CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Briefs on Radio Benue Makurdi

What is known today as Radio Benue Makurdi (94.50 FM) Food Basket station started as a station of the National Broadcasting Organisation. However following a re-organisation of Radio Broadcasting by the Federal military government in 1978, all state radio stations of National Broadcasting Co-operation were handed over to respective state governments of their locations. Consequently, NBC Makurdi was handed over to the Benue state government following this development; the state government issued an enabling edict No.4 on 14th Dec. 1978, which christened the station “Radio Benue”.

Radio Benue has grown from leaps and bounds into a network of radio stations strategically located across the state for effective service delivery to over 3 million listeners both within and outside Benue state. Thus, apart from the mother station located in Makurdi, Benue state capital, there are other sub-stations located at Kastin-Ala which helps to provide quality broadcasting to the whole of the North-eastern part of the state including Cross-river, Akwa Ibom, Taraba and parts of Nasarawa, Plateau and Cameroons. The 2nd sub-station is located at Idekpa to take care of the whole of south-eastern part of Benue state including parts of Kogi, Ebonyi and Enugu states. Her 50KW AM and 35KW FM transmitters in Makurdi are received clearly throughout the states and other neighbouring states including Nasarawa, Kogi, the FCT and parts of Enugu states.

In all, the station accepts and broadcast programmes and commercials in eight(8) languages including Tiv, Idoma, Igede, Hausa, Akwaya, Etulo, Ufia, and English language. With this perfect configuration her concern is just to give the audience best service which is simply the reason for existing.
The media collectively acts to provide audiences with their “windows on the world.” Implicit of this claim is the idea that the media act as powerful agencies that are capable of shaping and directing public and private understanding of the world and awareness of its political affairs. Providing these explanations of events that occur in the environment, the media do not simply and neutrally provide information but also actively encourage us to see and understand it in particular ways and certain terms. That is why during the 2007 elections, journalist attempted to educate and persuade the public by directing attention to the need for full participation by citizens in the political process of the nation. Prior to the elections, it was the political role of the electronic media to restore people’s confidence in the transitional programme. The media (Radio Benue) was among those charged with the responsibility of covering the Governorship/ State Assemblies and Presidential/ National Assemblies elections which were held on April 14th and 2nd, 2007.

That is why Mboho (2005) specifically identified the political functions of the media as:

i. Creating and promoting political awareness,

ii. Identifying and promoting civic responsibilities among the people

iii. Mobilizing the people toward the achievement at national goals.

Media impact on political campaigns and voting has always been at the center of some of mass communication earliest research. Given that the media (televison / radio) had yet to develop into a true mass medium and that the notion of limited effects held sway, the overall conclusion was that the media had little direct impact on campaigns and voting, and when or if they did, such impact was in form of reinforcement but with the fuller diffusion of television and radio and the interest generated in these medium, thinking about media and campaigns began to change. For example after the focus of televised debates on how political candidates used media for image building and
“cheapening” of campaigns, it has made these personalities become more important than issues.

There is no gain saying the fact that the media helps in shaping the perception of the voters during the process of electioneering campaigns as they try to x-ray the various political actors and players. This is so because the media has the power of persuasion. Perception is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information.

In relation to the media, the implication of the above assertion means that people are often viewed with a preconceived idea. This is because; there is no man without a history. They often bring the history of anybody gunning for any electoral post to limelight and tries to shape or build the perception of the people about the candidate. The media often sets an agenda for the people. The agenda-setting hypothesis asserts that the media have an effect indirectly by choosing certain issues for emphasis, thus making those issues more salient to the audiences.

Another important development in contemporary thinking that came up about media and political campaigns was the agenda-setting. Agenda-setting was used to explain how the media can influence campaigns and voting from the audience. The media has helped to set the issue agenda that dictates the issue on which majority of the people ultimately base their voting decisions.

The amount of air time devoted to campaigns coverage on media stations has demonstrated dramatic declines in the amount given to the candidates’ position. The content-free political campaigns, coupled with the increase in negative campaign commercials (advertisement) may be creating an apathetic and alienated public, rather than the involved and informed citizenry that is necessary for democracy. However, though Americans consider or see negative campaign advertising unethical, uninformative, deceptive and lacking in credibility research indicates that negative campaigns are more
memorable than positive ones and voters decision making is been influenced to a greater
degree by these negative campaign rather than by positive campaign information. Though
these negative campaigns might ultimately damage democracy, the voters end up
declaring what they want better from their candidates. (Aigbovbiose 2007:399).

The media today have become essential to modern campaigning which has helped
to reinforce the disclosure of huge campaign contributions to all political parties. The
media should endeavour to make free air time available to political candidates and
campaigns and also increasing the length of time the candidates have to present full,
cogent explanations of their positions as these gives the audiences or voters better
knowledge of their political candidates.

The pattern of audience exposure to the media gives substantial explanation to the
nature of political socialization. In their study of the 1968 US presidential campaign,
media use was casually related to political knowledge but less related to political activity
among pre-voters.

Audience awareness of events depends on the prominence of the event coverage in
the media. The media right from time immemorial has been involved in drawing the
attention of voters to the possibility that a new government or party could implement fresh
policies which could consequently meet every days needs. The media therefore is strongly
an instrumental to public opinion formation and change about a political system or
government.

Furthermore, the information that is disseminated helps to create awareness of
various innovative programme and should be disseminated firstly not only in English
language but also in language that is understandable to all the audience members. Another
important use of information is that, the media should be accessible and available to the
target audience. It is on this note that Ukozor (2003:49) say, “the media should be able of report news events, giving meaning to it in order that their report gets more attractive and useful to the audience” This is done by offering contextual explanations to facts and issues of the days news in a manner that the average news consumer will understand their implications to his/her life. The media should be able to dig out some facts that are not immediately visible which the audience did not know about.

In addition, it is the multiplicity of linkage between the mass media, society and politics that brought about the role which the media has to play in mobilizing the audience politically. In this mobilization, they are expected (media) to be objective and propelled by public interest rather than individualized or parochial interest. The media with their spirit of resilience, have engaged themselves in politically reawakening the citizens and mobilizing them into participating in the nations political activities.

Radio Benue as a media station is been changed with the various function (information) to the society. The mission of it (Radio Benue) for instance seeks to emphasis development issues and promote the education of tension and friction to achieve global harmony (Udeajah 2004: 363).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The issue of media coverage of elections especially in the electronic media has always been a subject of considerable controversy in Nigeria. This issue is worsened by the diversity in culture and other social values among Nigerians. This obviously is the reason why the struggle to broadcast and control of the media as a means of gaining political power has remained an issue in Nigerian politics.

Political broadcasting tends to tilt in favour of the government of the day, however, with the deregulation of the industry, the trend changed, particularly with the nation’s return to democracy. This is obviously why many Nigerian broadcasting stations go all out
to satisfy the interest of their owners during electioneering periods. Many Nigerians often accuse the media for not playing an independent role during electioneering periods as they often deny the oppositions the chance to use them in getting to the electorates. For instance, some all the broadcasting stations in Benue state are owned by the government (including Radio Benue) and during elections, they are used to serve the interest of the party in power. This it does contrary to Section 1.5.4 of the National broadcasting Commission’s code which deals on Political broadcasting.

The values and expectations of audience members in Benue State which is the major catchment area of Radio Benue does not present a shift from the status quo and due to the differences in the psychological make up of the people, they exhibit varying perceptions when faced with political messages and they comprehend political messages differently even when they live in the same environment.

The problem remains, how does the audience rate the performance of Radio Benue in the 2007 general elections? Were their operations effective from the period of electioneering campaign to the elections proper? Was the station biased in terms of favouring the ruling party and denying access to the oppositions? Was the station able to mobilize the audience through inducing attitudinal and behavioural change during the elections period?

The problems highlighted above make it imperative to examine the perception of the audiences of Radio Benue in the station’s coverage of the 2007 general elections in the state.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were drawn to set the base this research to ensure a better understanding and assessment.
1. To ascertain the level of coverage given to the 2007 General elections in Benue State by Radio Benue.
2. To ascertain the directional coverage of the elections by Radio Benue with a view to ascertaining whether they were objective to all parties involved.
3. The find out the level of political influence in the station’s coverage of the elections if there were any.
4. To assess audience perception on the performance of Radio Benue coverage of the 2007 elections in terms of functional duties and the effectiveness of its operations.
5. To find out if the ownership status of radio Benue affects her coverage of political issues like campaigns and elections?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will be of great significance to the following people and in the following ways.

a. The media from time immemorial are charged with various roles of informing and enlightening the public, so this work will be useful to them by encouraging the media to carry out their functions well, despite the challenges that they face from time to time.

b. The study will provide reliable feedback data on audience view of media coverage of elections and also provide its strengths and weakness which will serve as a tool for improvement in the media outfit including both electronic and print.

c. It will serve as a data base for Mass communication researchers and scholars who may be embarking on similar research in the future.

d. It will also avail political actors and players more and better information on the role of the media in electoral processes, especially on the coverage of elections.
1.5 **Research Questions**

The following research questions will be of guide to this study.

1. What is the level of coverage given to the 2007 general elections by Radio Benue?
2. What is the direction coverage of the elections by Radio Benue to ascertaining whether they were fair to all parties involved?
3. What is the level of political influence in the station’s coverage of the elections if there were any?
4. How does the audience of Radio Benue perceive the station’s performance in terms of the coverage of the 2007 elections?
5. Does the ownership status of radio Benue affects her coverage of political issues like elections and campaigns?

1.6 **Scope /limitation of the Study**

It will be nugatory, attempting to study the whole of Nigeria as it relates to the perception of Nigerians to the media coverage of the last general elections in the country. This is so because apart from the fact that it will be too expensive to embark on such a research, the inability to measure the large number of people that will be involved posses another serious challenge. In view of this, this study would therefore be limited on one hand, to radio audiences in Makurdi in Benue state; while on the other hand, it would be limited to the Radio Benue Makurdi. Also, the refusal of the audience to fill the questionnaire posed another challenge. Time and finance was also a challenge, as the researcher could not go round in other to meet up with time.

1.7 **Theoretical Framework**

In order to situate and align any study within its proper perspective, there is a need for existing theories that will form the pivot on which the study will revolve. Therefore, this study is anchored on perception theory and agenda setting theory.
Perception Theory

Individuals have a way of viewing a particular message on television based on his predispositions. However, perception is affected by three basic variables

- Past Experiences
- Cultural Expectations
- Social Relationships

The extent to which a given message from the media in this case television affects an individual is determined by the individual’s limited experience factor. Thus, perception of television messages results from certain processes.

1. Selective Exposure

Selective exposure theory is a theory of communication, positing that individuals prefer exposure to arguments supporting their position over those supporting other positions. It has been discussed by communication scholars for decades. Since excessive amount of media choices are available in the 21st Century, media consumers have more privileges to expose themselves to selected medium and media contents.

2. Selective Attention

Folarin (2005:89) observes that because the eye processes information much faster that the brain can interpret, the human brain has to select which information to pay attention to at any given time in other to avoid confusion. In other words, If people are confronting unsympathetic material, they do not perceive it, or make it fit for their existing opinion.

3. Selective Perception
The basic axiom of this process is that each of us tends to perceive and then decode communication messages in the light of our previous experiences and current dispositions and our needs, moods and memories. This suggests that individuals who received a miracle after watching a televangelism programmes would always want to tune in to such broadcast in the future. Again, relatives and friends who see such miracles or transformation in the life of the individual would likely identify when such broadcast comes again on air.

