

# Evaluation of Broadcast Media and Voters' Education during Gubernatorial Election in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study investigated the evaluation of broadcast media and voters' education during gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The objective of the study was also to examine the activities of Broadcast media in educating Voters about the conduct of election and investigate how voters' education can be promoted during election by the broadcast media in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for this study consists of 450 staff of radio stations and 450,000 adult indigenes from 5 Local Government areas in Ekiti State. The sample for this study consists of 30 staff of two radio stations and 300 indigenes from 5 Local Government areas in Ekiti State. The instrument used was a self-designed Questionnaire titled "Broadcast Media and Voters' education Questionnaire (Bmveq)". was used to collect data from the respondents. The face and content validity of the questionnaire was ensured through experts' broadcast media, voters' education, tests, measurement and evaluation both within and outside Ekiti State. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using test-retest method and the value obtained was 0.94. Data collected for the study was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistic. The result showed that media stations run programmes in order to enlighten and sensitize. The result also showed that media house introduces indigenous and local languages in publicizing political information. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Broadcast media have indeed contributed immensely in Voters' education through different running of traditional and indigenous programmes staged. More programmes on electoral enlightenment and education should be aired in order to keep the electoral and the populace informed about political activities and occurrences in the polity and that Government policies and programmes should also be made public so as to make the people more knowledgeable about governmental activities*

**Keywords:** Broadcast Media, Voters' Education, Election, Electoral System and Information

## 1. Introduction

The use of social media in politics has continued to grow in recent times. Since Barack Obama broke the world record in the history of social media use for political purpose during the 2008 US presidential elections, many nations and politicians across the globe have continued to embrace the platform to mobilise their citizens and candidates towards active participation in the political process, Esuh, (2014).

Over time, Broadcast media in Nigeria has been used as a medium of communication that seeks to impact in the life of average Nigerians by influencing positively its social, cultural, economic, political and technological thinking.

In contemporary time television and radio is used as a tool in disseminating information to the people about electoral process. Such alignment is meant to educate Voters and members of the society about electioneering campaigns thereby ensuring credible electoral outcomes in elections in Nigeria.

The broadcast media is an instrument used to educate Voters through jingles, advert placement, political debates, electoral advice all geared towards the education and political enlightenment and education of the Nigeria electorate/Voters.

Ibemesi and Duru (2013) have also noted that the media "influence the emergence of political ideology by the fact

of their being the platform on which political discourse happens" (p.176). They further note that the foregoing powers of the media expose their potential as facilitators of political ideology through conscious and systematic presentations.

Ibemesi, D. and Duru, H. C. (2013). The media and quest for an ideology driven political culture in Nigeria. In P. Umaru, C. Nwabueze and N. Idiong (eds). Politics, culture and the media in Nigeria. Pp.169 – 181. Ibadan: Stirling – Horden Publishers Ltd. Oso (2012) notes that the "role of the mass media in making politics and society visible in providing information, analysis, fora for debate; etc is beyond dispute" (p.272).

Dahlgren (2001) as cited by Oso (2012) notes in corroboration that the mass media have been instrumental in globalizing the normative features of democracy. The mass media are indeed endowed with capacities to wield an enormous influence on the people through widespread voter enlightenment and awareness. In this regard, Umechukwu (2004), as cited by Ochonogor and Omego (2012), observes that the role of the mass media in the electoral process can be subsumed under enlightenment.

The history of the elections in Nigeria generally has afforded us the golden opportunity of assessment of the divergent roles of the media in Nigerian political process within the frame work of the national political goal. The issue of and question of education, information

mobilization and monitoring has become a very crucial factor in the context of the electoral process.

According to Iredia (2007) the former Director General of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) states the problem in this regard very clearly that, the people must be assist to promise their choices of rationality and vote wisely during elections. They must have all information that is needed to elect the right candidates who can ensure good governance where such public awareness is lacking, those of us in the media must accept a share of the blame of failed elections in Nigeria.

