

## Coverage of the 2015 Nigerian Presidential Election Campaigns by Select Mainstream Nigerian Newspapers

Olusegun H. Adebumiti<sup>1\*</sup>, Prof. John A. Sambe, PhD<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Department of Mass Communication. Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria

\*Corresponding Author: hakeemade@gmail.com; +2347030424406

### Abstract

This study was designed to determine the coverage of the 2015 Nigerian presidential election campaigns by select Nigerian newspapers. Using the content analysis method, the researchers studied four newspapers (*The Nation, The Punch, Nigerian Tribune and The Guardian*) and found out that the four newspapers covered the 2015 presidential election campaigns by reporting issues that were important to the electorate. However, some of the newspapers, most especially the ones owned by politicians exhibited bias in their coverage of the election campaigns. They also demonstrated unethical values by using sensational headlines, hate speeches and inciting comments. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Nigerian newspapers should do away with bias reporting and ownership influence by playing the role of an umpire, rather than taking sides during the electoral process among others.

**Keywords:** Coverage, election, influence, political campaigns, newspaper

### Introduction

In every democratic setting, elections are the main legitimate ways of appointing some citizens to the positions of leadership. More vigorous of the process is the presidential campaigns and elections as they determine who becomes the head of state and to whom the masses would entrust guardianship of their sovereignty. Thus, presidential campaigns across the globe attract the interest of newsmen or journalists and gain considerable focus of the newspapers.

Hollihan (2001) found that newspapers perform more successfully at informing voters than television news. For national political news coverage, the most thorough, comprehensive, and substantive information regarding political campaigns, political issues, and public policies are available to readers through the daily papers. This position by Hollihan (2001) points to the dominant thoughts that the electorate carry about during the elections as they are mostly influenced by the newspapers' constant projection of what to think about concerning the electoral process. The submission by Hollihan (2001) is in line with the agenda setting theory, which provides explanation to how the media can manipulate the behaviour of the people in the society. Hence, the success or failure of any electoral process largely depends on information in the mass media, most importantly the newspapers. Suffice it to say that the Nigerian newspapers during

the 2015 presidential election campaigns played immense roles in connecting the masses with the electioneering process and also serving as tools for political communication.

The 2015 presidential election in Nigeria was held on the 28th March, 2015. The period of the election campaigns was mainly the period General Muhammadu Buhari emerged the flag bearer of the All Progressives Congress (APC) after Dr Goodluck Jonathan had emerged the flag bearer of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The election was initially scheduled to hold on 14th February, 2015, but was later postponed to 28th March, 2015 (Independent National Electoral Commission Press Release, Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2015). However, the peak of the campaigns was mainly between 1st January, 2015 and 7th February, 2015. This period forms what the researchers used to study the newspapers coverage of the election campaigns. Thus, the researchers set out to determine the coverage of the presidential election campaigns by four selected newspapers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This particular study investigates Nigerian newspapers' coverage of the 2015 presidential election campaigns. The purpose of the study is to examine the issues in the campaign and how the newspapers argued the issues by their attribution to sources. Literature review establishes that overtime newspapers play significant roles in shaping public debate over election issues. The literatures also point to the fact that, the frame of coverage of election campaigns determines voters' turnout or turnoff during previous polls. However, little is known about how the newspapers covered the main issues, editorial discourse and ethical issues in the 2015 presidential election. Due to this gap, this study relied on content analysis as the approach to provide answers to research questions raised in the study.

### **Research Objectives**

The study sought to:

1. Ascertain the amount of coverage the newspapers gave to the main issues in the campaigns.
2. Assess the genres of stories used to cover the election campaigns.
3. Find out the frames used to cover the elections campaigns.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Amponsah (2012) in his study on "*The Daily Graphic* coverage of presidential campaigns in Ghana, 1992-2004," examined the nature of newspaper coverage of presidential election campaigns in Ghana. Using content analysis, the researcher studied 48 issues of *Daily Graphic* newspaper and revealed that advocacy is the most common topic of the campaign coverage. Also, in a study conducted by Odubote (2014) with the title. "Impact of television broadcasting on electioneering campaigns." He concluded that in the course of upholding their responsibilities as responsible media, the mass media in Nigeria have tried as much as possible to give equal chance to political parties most especially during elections. The study found that the private mass media, both broadcast and print

are better than the public-owned media. Odubote (2014) also noted that the press mobilises the electorate towards the 2011 elections in Nigeria at large.