4. Selective retention

Although there are myriads of messages from televangelism, it is noteworthy that only those messages which are favourable to the self image of the individual would be retained. The relevance of the message to the social conditions of the individual would also affect his retention.

Therefore, these processes which are linked influences the individual’s perception of the media station.

**The Agenda-Setting Theory**

This theory explains the power of the media and how it helps to raise issues of public importance. The theory is related to public opinion generation, since it is often the media that raises issues upon which public opinion is expressed. According to Baran (2004:429)

> The audience not only learn about public issues through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the media places on it” that is the media may set the “agenda” of the campaign.

The above statement indicates that agenda setting by the press is a way in which the press dictates the political and other issues on which many voters ultimately base their voting decisions.
The first empirical test of agenda-setting theory of the media was made manifest by McCombs and Shaw (1972), cited by Ojobor (2002:21); they noted that members of the “audience not only learn about public issues through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place on it”. This was in response to the results of a study carried out by them, during the 1968 United States presidential elections. In that study, McCombs and Shaw found a strong support for the agenda-setting hypothesis. They revealed strong relationships between the emphasis placed on different campaign issues by the media and the judgments of voters, regarding the importance of various campaign topics.

In the views of Folarin (2005: 95), the elements involved in agenda-setting include:

1. The quantity or frequency of reporting;
2. Prominence given to the reports – through headline display, pictures and layout in newspapers, magazines, film, graphics, or timing on radio and television.
3. The degree of conflict generated in the reports; and

The place of this theory in this study can be seen in the need of the media to be involved in drawing the attention of voters to the possibility that a new government or party could implement fresh polices which could consequently meet their everyday needs. The number of times of which the political campaigns are been aired indicates the importance being attached to the electoral process by the media.

1.8 Definition of terms

A clear understanding of major concepts in any study goes a long way in illuminating the reader views by engendering better comprehension. Perception is meant to be a process by which we become aware of change in our environment through the senses. Perception about a thing or an issue leads
to opinion formation or change about that thing or issue. Perception is often selected support an inner consistency among a person’s beliefs, attitudes and value. These comments about perception together or separately contribute to opinion formation and change about an issue or something. From the semantic view point, the oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines it a belief you have as a result of how you see or understand something the way you notice things. In the context of this study, therefore, perception is seen as the way people view or think concerning an issue or something.

**Audience** is taken to be the group or selected number of people who watch, read or listen to the same thing. For this study we will take the audience to be the number of people who watches (sees) everything that has happened in the environment.

**Coverage** is the amount or way that (the media) covers an area. The coverage is to be taken from the 2007 election area.

**Media** Dictionary meaning sees it as the main ways which large number of people receives information. In the cause of this work, it’s taken to be the radio station where Radio Benue falls under this media in disseminating information to large heterogenous audience.
REFERENCES


2.1 Introduction.

As human nature goes, we tend to learn certain things that both interest us and have some personal significance. The review of literature to this study in relation to the topic; An Assessment of Audience Perception of Radio Benue Coverage of the 2007 General Elections has to bring understanding of how important the media has the role to play in the society in every area especially its political functions. The unique nature of the perception of audience using the media in its coverage of elections attracted the attention of many authors in the past and present and the importance of media guidelines in election coverage. It is on this basis that the researcher would like to use this chapter to review the works of many individual scholars who have also contributed to the significance of the media in the society.

Literature review is therefore important for a study of this nature as it helps to sharpen the research focus.

2.2 Perception

In psychology and the cognitive sciences, perception is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information. The word perception comes from the Latin word, percepio, meaning "receiving, collecting, and action of taking possession, apprehension with the mind or senses." (Nelson, Richard Alan: 1996).

Perception is one of the oldest fields in psychology. It is the process by which people receive and interpret information from the world around them. The world around us consists of various kinds and levels of physical energy. Our knowledge of the world comes through our sense organs, which react to these energies. Science has revealed that certain wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation stimulate our eyes and ears which sense
certain kinds of mechanical vibrations in the air. Our noses and tongues are sensitive to
certain chemical stimuli. Sense organs in our skin respond to pressure, temperature
changes, and various stimuli related to pain. Sense organs in our joints, tendons, and
muscles are sensitive to body movement and position.

The process of perception does not reveal objects and events of the world. When
looking at an illustration, you may not understand it clearly at the first instance. But as you
look further, your first perception may change, particularly if there is something there that
catches your interest the more.

According to Folarin (2002:70) Perception depends on a complex of variables such
as psychological disposition, past experience, cultural expectations and social relationship.
These are in relation to language constraints and the limited experience factor results in
the selective perception process which takes place in a stop-gate fashion with selective
exposure, attention and retention. In other words, you have to be exposed to a message
before you can attend to it, you have to pay attention before you can perceive the message,
and you have to perceive it before you can retain it for later recall.

Glasersfeld, E. (1995), highlights that two types of consciousness are considerable
regarding perception, they are phenomenal and psychological. The difference everybody
can demonstrate to himself/herself is by the simple opening and closing of his/her eyes.
Phenomenal consciousness is thought on average to be predominately absent without sight
by example. Through full or rich sensations present in sight, nothing in comparison is
present whilst eyes are closed, bar the remaining other senses and of course having
considered sight firstly as the primary human sense. Using this precept it is understood by
a vast majority of cases that the logical solutions present through phenomenology in
human mind/body interfacing within reality, is through simple human sensation.
Various factors influence our perception. Our perceptions are influenced by the ways our bodies are structured to receive and process stimuli from the environment. Our perceptions also reflect our emotions, needs, expectations, and learning. Below are the various factors that affect perception.

- **Receptors.** Each sensory system, such as vision, hearing, or touch, has its own specialized body parts. These parts are called receptors, and they change energies from the environment into nervous impulses. The human eye, for example, has two major kinds of receptors in the retina (the light-sensitive part of the eye). These receptors are called rods and cones. The rods respond to the intensity of light, but not to different frequencies of light (different colours). The cones do respond to different frequencies of light, and are called colour receptors. The rods allow us to see in dim light, and the cones enable us to see colours and sharp detail in bright light. Thus, the particular ways that receptors are structured and function help determine the perceptual effects related to them.

- **The brain.** Certain physical and functional features of the brain also determine some aspects of perception. The part of the brain that serves vision has different kinds of cells that respond only under certain conditions of stimulation. Some of these cells respond only when a light goes off. Others respond when a light comes on, but they stop responding if the light stays on. Such cells also are arranged in special ways in the brain, and this fact is related to how we perceive. For example, some cells are arranged in columns or in clusters. Such arrangements are related to how we perceive edges and forms. Experiments suggest that some cells in the brain allow us to perceive movement. Thus, the structure of the brain is an important element in perception.
Learning, emotion, and motivation. Much evidence points to the conclusion that early experience, learning, emotion, and motivation are important in defining what and how we perceive. Part of this accumulating evidence comes from experiments that compare how people in different cultures perceive things. The perception of such things as form, colour, pain, and touch may differ from culture to culture, depending on habits and customs, and training of children.

The basic import of the above lies in the fact that media audience perceive messages in different ways and these are primarily precipitated by the prevailing indices around them. The audiences of Radio Benue are not different as they have their feelings and aspirations and therefore perceive the stations programmes especially electoral coverage based on their perceptions.

2.3 Political Broadcasting

Political broadcasting is an indispensable part for the struggle for control of and use of state power. The deregulation of the Nigerian broadcasting industry has opened the airwaves to competing political viewpoints, a major factor which was constantly eroded by the old monopoly of public broadcasting stations in Nigeria. Political broadcasting particularly from the private broadcasting stations has become critical of government policies and actions unlike the past where government stations were mere megaphones of the government. Thus, audience has the capacity to compare, analyse and make informed political decisions based on the alternative channels now available.

This new trend in political broadcasting is attributed to decree No. 38 of 1992 as amended by Decree 55 of 1999 which gave private individuals and organizations the right to own broadcasting channels for the purpose of transmitting information signals for the benefit of the general public. Broadcasting prior to 1992 was an exclusive of the government. Government ownership and monopoly of broadcasting dates back to 1932.
British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) empire relay service which was facilitated by the Post and Telegraph Department of the Ministry of Communication. The relay service was also called Radio Rediffusion Service (RDS). Udeajah (2004:9) notes that “by 1950, the nationalist legislative council had begun to think in a new dimension. The result was that in 1951 wireless broadcasting was introduced in Nigeria”. The introduction of wireless broadcasting through the establishment of Nigeria broadcasting service (NBS) marks the beginning of radio broadcasting from the Nigerian context.

“Broadcasting evolves side by side with politics in Nigeria, and both had mutual influence” Udeajah (2004: xxvi). The politics of media ownership and control has deprived Chief Obafemi Awolowo the leader of Action Group (AG) and the premier of the Western region the right of reply through the Nigeria broadcasting service (NBS) in the wake of the unpleasant remarks of Governor John McPherson, that Awolowo motivated the mass resignation of AG members in the Federal Cabinet and the Federal house of representatives; following the riots in Kano that stemmed from chief Anthony Enahoro’s motion of 1953 that Nigeria be granted independence in 1956 which was resisted by the Northern elements in the house. The refusal of Awolowo the right of reply led to constitutional Amendments that gave regional government the right to form their own broadcasting stations. The Western Government of Nigeria took advantage of this and established the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) in 1959, which was the first in Nigeria and indeed, Africa. The Eastern Nigeria Region followed suit in 1960 with Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service (ENBS) while the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria (BCNN) operators of the Radio Kaduna Television (RKTV) followed in 1962.

The monopolization of broadcasting became apparent following Decree No 24 of March 1977 that established the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) and Decree No. 8 of April 1979 which established the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN). The
decrees gave the right of broadcast to these bodies that marked a departure from states controlled media. This was corrected by the 1979 constitution. The desire to exercise and control power made many states to establish their own broadcasting stations, supporting the view of Albert Altschul “that the news media are agents of the people who exercise political and economic power”.

The struggle to broadcast and control as a means of gaining political power has remain an issue in politics. McQuail (2005:524) notes that “Broadcast channels are the vehicles which the state and powerful interest address the people, as well as platforms for the views of political parties and other interest group. They also promote the circulation of news and opinion within the politically interested public.” For instance the political consciousness of President Shehu Shagari led National Party of Nigeria (NPN) to annex the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) between 1979 to 1983. Adeseye and Ibagere (1999:109) note that the National Party of Nigeria took complete charge of the only television service in the country for the exclusive broadcast of her programme to the exclusion of other political parties. Uche (1989:56) stresses the issue further:

> the Federal Government did brazenly violate the FRCN decree by establishing high powered transmitters for radio stations in those states of the Federation that the only party (NPN) at the centre was not in political and economic control. Between June and July 1983, the Federal minister of information has commissioned seven of such new stations at Owerri, Akure, Enugu, Jos, Abeokuta, Calabar and Ikeja. It is worth noting that all these controlled by various parties opposed to the NPN at the center.

Following, this political development in the broadcast industry at the time, the opposition parties particularly, the Unity Party of Nigeria (NPN) decided to establish stations in her various states not only to counter the NPN propaganda in NTA but also to broadcast their programs and policies to their people. Ibagere (1992:186-187) argued that even the establishment of the broadcasting stations by the opposition parties states was for
political reasons, in spite of other reasons adduced for setting them up. It must be noted that the trend brought about conflicting results that were announced by the different stations in the 1983 general elections which snowballed into wide scale violence.

