

Evaluating Broadcast Station Licensing in Ekiti State, Nigeria: Regulatory Standards, Public-Interest Performance, and Democratic Accountability

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Abstract

Broadcast station licensing is a central instrument through which Nigeria regulates access to the scarce radio-frequency spectrum, structures ownership of broadcast media, and imposes public-interest obligations on radio and television operators. This article evaluated broadcast station licensing in Ekiti State by examining the legal framework established under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the National Broadcasting Commission Act, the institutional mandate of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the distribution of selected licensed broadcast stations in Ekiti State, and the post-licensing compliance record illustrated by the 2018 sanction and closure of the Broadcasting Service of Ekiti State. The study adopted a qualitative desk-review method based on statutory provisions, official regulatory information, government institutional records, broadcast-station listings, scholarly literature, and credible news and press-freedom reports. The analysis found that licensing in Ekiti State has contributed to broadcast pluralisation, especially through the presence of federal, state, university, and private radio stations. Nevertheless, the licensing landscape remains spatially concentrated around Ado-Ekiti and a small number of urban centres, while the 2018 BSES case demonstrated the continuing vulnerability of state-owned broadcasting to political influence during elections. The article argued that an effective licensing evaluation should not stop at issuance of licences; it should also assess geographic equity, ownership diversity, technical compliance, editorial independence, electoral responsibility, sanction proportionality, and public-service performance. It concluded that Ekiti State's broadcast licensing regime has created an operational foundation for plural broadcasting, but its democratic value would be strengthened through transparent licensing data, clearer local coverage audits, stronger safeguards for state-owned broadcasters, periodic public-interest reviews, and regulator accountability.

Keywords: broadcast licensing, National Broadcasting Commission, Ekiti State, media regulation, public interest, Nigeria, radio, television, democratic communication

1. Introduction

Broadcast licensing occupies a distinctive position in democratic media governance because radio and television stations depend on access to the frequency spectrum, technical standards, and public-interest obligations. Unlike print media, broadcast media use a finite public resource and therefore require structured authorization, technical coordination, and continuing regulatory oversight. In Nigeria, this licensing function is constitutionally and statutorily anchored. Section 39 of the Constitution protects freedom of expression and the right to receive and impart information, but it also states that no person may own, establish, or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station except the federal or state government or a person or body authorised by the President upon fulfilment of statutory conditions (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999:n.p.). [1]

Ekiti State is an important site for evaluating broadcast licensing because it is a relatively small South-West Nigerian state with a politically active citizenry, a strong state-owned broadcasting tradition, federal broadcasting presence, university broadcasting, and growing private radio activity. The Broadcasting Service of Ekiti State (BSES), for instance, is officially presented by the state government as an institution whose functions include information dissemination, entertainment, public enlightenment, education, and social mobilization (Ekiti State Government, 2025:n.p.). [2] These functions closely match the normative public-interest rationale for licensing. Yet the same public-service claim must be evaluated against licensing outcomes, ownership influence, geographic reach, electoral conduct, and regulator enforcement.

This article examined broadcast station licensing in Ekiti State through a regulatory and public-interest lens. It asked whether licensing has promoted lawful entry, media pluralism, public communication, and democratic accountability, and whether the licensing framework has adequately addressed the risks of political partisanship, urban concentration, and uneven access. The central argument is that licensing should be understood as a continuous governance process rather than a one-time permission to operate. Licence issuance, frequency allocation, technical approval, programme obligations, ownership structure, monitoring, sanctions, and renewal conditions are all parts of the same regulatory chain.

2. Statement of the Problem

The deregulation and expansion of Nigerian broadcasting have increased the number and variety of broadcast stations, but expansion alone does not guarantee democratic communication. In Ekiti State, licensed radio and television stations have improved access to information and created platforms for news, entertainment, public enlightenment, and political communication. However, several regulatory concerns remain. First, station distribution appears heavily concentrated in Ado-Ekiti and a limited number of urban locations, raising questions about whether rural communities enjoy equitable access to locally relevant broadcasting. Secondly, the coexistence of federal, state, university, and private stations creates pluralism, but the licensing record is not always publicly available in a consolidated, regularly updated, and easily searchable official format. Thirdly, state ownership of broadcasting may expose public broadcasters to partisan influence, especially during elections. Fourthly, sanctions imposed by the regulator can protect the public interest, but they can also raise questions about due process, proportionality, and press freedom.

