Western Region in the lead". The industry has come a long way and has gone through a lot of changes in trying to keep pace with the intricacies of an ever-changing society (Udomisor, 2013). But with the creation of 36 states and arrival of democratic government, the broadcast media became all government tool as well as individuals who can afford and meet up the demand of running the industry hence, public and

private broadcast media are significant sector of the Nigerian society.

Both radio and television broadcast media perform an indispensable role in the development of any nation (Chapman, 2003). Radio and television are usually regarded as the most effective tools in communication for the support of development (Nwanze, 2003). They contribute immensely to the development and sustenance of democracy.

Ebo (1997) sees the electronic media as “the most potent and sensitive sectors of the communication industry considering the reach and influence they have on their viewers and listeners.” Likewise, Orhewere and Kur (2003) refer to “the broadcast media as playing decisive roles in the lives of the citizens no matter where they are located and whatever stage of development”. The media depend on electricity for transmission e. g radio, television, recordings and video (the new electronics). It is the transmission of voices to and music at great distances to a large number of people.

Nwanwene (1995) writes that broadcasting is a technology that uses the radio waves. It is the transmission through space by means of radio frequencies of signals capable of being received orally by the general public. The inbuilt mechanisms in radio are powerful that receivers stay in their houses, tune to the appropriate channels and get the voice message.

Ume Nwagbo (1995) comments on the functional benefits of the media as agents of mass communication that provide varieties of programmes, “which meet the needs of listeners and viewers in the country and those across the urban boundaries of the society.

### **Responsibilities of Broadcast Media in a Democratic Dispensation**

The media generally are known to perform certain functions in the world over but more importantly in democratic governance. Cremedas and Lysak, (2011) identified at least four roles that the media should perform in sustaining democracy. These are:

**I. Watchdog over Government-** The media being non-state actors are ideally placed to act as watchdog to the government by digging up

information about the political process and alerting the public. In so doing, the media pushes the government on the path of accountability. In a free and democratic society, the media as a whole is the market place of political thought. The broadcast media exist to serve the information needs of the citizenry. Editors, commentators, anchormen and newsmen as a whole work on the principle that the public is entitled to all the facts in political situation and that on the basis of these facts; it can make its own decisions.

**ii. Clarifying Electoral Choices:-** It is also the role of the media to furnish the people with information in clear terms about the electoral choices available to them in fuzzy electoral campaigns. For example, the ideological differences between and among parties and the position of candidates on public policies. (The recently determined press identical election in America is a classic case).

**iii. Providing Policy Information: -** It is also the duty of the media to educate the populace about policies of government; the pros and cons of such and; the reality of alternative policy framework. The policies and aim of government are made known through the media and are examined exhaustively by opposition political figures, and by commentators and the general public through the same media. The broadcast media are regulated in such a way as to allow the voice of opposition to criticize some government proposals.

**iv. Other Roles:-**The media also provide the avenue for government to speak to the public; it offers an official channel of communication between government and the public. Another important role of the media is the Agenda setting role. Agenda setting role when performed satisfactorily by the media strengthen democratic government. Although it is true that the media in advanced democracies cannot be said to have perfectly executed these roles, yet it can be argued that it has sufficiently tried in accomplishing them.



### Empirical Review

Ogbuaku (2006) in his work titled “the impact of radio in promoting political participation, a study of Ubakala community” observed that “the result derived from the tested hypothesis on the role radio has played in influencing people of Ubakala compared to other media of communication shows that the chi-square calculated value (50.04) is above the cut-off point of the chi-square tabulated value ( $X^2_{tv} = 16.92$ ). Therefore it is empirically supported that radio is a veritable tool in promoting political participation in Ubakala community. He further stated that the main role of the broadcast media in a democracy is to keep the public informed about government activities. This major pre-occupation of the broadcast media is referred to as the watchdog or surveillance role.

Using descriptive analytical method, he opines that the media serves as the eyes and ears of the public. It exposes political corruption at all levels of government. He stressed that there is hardly any government that will concede to reveal all its secrets to the glaring light of the press investigation. This is the evidence in the fact that a probing press in the true spirit of its professional calling wishing to spy into all the activities of government in order to ensure proper governance is contributing its quota to national democracy. He therefore recommends that the media should keep the citizens engaged in the business of governance by informing, educating and mobilizing the public.