The intervention of the military into politics changed the trends in political broadcasting. Thus, broadcast stations whether Federal or states after the 1984 coup adopted the ideology, promoted the politics and policies of the succeeding military Juntas.

Political broadcasting is generally guided by the National broadcasting Commission code. Section 1.5.4 provides that the objective of political broadcasting shall be:

- Create and promote political awareness amongst the people to achieve a democratic society;
- Inculcate in the people the spirit of tolerance of all shades of opinions and
- Promote social justice based on the responsibilities and rights of individual in society.

Similarly section 5.4.0 stimulates the rules guiding political broadcasting but some of them would be examined.

- Partisan political broadcasting shall be only those in which the parties seek to explain their view and policies.
- In adherence to the principles of pluralism of ideas and opinions, equal opportunity and airtime shall be provided to all political parties or view with particular regards to amount of time and belt during electioneering campaign period.
- At campaign period a log shall be kept by each stations news division at a level not below controller or its equivalent showing the allocation of time to each party, with dates, title of programme and other information as may be requested by the commission, to ensure fairness.
• A station or its state shall not at electioneering time, broadcast the collated some of votes obtained at different polling stations or from exit polls, to project or speculate on the candidate who at air time was leading or doing better or worse than his opponent.

• A station shall broadcast, election results or declaration of the winner of an election only as announced by the electoral officer for the election

• While a broadcast provider may interact with politicians in the course of his professional duties, this interaction shall not be such as to lead to the belief that he is either a member or sympathizer of any political party.

• It shall be the duty of broadcast stations to highlight the activities of government. But this shall not be reduced to glamorizing government functionaries or resort to praise singing or denial of access to those with contrary views of political leaning.

• Panelists shall be of comparable status.

Politics transverse every facet of human life. It is an inherent nature of man. It occurs at every level of society because broadcasting is an important institution of the society, it generates broadcast politics. Politics is the struggle for and use of state power by a social group for the benefit of the member of the social group. Pious (1986:4) says “politics involves power, a relationship between people in which some get others to obey them, even if they would rather not do so, by means of subtle or overt pressure and even by the use of force.” Ekeli (2007:392) sees it as the pursuits of positions, as conflict management and as who gets what, when and how.

The Place of politics in broadcasting lies in the assertion of Kahn (1998:2): “that politics is the process of solving public problems... and that process takes place through communication.

Political broadcasting prior to 1992 was tilted in favour of the media owners, however, with the entry of private media outfits, the notion changed, particularly with the
return to democracy. The impact of political broadcasting was not felt in the first years of deregulation, as the military authorities gagged the media. For instance, Ray Power 100.5 and AIT gave live coverage to the Abacha 2 million man match of Youths Earnestly Ask for Abacha for financial reasons, but panelists in their daybreak programme Kakaki kicked against the action and even the head of state for attempting to succeed himself, the result was the closure of the station. With democracy it has taken a firmer root, as media debates have become concrete features from the Federal to state levels. BON stations gave live coverage to the 2003 media debate.

The 1999, 2003, 2007, elections were given correspondent coverage from different parts of the country, incidences of rigging, thuggery, ballot box snatching were adequately reported unlike previous elections where regional stations and government stations failed to report such, even when such were reported, it was the opposition activities that were prominent. To avoid the repeat of the 1979/1983 elections, where conflicting results emanated from different broadcasting stations based on their owners interest, section 5.4:12 of the NBC code has corrected it. Although a rare case happened in Radio Jeremi, a private broadcasting station in Warri, Delta State, where Chief Great Ogboru was announced the winner of the election contrary to INEC returned candidate in the person of Chief James Ibori.

Political broadcasting particularly in private stations have become very critical of government policies and action, adequate coverage have always been given to public protest motivated by the civil society groups. Cases in point are, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) led protest over the ₦2 million furniture allowance for members of the national Assembly, the NLC led strikes over fuel hike ,the media war against the sale of the refineries, Ajaokuta Steel which have all be reversed. Although NTA and FRCN, and some states stations have always been biased in their coverage, the alternative channels
have often reinforced the peoples stand and the success of such protest and strikes.

Another important point as exemplified by AIT in her 9 am programme *Focus Nigeria* in which the anchor, Gbenga Aruleba faulted the claim that the purchased presidential jet was new, citing obvious defects with the presidential jet. Although he was arrested and detained, Journalists argued that Article 2, of the People’s Communication Charter states that;

*People have the right to freedom of expression without interference by public or private interests and to have communication channel independent of governmental or commercial control.*

This is in line with chapter iv, section 39 of the 1999 constitution which states that:

*Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression including freedom to hold opinion and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.*

Even the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) code (2006:6) reinforces this; “Every Nigeria is expected to participate in sharing of ideas and experiences that will enrich his or her life and help him or her live in a complex, dynamic and humane society”. He was later released on bail. The same station took a critical step further, when it gave live coverage to the aborted 3rd term bid, mirroring on senators who were arrowheads of the unconstitutional Agenda. The result was widespread criticism by civil society groups and opinion leaders. Thus third term Agenda died abruptly on the floor of the senate.

Closely linked to this were coverage given to various impeachments across the country, they all feature in both government and private stations, and the most celebrated of all was the pre-impeachment move against Patricia Etteh. Then speaker of the House of Representatives, over 628 Million Naira house renovation. The issue divided the house into two; the Integrity Group versus Pro-Etteh Lawmakers. The daily show of shame beamed live through AIT and correspondents reports eventually led to her removal. Others
were Ngige versus Uba., Ladoja versus Pro-Adedibu lawmakers; Peter Obi versus the State House of Assembly, Diepreye Alamieseigha’s escape from London and subsequent impeachment by the Assembly, Adolphus Wabara, the former Senate President over increase in ministry of Education budget, late Evans Enwerem over false declaration, Salisu Buhari of certificate forgery popularly called Toronto certificate and the recent commando–like removal of the speaker, Delta State House of Assembly in April, 2008.

To ensure that issues in the National Assembly are given adequate political coverage, FRCN and NTA have opened studios in the National Assembly to relay events promptly and timely. AIT has been consistent in given live coverage to issues, political campaigns and important national issues as the NTA and FRCN, of note, are the 2003 electioneering campaigns, senate hearing on the FCT, House of Representatives committee on the power sector, third term Agenda, Budget presentation, senate retreat in PortHarcourt showed live on Channels Television, other major networks, etc.

In spite of our new found democratic culture, the tolerance for opposition groups and unfavorable reports on incumbent Executive Governor leaves much to be desired. For instance, it took the intervention of NBC before some states Government stations like DBS Asaba and Warri to play Great Ogboru jingles, Even though the Broadcasting code provides for this. In another case, Governor Alao-Akala removed the General Manager of Oyo State Broadcasting Service, late last year because the reportage of the election tribunal portrayed him as having a not strong defense. This was also the case in the 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections where only the big parties were given adequate coverage and airtime. Mboho (2005:135) supports this viewpoint when he noted that;

*The National Broadcasting Commission reported that some stations were reported to have refused adequate coverage to the opposition parties, and has equally refused to air their jingles.*

The seeming intolerance from government stations stem from Sobowale
assertions that “It has been show that the ownership of a country’s media is rested on government or concentrated in the hands of a group or a few individuals, the media tend to become mere megaphones of those in control.”

Deregulation has addressed this issue in states with alternative channels but they are involved in limited coverage. Mboho (2005:133) reason in this light when he notes that;

Apart from the few numbers of stations privately owned, their coverage is limited. All of them are operating on high frequency (FM) or Ultra High Frequency (UHF) channels concentrate in the cities and can cover just a few kilometers away from the city centers.

The impact of this is the dominance and biases of the government stations which have wider reach, thereby denying the people of the critical thought needed for informed decision. This negates (USAID, 1999) paper, that access to information is essential to the health of democracy based on the fact that “access to information ensures that citizens make responsible, informed choices rather than act out of ignorance or misinformation; independent media contribute to transparent elections by giving candidates access and by responding to relevant issues on a timely, objective manner” McConnel and Becker (2002:1) corroborate this by citing Beman and Witzner (1997), “the very nature of democracy suggests that free and open communication, through a variety of channels, is necessary to foster critical practices found in democratic societies.

Political broadcasting has assumed the status of who breaks the news first or has the programme that stimulates political discuss in order to gain audience followership. Part of the measure is the idea of network stations as exemplified by NTA, FRCN, which AIT, Raypower, Channels, MBI and ITV all pursuing vigorously. In doing this, Kakaaki, News, Democratic License, Matters Arising, Across the state, Democracy today are shown in all AIT network stations. Channels TV, Abuja Weekly, Sunrise, Diplomatic Channel, and
Politics Today are also shown simultaneously in Lagos and Abuja. The same thing goes for other stations that operate network stations. AIT was quick to announce the death of the former first lady, Stella Obasanjo, showed the footage of the ill fated Bellview Plane Crash in Ogun State, thereby beating NTA and even the national Emergency Management Authority to it. As Ibemesi (2007:402) observes,

> Raypower/AIT has had constant face-offs with the NBC due to its way of relaying out news first to audience raw. It has often embarrassed government quarters through its activities and by telling people what is happening without any window dressing.

Mboho (2005:133-137) takes a critical look at the provision of the National Broadcasting Commission Code by the following submissions on political broadcasting since deregulation.

- It is believed in the media circle that government ownership and control of broadcasting stations affects the media contents. For government stations exists to convey the messages of government performance to the citizens. If the citizens are fed with information on the government, it then inadvertently means that the political party which projected the government has been given an advantage over the others. This is the case with the FRCN which has over 30 functional FM stations across the country, NTA 97 stations unlike the private stations with their network stations that are not up to 30 stations.

- Undue advantage is still being given to the government by the “press corps” who works in government owned media who out of fear report only to glamourize and praise the government contrary to NBC’s provisions.

- There are evidences to construe that some professional journalists’ interaction with politicians suggests that they are party men but the code says, that should not be misconstrued.
- NTA and state government-owned media still glamorize the executives with a critical look at their programmes and policy.
- Panelists into programmes have never been of comparable status as in the case of NTA’s Tuesday Live.
- Ownership still dictates the content of political broadcasting
- The stations whether private or government owned are defendants, judges and witness in complaints against them, based on the defects of the broadcasting policy.

2.4 Role of Mass Media in Election Campaign and Reporting.

The mass media (radio, television, newspaper, magazine) has various roles to perform in election campaign and reporting. The media collectively acts to provide audiences with their “windows on the world” that is, they are capable of shaping and directing public and private understanding of the world and awareness of its political affairs. Understanding the power of the media in all ramifications Nnaane (2007:164) cited O’Sullivan et al (2002) state that “the media collectively acts as powerful agencies capable of shaping and directing both the public and private understanding of the world and awareness of its social, economic, moral, cultural, technological and political affairs. These modern media do not simply and neutrally give information about the world, but actively encourage the society to see and understand it in particular ways and certain terms. That is why McQuail (2005) sums it up that, fundamental power of the media vis-à-vis media dependency is the way which cannot be ruled out and the media are to all intent and purposes influential in times of crises and uncertainty.