During the 2015 presidential election campaign period, the Press educated Nigerians on the need to get their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) which was to be used by voters during the election (Independent National Electoral Commission Press Release, 2014). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had vowed not to compromise on her stand that only voters with the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) would vote during the election. This also became evident since the electoral umpire used the card-reader machine which can only capture voters with the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs). The Press as part of her social responsibility informed the electorate on the need to collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) in order to vote for the candidate of their choice. In the same vein, Nwammuo, Edegoh & Iwok (2015) in their study on "Nigerian press coverage of the 2015 Elections" discovered that *The Sun* newspaper favoured the People's Democratic Party (PDP) which is the political party of the paper's financier - Orji Uzor Kalu. *The Nation*, on the other hand, favoured the All Progressives Congress (APC), which is the political party of its financier - Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The interests of their owners influenced the amount of coverage given to stories, the direction of the coverage, prominence given to the stories and the purpose of the stories.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The framing theory formed the framework of the study. A second-level theory to agenda-setting, framing theory had its roots in symbolic interaction and social constructions and was credited to Erving Goffman, cited in Baran & Davis (2012) and Chong & Druckman (2007). The theory's basis is that the expectations or schemes we form about ourselves, other people and our social world are central to social life. Words that could express such expectations- stereotypes, attitudes, and racial or ethnic bias- assume that our expectations are socially constructed and which guide our day-to-day meaning-making (Volkmer, 2009). Volkmer (2009) notes that knowledge about framing theory is crucial for the planning of media campaigns in advertising, public relations, and political sectors. Framing theory is, for example, utilised by spin doctors for the tailoring of a political issue in election campaigns for a specific audience. However, one of the important areas of framing theory is media research in journalism and political communication. As media maintain a fourth estate role in democratic societies, media researchers find framing theory helpful to analyse the imbalances and underlying power structures that mediate political issues (Volkmer, 2009).

The above quotation shows the relevance of framing theory to political communication. Political campaigners with a very good understanding of this theory surely will reap a bounty if skilfully deployed. In essence, framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience called "the frame" influences the choices people make about how to process that information. Frames are abstractions that work to organise or structure message meaning. The most common use of frames is in terms of the frame the news or

media place on the information they convey. They are thought to influence the perception of the news by the audience, in this way it could be construed as a form of second level agenda-setting – they not only tell the audience what to think about (agenda-setting theory), but also how to think about that issue (second level agenda setting, framing theory). These were obvious in the political event of this study. The significance of the theory to this work is robust as the select newspaper publications of the 2015 presidential campaigns did not only form the agenda, but also guided the thought patterns of the public and influenced participation in the political debate.

### Methodology

The approach selected for this study was content analysis. The population for this study is 152 editions of the four newspapers studied. The sample size is 141. This sample size is adequate for this study because it is 92 percent of the population which of course surpassed Kerlinger (1973) and Wimmer & Dominick's (2000) recommendation, which says a sampling rate of 10 percent or 20 percent, is acceptable for the study of this nature. The units of analysis included news reports, features and opinion and editorial pages. The researcher made use of coding guide for the content analysis to extract data from the samples of reports or items in the selected newspapers in order to answer the research questions raised. The coding sheet was used to aggregate data for analysis using variables such as bias reporting, unbiased reporting, neutral reporting and slant of opinion and news.

### Inter-Coder Reliability

Using inter coder reliability analysis, the researcher subjected the coding instrument to repeated coding by two different assessors - The researcher and a research assistant who was trained on the procedure for coding.