Oge (2008) in a related issue observed that the result derived from the tested hypothesis on his research work titled “the impact of radio broadcasting in promoting political awareness in Ebonyi State” shows that the chi-square calculated value 81 is greater than the table value -5. 991. Therefore it was empirically supported that radio broadcasting play a great role in promoting political awareness in Ebonyi State. He further elucidates that the media force attention on certain issues. They build up images of political figures, and constantly, presenting objects suggesting what individual should think about.

Having adopted content analysis, he finally recommends that for media to effectively play its

role as the watchdog and promoter of democracy, there is an urgent need for media practitioners to acquire a deep understanding of the people, issues, and trends in their communities for proper information, education and enlightenment of the people about democracy as well as hold government accountable.

The government is accountable to the citizens as democracy depends upon literate knowledgeable citizens whose access to information enables them to participate as fully as possible in the public life of society and to criticize unwise or oppressive government officials.

Idenyi (2010) in his contribution explains that communication network can serve as agenda for the promotion of democracy. It can also provide useful information to curtail or fuel human conflict in democratic process. In his work titled “broadcast media and conflict resolution” he observed that “the result from the tested hypothesis on whether broadcast media help in conflict resolution reveals that the chi-square calculated value 93.63 is greater than the table value 12.592. Therefore it was generally accepted that broadcast media is a veritable tool in conflict resolution.

Using descriptive analytical method, he recommends that the media should bridge the communication gap between the society and democracy by providing useful, relevant and proper information about democracy and by prescribing possible options for peaceful resolution of conflicts always. The mass media should not be used as destroyer of democracy but as builders of democratic structure. The communicators should not be manipulators; this should serve as quality controller of peaceful resolution of dictatorship.

### Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in agenda setting theory. Agenda setting theory was developed in 1970 by MC Comb and Donald Shaw after the study of media role in 1968 presidential election of the United States (Baran, & Davis, 2008). This theory states that a direct correlation exists between what the media choose to give prominence in their coverage and what the audience holds as important

issue. It is an assumption that a direct, positive relationship exists between media coverage and Salience of a topic in public mind.

Agenda setting describes a very powerful influence of the media, the ability to tell us what issues are important. Those issues or individuals that the media choose to publicize ultimately become the issues and individual we think and talk about.

Iwokwagh and Ijiwo (2007) state the elements involved in Agenda setting theory to include:

- The quality of frequency of reporting.
- Prominence given to the reports through headlines display, pictures and layout in newspapers, magazine, film, graphics or timing on radio and television.
- The degree of conflicts generated in the report and specific cumulative media efforts overtime.

In addition to politics and elections, research on Agenda setting later focused on racial unrest, student riots, crime statistics, inflation, drug abuse etc.

Finally, a prominent dimension in agenda setting theory is the suggestion that the press is a search light, and where the search light is shining can be affected by the group with special interest on an issue in the pseudo-events created to get attention and by certain practice of journalism.

The theory was chosen because of the related issue it holds with the topic of this research. The mass media most often initiate an issue for discussion which the society adopts and makes it a subject of discussion and heated debate in a democratic setting.

As it concerns Nigerian politics, the media not only propagate, promote and transmit or air political events, activities and programmes but also keep politician abreast of what is happening around them, including their political party activities and programmes. It further demonstrates that the mass media is the vehicle that conveys ideas and wishes of one segment of the society to the government.

Agenda setting theory gives media the right to call attention to certain issues and such issues become prominent among the audience as the prevalent issues to think and talk about.

**Research Methodology**

**Research Design**

Research design serves as the framework for data collection of a study. Nwonu (2006) asserts that research design is a comprehensive data collection plan whose purpose is to answer research questions and test research hypothesis. Since this study is aimed at assessing the role of broadcast media in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State, a study of two media houses in the state. Survey design method was adopted in this work. In using this method, opinions of the audience of these media houses were ascertained through the administration of questionnaire. Information was also gathered through interviews.

**Population of the Study**

The population of this study was drawn from the 2016 projected population size of the three selected LGAs of Ebonyi State by the National Population Commission of Nigeria and National Bureau of Statistics respectively. The population size is 582,200.