Voting can be defined as the process of formally indicating one's choice or opinion especially in election. Voting is a process of formally indicating one's choice or opinion especially in an election or referendum. It is also the casting of ballots for eligible aspirants by eligible Voters; while Voters are those who cast their ballots in an election Voters' education refers to basic information enabling qualified citizen to vote including the date, time, and place of voting, the type of election, identification necessary to establish eligibility, registration requirements and mechanisms for voting.

Voters' education typically addresses voter's motivation and preparedness to participate fully in elections. It pertains to relatively more complex types of information about voting and the electoral process and it further explains the basic human rights and voting rights, the role, responsibilities and rights Voters; the relationship between election and democracy and the conditions necessary for democratic elections, secrecy of ballot why each vote is important and its impact on public accountability, and how votes translates into seals.

Broadcast media is conceptualized as the totally of organizations and agencies that provide information for the members of the public while the broadcast media is a primary means by which information, education and entertainment are delivered in virtually every nation around the world with an our bone transmission of electromagnetic audio signals to a wide population.

Voters' education means providing citizens of a democracy with basic information about participating in elections. In includes information on when, where and how to register to vote, as well as when, where and how to vote.

Voters must understand how to vote on Election Day, or risk missing the opportunity, having their ballot disqualified for being improperly marked, or facing another issue that restricts or eliminates their ability to participate. Information about electoral contestants and voting procedures should be made available well in advance of Election Day.

Voters' education is generally used to describe the dissemination of information, materials and programmes designed to inform Voters about the specifics and mechanics of the voting process for a particular election. Voters' education involves providing information on who

is eligible to vote, where and how to register; how electors can check the Voters list to ensure they have been duly included; what type of elections are being held; where, when and how to vote; who the candidates are; and how to file complaints.

The goals of Voters' education are to make information available and accessible to all constituents. Voters' education campaigns should seek to achieve universal coverage of the electorate. To do this effectively requires reaching out to disadvantaged groups as well as mainstream Voters. Voters' education should take into account factors such as high rate of illiteracy or the use of different languages in a country, even if there is only one official language.

Minority groups internally displaced persons and other marginalized segments of society should be specially targeted. Young adults eligible to vote for the first time may need special messages explaining how to register and cast a ballot. Voters' education should also include publicity encouraging people to vote. Effective Voters' education campaigns start early and continue throughout the election process. Very early in the process, Voters should be informed about Voters registration procedures so they have ample time to register. They should be told how and where to check their respective Voters lists to ensure their entries are correct. Awareness raised by the media, NTA Ado-Ekiti.

Voters' education and sensitization methods, present the information in the language of each town in Ekiti – State, the media campaign should have a daily broadcast of radio programs that focus and electoral content and public awareness. Awareness is also raised on the secrecy of the vote, information on various parties, candidates in competition and the procedure of voting.

First there is a in-house training for key production staff on the process and ethics of the profession. Seasoned broadcasters familiar with election update and INEC is invited to sensitize the public / Voters. Political parties that are willing will be invited for political coverage and given equal supporting coverage.

During elections phone – in programmes are done to monitor elections. Public educator/ Voters' education provide citizens of a democracy with basic information about parties patting in elections. The focus is often on how to vote rather than who to vote for. An appropriate Voters' education would provide citizens with knowledge regarding how to register, how to complete ballot papers and the electoral system.

2014 election in Ekiti state shall go down in the state's annals of electoral process as the most historic and revolutionary which led to the comprehensive defeat of the incumbent sweeping all the 16local governments in the state the paper is concerned about the contributions of the broadcast media to the success or failure of the election through programmes aired to sensitize the people, the activities in educating the people about the conduct of the election, election monitoring, the who, why, how,

what, where and what tools used before, during and after the election.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Elections cannot be genuinely democratic unless Voters have the basic information on how to vote rather than whom to vote for. Through the various generations of elections, declining voter's participation and voters' education has steadily and increasingly become a major issue of concern that has equally affected the emerging democracy.