### Data Presentation/Analysis

**Table 1: Showing the Amount of Coverage given by the Newspapers to the Main Issues in the Campaigns**

Priority Issues	<i>The Punch</i>			<i>The Guardian</i>		
	Article	Frequency	(%)	Article	Frequency	(%)
INEC	News	62	24	News	52	23.2
Political	News	24	9.2	News	22	10
Conflicts						
Security	News	46	17.6	News	20	9
Political	News	111	42.6	News	110	49
Campaign						
Voter	News	3	1.2	News	8	3.6
Education						
Corruption	News	10	4	News	7	3.1
Youth/ Women	News	4	1.5	News	5	2.2

Empowerment						
<b>Total</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>Nigerian Tribune</i>			<i>The Nation</i>		
<b>Priority Issues</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>(%)</b>
INEC	News	95	20	News	45	22
Political Conflicts	News	25	5.2	News	7	3.3
Security	News	63	13.2	News	25	12.0
Political Campaign	News	266	56	News	121	58.2
Voter Education	News	15	3.1	News	5	2.4
Corruption	News	2	0.4	News	2	0.96
Youth/ Women Empowerment	News	11	2.3	News	3	1.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above representation, it can be deduced that the select newspapers covered the political campaigns of the two major political parties (PDP and APC) that keenly contested the election. *Nigerian Tribune* covered more political campaigns than other newspapers under analysis with 266 news items representing (56%); *The Nation* followed with 121 news items representing 58.2%; *The Punch* also had 111 news items representing 42.6%; while *The Guardian* had 110 news items representing 49% for political campaign coverage.

Reports on the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC was the most covered after political campaigns by the newspapers. *Nigerian Tribune* had 95 news reports representing 20% of the activities of the electoral umpire; *The Punch* followed with 62 news reports representing 24%; while *The Guardian* covered the issues regarding INEC with 52 news reports representing 23.2%; and *The Nation* had 45 news reports on INEC representing 22%. Issues on security also featured in all the newspapers with *Nigerian Tribune* covering the issue in 63 news reports representing 13.2%; *The Punch* also followed with 46 reports representing 17.6%; *The Nation* churned out 25 news reports representing 12%; while *The Guardian* only had 20 news reports representing 9% to its credit on the issue of security. Issues on political conflicts also witnessed coverage from Nigerian newspapers with the *Nigerian Tribune* also leading the pack with 25 news reports representing 5.2%; *The Punch* had 24 news reports representing 9.2%; *The Guardian* had 22 news reports representing 10% and *The Nation* reported 7 news items on political conflicts representing 3.3%. Voter education was another issue the newspapers reported in the presidential election. The *Nigerian Tribune* reported the issue in 15 news items representing 3.1%; *The Guardian* reported 8 news stories representing 3.6%; *The Nation* had 5 news items representing 2.4%; *The Punch* had 3 news items representing 1.2%. On the issue of youth and women empowerment, *The Nigerian Tribune* led the pack with 11 news stories representing 2.3% issue; *The Guardian* churned out 5 stories

representing 2.2%; *The Punch* had 4 stories representing 1.5%; while *The Nation* reported 3 stories representing 1.44% on the issue. The issue of corruption was the last issue under review and *The Punch* Newspaper doled out 10 stories representing 4%; *The Guardian* reported 7 stories representing 3.1%; *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Nation* reported the issue of corruption with 2 stories each representing 0.4% and 0.96% respectively.