Electioneering campaigns are media events that encapsulate all the political parties have to show for the suitability their candidates and geniuses of their party. Agba (2006:193) is of the opinion that the mass media are pivot of social interaction. They seek
to use the power of mass information to solve the problems of national cohesion and integration which are both critical to the growth of healthy electioneering campaigns. The media require a political ideology that guarantees freedom of speech and access of information especially to those who trade in communication.

From the pre-colonial days up to these present times, the media has acted as the mouthpiece of the political divisions in Nigeria and the media right from time is faced with the task of facilitating a cross-fertilization of ideas which seeks to criticize or analyze campaign issues mainly for those who are little equipped to grasp political jargons. Consequently, the elections campaign reportage should seek out to reveal relevant truths for the people who cannot witness or comprehend the events that affect them. The media also has the role of forming a solid alliance with the electorate to force other political actors operates within a prescribed campaign bound. This is important to the citizenry because all that they want is an election that reflects their wishes. They (citizenry) want to show that they matter and they decide the fortunes aspirants before and after elections. As a result of this, the media are faced with how to make politicians respect people’s right to candid election campaigns and how to ensure that flimsy promises do not fill campaign scripts. Political actors are meant to accept the rules which are made to guide the conduct of elections and the process of contesting electoral seats.

The media must clarify issues during campaigns, bring aspirants close to the electorates, teach the difference between party and candidate to enable the electorate make a wise choice (Agba 2006:199). Hence the ordinary expectation is that the mass media will focus on serious matters that portend serious consequence for the people and their political choices.

The electorate should know what to do with campaign messages after the media has aired them out. For example, it is believed, that what the media did to actualize a
massive turn out for 2002 voter registration can be done in the case of campaign reporting. It went far as throwing their weight fully behind that exercise to achieve resounding success. The campaign themes of various parties ought to be closely followed by the media, and its focus (media) should be to set the correct political agenda for the audience instead of allowing politicians to do so.

The role of campaign reporter who reports through the media is also very crucial because, the reporter is expected to be familiar with key events; institutions and political processes. Besides, particular attention should be focused on those issues that affect campaigns strategies (e.g the party caucus), conventions, the primaries, the campaigns proper, elections and indeed the electorate on whom the entire process is based. The reporter should therefore understand the positioning strategy to use and duly cover certain key issues. There should also be a sampling of public opinion as regards depth of coverage, style of reporting, objectivity of reports and areas the audience will want to amend if introduced.

Everything about campaign reporting should serve to guide the electorate on what to do with their votes. Getting the electorates informed does not mean telling them what plans the party has for them but it implies good governance. Therefore thorough voter guidance should be the heart of campaign reporting by the media.

Hage et al (1976) also articulates the functions of the mass media for collective campaign reporting to be as follows;

a. reporting and interpreting events
b. defining issues
c. portraying personalities
d. investigating support
e. identifying trends and
f. checking and analyzing public opinions

In other to stop the media from making comments on polling, it should place surveillance on any group that takes unauthorized interest in politics and its prying eyes should be focused on socio-cultural organization. The media should therefore judge their actions from time to time noting that any form of partisanship can stifle media efforts at professional campaign reportage. As suggested by Hur and Orhewere (2003:61) broadcast journalist reporting elections should bear in mind their social and political responsibility to the nation. In times of elections, they should use their media to let off steam from politicians whenever there is electoral conflict.

2.5 Political Functions of the Media

The media today have brought messages of what is new and fashionable in terms of goods, ideas, techniques and values from the social top to the base and that is why, all consequences of the mass media are potentially questions about social change and potential use of the media for development.

The main functions of development according to Lasswell (1992) were surveillance of the environment, correlation of the parts of the society in responding to the environment and the transmission of the cultural heritage which makes it easier for people to cope with real life problems and for societies to avoid breakdown.

Mboho (2005) specifically identified the political functions of the media as:

- creating and promoting political awareness
- identifying and promoting civic responsibilities among the people
- mobilizing the people towards the achievement at national goals.

The numerous admittance of the indispensable roles of the mass media is precisely, political mobilization do not draw conclusion that the resultant effects to messages are all positive as intended.
2.5.1 Political Education

Political education is far reaching in its scope. It is one of the functions the media carries out to the society. Politics, education and indeed political education are all forms of intentional action. As far as the free education of adults and youths is concerned, a good way of reaching consensus might be to put one’s trust in political debate, but those responsible for political education have to make sure that these values are legitimate. According to Dadalos (2008) politics is not all about implementing a historical or moral code; it is about negotiating between a set of interests and objective-fuelled conflicts according to the situation. The details of exactly what the job of political education is, remains subject to debate and change. A short list of political educational aims includes:

1. developing and strengthening a liberal democratic value awareness
2. Understanding the basic task of politics as begin to solve current problems by introducing building decisions on contentious public issues.
3. Gaining a basic knowledge in all of the most important political issues with regards to the future such as democracy and its threats
4. Understanding the political decision-making process.

Different electoral education bodies emerged with various duties. One of such is the National Electoral Education Plan (NEEP) which forms strategic framework for the conduct and implementation of the Electoral Education Campaign Project (EECP) in partner with Civil Society Organization. The Electoral Education Campaign project (EECP) seeks to raise public awareness and create discussions around all aspects of electoral processes by supporting grassroot initiatives. The National Electoral Education Plan (NEEP) provides guidance to NGO’s which implements electoral education activities that are produced by electoral education forum, a body that coordinates campaign to ensure its integration within the overall electoral outreach effort. The context both social
and political, of the upcoming electoral cycle will impact the current electoral education campaign.

Lessons learnt from the previous elections have pointed to the necessity of engaging the public through direct outreach activities of participatory nature and the importance of key influencers in the community. The electoral education campaign activities are a mix of voter education, voter information and relevant basics of civic education.

Figure 1: Women participating in voters’ education process in Nigeria.

Source: Google Image

The relationship between people and politics cannot be undermined. Haruna (2008) made it clear also that the mass media cannot function in the same way in all societies even though their roles are the same in all societies. As societies and culture differ, that is how other factors that affect the media differ too. For example, the media in Nigeria cannot function and should not be expected to function like the America. He said “the media in Nigeria cannot undertake the American type of political opinion polls during elections this is because while Americans will accept result that contract opinion polls, Nigerians will not. Nigerians instead would join in the burning of houses and engage in
other destructive tendencies if the candidate that was shown to be leading through an opinion poll does not emerge as the winner of the election.”

Nigerians can be victims of herd mentality which in turn can lead to unthinking reactions to events. However, it takes a perception of injustice, whether such a perception is right or wrong for even the most irrational crowd to resort to violence. The reason behind this is because, Nigerians do not have any good cause to believe that their electoral system is free and fair. According to Iredia cited in Haruna (2008) the reason for riots during election result among many is that; because the country’s unity is fragile and its socio-economy and politics are underdeveloped, the Nigerian media cannot afford to be “confrontational and anti-government” if Nigerians interest is at heart. Government regards secrecy as essential to their proper functioning.

Also in the clash of functions, the media by definition is on a higher moral ground since government are supposed to be accountable to the people but one cannot be accountable if he cannot be open and transparent. It is therefore wrong condemning the media to be confrontational and anti-government.

2.5.2 Political Mobilization

Ebeze (2003) sees political mobilization as one of the basic political functions of the media. Political mobilization is the role played by the mass media in creating awareness, interpretation of issues, personalities, programmes encouraging and educating them to exercise their political rights and take informed political decisions. It also involves campaigning for societal objectives in the sphere of politics, war, economic, development, work etc (McQuail 2005:98).

The election days 14th &21st April 2007 witnessed coverage by the broadcast stations world wide. The mobilization and coverage work by the station however did not start from election days. The media began airings of political activities geared towards
elections before the primaries and there were also incisive and live coverage, and reportage of the activities of political parties and campaigns both from the public and private stations.

The intention of the various coverage and mobilization efforts were geared towards arousing and motivating the citizens towards not only casting their votes but equally knowing their political candidates and their programmes so as to know what to align with and who they should vote for and their reasons for voting. Political mobilization is also defined as the actors attempt to influence the existing distribution of power. It is the social relationship between two types of actors, the individuals and the parties.

Today, the media are continually faced with the difficulty of mobilizing the electorates because they spend more time talking about mobilization than they do in devising ways to get the citizens mobilized. Inspite of the glory ability of the media to come to grips with what it takes to mobilize the people, mass mobilization has become a fascinating social and political adventure in Nigeria. (Udoakah 1998:41) defines mass mobilization as the wakening or activation of the dormant consciousness of a greater number of people with the use of new ideas for the purpose of gaining support for an action or inaction. This implies that the citizens response to appeals is affected by certain factors such as experience, interest, politics, religion etc. if the media is been involved, its impact must be positively felt, the progress it makes must be seen in real terms and the direction it is going known to the public before a sympathetic response can be expected.

The media of mass information are not magicians and therefore will not succeed if the conditions necessary for their success are absent. Since people have the right to think independently of a situation which their co-operations is sought, they have a right to reject media explanations and to form their own impressions. That is why; mobilization should imply that those involved have absolute confidence. There is an extent to which the media
can be used, if the media are used to propagate promises that are never fulfilled, a time will surely come when it will lose its credibility.

Therefore mobilization is far less the responsibility of the media as we seem to think but more of the government duty. The citizens must first be made to feel belonged to the system, thereafter they can be mobilized for the survival of the system. For any media to succeed in any mobilization, the message must be a message of credibility otherwise people would not be willing to listen to the message. Facts alone do not persuade always although the may elicit some kind of behavior or rationalize an action this is because the facts are more persuasive when supported by events or actions. The time of the message, interest and belief of the audience are all considered during mobilization.

The introduction of radio has given access to a national audience by airing some political programmes which mobilizes the citizenry. Through this function, it is the responsibility of the media to provide the citizenry with information about the government, itself and its activities. According to Udeajah (2004:245) the peoples right to know of events of public importance particularly political matters, constitutes the major task of the media. It is on this axis that, political programming is involved to serve the public and government as well.

Programmes like presidential media chat, know your candidate, people’s choice etc on the station were aired to mobilize the people to participate in the elections. Most of the stations as far involve some degrees of audience participation.

2.5.3 Understanding Political Participation

The success of any Nigerian electoral process depends to a large extent on the level of support and participation of the people. Hence, it is crucial to discuss the importance of elections as a foundation for democracy and educating the public on the upcoming electoral process (Dadalos 2008). The public therefore needs to be engaged through direct
outreach activities of a participatory nature that should address democratic values and key notions of civil participation. Radio, with its singular voice touch can also bring candidates to the electorate through audience participation programmes. The public is also allowed to voice and air its opinions freely through the media. Thus, radio-television programmers should explore the remote touch of the media to advantage in dealing with political aspirants.

Okunna (2003:300) is of the opinion that participation is the key to any development. And that, participation in communication activities should not only involve sending feedback to received information but also taking part in discussions and decision-making. It should be a two-way communication process and this is through radio which gives little opportunity for the active participation of the audience and their interactions. Most of the political programmes aired so far involve some degrees of audience participation. As a result, these programmes have the capacity to influence politics. The public through the media is allowed to voice its opinions and air its views freely. Political participation focuses on four sets of factors. One of the factors known as institutional perspective stresses the importance of the legal context which includes the level of political rights and civil liberties, the type of electoral system, the facilities for registration and voting, and the expansion of the franchise, the frequency, level and timing of elections and the competitiveness of electoral politics. Two renowned scholars, Jackman and Miller examined voter participation in twenty-two categories and found out those political institutions and electoral laws provided the most plausible explanations for variations in voters turn out and electoral participation. In the united state for example, the legal hurdle for registration requirement and the frequency of elections are widely believed to depress American turn out.