Table 1: 2016 Projected population size of Ebonyi State by the National Population Commission of Nigeria and National Bureau of Statistics

Name	Status	Population Census 2006-03-21	Population Projection 2016-03-21
Ebonyi	State	2,176,947	2,880,400
Abakaliki	Local Government Area	149,947	198,100
Ezza South	Local Government Area	133,625	176,800
Afikpo North	Local Government Area	156,649	207,300

Source: National Population Commission of Nigeria (web), National Bureau of Statistics (2016)

**Determination of Sample Size**

The sample size of this study was determined by using a sample size online calculator developed by Australia's National Statistical Service (NSS). In using the Australian Calculator, the population size of 582,200 was imputed and the calculator automatically generated the sample size of 384 for this study.

**Sampling Technique**

In order to get the actual respondents from the determined sample size, the researcher adopted multi-stage sampling technique. Firstly, cluster sampling technique was used to divide Ebonyi State into three clusters. The zones are Ebonyi North, Ebonyi Central and Ebonyi South.

In the second stage, in each of the three senatorial/political zones, the researcher used purposive sampling method and selected one Local Governments Area (LGA) while in the third stage; the researcher used simple random sampling technique and selected five political wards from each of the Local Government Areas.

**Research Instrument**

Instrument of data collection used in this study questionnaire. Questionnaire was administered to the audience of the media houses under study.

**Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

The validity of instrument refers to the ability of an instrument to prove what it actually claims to measure. The above instrument of data collection

are valid because the questionnaires have graded answers in order to enable the respondents have a wide choice of answers to choose from and not being left with two extremes yes or no. The researcher subjected the instruments to material validity by presenting it to some experts for tests and measurement. On reliability, the test-retest method was adopted. This indicated that the instrument is reliable.

**Method of Data Analysis**

This study used descriptive statistical method to analyze data collected from the respondents. In doing this, the researcher imputed data collected from the questionnaire into the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) data editor to ascertain the percentage and frequency values of responses in tables.

**Presentation of Findings**

A total of 384 copies of questionnaire were distributed to randomly selected participants within the state but in return, a total number of copies of the questionnaire returned and found usable for analysis were 375, representing 97.7% percent return rate. The data gathered from the field were presented quantitatively using descriptive statistical method. In this method, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data editor was used to compute and present the responses infrequency tables and percentages. The results are presented in tables as follow:

Table 2: Audience exposure to government broadcast media stations in Ebonyi State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid EBBC Radio	229	61.1	61.1	61.1
EBBC Television	28	7.5	7.5	68.5
Unity FM	103	27.5	27.5	96.0
NTA Channel 43, Abakaliki	13	3.5	3.5	99.5
All of the above	2	.5	.5	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2022

Table 3: Government broadcast media role in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Information on democratic activities and processes	204	54.4	54.4	54.4
Education of the people	125	33.3	33.3	87.7
Sensitization of the people	31	8.3	8.3	96.0
Mobilization of the people	15	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2022

In table 1, responses to the statement: audience exposure to government broadcast media stations in Ebonyi State, showed that majority 229 (61.1%) of the respondents were exposed to EBBC radio. 103 respondents representing (27.5%) indicated 'Unity FM' except 2 respondents that said were exposed to all the broadcast media stations.

Table 3 above shows responses to the statement: Government broadcast media role in promoting

democracy in Ebonyi State. It shows that 204 (54.4%) of the respondents indicated on information on democratic activities and processes while 125 (33.3%) indicated on education of the people. Those who indicated that the broadcast media sensitize people were 31 (8.3%) against 15 (4.0%) that said indicated mobilization of people on democratic events.

Table 4: Ways in which broadcast media programmes assisted audience in democratic participation in Ebonyi State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Through political/democratic news and programmes	351	93.6	93.6	93.6
Through democratic advertisements and promos	11	2.9	2.9	96.5
Through specialized reporting and commentaries	13	3.5	3.5	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2022

Table 5: Extent to which government ownership of broadcast media affect their performance in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very high extent	308	82.1	82.1	82.1
Low extent	31	8.3	8.3	90.4
Average level	36	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2022



Entries in table 4 above, shows response to the statement: Ways in which broadcast media programmes assisted audience in democratic participation in Ebonyi State. Majority, 351 (93.6%) indicated “through political/democratic news and programmes” while 11 (2.9%) indicated 'through democratic advertisements and promos'. Thirteen (13) respondents representing (3.5%) said it is through specialized reporting and commentaries.