These problems became visible in the 2018 Ekiti governorship election period, when the NBC fined the Ekiti State Broadcasting Service for alleged ethical violations and later ordered the closure of the state-owned radio and television service after an unauthorized election-result broadcast and alleged breaches of the Broadcasting Code (Premium Times, 2018:n.p.; Committee to Protect Journalists, 2018:n.p.). [3] [4] The case illustrates the need to evaluate licensing not only at the level of legal eligibility but also at the level of continuing public-interest compliance.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this article was to evaluate broadcast station licensing in Ekiti State within Nigeria's legal and regulatory framework. Specifically, the article pursued five objectives: to examine the constitutional and statutory basis of broadcast licensing in Nigeria; to identify the main licensing obligations applicable to broadcast stations in Ekiti State; to assess the distribution and institutional character of selected broadcast stations in the state; to analyse the 2018 BSES sanction and closure as a post-licensing compliance case; and to propose policy measures for improving licensing transparency, equity, independence, and public-interest performance.

4. Research Questions

The article was guided by the following research questions. What legal standards govern broadcast station licensing in Nigeria, and how do they apply to Ekiti State? What kinds of broadcast institutions operate in Ekiti State, and what does their distribution suggest about media pluralism and geographic equity? How did the 2018 sanction and closure of BSES illuminate the relationship between licensing, political neutrality, and regulatory enforcement? What reforms would improve licensing outcomes in Ekiti State?

5. Methodology

The article adopted a qualitative desk-review design. It relied on primary legal materials, official institutional sources, scholarly literature, credible station listings, and news or civil-society reports. The principal legal sources were Section 39 of the Constitution and the National Broadcasting Commission Act. Official institutional information was obtained from the NBC website and the Ekiti State Government page on the Broadcasting Service of Ekiti State. Station data were triangulated from publicly available radio and television listings, including Media Nigeria and a broad reference list of Nigerian radio stations. The 2018 compliance case was examined using Premium Times and the Committee to Protect Journalists.

This method was appropriate because the study evaluated licensing as a regulatory and institutional phenomenon. The available data were sufficient for normative and policy analysis, although the article acknowledges that a complete empirical evaluation would require access to the NBC's current official register of active licences, technical coverage maps, licence-renewal records, audience data, and interviews with regulators, station managers, journalists, and community audiences.

6. Conceptual Clarification: Broadcast Station Licensing

Broadcast station licensing refers to the formal authorization granted by a competent regulatory authority to an eligible person, corporate body, or public institution to own, establish, or operate a radio, television, cable, satellite, or related broadcast service. Licensing has at least four purposes. It allocates scarce spectrum; it verifies legal and technical capacity; it imposes ethical and public-interest obligations; and it creates a basis for monitoring, sanctions, renewal, suspension, or revocation.

In Nigeria, licensing is not merely an administrative formality. The NBC Act requires the Commission, when considering a licence application, to be satisfied that the applicant is a body corporate registered under the Companies and Allied Matters Act or a station owned, established, or operated by federal, state, or local government; that the applicant is not acting on behalf of a foreign interest; that the applicant can comply with the objectives of the National Mass Communication Policy; and that the licensed station will promote national interest, unity, and cohesion rather than religious offence, ethnicity, sectionalism, hatred, or disaffection (National Broadcasting Commission Act, 1992:n.p.). [5] Licensing therefore combines technical, ownership, national-interest, and social-responsibility criteria.

7. Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Constitution creates the foundational balance between freedom of expression and broadcast authorization. Section 39(1) protects the right to freedom of expression, while Section 39(2) protects the right to own and operate a medium for disseminating information. However, the same section permits special authorization requirements for television and wireless broadcasting (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999:n.p.). [1] This means that broadcast licensing must be interpreted as a constitutional limitation that is valid only when it serves democratic and public-interest purposes rather than arbitrary exclusion.

The NBC Act operationalises this constitutional arrangement. The Act empowers the NBC to license and regulate broadcasting, allocate frequencies, approve locations, regulate technical specifications and transmission standards, approve call signals, approve service areas, impose sanctions, prescribe fees, and inspect station premises and equipment (National Broadcasting Commission Act, 1992:n.p.). [5] The NBC's own official FAQ similarly describes the Commission as the body responsible for overseeing broadcast media, licensing radio and television stations, ensuring compliance with the National Broadcasting Code, upholding ethical standards, and monitoring content to prevent harmful or misleading information (National Broadcasting Commission, 2026:n.p.). [6]

The Act also contains ownership and eligibility restrictions. Religious organisations and political parties are disqualified from licence grants, and controlling shares in more than two of each broadcast transmission sector are prohibited (National Broadcasting Commission Act, 1992:n.p.). [5] These restrictions are significant in Ekiti State because political and religious identities are influential in local public life. A licensing evaluation must

therefore examine whether ownership structures, editorial control, and station governance comply not only formally but substantively with the law’s anti-capture objectives.