This situation has forced many to ask if actually the media especially the broadcast media has actually performed its function of mobilization. It is against this background that this research is being conducted to ascertain the roles of broadcast media in Voters' education.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the activities of Broadcast media in educating voters about the conduct of election
2. To investigate how voters' education can be promoted during election by the broadcast media.

### Research Questions

Two research questions were raised to direct this study;

1. What programmes did the media organizations run in educating voters about/on the conducts of election?
2. How can Voters' education be promoted during election by the broadcast media?

### Delimitation of the Study

The study is delimited to the assessment of broadcast media and voters' education during gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, Nigeria using Voice (89.9) FM and Ekiti (91.5) FM as a case study.

### Significance of the Study

The findings of this study could be of benefit to the voters as reference points that could be studied – thus shall be a better position to enlighten others.

It could be helpful broadcast media practitioners on how to make themselves more available and the need for their importance during electoral process

It is hoped that electoral policy makers and experts in voters' education could make use of the information from the findings of this study for necessary innovations still needed in the electoral system of the nation.

## 3. Methodology

This study made use of a descriptive research of the survey design since data was collected to assess and describe broadcast media and voters' education during gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The population for this study consists of 450 staff of radio stations and 470, 000 adult indigenes from 5 Local Government areas in Ekiti State.

The sample for this study consists of 30 staff of two radio stations and 300 indigenes from 5 Local Government areas in Ekiti State. Random sampling technique was used to select 2 broadcasting stations out of 7 broadcasting stations in Ekiti State and Simple random sampling technique was used to select 15 staff from each of the broadcasting stations. Simple random sampling technique was also used to select 5 Local Government Areas out of 16 Local Government Areas of Ekiti State and Purposive Sampling Technique was used to select 60 indigenes from each of the Local Government Areas making 300 in indigenes altogether.

The study made use of a research instrument tagged "Broadcast Media and Voters' Education Questionnaire (Bmveq)". The questionnaire is a self-designed which will comprised of two sections; Section A and B. Section A deals with background information or bio-data of the respondents while section B consists of 25 items to assess information on broadcast media and voters' education.

Face and content validities of the instrument were established by the experts in broadcast media, voters' education, tests, measurement and evaluation both within and outside Ekiti State. The experts reviewed and based on their comments, recommendations and modifications, the instrument was restructured and corrected to be the final version.

Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument by administering the instrument twice to twenty respondents outside the two sampled broadcasting stations in Ekiti State with two weeks interval. The scores from the two set of responses were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and correlation coefficient of 0.94 was obtained.

The final version of the instrument was administered to with the help of research assistance in each of the broadcasting stations. Data collected for the study was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Research questions 1

What programmes did the media organizations run in educating Voters about/on the conducts of election?

**Item 1**-Did you listen to media programmes on Voters' education?

**Table 1**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	269	89
No	31	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1** Show that 269 respondents with 89% listened to media programmes on Voters’ education while 31 respondents with 11% did not listen to media programmes.

Opinion on the Broadcast media in Voters’ education.

**Item 2;** How many programmes do you have in voice 89.9FM to enlighten and sensitized Voters? (Group 2).

**Table 2**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Nil	-
2	Nil	-
3	Nil	-
4	15	100
5	Nil	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that 15 respondents with 100% said four (4) programmes are run on voice 89.9FM to enlighten Voters while others are Nil.

**Item 3:** How many programmes do you have in Ekiti 91.5 FM to enlighten and sensitize Voters? (Group 2)

**Table 3**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Nil	Nil
2	15	100
3	Nil	Nil
4	Nil	Nil
5	Nil	nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows that 15 respondents with 100% said 2 programmes are run to enlighten and sensitize Voters.