**Table 2: Showing the Genres of Stories in the Coverage of Campaigns**

<b>Editorial Issues</b>	<b><i>The Punch</i></b>			<b><i>The Guardian</i></b>		
	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Corruption	Editorial	0	0	Editorial	1	17
Economy	Editorial	0	0	Editorial	0	0
Security	Editorial	5	83.3	Editorial	2	33.3
INEC	Editorial	1	16.6	Editorial	3	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>Editorial</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Editorial</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

  

<b>Editorial Issues</b>	<b><i>Nigerian Tribune</i></b>			<b><i>The Nation</i></b>		
	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Corruption	Editorial	0	0	Editorial	2	13.3
Economy	Editorial	0	0	Editorial	0	0
Security	Editorial	1	50	Editorial	6	40
INEC	Editorial	1	50	Editorial	7	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>Editorial</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Editorial</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table 2, *The Nation* newspaper recorded 7 editorial issues on INEC representing 47%; 6 editorial issues on security representing 40%; 2 editorial issues on corruption representing 13.3% and no editorial issue on the economy.

*The Guardian* newspaper recorded 3 editorial issues on INEC representing 50%; 2 editorial issues on security representing 33.3%; 1 editorial issue on corruption representing 17% and no editorial issue on the economy. *The Punch* newspaper recorded 1 editorial issue on INEC representing 16.6%; 5 editorial issues on security representing 83.3%; no editorial issue was recorded on corruption and the economy. *Nigerian Tribune* recorded 1 editorial issue on INEC representing 50%; 1 editorial issue on security representing 50%; no editorial issue was recorded on corruption and the economy.

**Table 3: Showing the Frames used in the Coverage of Campaigns**

<b>Frame of coverage</b>	<b><i>Punch</i></b>			<b><i>The Guardian</i></b>		
	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Political Parties as	News	26	29	News	43	48

Sources						
Hate Speech	News	8	9	News	4	4.4
Sensational Headline	News	44	49	News	33	36.6
Inciting Comment	News	12	13.3	News	10	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<hr/>						
<i>Nigerian Tribune</i>			<i>The Nation</i>			
<b>Frame of coverage</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Political Parties as Sources	News	62	44.3	News	50	44.2
Hate Speech	News	18	13	News	5	4.4
Sensational Headline	News	46	33	News	49	43.4
Inciting Comment	News	14	10	News	9	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table above, *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper recorded 62 issues on political parties as sources of news coverage representing 44.3%; 18 issues on hate speech representing 13%; 46 issues on sensational headlines representing 33% and 14 issues on inciting comment representing 10%.

*The Nation* newspaper recorded 50 issues on political parties as sources of news coverage representing 44.2%; 5 issues on hate speech representing 4.4%; 49 issues on sensational headlines representing 43.3% and 9 issues on inciting comment representing 8%. *The Punch* newspaper recorded 26 issues on political parties as sources of news coverage representing 29%; 8 issues on hate speech representing 9%; 44 issues on sensational headlines representing 49% and 12 issues on inciting comment representing 13.3%. *The Guardian* newspaper recorded 43 issues on political parties as sources of news coverage representing 48%; 4 issues on hate speech representing 4.4%; 33 issues on sensational headlines representing 36.6% and 10 issues on inciting comment representing 11.1%.

### Discussion of Findings

Table 1 showed that the four newspapers content analysed gave more coverage to the two major political parties (PDP and APC) than other political parties. The first research question which sought to ascertain the amount of coverage given by the four newspapers revealed that coverage was given to local issues in all

ramifications. This finding supports Druckman's (2005) position that newspapers are less confined in the amount of coverage of issues when compared to the broadcast media.

In measuring the issues the newspapers covered the most, the researcher content analysed the news section of the newspapers. In all, seven issues were content analysed. The issues were: Political campaign; Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); Security; Political conflict; Voter Education; Youth and Women development and Corruption. Political campaign was the most covered issue during the period of coverage by the four newspapers. This is in agreement with Amponsah's (2012) position that "the amount of space and tone of coverage of election activities are important influences for any action a voter might take during the voting process."

The electoral umpire, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was the second issue that witnessed more coverage after political campaign by the newspapers. This was in agreement with the Common Wealth Observer group's (2012) report that newspapers committed considerable space to the coverage of the 2012 election process of the Electoral Commission in Ghana. Thus, the electoral body forms a part of the bulk of newspapers' coverage during election since the power of ensuring a successful election rests solely on its shoulder.