Regulatory dimension	Core legal standard	Evaluation implication for Ekiti State
Eligibility	Applicant must be a registered corporate body or government-owned station and must not front for foreign interest	Licensing should verify genuine ownership, beneficial control, and institutional capacity
Frequency availability	Licence grant is subject to available broadcast frequencies	Ekiti licensing should be assessed against transparent spectrum planning and avoidance of urban overconcentration
Ownership diversity	Shareholding structure and cross-media ownership must be considered	The regulator should prevent concentration and political capture of local media markets
Public-interest undertaking	Station must promote national interest, unity, and cohesion	Stations should be assessed for public enlightenment, conflict sensitivity, electoral neutrality, and community relevance
Technical regulation	NBC approves location, call signal, service area, equipment, and transmission standards	Licensing evaluation should include coverage audits and quality-of-service assessment
Enforcement	NBC may sanction, suspend, or revoke for serious breaches	Sanctions should be transparent, proportionate, evidence-based, and subject to fair process

8. Scholarly Perspectives on Broadcast Regulation in Nigeria

Scholarly literature has generally treated licensing as one component of a wider regulatory system. Ihechu and Okugo’s study of Nigerian broadcasting regulation identified licensing, sanctioning, arbitrating, and monitoring as major approaches used by the NBC (Ihechu & Okugo, 2013:n.p.). [7] This framework is helpful for Ekiti State because it prevents a narrow view of licensing as merely the issuance of certificates. A station’s democratic legitimacy depends on what happens after licensing: whether it operates technically as authorised, whether it respects the Broadcasting Code, whether it provides balanced political coverage, and whether it remains accountable to audiences.

The literature also raises concerns about regulator independence and perceived bias. Ihechu and Okugo reported that NBC regulatory approaches had been criticised for bias against certain stations and recommended review of regulatory practice to promote professionalism and broadcast-industry development (Ihechu & Okugo, 2013:n.p.). [7] In a state such as Ekiti, where politics is competitive and media are important channels for electoral mobilization, the perception of regulatory neutrality is as important as the existence of legal power. Regulatory action that appears selective may weaken public trust, whereas transparent and consistent enforcement may strengthen both compliance and democratic communication.

9. Broadcast Licensing Landscape in Ekiti State

Available station listings indicate that Ekiti State has a mixed broadcast ecology. The radio sector includes stations associated with university broadcasting, private ownership, state broadcasting, federal public broadcasting, and commercial networks. A reference list of Nigerian radio stations identifies, among others, Voice FM 89.9 in Ado-

Ekiti, Midas FM 90.5 on Iworoko Road in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti FM 91.5 operated by BSES at Ilokun in Ado-Ekiti, New Cruse FM 92.7 in Ikere-Ekiti, Ayoba FM 95.1 in Ado-Ekiti, FRCN Progress FM 100.5 on Iworoko Road in Ado-Ekiti, Our People’s FM 104.1 in Ado-Ekiti, and Fresh FM 106.9 in Ado-Ekiti (Wikipedia contributors, 2026:n.p.). [8] Search results and local listings also identify ABUAD Radio 88.1 at Afe Babalola University and Arena FM 89.3 in Ikere-Ekiti, although these require verification against an up-to-date NBC official licence register.

The television sector appears more limited and more strongly associated with public ownership. Media Nigeria lists Ekiti State Television at Ilokun, Ado-Ekiti, with a licence year of March 2, 2014; NTA Ado-Ekiti on Channel 5, licensed in 2003; and the Broadcasting Service of Ekiti State on Channel 41 UHF (Media Nigeria, 2018:n.p.). [9] Although this source is not a substitute for the official NBC licence register, it provides useful indicative data for evaluating location, ownership, and historical licensing patterns.

