**THE INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON BROADCASTING**

**(A SURVEY OF N.T.A. CHANNEL 12, UYO)**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

The desire of government to put in place a policy instrument for the broadcasting sector is a welcome development. In almost eighty years since broadcasting was introduced into Nigeria, there have been many policy processes involving diverse institutions. Several documents have emerged in the form of white papers, laws, constitutions and policies to define the positions of government at different period. Some of such documents compounded the problems they were meant to solve, some others got overtaken by events; and were on their way to the museum shortly after they were released. Some got installed in mills, yet some others were not implemented and the challenges that coursed their existence remained. But we must note that several policies have been produced and implemented by the government, giving birth to some of the dividends Nigerians broadcasting media enjoy now.

The Nigeria community radio coalition sees this new effort as an opportunity to design a document which will strengthen broadcasting to help engage the huge development challenges of our country which content will reflect the needs of Nigerians as well as international standards and best practices.

**1.1 Background of the Study**

Mass media are very important tools of communication through which information is passed to even the farthest end of the world. They enable us to communicate with each other by helping us to overcome the barriers of time and space. They perform both primary and secondary functions for the society.

Mass media functions in several ways, first it keeps us well informed of the happenings around us and of the world were will otherwise remain unknown.

The media also persuade us through mostly through advertisement, as we can see in newspapers, magazines, radio and television. It also entertains us, television and radio broadcasting provide us with a variety of programs which both educates and entertain us. The mediasystem that exist in a society are directly related to the political system prevalent in that society. The political system determines the exact relationship between the media and government. The political system in place also determines the relation between the media and the government. The political system in place also determine the relationship between the media and the people, it also determine the capacity the media will operate. The political system in a country also affects the flow of information in the country inwhich it operates. For example, if the political system in place in a country is an authoritative one (Military Rule) there will be no free flow of information as the media will be acting in fear of the government and will cover the information that the government would not want the people to know about, and this will make the people of such country to live in ignorance about the government activities going on in their society.

But since Nigeria is a democratic society, the researcher will be talking about the influence of government policies on broadcasting media in a democratic society. The influence of the government in broadcasting in a democratic society spring from the right of the people to learn about matters of public concern.

Nigeria as a member of democracy, claim freedom to speak about the workings of government and to debate about government conduct and right to demand that policy makers defend their decisions. For this study, the policy makersi.e the government policy makers are narrowed down to the institutional actors, that is the Federal House of Assembly. The legislative, i.e. authority of the Federal House of Assembly makes the House a central institution in the policy formulation process. The powers of the National House of Assembly may varied as contain in Chapter v, part II of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). The legislature is traditionally saddled with the responsibility of making laws for the society, including the broadcast media.

Although the executive does not have it powers of legislation clearly spelt out, as those of the legislative, it does in course of policy formulation or implementation, makes laws through orders, memoranda, circulars etc. that have the force of law without statutory basis to implement policies. Government ownership implies that the medium is completely financed by the government e.g F.R.C.N (Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria) and N.T.A. (Nigeria Television Authority) here, the government not only finance the media houses, but also encrypts and make policies for the media and helps in implementing them.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In Nigeria, most news and media broadcast are determined by the owners and gate keepers of the organizations. These owners are those in the helm of affairs of the government, and like the ruling government, the keepers take orders from the owners. Their rank and files may include the management of radio stations and the various news editors and news and program producers. The philosophy of any media operation in Nigeria depends on the government in place.

The problem or burden of this research work is to:

* Examine the influence of government policies on broadcasting.
* How these decisions can serve public interest.
* How to convince the government to interfere less in running of the affairs of broadcast media to their own interest, instead of the public interest.

The right media broadcast decisions and programming can lead to success for the radio and television station. Whatever the practice in N.T.A. (Nigeria Television Authority) is, the influence and policies of the government are still present and if these policies are not well handled, they may greatly impair the course of the media broadcast. So this is what the study or research is aimed at finding out.

**1.3 Objectives of Study**

This research work is to achieve the following objectives:

(1) To find out the influence of government policies on broadcasting.

(2) To find out whether the N.T.A (Nigeria Television Authority) broadcast content is for the interest of the masses or interest of the government.

(3) To ascertain the influence of gate keepers on broadcast programs.

**1.4 Research Questions**

The following questions, if properly answered, will achieve the aforementioned objectives of the research:

(1) To what extent does the government policies influence broadcasting?

(2) What influence does the government have on broadcasting?

(3) Is NTA news content for the interest of the masses or government?

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

The choice of N.T.A (Nigeria Television Authority) as opposed to other media stations, is because of it influence in Nigeria. Perhaps as it has often been said to be the largest television network in Nigeria. It is believed to have surpassed any other television station in terms of it wider reach. The ultimate significance of the study will lie with its final ability find out and unravel the various influences of government policy on broadcasting and how it affect the broadcast media programs.

**1.6 Limitation of the Study**

The design of this research work is to find out the influence of government policies on broadcasting. Due to time, materials and financial constraint, this research work is limited to N.T.A. Channel 12, Uyo.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to NTA channel 12, Uyo.

**1.7 Definition of Term**

**Broadcast Media:** This are media houses, etc. Radio, Television station and newspaper station that sends, receive and broadcast messages, news, music, or any of the radio or television programmes to the general pulbic or society. .

**Government Policies:** This are set of rules, actions or instructions of plans of action agreed or chooses by the government that binds or guide the operation and function of the media broadcasting houses or stations.

**Influence:** This means the effect that the government have or exert on broadcasting or the power of the government on the media.

**Ownership:** This means legal right to posses or own something.

**N.T.A.:** Nigeria Television Authority: The biggest television station in Africa, it transmits all the audio and video signals from its mast to our radios and news and radio programs and video signals to our television.