Security was the third issue that the four newspapers under review concentrated their coverage on. The issue of security raised a lot of concern during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria which even resulted to the postponement of the election (Independent National Electoral Commission Press Release, 2015). More so that the security challenges in the North East was worrisome due to the activities of Boko Haram. The Niger Delta militants also threatened to bring down the country should the then President, Goodluck Jonathan who hailed from that region fail to win. Political conflict is another issue that the four newspapers covered during the 2015 presidential campaign. Due to the sensitive nature of the election, the political class had some conflict of interest which was as a result of some fallout from the various parties' primaries. Also, the conflict became rife in the course of campaign with various court cases raising up head among the PDP and APC. Recall that the PDP alleged that the candidate of the APC, Muhammadu Buhari forged his certificate. Buhari was later cleared by the court after a long battle, which might have truncated the hope of the APC candidate before the election day.

Voter education was the fifth issue that was covered the most by the four newspapers under review. The newspapers were able to educate the voters on the candidates that are contesting the presidential election, though most of them concentrated on the candidates of the PDP and APC. They also educated them on the activities of the electoral umpire, INEC and the introduction of the card reader machine as well as the collection of their Permanent Voter Cards, which was the criterion to vote on election day. The concentration of the newspapers' coverage on INEC activities in providing voter education to the voters is in line with Tejumaiye's (2008) assertion that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) uses political advertising messages to persuade the electorate on how to vote, though not on whom to vote. Youth and Women empowerment was the

sixth issue content analysed. Thus, it indicated that the newspapers did not cover the issue of youth and women empowerment as it was expected. Corruption was the last issue that was content analysed. Corruption was at the peak of campaign during the 2015 presidential election. As the then incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan was serially accused of aiding corrupt officials in his government. The former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi had alleged that the sum of 20 billion naira was missing in the federation account. It was, however, a thing of surprise that the coverage on corruption was not the main issue that made the news in the four newspapers.

Table 2 revealed four issues that were germane to the political campaign process; Independent National Electoral Commission, security, corruption and the economy. In all the four newspapers content analysed during the period of review, 29 editorial issues were written by the newspapers on the four issues purposively selected for analysis. *The Nation* newspaper alone had 15 editorial discourses on the four issues to make it the newspaper that wrote more editorial discourse on the 2015 presidential election campaign among the four newspapers selected. Both *The Guardian* and *The Punch* wrote six editorial discourses each, while *the Nigerian Tribune* only recorded two editorial discourses on the four issues reviewed.

Findings revealed that the four newspapers wrote more editorial discourses on security than other issues. Out of 29 editorial issues, the newspapers wrote 14 editorial discourses on security, while 12 editorial discourses were written on Independent National Electoral Commission; 3 editorial discourses were written on corruption making it the third most written editorial discourse by the newspapers, while no editorial discourse was written on the economy during the period of review. The inability of the newspapers to publish more editorials on the four issues under review as discovered in this study might be that other issues were competing for media attention during that period, which might have of course, shifted editorial attention to some other issues.

Table 3 revealed whether the four newspapers adhered to the ethics of the profession in the coverage of the 2015 presidential campaign or they allowed their owners to influence their judgment. The frames used to measure the ethical coverage were: political parties as source; hate speech; sensational headlines and inciting comments. On political parties as sources of news, two main political parties (PDP and APC) were mentioned by the four newspapers more than the other parties and incidentally they form the scope of study for this research. The dailies under review mentioned the two parties in 181 news stories. Thus, the four newspapers content analysed followed the ethics of journalism by crediting the news sources to the political parties appropriately. However, it is unfair on the part of the newspapers to concentrate the coverage of the election on the two main political parties in the election. The monitored newspapers outfit most especially the ones owned by politicians failed on the score of equitable allocation of space to all political parties and the right of all political parties and candidates to equal participation in the political discourse before, during and after the elections. With every sense of responsibility, the four newspapers reviewed failed to meet up with the standard set in the media code of election coverage. Furthermore, the four