Table 5 shows the response pattern of the respondents regarding the extent to which government ownership of broadcast media affect their performance in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State. Thus, 308(82.1%) said very high

extent while 8.3% said low extent and 36 respondents said it is at average level.

Based on the responses in table 6, majority of the respondents 286(76.3%) said they have high confidence on the political messages from Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV for promoting democracy in Ebonyi State. The respondents who indicated 'average level of confidence' were 32(8.5%) while 113 respondents said they have low level of confidence on the political messages from Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV for promoting democracy in Ebonyi State. The least, 5 or 1.3% said they have no idea.

Table 6: Level of audiences confidence on political messages from Unity FM, NTA and EBBC radio/TV for promoting democracy in Ebonyi State

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid High level of confidence	225	60.0	60.0	60.0
Average level of confidence	32	8.5	8.5	68.5
Low level of confidence	113	30.1	30.1	98.7
No idea	5	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2022

**Discussion of Findings**

The discussion of findings of this study is drawn from the outcome of data analysis. The results revealed that out of the four government's broadcast media stations, majority of the respondents were more exposed to EBBC than other stations. This could be as a result of their wider and farer outreach. All the media outfits are seen to be well known and accessible to some of the respondents because their nearness and other viable qualities.

On the role of these broadcast media towards promoting democracy in Ebonyi State, majority of the respondents give their support and credence to the media stations. Iwokwagh (2009) equally lends credence to this issue; he notes that the mass media act as a mirror that reflect society to society, and as a result serve as a gauge for measuring the level of social, political and economic development in the society.

Findings on ways in which broadcast media in Ebonyi State promote democracy, it was found that political cum democratic news, programmes, commentaries, specialized reporting, political advertisements and promos are approaches or ways adopted by these media houses as indicated by the respondents. By doing these, the broadcast media should serve as agenda setters. As agenda setters, the broadcast media emphasize democratic themes thereby making the public to think and talk about democracy, and that triggers development in a given society.

The findings were supported by Dare (2009) that, “the mass media represent an institutionalized channel for distribution of social knowledge and hence a potential powerful instrument of social control. In the same light, Idoko (2010) opines that “a popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a

prologue to a farce or tragedy, or perhaps both". Nwabueze (2011) has simply said; any polity where government does not allow the press enough freedom to perform its traditional role of watch dog, will continue to pay the price in terms of having bad government, will lack development, stagnation and stunted growth of the democratic culture.

The findings revealed that government influences democratic programmes, news and messages from the media probably because they are the owners. Most of the respondents agreed with this. Atim (2010) in his study on broadcast media and voting behaviour found a related result where ownership of media influences the activities of the media. However, influence of ownership did not have much effect on the confidence of the audience of the democratic messages, and programmes.

From all indications, the summary of these findings shows that:

- a) Unity FM, NTA and EBBC Radio/TV stations are playing a great role in promoting democracy in Ebonyi State. Such roles include informing, educating, sensitizing and mobilizing Ebonyi people on politics and democratic issues.
- b) The broadcast media stations in Ebonyi State, through news, programmes, advertisements, promotions, commentaries and specialized reporting of democratic messages, events and programmes contribute in promoting democracy in State.
- c) It was discovered that government as the owner of these broadcast media station influences the way and manner in which they operate to high extent,
- d) This study found that in spite of the influence of government on the broadcast media, majority of the respondents have high level of confidence on the democratic activities of the media stations.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

From the above presentation, it is obvious that the media are known to be strong, efficacious and veritable instruments in shaping and ordering social dynamics. They are expected to inform both the public and the government, create a particular

political view in the minds of the people, education, sensitize and mobilize the people for political actions. In a democratic society, it provides the ground for equal participation of all peoples and parties in political debate, discussions and evaluations.

The study has shown that broadcast media houses in Ebonyi State have achieved the best in line with audience or public expectations from them on promoting democratic method of governance. It is on this note that the following recommendations are made:

To this end, this paper recommends the following:

- i. Broadcast media should be guided by the principle of social responsibility, i.e. inclusivity, fairness and balance in the handling of political coverage.
- ii. Broadcast media should promote the principles of public involvement in programme planning and production.
- iii. Stations need to develop strategic plans on promoting democratic values through behavior change oriented programmes targeted at different segments of the population.
- iv. Stations should work towards changing the mindsets of our politicians and general population on negative attitudes like money politics, political vandalism and rascality etc.
- v. The broadcast media should maintain a cordial waking relationship with the government, but be firm in the execution of its surveillance to the society.
- vi. The media should be financially viable in order to operate and meet up with challenges and expectations.