The role of political communication via parties and news media fall into this
category of political process. Parties act as mobilizing agencies through direct communication with voters which includes traditional grass roots activities such as canvassing, leafleting and contacting voters as well as holding party meetings and campaign rallies and using party political broadcasters. According to Norris (2000) “the news media serves the above function through providing information about parties, candidates and policies that help to crystallize voting choices”. Through positive messages in these activities, both parties and the news media can serve to increase party and candidate support among electors, and the propensity to turn out, or they can also convey negative messages that function to depress participation.

The more people read or listen to campaign messages on the mass media, the more interested they become in the election and they more strongly they come to feel about their candidates. This implies that, media exposure gets out the vote at the same time that it solidifies preferences. This perspective became so influential that it developed into the main stream view in studies of political participation. The media should avoid “negative” or “attack” campaign advertisement, because negative advertising drives people away from the polls in large numbers and also breeds distrust of the electoral process and pessimism about the value of an individuals own voice”. In most research conducted, it seems equally plausible that what matters for electoral participation is what the polls report, not the extent of their coverage per se. In the British context, for example, large scale experiments in the 1997 election demonstrated that exposure to “negative” television news about the major parties had no influence on party images or propensity to vote, where as positive news did have a significant impact on voters. Political participation involves many different types of activity from contacting representatives to becoming active in community organization, political parties or interest group. This participation can be done through various means like the internet or on-line.
2.6 The Media and Sustenance of Democracy

As the society grew, it became necessary to have an institute government where selected, elected or appointed persons will make decisions on behalf of the entire citizenry. This made the mass media under this condition to be seen as part and parcel of the government only existing to serve as megaphones of the government in power. Today, under democracy, the media is been charged with the responsibility of carrying people along. Onyishi (1996) aligned that “the success or failure of the practice of democratic governance will, to a large extent, depend on how well the mass media carry out its functions as the midwife of democracy”. The essence of democracy according to Aristotle is to provide for life which connotes happiness, equality, freedom and fair play. This was echoed by the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (1999) under sec.39 (1) which says “every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression which includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and to impart ideas and information without interference. (Aframuefuna 2007:254)

Unfortunately, the media today is been controlled by ownership means, the owners dictate what the media should give to the people which is not expected to be so in a democratic environment. Inquires into issues, reveal accusation and counter accusations emanating from political actors of varied orientations. There was no freedom of the press because the (media) works under restriction in other to please who were controlling them. While the government owned media and broadcast organization were established to disseminate information without bias to the public, the state owned media were given attention to some particular parties and candidates only. They never put the public in mind.

According to Udeajah (2004:288) the strength of Nigerian broadcasting media pivots on the ability to reinforce democracy by acquainting different groups with each
other and by facilitating the membership of a single person in more than one group.

There is no way one can discuss about Nigerian politics without recognizing the role the media have played in politics. The media has played its various roles right from the 60s to date and today the democratic government in Nigeria is neither friendly nor repressive. The press is an integral part of democracy and for it to remain relevant. Afamuefuna gave points on the roles it must play.

Providing Information: it must play its watch dog role by providing adequate information on the business of governance in a polity. The press monitors and checkmates the state administrators against excesses and violation of the social contracts and reports findings to the people. That is why Onyedika (2006:41) observed correctly that “….journalist through objective reporting could be catalyst of positive change in the nation’s democracy”.

Public opinion polling function: representative democracy is participatory and requires that all shades of opinion should be recognized and respected because the leaders and the people have equal stake in the polity since decisions taken by the leader affects the people. The concept of public opinion has developed in step with the idea that powers of the government should be based on the consent of the governed and hence with the idea of democracy.

The workability of democracy depends on how much the press objectivity sample and conveys people’s opinion to the government. “the safety of the people in modern society depends upon the free and untrammelled expression of enlightened public opinion…through an objective press”(Nnamani,2003). The press should therefore not neglect this role as it is the index for measuring good governance.

Political mobilization: the media is expected to conscientize and sensitize the Nigerian people in order to build a new political culture and orientation devoid of the
negative elements such as rigging, political corruption, embezzlement of public funds, assassinations and other politically motivated vices. Mobilization transforms the perception, orientation and views of the society. According to Moemeka (1991:22) in “mobilization is a process which begins with a radical change in the political orientation of the people”. The ultimate result of this change is the formation of new social relations. This is because the press constitutes the institution for social change and political orientation which serves as the central nervous system of democracy.

Mobilization makes people to be politically conscious through subtle strategies of the mass media. These strategies are aimed at making people involved in rebuilding the society. For this to be a sustainable fruit, it has to be backed with political education. This is because if the people are not well educated about the meaning and reasons for some political occurrences, they will be very reluctant to imbibe a new political culture. It is for this purpose, that the media is expected to design educative programmes that can bring about enlightenment.

The three essential requites of democracy are, a well informed citizenry, participation of the citizens in the day-to –day governance of the society, and accountability of the citizens of those who exercise power on their behalf. It is on this point that democracy is been described as a regime where the rule of law enacted by the people and not the rule of men prevails and where none is above the law. Unless the citizens have adequate accurate information on issues and problems confronting them, they will be unable to take enlightened decisions on them.

The freedom of the media is an aspect of the larger freedom of speech and expression which is guaranteed as a fundamental civil right in all democracies. The media has the power to mould the minds of the people and influence their decisions in private and public life. The media serves as “the ears” and “eyes” of the people. A free media can
only exist where there is free democracy and true democracy is possible only with free media. No society can exist or can be conceived of without it because it is the life-line of democracy. McQuail (2005) identifies the media’s relevance to the political realm as follows:

a. The have become an essential element in the process of democratic politics by providing an arena and channel for wide debate, for making candidates for widely known and for distributing diverse information and opinion.

b. They are now a means of exercising power by virtue of relatively privileged access that politicians and agents of government generally claim from the media as a legitimate right.

2.7 Media guidelines for election coverage

The press does have a code of conduct that is expected to guide news media editorial policy at all times including election seasons. However, in a press conference held in early January 2007, the national broadcasting commission (NBC) made directives that the media have interpreted as “warnings” rather than guidelines in facilitating public understanding of issues at stake in the 2007 elections. The listed warnings proposed by the NBC include the following:

- No station shall be involved in the production of jingles, no voice of members of any station shall be used in political jingles, and all jingles should conform to the standards of truth, decency, good taste and morality. This implies that, the broadcast media must remain neutral throughout the election period and not allow proprietorial interest whether private, or federal to be used to the detriment of other candidates.

- Government owned electronic medium either state or federal and privately owned medium shall give access on daily basis to all registered political parties or
candidates that are contesting elections. A denial of equitable access constitutes an
offence punishable with a fine of 500,000 and a withdrawal license for a period of
12 months or any subsequent violation.

This makes it easier because, it is highly uncommon for reporters or news
programme producers to be involved in jingles and advertising production. It is equally a
tall order to require news organizations to provide equal time for parties and candidates to
make their cases in the media.

Despite the laws and warnings, journalist were also been charged with a duty to
provide equal access to political parties. This is because as the election drew closer, the
broadcast media especially, was the focal point of political reporting and programming
escalates and the public would be eager for useful information on which to base decision-
making about who gets their vote. The situation seemed to change as journalist and news
organization were been faced with some challenges. While they may be eager to oblige,
time constraints and political environment acts to limit what actually gets covered,
meaning that mostly those party politicians who has the resources, sophisticated
organization and media savvy will get attention.

2.7.1 Views on 2006 election law on media coverage

In regards with the constitutional law and media guidelines for election coverage,
there are also laid down election laws on media coverage on how the media should cover
elections without offending the public or candidates and political parties. Sec.102-105 of
the electoral law of 2006 made rules for media coverage of the 2007 elections process.
The rules are rather broad and open to any interpretation which can serve to restrict
freedom of expression.
Sec.102 states that:

1. a government owned print or electronic medium shall give equal access on daily basis to all registered political parties or candidates, a denial of such access and equal time constitute an offence punishable with a maximum fine of 500,000 and the withdrawal of the license of the media house by the national broadcasting commission for a period of 12 months.

2. a person other than a political party or candidate who procures any material for publication for the purposes of promoting or opposing a particular political party over the print or electronic medium whatsoever called during 24hrs immediately proceeding or on polling day is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a maximum fine of 500,000 or imprisonment for six months or both.

Sec.103 states that

1. a candidate and his party shall campaign for the elections in accordance with the rules and regulation as may be determined by the commission.

2. state apparatus including the media shall not be employed to the advantage or disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election.

3. the media time shall be allocated equally among the political parties at similar hours of the day either during prime times, subject to the payment of appropriate fees.

4. any public media that contravenes sub sections 3 and 4 of this section shall be guilty of offence and on conviction be liable to a maximum fine of ₦500,000 in the first instance and to a maximum fine of 1,000,000 for subsequent conviction.

Sec.104 states that:

1. a person other than a political party or candidate who procures any material for publication for the purposes of promoting or opposing a particular political party over the print or electronic medium whatsoever called during 24hrs immediately proceeding or on polling day is guilty of an offence under this act.

2. Where a person is convicted of an offence, he shall be liable in case of a body corporate to a maximum fine of 500,000 and in the case of individual a maximum fine of 100,000 or 12 months imprisonment.

Sec 105 finally states that:
Any person, candidate or association who engages in campaigning or broadcasting based on religious, tribal, or sectional bias for the purpose of promoting or opposing a particular political party or the election of a particular candidate, is guilty of an offence under this act and on conviction is liable to a maximum fine of ₦100,000 or imprisonment of 12 months or both.

2.7.2 Media advisory guidelines duty

One of the salient features of the 2007 presidential and governorship election campaign was the number of televised debates programme with public participation as a major feature. First, the political context of this meant that Channels television advertised this aspect of programme format so as to legitimize and valorize their roles in the electoral debate. The global campaign for free expression and Media Rights Agenda (MRA) is aimed at ensuring adequate and equitable media coverage of the 2007 elections which is geared towards enabling the public to make informed choices during choices during the elections.

The media advisory was adopted at the meeting of media owners, managers, leaders and advocates as well as regulators including Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ), Nigerian Press Council (NPC), Nigerian Guild Editors (NGE) which was held in Abuja on March 20th, 2007 under auspices of article 19: the global campaign for free expression, channels television and Media Rights Agenda (MRA). The advisory is distilled in part, from the rules and practice relating to the coverage of election campaigns.

The media advisory on elections recommends some guidelines which address the media duty to inform the public; the rules governing election coverage, the protection for freedom of expression during elections; as well as the government duty to provide a favourable legal and regulatory environment for the media to operate.

The guidelines duty ensures to inform the public during election about relevant electoral matters such as the political parties, the campaign issues, the candidates and
voting process. The state-owned or funded media also have a duty to be balanced and impartial in their election reporting and not to discriminate against any political party or candidates. This duty requires that the news, current affairs, interviews and information programmes must not be in favour of or against any party or candidate. All broadcasters particularly state owned should be scrupulous and be fair in providing balanced news and impartial current affairs coverage. Where editorial opinions are expressed, broadcasters should conform to the highest of professionalism and impartiality. The amount of time allocated should be equal and sufficient for the political parties or candidates to communicate their messages. The purchasing of broadcast time should be organized in such a way as to minimize the campaigning advantage to be gained by the richer political parties. The broadcasters are also obliged to broadcast voter education programme which must also be accurate, impartial, and informative about voting process and broadcast at peak viewing hours.