Station service or	Frequency/channel	Location listed	Institutional character	Evaluation relevance
ABUAD Radio	88.1 FM	Ado-Ekiti	University/community-oriented institutional broadcasting	Indicates educational-sector participation and specialised audience service
Voice FM	89.9 FM	Ado-Ekiti	Private/commercial radio	Adds private-sector pluralism in the capital area
Midas FM	90.5 FM	Ado-Ekiti	Private/commercial radio	Contributes to commercial competition and local entertainment/news provision
Ekiti FM/BSES	91.5 FM	Ilokun, Ado-Ekiti	State-owned public broadcasting	Central to public enlightenment and government-citizen communication
New Cruse FM	92.7 FM	Ikere-Ekiti	Private/commercial radio	Important because it is outside Ado-Ekiti and improves geographic diversity
Ayoba FM	95.1 FM	Ado-Ekiti	Private/commercial radio	Adds market plurality but still reinforces capital concentration

Station service or	Frequency/channel	Location listed	Institutional character	Evaluation relevance
FRCN Progress FM	100.5 FM	Ado-Ekiti	Federal public broadcasting	Provides federal public-service presence and national programming links
Our People's FM	104.1 FM	Ado-Ekiti	Private/commercial radio	Adds pluralism but requires ownership and editorial-independence scrutiny
Fresh FM	106.9 FM	Ado-Ekiti	Private/commercial network	Expands commercial and networked broadcasting in the state
NTA Ado-Ekiti	Channel 5	Ado-Ekiti	Federal television	Provides federal public television coverage
Ekiti State Television/BSES	UHF Channel 41/listed Ilokun service	Ado-Ekiti	State-owned television	Requires strong safeguards against partisan misuse

The table suggests that licensing has achieved a basic level of plurality by allowing multiple institutional types. However, the spatial distribution is uneven. Most listed stations are located in Ado-Ekiti or along the Ado-Ekiti/Iworoko axis, with Ikere-Ekiti being one of the few non-capital locations visibly represented. Licensing evaluation should therefore ask whether communities in local government areas such as Ikole, Oye, Ijero, Emure, Ise/Orun, Gbonyin, Ekiti East, and Ekiti West receive adequate signal coverage and locally relevant content. A licence regime may be legally valid yet socially incomplete if it permits concentration of studios, transmitters, advertising markets, and political discourse in the capital.

10. The Broadcasting Service of Ekiti State and Public-Service Obligations

The Broadcasting Service of Ekiti State is central to the licensing discussion because state-owned broadcasters usually carry explicit public-service responsibilities. The Ekiti State Government states that BSES's vision is to be number one in the South West in professionalism, productivity, profitability, and relevance, and that its mission is to serve the people and Government of Ekiti State faithfully and creatively (Ekiti State Government, 2025:n.p.). [2] Its listed functions are information dissemination, entertainment, public enlightenment or education, and social mobilization (Ekiti State Government, 2025:n.p.). [2]

These functions are legitimate, but the phrase “serve the people and Government” creates a structural tension. A public broadcaster should inform citizens about government, but it should not become the partisan voice of a government in power. This distinction is especially important during elections, protests, public-health emergencies, fiscal debates, and conflicts. The licensing framework therefore needs to distinguish between state ownership and government control. A station may be owned by the state while remaining editorially obligated to the public rather than to the ruling administration.

11. Case Study: The 2018 NBC Sanction and Closure of BSES

The 2018 Ekiti governorship election produced one of the most important post-licensing compliance cases in the state’s broadcasting history. Premium Times reported that the NBC imposed a N500,000 fine on Ekiti State Broadcasting Service for violating ethical broadcasting standards. The reported concerns included unprofessional political broadcasting and the appointment of Lere Olayinka as acting director-general of the broadcaster while he also served as spokesperson of the Kolapo Olusola Campaign Organisation (Premium Times, 2018:n.p.).^[^3] The NBC reportedly relied on the Broadcasting Code’s requirement that a broadcaster’s interaction with politicians should not create the belief that the broadcaster is a member or sympathiser of a political party (Premium Times, 2018:n.p.).^[^3]

Days later, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported that police acting on NBC’s order evacuated and locked the state-owned BSES radio and television broadcaster on July 14, 2018. The closure followed Governor Ayodele Fayose’s broadcast declaring victory for his preferred candidate before the Independent National Electoral Commission announced official results. CPJ reported that NBC considered the action a violation of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code and the Electoral Act, including the rule that election results or declarations of winners may be broadcast only as announced by the authorized electoral officer (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2018:n.p.).^[^4]

This case demonstrates that licence evaluation must include operational conduct. A station may be legally licensed and technically capable but still fail democratic obligations if it becomes an electoral instrument. The case also shows why licensing conditions should require internal editorial safeguards, conflict-of-interest rules for senior management, election-coverage protocols, training on the Broadcasting Code, and transparent complaint-handling mechanisms.