**Research questions 2**

How can Voters’ education be promoted during election by the broadcast media?

**Item 4: What do you consider the roles of broadcast media in Voters’ education**

**Table 4**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To inform electorates about their civic responsibilities	8	26
Educating the Voters	10	33
Sensitizing	4	13
Influencing and Enlightening	6	20
Watchdogs	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Item 5:-**How do you think broadcast stations and electoral management board can work with the political class to enhance voters’ education.

**Table 5**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Keeping the media update	4	13
Synergy between the two bodies	6	20
The media should be used as working tool	16	53
	4	13

Call for meetings and trainings	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>		

Table 5 shows that 4 respondents with 13% said the media should be up dated 6 respondents with 20% said there should be synergy between the two bodies, 16 respondents with 53% said the media should be used as a working tool, 4 respondents with 13% said meetings and trainings should be organized.

**Item 6: As media practitioners how do you think Voters’ education can be promoted?**

**Table 6**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Partnership between media house and private investors	2	6
Introduction of indigenous and local languages	8	26
Availability of human and local languages.	12	40
More Voters’ education programmes and proper sensitization	12	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 above shows respondents with 6% said there should be partnership between media houses and private investors, 7 respondents with 26% said there should be introduction of indigenous and local languages, 12 respondents with 40% said there should be available human and material resources, while 12 responds with 40% said there should be more Voters’ education programmes. These respondents are from the media houses.

**Item 7: What other programs do you think the broadcast media in Ekiti State should air aside the ones aired during the 2014 gubernatorial election.**

**Table 7**

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Call in programmes	60	20
More jingles	30	10
INEC sponsored programmes	16	5
Radio Drama	83	27
Political debate	47	15
Voters’ education programmes	64	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

The table has call in programmes as 60 respondents and 20 percent, more jingles 30 respondents and 10 percent, giving voice to the people 16 respondents with 5 percent, public feedback, 83 respondents with 27 percent, political debate with 47 respondents and 15 percent, Voters’ education programme as 64 respondents with 21 percent.

**5. Discussion**

What Programmes did the media organisations run in Educating Voters about/on the conduct of election? This

study shows the different programs and activities run in educating Voters on the conduct of elections where 89.9 GM voice with 12 respondents and 80% said 4 programmes on Voters' education are run in their radio station while 11 respondents with 73% said 2 Voters' education programme Arerun in Ekiti 91.5FM.

This shows that voice FM has more Voters' education programmes than Ekiti FM. The researcher therefore argues that more programmes should be introduced to elevate the role of broadcast media and to promote the value of Voters' education.

Analyzing the respondents that concerns how Voters' education can be promoted during election by the broadcast media 6 respondents from the media houses with 20% said there should be synergy between the broadcast media and the electoral body, 4 respondents with 13%. Said the media should be updated while 16 respondents with 53% said the media should be used as working tools. Another table with 8 respondents of the media house said introduction of indigenous and local languages will do while 12 respondents with 40% said availability of local languages with more voters' education programmes should be introduced.

The researchers therefore argue that more focus should be on running traditional and indigenous programs as it is important that a good portion of Voters' educational programming should be locally target with more programmes like radio drama, political debate call in programmes and jingles.

## 6. Conclusion

Broadcast media have indeed contributed immensely in Voters' education through different running of traditional and indigenous programmes staged.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that;

More programmes on electoral enlightenment and education should be aired in order to keep the electoral and the populace informed about political activities and occurrences in the polity.

Broadcast stations should increase capacities on deploying public service announcements (PSAs) to address issues that fall within the purview of electoral issues with a view to curbing and stemming them.

Government policies and programmes should also be made public so as to make the people more knowledgeable about governmental activities.

Civil society, advocacy groups and democratic institutions should also intensify all efforts and their activities geared towards Voters' education.

There should be mass orientation and civil enlightenment from these groups in order to promote Voters' education in Nigeria.

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