2.8 Political Attacks during Campaigns and Elections

Since independence from Britain in 1960, the country has never had a peaceful transition from one elected leader to another. Tension were seen running high during the last elections with more than 50 political parties vying for hundreds of local and national parliamentary seats and 24 candidates for presidents. The elections today in Nigeria are declared as political “wars” that employ a variety of strategies to woo the electorate. This political war often ends up in fierce fighting (literal warfare). The election campaign issue is only a part of a profound socio-political rot. During the April 13\textsuperscript{th} 2007 elections, tension flared. Everybody wanted victory either through the ballot box or through the barrel of gun (Kur: 2005). A day before key national elections, unidentified gunmen shot dead a hard line Muslim scholar who was a government critic while he was at prayer in the mosque. Police said, gunmen who burst into the mosque mowed down Shakjafar
Adam, a Wahhabi cleric who was shot 5 times at close range and two other members of the congregation.

In a national radio and television broadcast, the former president ominously accused “highly placed individuals” of encouraging violence in the country. This was as a result of an attack on the former vice-president who fell out with the president. Meanwhile a police officer and four others in the rich oil delta region were also killed in gang violence and four police officers in Portharcourt were also killed by gunmen.

The assassination of Malam Jafar Adam Kano is said also not to be in related to any of the Islamic group but was seen to be related to politicians or government because of the several lectures he held accusing the government. On 18th April, the Nigerian military killed at least 25 suspected Islamic militants voting began on 21April, there was an alleged attempt in Bayelsa to kill Goodluck Jonathan who was the former governor of the state and also a failed attempt to destroy INEC headquarters in Abuja with a tuck bomb, while on 17th April, few days before the elections, battling extremist attacked a police station in Kano. Nigeria has never yet managed a peaceful hand over from one democratically elected president at the end of his constitutional term to the next. One of the most recently failed elections as a result of this attack was the 1993 election of Chief M.K.O Abiola which was annulled by a military dictator and when he tried to claim his presidency, he was imprisoned until his questionable death in 1998.

Not only where there increase in violence directed at individual politicians, the media was also involved and there were serial kidnappings of foreign nationals in the oil rich Niger-Delta region where communities are campaigning for the right to development. Among the independent broadcast media organizations affected by this tragedy were the African Independent Television (AIT) and Ray-power FM stations who were been harassed by authorities with programmes stopped in mid air, yaps sized and reporters
arrested. Just before the Christmas, the chairman of the editorial board of daily *ThisDay* newspaper, Godwin Agboroko was found dead behind the wheels of his vehicle. Some days latter, the office was gutted by fire. Then in January, to newspaper offices in Abuja, the *Leadership* and the *Inquirer* were raided and briefly shut down. “It seems the election campaign was a trying time for Nigerian journalists who were repeatedly the targets of SSS savagery” said the press freedom organization.

The tense political environment prompted critical comments from the US & U.K government and have expressed concern about the violence and its implications for the elections. Testifying before the U.S congress, the U.S army Lieutenant General Michael D. Maples, director of the defense intelligence agency said the potential for violence in Nigeria remains high “as candidates from the predominantly Muslim north and Christian south compete for office”. Britain also expressed concerns over press freedom in Nigeria, citing the killing of a well known journalist and detention of several others in Nigeria over “political stories”.

Amnesty international, human rights defenders, and 28 civil society organizations (CSO’s), decried a spate of extra-judicial killings, electoral violence and abuse of human rights in the country ahead of the elections. Amnesty called for an end to continuing political violence and human rights abuses during and after elections which includes acts of political violence, killings threats, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defenders. While in a joint statement, the CSO’s launched a “campaign for violence free elections calling for an end to increased political violence and human rights abuses in the country”.

The political violence which goes on in the country is as a result of “highly placed god fathers” acceptance of violence by saying election is a do or die affair ie a must win for a popular party.
2.9 Overview of 2007 Nigeria General Election

The Nigerian general elections of 2007 were held on 14th April and 21st April 2007. While the Governorship and State Assembly elections were been held on 14th April, the Presidential and National Assembly elections were held a week later on 21st April. Nigeria which is a multi-party system with two or three strong parties elects on federal level a head of state (i.e. the president of the country) and a legislature (the national assembly). The National Assembly has two chambers comprising the House of Representatives which have 360 members elected for a four year term in a single constituency and the senate which has 109 members.

Nigeria faced a set of elections in April that defined the country’s political landscape well into the next decade. The success of these elections is vital to the continued democratic development of Nigeria and the integrity of the 2007 electoral process is the most immediate issue of concern to Nigerians and to the international community.

Don Heflin in his seminar paper about U.S policy towards Nigerians April 14 and 21 elections said with over $15 million indirect resources over the past three years, the U.S has support the Nigeria’s government efforts to hold credible, timely elections which leads to an historic transition from one civilian president to another on may 29. The $15 million in electoral assistance focuses on strengthening civil society engagement in voter education and election observation, and on working with political parties to enhance professionalism which aims at increasing and reducing electoral violence.

Regardless of the outcomes of Nigeria April 2007 elections, the fact remains that the forces resistant to change will continue attempting to hinder progress. These forces include entrenched poverty and unemployment, continued pervasive corruption, ineffective governance, suppressed democratic institution and of course major political unrest in the country. Whatever the hitches to the election schedules, the preparations were
on-going as the media broadened public debate and INEC worked towards ensuring to conduct credible, free and fair elections but it is the electoral environment that has raised consternation. Going by recent reports, there were complaints that preparations for the 2007 elections have shown more faulty lines through tight election time-table that has limited voter registration at centres and immersed controversy about registration machines allegedly gone missing or undelivered. Even with the extension of voters’ registration from December to January, many eligible voters were not still registered. Opposition can dictate in the parliamentary elections were intimidated and supporters barred from voting.

There were also cases of missing ballot boxes in areas to favour some party.

**Figure 2: Summary of the 1 April 2007 Nigerian Presidential Election Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates-Parties</th>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Umaru Yar’Adua</td>
<td>Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)</td>
<td>24,638,063</td>
<td>69.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammadu Buhari</td>
<td>All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)</td>
<td>6,605,299</td>
<td>18.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atiku Abubakar</td>
<td>Action Congress (AC)</td>
<td>2,637,848</td>
<td>7.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orji Uzor Kalu</td>
<td>Progressive Peoples Alliance</td>
<td>608,803</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attahiru Bafarawa</td>
<td>Democratic Peoples Party (DPP)</td>
<td>289,324</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu</td>
<td>All Progressives Grand Alliance</td>
<td>155,947</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pere Ajuwa</td>
<td>Alliance for Democracy (AD)</td>
<td>89,241</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Okotie</td>
<td>Fresh Democratic Party</td>
<td>74,049</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Utomi</td>
<td>African Democratic Congress (ADC)</td>
<td>50,849</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambrose Owuru</td>
<td>Hope Democratic Party</td>
<td>28,519</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Okereke</td>
<td>African Liberation Party (ALP)</td>
<td>22,677</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Adedoyin</td>
<td>African Political System (APS)</td>
<td>22,409</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habu Fari</td>
<td>National Democratic Party</td>
<td>21,934</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxi Okwu</td>
<td>Citizens Popular Party (CPP)</td>
<td>14,027</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartholomew Nnaji</td>
<td>Better Nigeria Party</td>
<td>11,705</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Obayuwana</td>
<td>National Conscience Party</td>
<td>8,229</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olapade Agoro</td>
<td>National Action Council</td>
<td>5,752</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mojisola Obasanjo</td>
<td>Nigerian Masses Movement</td>
<td>4,309</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IPU Parline

**Figure 3: Summary of the 21 April 2007 Nigerian National Assembly Election Results**
### SUMMARY OF THE 21 APRIL 2007 NIGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>House of Representatives</th>
<th>Senate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People's Democratic Party</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Nigeria Peoples Party</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Congress</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Peoples Alliance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accord</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3600</strong></td>
<td><strong>109</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IPU Parline

---

![Figure 4: A Voter casting her vote in the 2007 general elections](source: Google Image)

### 2.10 Perception of Individuals on 2007 General Elections

This is a post election analysis by different panels which comprised of renown individuals. The 1st panel comprise of individuals from the international community who were in Nigeria during the state elections on April 14th and national elections on April 21st. There were observers of the Nigeria’s political situation as the April 2007 elections approached, marking the first ever civilian to civilian transfer of power in Nigeria history.
Former Canadian Prime Minister **Joe Clark** was a member of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) international observer delegation to Nigeria’s 2007 national elections. Clark noted that the conduct of the election was dramatically flawed. Most striking were the false assertion of slacking serial numbers, the disqualifications of leading candidates and the falsification of voter turn out. To improve on Nigeria’s democratizations, Clark provided concrete recommendations for INEC to regain its credibility. Foremost, commissioners should be appointed democratically and function independently and penalties should equally be applied to all parties convicted of violating electoral laws.

- **Ayo Obe**, from ND is elections programmes in Abuja stated that she had witnessed the erosion of democratic institutions during both the state and national elections. Both elections she said lacked organization demonstrated coercive practices and lacked transparency.

- **Dr. John Paden** was also an election observer and professor of international studies at George Mason University, asserted that low voter turn out in the national elections occurred primarily due to the violence and discouragement many Nigerians experienced after the state elections.

- **Robert Lawrence**, the Deputy Director of the Africa programme at the International Republican Institute (IRI). He believed that the 2007 elections represented a step backward in Nigeria’s democratic process and that “Nigeria is regressing without regret”. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} panel comprised of Nigerian civil society leaders and political party members who presented a Nigerian perception of the election and examined their impact of Nigeria’s political future.

- **Hon. Abike Dabiri**, an assembly member from the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and a broadcast journalist expressed shame at how the elections were conducted
and expressed her belief that the failures stemmed from a statement made by the ex-President Obasanjo saying the elections were a “do or die” affair. This statement accompanying a lack of preparation and transparency by election authorities, led many Nigerians to suspect a predetermined victory by the ruling party.

- **Dr. Kayode Fayemi** member of the action congress party (AC) stated outrage and disappointment at the “state criminality that masqueraded for an election in Nigeria”. He was optimistic because the problem faced by plaintiffs in election related disputes was not a lack of evidence, but the ability of government to adjudicate cases quickly and fairly.

- **Innocent Chukwuma**, head of the transition monitoring group, reinforced the argument INEC was unprepared for the election and charged that it was deliberate. He encouraged opposition parties, who now stood little chance of electoral success to explore other means of engaging in the electoral process.

- **Dr. Reuben Abati** editor at the guardian, a prominent Nigeria newspaper, addressed broader repercussion of these elections including impending legitimacy crises of the government. Despite positive trends in Nigeria such as a vibrant society and media and an independent judiciary, most Nigerians are still disheartened by the outcome of elections and increasingly skeptical about the democratic process in Nigeria politics.

The final panel focused on Nigeria’s electoral and political evolution and made recommendations for new government. Among them are

- **Mr. Faruk Lawan**, a member of the PDP and national assembly stressed that electoral reform requires strengthening weak institutions and voter confidence in the democratic process.
• George Obiozor, a Nigerian ambassador to the U.S urged Nigerians to allow president elect a chance to prove himself in office.