newspapers used a lot of sensational headlines during the course of the presidential election campaign. Expectedly, *The Nation* newspaper used a lot of sensational headlines in its news coverage with 49 issues representing 43.3% of the reports. Apparently due to the interest of its owner who is a national leader in the then main opposition party – APC, *The Nation* newspaper was heavily involved in the reportage of sensational headlines. In all, the four newspapers reported 172 stories with sensational headlines in the period of review of the presidential campaign. This is not healthy for the system as sensational headlines often add to the tension that surrounds presidential elections in Nigeria. Some of the sensational headlines are featured below:

- i. Jonathan: We've failed; President says his generation has failed as PDP begins campaign in Lagos. (*The Nation*, Friday, January 9, 2015 front page).
- ii. South South can collapse economy if Jonathan loses – Jimi Agbaje. (*The Punch*, January 8, 2015 p. 25)
- iii. APC: Fed Govt using security agencies to decapitate opposition. (*The Nation*, Thursday, January 1, 2015 p. 9).

On hate speeches and inciting comments, the four newspapers recorded 80 news stories that depict hate and inciting comments which might have disrupted the electoral process if not for the intervention of God in the country during this period. Though some elder statesmen and religious leaders came up with the idea of a peace accord whereby the candidates of the two main political parties – Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP and Gen. Muhammadu Buhari of the APC were made to sign a peace pact and even hug themselves on live television during the process, the rate at which the two candidates and their parties rained hate speeches and inciting comments on each other negated the so-called peace accord, thereby raising political tension among Nigerians. Thus, while analysing the editorial discourses of the four newspapers under review, the researcher was able to find out that security topped the chart among other issues raised in the editorial discourse. The reason for the editorial discourse on security might not be farfetched when one vividly looks at it from the number of hate speeches and inciting headlines covered by the four newspapers during the 2015 presidential election campaign. Some of the hate speeches and inciting comments are featured below:

- i. Jonathan has run out of ideas – Buhari (*The Punch*: Thursday, January 1, 2015)
- ii. Some senior citizens are motor park touts – Jonathan (*The Punch*: Thursday, January 8, 2015, p. 2)
- iii. We are going to war; every one of you should go and fortify himself - Mujahid Asari- Dokubo (*Nigerian Tribune*, February 6, 2015, p. 19)

- iv. Buhari can't remember his phone number – Jonathan (*The Punch*: January 10, 2015, p. 6)
- v. Voting Jonathan would doom Democracy (*The Nation*: February 15, 2015, Back Page)

### **Conclusion**

From the findings, it is evident that the four newspapers covered the 2015 presidential election by reporting issues that are important to the electorate. For instance, the political campaigns and INEC activities were well covered. Also security and political conflicts which are paramount to the electoral process were given coverage. It is, however, a thing of surprise that issue like voter education, corruption, health care and youth and women empowerment were given less attention by the newspapers during the period of review. Furthermore, the four newspapers, most especially *The Nation* and *Nigerian Tribune* reeled out biased opinions and columns in the course of the campaign which is not good for the polity. In terms of ethics, the four newspapers upheld ethics by attributing the sources of news stories to political parties. This no doubt brought confidence into the system with the political parties given fair deal in the campaign coverage. However, the four newspapers concentration was mainly on the two main political parties in the election - PDP and APC, which was largely determined by ownership structures of the newspapers.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. In fulfilment of the duty of the press to the society, newspapers should endeavour to serve the society more by giving more importance to issues concerning electioneering.
- ii. The press must be free from bias by playing the role of an umpire rather than taking sides in the electoral process.
- iii. The press must be alive to its responsibilities by following the ethics of the profession while reporting campaigns during election. The regulatory bodies must be prepared to sanction any newspaper that runs contrary to the ethics of the profession.
- iv. There is also the need for newspaper organisations to organise a refresher course for their reporters whenever election beckons. This retraining programme would arm the reporters with the necessary tools needed for covering election campaigns.

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