At the same time, the case raises concerns about sanctioning power. CPJ called for the broadcaster to be permitted to reopen and reported that NBC officials did not respond to requests for clarification on the sanctioning process and reasoning for the closure (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2018:n.p.).^[^4] This point matters because enforcement must satisfy both regulatory necessity and procedural fairness. If closure is used too readily, it may restrict public access to information. If it is never used, stations may disregard electoral integrity. The appropriate balance requires clear evidence, notice, opportunity to respond where feasible, proportional sanctions, public explanation, and independent review.

Evaluation issue raised by the 2018 case	Public-interest risk	Licensing lesson
Political role of senior broadcaster	Station management may become aligned with a candidate or party	Licence conditions should require conflict-of-interest disclosure and editorial independence safeguards
Premature election-result declaration	Public confusion, electoral tension, and possible disorder	Election-coverage compliance should be a core licence-renewal indicator
State ownership	Public broadcaster may be used by incumbent officials	Governance boards should include public-interest and professional representation
Regulator closure power	Enforcement may affect press freedom and audience access	Sanctions should be proportionate, transparent, and reviewable
Prior warning allegedly ignored	Weak compliance culture	NBC and stations should institutionalise corrective compliance plans before escalation

12. Evaluation of Licensing Outcomes in Ekiti State

12.1 Legal Compliance and Institutional Entry

The first evaluation criterion is whether stations enter the broadcast market through lawful authorisation. The existing constitutional and statutory framework is clear: broadcast operation requires authorization, and the NBC has power to consider eligibility, allocate frequencies, approve locations, and regulate technical standards (National Broadcasting Commission Act, 1992:n.p.). [5] Ekiti's radio and television landscape indicates the presence of several licensed or publicly listed stations. This suggests that the licensing regime has enabled structured entry by federal, state, educational, and private actors.

However, public evaluation is constrained by limited access to a consolidated official licence register containing station names, licence holders, ownership structures, licence categories, coverage areas, expiry dates, renewal status, sanctions, and technical parameters. Without such transparency, citizens and researchers must rely on fragmented listings. This weakens accountability and makes it difficult to assess whether licensing decisions are consistent, current, and equitable.

12.2 Ownership Diversity and Media Pluralism

Ekiti State benefits from a mixed ownership ecology. Federal public broadcasting, state public broadcasting, private radio, and university-linked broadcasting create a measure of plurality. This plurality is important because media diversity reduces dependence on a single official voice and expands opportunities for local news, Yoruba-language programming, educational content, and community mobilization. Nevertheless, ownership diversity must be evaluated beyond surface categories. The NBC Act requires attention to shareholding structure, cross-media ownership, and distribution between urban, rural, commercial, and other categories (National Broadcasting Commission Act, 1992:n.p.). [5]

An effective Ekiti licensing assessment would therefore examine beneficial ownership and political affiliations of private stations, the governance structure of state-owned stations, and the editorial independence of all stations during election periods. Licensing should prevent both market concentration and political capture.

12.3 Geographic Equity and Rural Inclusion

The visible concentration of stations in Ado-Ekiti suggests a significant geographic-equity challenge. Capital-city concentration may be commercially rational because advertising markets, government institutions, universities, and news sources are concentrated there. Yet broadcasting is a public-interest service, not merely a commercial enterprise. Licensing should therefore consider whether transmitters, studios, correspondents, and programming schedules serve all senatorial districts and local government areas.

Ikere-Ekiti's presence through New Cruse FM and Arena FM indicates some diffusion beyond the capital, but this does not fully answer questions about coverage depth, local-language access, rural feedback mechanisms, and programme relevance. Periodic licence review should include evidence of local content across rural communities, not only technical signal availability.

12.4 Technical and Service-Area Regulation

The NBC Act empowers the regulator to approve station location, technical specifications, call signals, and service areas (National Broadcasting Commission Act, 1992:n.p.). [5] These powers are essential for preventing interference, ensuring quality transmission, and aligning coverage with licence category. In Ekiti State, mountainous topography and settlement patterns may affect signal reach. Licensing evaluation should therefore include coverage mapping, transmitter audits, interference reports, and audience reception assessments.

Technical compliance should not be treated as separate from democratic access. A station that claims statewide coverage but cannot reach rural communities effectively may fail its public-interest obligation. Conversely, a station with excellent technical reach but narrow partisan content may also fail democratic standards. Technical and editorial evaluation must therefore be combined.