According to the European Union election observation mission in Nigeria, media performance during the Nigerian elections was flawed, as it failed to provide unbiased, fair and informative coverage of the political parties and candidates contesting the elections. This was as a result of various factors..... Federal and State owned media were biased in favor of the parties and candidates in power. (Daily Trust, April 23, 2003:4).

![Figure 5: Election Observers in Nigeria](Source: Google Image)

2.11 Conclusion

The 2007 elections came and gone with its short comings. Late arrivals of ballot papers, alleged riggings, snatching of ballot papers, killings attempted, assassinations, absence of candidate pictures on ballot papers, disenfranchisement of people, non display f party logos on paper, lack of adequate information which is part of the growing process. However, nothing planned by human being is expected to be perfect. Nigerian 2007 elections is a learning process and part of development. The registration of voters that
produced voters list is a good beginning, all presidential candidates did all they could in the exercise and the result tell the remaining story. Nigerians should endeavour to congratulate them for their efforts. The winner of the election won by 24,638,063 votes with the runner up followed, 6,605,299 votes and the third position with 2,637,848. The election is a process; therefore losers should take the sportsmanship route and support the winner. There were some individuals that planned to disrupt the April election through various attacks and this has made everybody to change the perception about Nigeria in their community. Therefore the ministry of information and communication in Nigeria should buy air time on some local television stations to enable them present accurate representation of Nigeria. Nigerians also in Nigeria have to put their brain and experience together in order to come up with some strategies to stop the continuous bashing of Nigeria as an outcast.

REFERENCES


Daily Trust, April 23, 2003


CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 PREAMBLE

This section is a description of the methods used in collection and analysis of data. It discusses research design, population of study, sampling techniques/size, instruments for data collection, validation of research instruments, reliability of the instrument, procedure for data collection, method of analysis and data presentation.

3.1 Research Design

This research adopts the survey method as its research design. The rationale for the use of survey method is to elicit responses from the sampled respondents. Surveys are useful in the measurement of public opinion, attitudes and orientations which are dominant among a large population at a particular period. It will help in gathering and subjecting such data to statistical analysis for the purpose of reaching conclusions on subject-matter of the study and providing solutions to identified research problems. Survey therefore is particularly useful in studies in which the population involved is too large to be observed directly.

Survey research takes into account a wide variety of decision and problems. Surveys can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings. It allows researchers to examine many variables (demographic and lifestyle information, attitudes, motives, intentions and so on.) and to use a variety of statistics to analyse the data. Again, survey is a study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning that enables a researcher to make generalizations concerning his population of interest.

3.2 Description of Research Population.

The population of this research work comprises Youths and Adults in Nigeria. However, as a result of the difficulty in sampling the entire population of youths and adults in Nigeria, the researcher chose to use Youths and Adults in Makurdi local
Government Area of Benue state as study respondents. The choice of Makurdi Youths and Adults was in consideration of the fact that the station (Radio Benue) is situated in their environment, therefore making them easily notice everything concerning their programmes.

3.3 Sampling Technique

In selecting the sample for this study, the simple random sampling technique was used. This technique was to ensure that every resident Youth and Adult of Makurdi stands a chance of being a part of the sample because simple random sampling is a technique in which every member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the final sample. The entire sample for the study came from Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

3.4 Sample Size

Due to the large nature of the population, limited time and resources that was available to the researcher, a sample of three hundred (300) people was randomly selected. This was to ensure accuracy and also to minimize errors.

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used in this study was the questionnaire, designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was a vital instrument for gathering information from people about their opinion, attitudes, behaviours and perceptions on a given phenomena. The instrument was administered physically on the respondents which seek to elicit the respondent’s views and feelings about the issues being raised.

3.6 Validation of research Instrument

To ensure the validity of the study, the researcher first embarked on a pilot study by distributing 50 copies of the questionnaire to focused respondents among the Youths and Adults in Benue State University, Makurdi. The project supervisor also corrected
errors on the instrument before the researcher embarked on the final administration of the
questionnaires to the actual sample respondents.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis and presentation

The data collected from the questionnaire used in this research work was analyzed using simple percentages and was presented with the aid of tables as well as explanations made. The formula for the calculation of simple percentage is as follows;

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{No of respondents} & \quad 100 \\
\text{No of questionnaires} & \quad x
\end{align*}
\]

These will form the basis of data analysis and interpretation as will be presented in the preceding chapter.
4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis of data obtained and findings by the researcher through questionnaires. The findings through observation are also applied in the discussion.

However, a total of 350 questionnaires were administered and 300 returned back. The analysis which is divided into two parts, that is demographic variables and research questions is therefore based on the 300 respondents.

4.1 Demographic analysis

Demographic analysis comprised questions 1 - 4 inquiring about age, sex, marital status and occupation of respondents.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35 years</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45 years</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 years and above</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

Table 1 above indicates that 150 respondents (50%) were between the age brackets of 18-25, 70 respondents (23.3%) were between the age brackets 26-35, 40 respondents (13.3%) fall between the age bracket 36-45 while the remaining 40 respondent (13.3%) fall within the age classification of 46 and above.
Table 2: Sex Distribution of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>43.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>56.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 2 indicates that 130 respondents (43.3%) were males while the remaining 170 respondents (56.6%) were females.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2009

Out of the respondents as shown in table 3, 200 respondents (66.6%) were single, 70 respondents (23.3%) were married while 30 respondents (10%) were divorced.

Table 4: Occupation of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2009
Table 4 shows that 40 respondents (13.3%) were civil servants, 160 respondents (53.3%) were students, 20 respondents (6.6%) were also traders while 60 respondents (20%) were involved in other occupations.

Findings:

The demographic analysis is basically intended to obtain information on the background of the respondents who are audiences of Benue State broadcasting cooperation, so as to clearly establish their perception of radio Benue coverage in the 2007 general elections.

Findings show that the young people who fall between the age brackets 18-25(50%) are students, and 160(53.3%) are mostly the ones that came out to perform their civic responsibility by casting their votes.

This respectively validates the findings that young people tend to easily get political messages and act on it faster. Another interesting factor is that, the single people mostly participate in political activities than the married ones. 200 respondents (66.6%) constitute the majority and are single, this validate this findings.

4.2 Psychographic analysis

Table 5: Was there election awareness by radio Benue within your household during the last elections?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2009
Table 5 above indicates that 240 respondents (80%) who are majority agreed that there was election awareness within their household while 60 respondents (20%) disagreed with that view.

Table 6: Was the station able to carry the people along in terms of participation in the election?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 indicates that 150 respondents (50%) accepted that the station carried the people along while the remaining 150 respondents (50%) said the station did not carry people along.

Table 7: Was the station able to carry the rural people along by using campaigns in indigenous language of the people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 7 shows that 180 respondents (60%) supported that the station was able to carry the rural people along using indigenous languages while 120 respondents (40%) were not in support.
Table 8: Was the station fair in the way it carried campaign adverts from the different participating parties and aspirants?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

Table 8 indicates that 130 respondents (43.3%) asserts that the campaign adverts where fair while the remaining 170 respondents (56.6%) who constitute the majority strongly disagreed that the station was not fair.

Table 9: Do you think that the station gave equal opportunity to all the political parties participating in the election to mobilize their people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

Table 9 indicates that 80 respondents (26.6%) said there was equal opportunity, 90 respondents (30%) objected by saying there was no equal opportunity while the remaining 130 respondents (43.3%) said it was partially equal.

Table 10: Were there any political influences from the station on its audience(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*
Table 10 above shows that 200 respondents (66%) were positive that there were political influences from the station while the remaining 100 respondents (33%) said there was no political influence.

### Table 11: Did the political adverts from the station influence your voting option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

Table 11 indicates that 190 respondents (63.3%) were of the view that the political adverts from the station influenced their voting options while the remaining 110 respondents (36.6%) disagreed with that.

### Table 12: If yes, which of these actually influenced your voting option?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jingles</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political programmes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama/ songs</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

**Legend:** The depreciation in the total number of respondents from 300 to 190 in table 12 is explained by the follow up status in question 14. In other words, only 190 respondents (63.3%) said the political adverts influenced their voting.
In table 12, 50 respondents (26.3%) said they were influenced through jingles, 30 respondents (15.7%) were influenced by adverts, 20 respondents (10.5%) by political programmes, 40 respondents (21.0%) were through drama/songs while the remaining 50 respondents (26.3%) were influenced by other factors.

Table 13: Do you think that the station helped to influence its audience participation in the elections?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

Table 13 above shows that 240 respondents (80%) said yes, that the station helped in audience participation while 60 respondents (20%) said no.

Table 13: How would you rate the performance of Radio Benue in terms of the coverage of the 2007 general elections?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

Table 13 shows that 20 respondents (6.6%) said the performance was excellent, 90 respondents (30%) said it was good, 160 respondents (53.3%) rated the performance as fair while the remaining 30 respondents (10%) said it was poor.
Table 14: How would you rate the level of awareness on the election by the station?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 14 shows that 80 respondents (26.6%) said the level of awareness was good, 180 respondents (60%) rated the station as been fair while the remaining 40 respondents (13.3%) said the awareness was poor.

Table 15: Were you happy with the way the station relayed election stories and result during the period?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 15 shows that 120 respondents (40%) were happy with the way the station relayed its stories while the remaining 180 respondents (60%) said they were not happy.
Table 16: Do you think that the ownership status of Radio Benue affected the way the station covered the whole electioneering process in the state?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t say</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

The table above shows that 160 respondents (53.3%) agreed that the ownership status affected the station, 40 respondents (13.3%) disagreed, while the remaining 100 respondents (33.3%) could not say if the status affected the station.

Table 17: How effective would you rate the station transmission and coverage of events during the electoral period?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very effective</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially effective</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not effective</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey 2009*

Table 17 shows that 60 respondents (20%) rated the station as very effective, 190 respondents (63.3%) said the station was partially effective while the remaining 50 respondents (16.6%) said the station was not effective.
4.3 Discussion of Findings/ Answers to Research Questions

Research question one sought to find out the level of coverage that was given to the 2007 general elections in Benue State by Radio Benue.

In answer to question 5, 6, 7 and 8, 80% respondents admitted that there was election awareness and the station was able to carry them along in terms of participation (50%). The rural people were not left out, as 60% of the respondents were in support that the rural people also participated in the elections as the station used indigenous languages for campaigns. The station also according to respondents response to question 7 carried the people along by airing campaign programmes on voting process, the station also advertised and sensitize the people on why the must exercise their franchise.

Finally, the station also aired out jingles and other related ideas in terms of participation.

Research question two is an inquiry to find out the directional coverage by Radio Benue to ascertain if the station was fair to all parties involved.

In response to question 9, 10 and 11, 56.6% respondents who are the majority opined that the station was not fair with the way it carried its campaign adverts from the different participating parties and aspirants. The reason by the respondents in answer to question 10 was because the station paid most attention to only the ruling party and equal opportunity was not given to all the parties and its candidates. The result of this was that 43.3% respondents ascertained that there was partial opportunity given to the parties.

Research question three sought to find out the level of political influence in the stations coverage of the elections if there were any.
In answer to questions 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, respondents (66.6%) admitted that there were political influences on them because the station made them to vote for the ruling party. The station also enlightened them on how to cast their votes, and mostly made them to understand that there is only one party because of the attention they gave to that party.