### References

- Akinfeleye, R. (1995). *Democracy, society and the mass media*. In Omang, O. (Ed.), *Nigerian mass media and national crisis*. Lagos: NPC.
- Aliede, J. E. (2003). Mass media and politics in Nigeria: a historical and contemporary overview In I. E. Nwosu (Ed.), *Polimedia: Media and politics in Nigeria* (pp.30-36). Enugu: Prime Targets Ltd.

- Atim, T. (2010). *Democracy, society and the mass media in Nigeria*. Makurdi: Mishad Publishers. Baran, J. S. & Davis, K.D. (2008). *Mass communication theory: foundations, present and future*. USA: Wadsworth Cengage.
- Chapman, R. (2003). Rural radio in an agriculture extension: The example of vernacular radio program's on soil and water conservation in Ghana. *Network paper*, 127 (15). <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258517371>.
- Cremedas, M. & Lysak, S. (2011). New media skills competency expected of TV reporters and producers: a survey. *Electronic News*, 5(1), 41-59.
- Dare, I. (2009). Narrating the Nigerian story: The challenge of journalism, A speech delivered at the Second Edition of the Wole Soyinka Lecture Series at Lagos, 13<sup>th</sup> July. Retrieved 13/09/2013 from <http://thenationonlineng.net>.
- Davis, R. (2009). *The press and American politics*. Retrieved from <http://www.Diretessay.com/..//92725.html>.
- Ebo, S.J. (1997). Broadcasting mobilization for rural development, *The Nigerian Society for the promotion of indigenous studies*.
- Egbon, (2001). *Democratic journalism in two worlds*. Makurdi: Mishad Publishers. Idoko, (2010). *The Nigeria media and the consolidation of democracy*. *Makurdi Journal of Communication Research Major* (Maiden issue July- December, (1), 101-106.
- Iwokwagh, N. (2009). *The mass media and mass mobilization in a democracy*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers. Iwokwagh, N. & Ijwo, A. (2007). *Mass media and the challenges of sustainable democracy in Nigeria*. A Paper Presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the National Association for Science, Humanities and Education Research (NASHER). Nasarawa State University, Keffi. July pp. 18-21.
- James, U. A., (1984). *Decree 4 Responsible journalism in Nigerian Journalist*. 2(2), 52-59. Lagos: NUJ.
- Kadiri, K., Muhammed, Y A., Raji, A. & Rasheed, L. (2015). *Mass media for sustainable democracy and development in Nigeria*. Research-Gate.
- McQuail, D. (2005). *Mass communication theory*. London: Sage Publications.
- Nwabueze, C. (2005). Mass media and community mobilization for development: an analytical approach. *International Journal of Communication*, 2 1-5.
- Nwabueze, C. (2011). Communication and rural development in Africa: critical role of broadcasting In V. Agbanu and C. Nwabueze (Eds.), *Readings in mass communications global perspectives on communication issues*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex.
- Nwanwene, T. A. (1995). *Radio production techniques: An introductory approach*. Ibadan: Afrika-Link Books, 22.
- Nwanze, I. (2003). *Broadcasting in Nigeria: Private broadcasting, prospects and challenges and Legal aspects*. Port-Harcourt: Renaissance Communication Ltd
- Nwodu, L. C. (2006). *Research in communication and the behavioral sciences, Principles methods and issues*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishers.
- Ogbuoshi, L. I. (2011). *Introduction to mass communication*. Enugu: Newmoon Publishers.
- Orhewere, J. & Kur, J. (2003). The role of the broadcast media in preventing political violence during elections. *The Nigerian Journal of Communications*, 2, (1 &2). Enugu: ACCE/Prime Targets.
- Udomisor, I.W. (2013). *Management of radio and television stations in Nigerian new media `and mass communication*, 10. [www.iiste.org07/15/18](http://www.iiste.org07/15/18).
- Ume-Nwagbo, E. (1995). *Television production: principles and practice*. Lagos: Strad Ltd.
- Wogu, J. O. (2009). *Perspective in media and network society*. Nsukka: Perspeo.