12.5 Content Responsibility and Electoral Integrity

The 2018 BSES case showed that election broadcasting remains a high-risk area. Broadcast stations can inform voters, host debates, fact-check claims, and promote peaceful participation. They can also amplify partisan propaganda, announce false results, or inflame tensions. Licensing should therefore include election-specific compliance conditions, staff training, and internal delay mechanisms for sensitive electoral claims.

The NBC's sanction against BSES reflected a legitimate concern that broadcasters should not disrupt democratic order. However, the closure also showed the need for procedural transparency. Public trust depends on knowing why a sanction was imposed, what evidence supported it, how the station was heard, why the selected penalty was proportionate, and how the public's right to information was protected.

13. Key Findings

The study found that Nigeria's licensing framework provides a legally robust basis for regulating broadcast entry and conduct in Ekiti State. The Constitution permits special authorization for broadcasting, while the NBC Act gives the regulator extensive powers over licensing, frequency allocation, technical standards, ownership review, inspection, sanctions, and revocation. This framework is adequate in formal terms but requires stronger transparency and public accountability in implementation.

The study also found that Ekiti State has a plural but uneven broadcast ecology. The presence of federal, state, private, and university stations supports diversity, but the visible concentration of stations around Ado-Ekiti raises concerns about rural inclusion and equitable distribution. The licensing process should therefore evaluate not only how many stations exist but where they are located, who owns them, whom they serve, and whether they provide locally relevant content across the state.

Finally, the 2018 BSES case demonstrated that post-licensing compliance is essential. Licensing should not end with approval to operate. It should include continuous monitoring of editorial independence, election coverage, conflict of interest, and public-service obligations. The same case also demonstrated that sanctions must be transparent and proportionate to avoid undermining press freedom.

14. Recommendations

First, the NBC should publish and regularly update a comprehensive official licence register for Ekiti State and other states. The register should include station name, frequency or channel, licence holder, ownership structure, licence category, service area, licence grant date, renewal status, sanctions, and contact information. Such transparency would reduce reliance on fragmented unofficial lists and improve public trust.

Second, licensing and renewal decisions should include a geographic-equity assessment. Applicants should demonstrate how their service will reach underserved communities, and existing stations should periodically report coverage, rural programming, correspondent networks, and audience-feedback systems. Special incentives may be considered for stations that serve rural or linguistically underserved audiences.

Third, state-owned broadcasters such as BSES should be protected through governance reforms. Their boards and senior management structures should include professional, civil-society, and public-interest representation. Appointment procedures should reduce direct partisan control, especially during election periods. The mission of serving the government should be reinterpreted as informing citizens about public administration rather than promoting incumbents.

Fourth, all licensed stations in Ekiti State should adopt election-broadcasting compliance protocols. These should include verification procedures for election results, equal-access rules for parties and candidates, conflict-of-interest disclosure, complaint-response mechanisms, and mandatory staff training before elections.

Fifth, sanctioning should be transparent and proportionate. NBC should publish detailed sanction decisions, including the alleged breach, evidence, prior warnings, response of the station, legal basis, proportionality reasoning, and appeal options. Closure should remain a last-resort measure reserved for grave and immediate public-interest risks.

Sixth, licence renewal should include public-interest performance review. Stations should be assessed not only on fee payment and technical compliance but also on local content, educational programming, accessibility, public complaints, election coverage, children's programming, disaster communication, and community engagement.

15. Conclusion

Broadcast station licensing in Ekiti State has enabled a more diverse media environment than existed under a purely state-dominated broadcasting order. The state now has federal, state, private, and educational broadcast actors, and these stations contribute to information dissemination, entertainment, public enlightenment, and political communication. However, licensing should be evaluated by outcomes rather than mere licence counts. A democratic licensing regime must promote lawful access, ownership diversity, rural inclusion, technical quality, editorial independence, and accountable enforcement.

The Ekiti experience shows both the promise and the limitations of Nigerian broadcast licensing. On the positive side, the legal framework is sufficiently detailed to regulate ownership, frequency allocation, technical standards, and sanctions. On the negative side, gaps remain in public transparency, geographic equity, state-broadcaster independence, and sanction accountability. The 2018 BSES case remains a cautionary example: licensing without editorial safeguards can permit partisan misuse, while enforcement without transparent process can raise press-freedom concerns. The future of broadcast licensing in Ekiti State should therefore be guided by a public-interest model that treats spectrum as a public resource, broadcasting as a democratic institution, and licensing as a continuing social contract between the regulator, the broadcaster, and the citizens.

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