Findings also from these responses assert that, since they were politically influenced by the station, their voting option was also influenced by the political adverts as respondents (63.3%) accepted that through different way especially jingles (26.3%). This finding then concludes that 80% respondents were influenced by its audience participation.

**Research question four** is an inquiry to find out how the audiences perceive the stations performance in terms of their coverage.

In response to question 17, 18, 19 and 20 almost all the respondents (53.3%) rated the station performance as been fair and these made the level of awareness by the station to be fair according to respondents (60%). The respondents (60%) as affected were not happy with the station as she relayed the election results. The reasons as answered in question 20 were because the station was geared towards the ruling party, also the station was not accurate in airing the results.

**Research question five** sought to find out if the ownership status of the station affected the coverage of political issues.

In response to question 21, 22, 23 and 24, 54.3% respondents said the station was affected by the ownership status and 63.3% respondents attested that this made the station transmission and coverage during the elections to be partially effective. In response to question 23, the areas which the station was deficient in their coverage as noted by the respondents were, the station pushed her weight
behind the ruling party and was biased in their reportage of other political parties. Also, the station did not reach out to everyone as most rural areas where left out, the station did not transmit coverage especially to some interior part and they also allowed politicians to influence performance of duties. The station was always attacking opposition party and many happenings which occurred during and after the elections were not been broadcast.

The station also failed to give facts and accurate information. The station was also deficient in the area of drama, advertisement and talk shows. In answering question 24, the respondents stated areas which the station can improve during electioneering periods.

The station should be able to send correspondents to everywhere even the remote areas during election to ensure good coverage and rural participation. They should not be biased and also be broadcast more in indigenous languages. The station should air the program that will change the mind of audience, collation centers should be covered and the station should be granted independent autonomy. Finally equal airtime should be given to all parties and candidates and government monopoly should be low.

In conclusion the audience admitted that there was election awareness but the station was not been fair in the way it carried out its campaign adverts from the different parties due to some reasons. The station also politically influenced their voting options and that the station’s performance was thought not to be good because of some reasons.

The ownership status of the station really affected the coverage of political issues and this made the audience not to be happy which made them to state areas which the station’s services can be improved during future electioneering period.
4.4 Implications of findings

Since radio created awareness during election, it means that radio remain a viable medium for political mobilization, sensitization and education.

Since the media is biased, the canon of objectivity is lust to prejudice as it creates room for the public to perceive the medium as incredible, thereby making its information function useless.

Since the level of literacy is still very low, the value of indigenous language broadcasting during elections is very necessary since it will help to create the needed political education.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

This research work dwelt on the assessment of audience perception of radio Benue coverage of the 2007 general elections. This chapter has therefore summarized all that has been done in carrying out this research work.

In chapter one, the general introduction of the study was made in which the background of the study, statement of problems, objective of study, significance of study, scope of the study was discussed. Research questions were formulated as well and theoretical framework was stated.

In chapter two, a review of related literature was broadly covered with the view of different people concerning the election process in Nigeria generally. Existing literature concerning the research work were critically and constructively reviewed.

Chapter three concentrated on the research methodology which talked about the research design, description of research population, the sampling technique/size, instrument of data collection, validation of research instrument and the method of data analysis and presentation. The survey method was adopted with the use of questionnaire as an instrument which copies were distributed to youths and adults in makurdi metropolis as was chosen as the population of study.

In chapter four, the data which were obtained were based on responses from the respondents. The chapter was devoted to data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings from the research questions with the use of simple percentages in tabular form. Findings show that the audience was not satisfied with the station coverage from the early time to election period.
5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings derived from the study, a number of conclusions could be drawn. This study established that, from the assessment of audience perception, though the stations (Radio Benue) effort was good but they were not still satisfied with the coverage of the general elections. A valid conclusion is reached that the station was bias to the political parties and the aspirants were not given equal opportunity. The station was also influenced politically and the ownership status affected their coverage as they did not report accurate information on election results to the audience. The airing of jingles, advertisements, dramas etc was also in favour of one party. The audience therefore, saw it that the station only worked for the government interest and not for the people as they were not given opportunity to say their minds through the media.

5.3 Recommendations

In view of the identified problems which the station (Radio Benue) and other media houses, it is therefore imperative to recommend possible solutions to the problems to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the station/media houses.

1. The recommendations are firmly premised on the fact that for any station that wants to maintain its integrity and respect, it should work for the people and not the government as its main goal or objective. It should be able to give the people what they are looking for and also make them participate in political activities.

2. The station should give equal opportunities to all the political parties and candidates as this will help the people to be interested in politics. Results and information passed should be accurate, timely and fair as this will make the audience to always be happy and trust the station.
3. The government should also help the media by not dictating what should be aired, also support the activities of the media. The media or state should not be monopolized and always be in favour of one party.

4. Also in trying to solve the problems of indigenous language; the station should carry out programmes in indigenous language as this will make the rural people to feel belonged and journalist should be sent to such areas to reports events that are going on around the environment and outside.

It is hoped that, these suggestions are considered in the effort to improve our stations and media houses as it will serve a new chapter of trust on them. A further study on the relationship between media ownership and election coverage can be carried out.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


**Journals**


Internet Materials


Newspapers/Magazines


Unpublished Materials


Dictionary/Encyclopedia

APPENDIX

Department of Mass Communication,
Faculty of Arts,
University of Nigeria.
Nsukka.

January 2009.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a postgraduate student of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. I am conducting a research on An Assessment of Audience Perception of Radio Benue Coverage of the 2007 General Elections in Nigeria.

The research is purely an academic study in fulfillment of the award of a Master Degree of Arts in Mass Communication.

I shall be grateful if you can complete the attached questionnaire for me. Your anonymity is guaranteed as the information will be treated in strict confidence.

Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours Sincerely

Agbenyi, Joy I.
(Researcher)
QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTION: Please tick (✓) against your response(s) in the space provided.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Age of Respondents
   a. 18 – 25 Yrs
   b. 26 – 35 Yrs
   c. 36 – 45 Yrs
   d. 46 and above

2. Sex of Respondents
   a. Male
   b. Female

3. Marital Status of Respondents
   a. Single
   b. Married
   c. Divorced

4. Respondents Occupation
   a. Civil Servant
   b. Student
   c. Self Employed
   d. Trader
   e. Others

SECTION B: PSYCHOGRAPHIC DATA

5. Was there election awareness by Radio Benue within your household during the last elections?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. Was the station able to carry the people along in terms of participation in the election?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. If yes, please state how? ......................................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................................................
8. Was the station able to carry the rural people along by using campaigns in the indigenous languages of the people?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

9. Was the station fair with the way it carried campaign adverts from the different participating parties and aspirants?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

10. If no why? ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

11. Do you think that the station gave equal opportunity to all the political parties participating in the election to mobilize the people?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐
   c. Partially ☐

12. Were there any political influences from the station on its audience(s)?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

13. If yes, please state how? ………………………………………………………………………………………………

14. Did the political adverts from the station influence your voting option?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

15. If yes, which of these actually influenced your voting option?
   a. Jingles ☐
   b. Advertisements ☐
   c. Political Programmes ☐
   d. Drama/Songs ☐
   e. Other. ☐
   Please state………………………………………………………………………………………………………

16. Do you think that the station helped to influence its audience participation in the elections?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

17. How would you rate the performance of Radio Benue in terms of the coverage of the 2007 general elections?
a. Excellent ☐
b. Good ☐
c. Fair ☐
d. Poor ☐

18. How would you rate the level of awareness on the election by the station?
   a. Good ☐
   b. Fair ☐
   c. Poor ☐

19. Were you happy with the way the station relayed election stories and results during the period?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

20. If no, please state reason(s)? .................................................................
     ........................................................................................................

21. Do you think that the ownership status of Radio Benue affected the way the station covered the whole electioneering process in the state?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐
   c. Cant Say ☐

22. How effective would you rate the station transmission and coverage of events during the electoral period?
   a. Very Effective ☐
   b. Partially Effective ☐
   c. Not effective ☐

23. Please state areas you think the station was deficient in their coverage.
     ........................................................................................................
     ........................................................................................................

24. Please state areas which you think the stations service(s) can improve during electioneering periods.
     ........................................................................................................
     ........................................................................................................
     ........................................................................................................
AN ASSESSMENT OF AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF RADIO BENUE’S COVERAGE OF THE 2007 GENERAL ELECTIONS

AGBENYI JOY ICHIKO
PG/MA/07/42936

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: C. S. AKPAN, Ph.D.

MARCH 2009
CERTIFICATION

This project report is certified as having met the requirements of the Department of Mass Communication and the School of Post Graduate Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka for the award of a Master of Arts degree in Mass Communication.

BY

-------------------------------------------   ----- -----------------------------------
CHURCH S. AKPAN (Ph.D).                      DATE
(RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISOR)

-------------------------------------------   ----- -----------------------------------
RAY A. UDEAJAH (Ph.D).                        DATE
(Ag. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

-------------------------------------------   ----- -----------------------------------
EXTERNAL EXAMINER                            Date
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his inspiration, and to my lovely parents Dr. and Dr. Mrs. Agbenyi Peter Igbo.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In a project of this nature, it is not possible to list all those who may have assisted in one way or the other. I want to first thank God for the grace of making me pass successfully through this programme. My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr. Church S. Akpan for his critical remarks which helped a lot in reducing the mistakes that would have been in this thesis. My thanks to all my lecturers in my department especially my Head of Department, Dr. Ray Udeajah for his advice.

I want to sincerely appreciate my lovely parents Dr. and Mrs A.P Igbo for their financial and moral contribution during the period of this study. Also to my siblings, Grace, Priscillia, Victor and Alice I say thank you for your assistance.

I also appreciate the contributions of my friends, Precious Inchifor, Daniel Ekharefo, Ogedi Nyekwere, Jane Amaefule, Nnamdi Nwanyanwu, Peace Nwachukwu, Tosin Oyedepo, Bunmi Akande, Anyinda Elachi, Onyebi Adakole, Aver Moor, Ogo A. Ogo, Ene Ogwuji, Ashioma Ikatule. And to all my Friends, Cousemates and Cousins whose names were not mentioned I say a big thank you for all your support.

Finally to my Dearest friend, Wilfred Olley I just want to let you know that your contributions and co-operation brought me this far, I appreciate you.
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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the assessment of audience perception of Radio Benue’s coverage of the 2007 General elections by seeking to get their views on the performance of Radio Benue during the election period in the state with a view to ascertaining the coverage and effectiveness of information by the station. Five research questions were constructed in an attempt to provide answers to the relevant research objectives and using the survey method which employed the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection, information were gotten from respondents in the state. Findings revealed that, majority of the respondents sampled noted that there was election awareness but the information/results were not accurate. The relevance of this information to the study is that, the media do set agenda for the audience and the audience do rely on the information from the media at all times. Majority of the respondents also agreed that, the media was biased and not fair in the area of election coverage and campaigns as they focused mostly on one political party. On the basis of these findings, this paper concludes that Radio Benue was ineffective and not credible in the coverage of the elections and this was as a result of ownership status as stated by the respondents. This study therefore recommended that, the media should not be influenced by its owners as this would enable them to be accurate, fair, non-biased and truthful in relaying election campaign messages and information thus making the audience to trust them as the media universally are seen as catalyst to societal development.