USES OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA IN POLITICAL MOBILISATION DURING NIGERIA'S 2011 ELECTIONS INBENUE STATE

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Abstract
The study examines the uses to which traditional media was put in mobilizing the electorate during the 2011 gubernatorial elections in Benue State. The study also ascertains reason for the use of traditional media instead of mass media; the most frequently used mass medium as well as the most preferred traditional medium that was used during the electioneering period. Using a survey of 400 purposively selected respondents across the three (3) senatorial districts in Benue State, the study finds among other things that: traditional media was used most often to advocate for or against the removal of the incumbent; traditional media was used instead of mass media because the former is embedded in local culture; local songs were the most frequent traditional medium put to use and it was the most preferred during the period. Political candidates and political parties have to realise the relevance of traditional media in mobilisation during elections. They should also promote the use of traditional media by patronising creators of local content such asmusicians, dancers, praise singers, artistes, etc. Radio and television producers should incorporate elements of traditional media in broadcast to increase relevance and acceptance among the populace.

Key words: Traditional media, political mobilisation, elections, oramedia, folkmedia, electorate

Introduction

In every society, the participation of citizens in politics is important especially in a democracy. Democracy will not succeed if the people are not adequately mobilized and involved during political campaigns which precede elections. Ucheanya (2003:70) acknowledges this fact when he says that through adequate mobilization and enlightenment, the people's political participation becomes advanced to higher level that will pave way for peaceful, coordinated and credible elections. Ucheanya (2003:70) further maintains:

> At this point of awareness, the people's political culture becomes shaped and redirected for better political participation which involve those voluntary activities by which they share in the election of rulers and directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy. These activities typically include voting, seeking information, discussion and proselytizing, attending meetings, conventions, contributing financially,

> communicating with representatives, formal enrolment in a party, canvassing and registering voters, speech writing and speech making, working in campaigns, and competing for public and party offices.

The idea drawn from the above is that non-participation of the people will mean a state of withdrawal from, or indifference to, such activity like having successful and peaceful elections. Mobilization which leads to participation is very important in any election so as to avoid any unhealthy action by aggrieved people. Participation is a source of vitality and creative energy, as a defense against tyranny, and as a means of enacting the collective wisdom of the people. With the realization of the fact that effective mobilization of people is very crucial for the success of any development programme including politics, a lot of efforts have been directed in the past to the use of mass media in mobilizing people for participation in the development activities including politics. However, mass media is often limited in its scope, when the under-de\eloped and impoverished nature of many Nigerian communities is considered.

The use of traditional media (also known as folk/indigenous media) may prove to be more effective (than mass media) in mobilizing the general masses (at the grassroots) for participation during political campaigns and elections. This is in view of the fact that political activities such as campaigns and elections should take a holistic approach. These activities should embrace all segments of the society, irrespective of class, status, educational level and so on. Since the electorate at the grassroots needs mobilization, this study addresses how traditional media was used to accomplish this task during the 2011 elections in Nigeria. Nwabueze (2004:295) has recognized that in Nigeria, communication which is aimed at the masses is done more through the print and electronic media with little seriousness paid to the use of traditional media to reach the grassroots. Nwabueze (2004:295) maintains that though a good number of people today, particularly those residing in the rural areas have access to radio and television, traditional media remain more familiar means of communication with/to people in the rural areas and even the urban poor. These people are familiar with it and have easy access to the traditional media.

Traditional media may be effective in mobilizing the masses for development including political awareness because they are embedded in the culture of the people thereby making them more credible and reliable. Ugboajah (1985:175) agreed that traditional media also called folk media or "oramedia" have credibility and prestige. They precipitate stability into Africa's social systems and indeed they are the real media which should be used at the grassroots level. Wilson (1987:88) notes that traditional communication remains what essentially sustains the information needs of the rural dwellers that represent over 70% of the national population of most Third World countries. Dissanayake in Lent (1978) takes a critical look at the following as numerous advantages that accrue from the use of traditional media as against mass media in mobilizing the teaming masses for various development purposes: traditional media are more credible; have existed among the rural folk for a long time; express their deeply felt and communal joys and sorrows, triumph and debate; the peasants consider mass media to be elitist and alien and they are often identified with centers of power; traditional media employ the idioms of the people and the symbols, which are readily intelligible to them; it reaches part of the population that impervious to the influence of mass media and demand active participation in the process of communication.

Alot has been said about the efficacy and relevance of traditional media. Gumucio-Dagron (2007) also captures the relevance of traditional media among communities in developing countries when he states thus:

> Folk communication is so relevant in development, because it interacts with local culture, in the language and themes that are important to the communities. While mass media campaigns are aiming larger publics with very general messages, folk and community based media addresses issues in specific ways and is doing it through local engagement and participation.

In some respects, traditional media may have an edge over mass media. Monday and Compton (1995) in Akinleye (2003:61), making a comparison of the two media (folk and mass media) of communication for development purposes have realized that indigenous communication channels are more effective because; they have value in their own right; the. contemporary media have limited range; indigenous channels have high credibility; they are important conduits of change; they offer opportunities for participation by the local people; they are democratic in nature and; they are not necessarily top-down. In the light of the afore mentioned benefits of traditional media, this study assessed the use of traditional media during the 2011 election campaigns in Nigeria with specific focus on the gubernatorial elections in Benue State.

Clarification of concepts

Traditional media

Traditional media are those means of communication that are peculiar to typical African societies. They refer to those modes of communication still used today by rural dwellers and are often used also in urban areas. According to Nwabueze (2004), these traditional media forms include folk theatre, traveling story tellers, poets, talking drums, flute, traditional dances, metal or wooden gong, town crier, village squares, market, streams, churches mosques, masquerades, songs, extra-Mundane modes, e.g. spirits and gods etc. Ugboajah (1985) writes that traditional media is regarded as the products of the interplay between a traditional community's customs and conflicts, harmony and strife, cultural convergences and divergences, culture specific tangibles, interpersonal relations, symbols and codes and moral traditions which include mythology, oral literature (poetry, story-telling, proverbs), masquerades, witchcraft, rites, rituals, music, dance, drama, costumes and similar abstraction and artifacts which encompass a people's factual, symbolic and cosmological existence from birth to death and even beyond death. Ekwelie and Okonkwo (1983:69) acknowledge that these media have survived from the earliest of times and made an adjusted transition into the electronic age. Aima (2003:52-53) adds that folk media forms include festival forums, music, folktales, songs,rituals, clothes and other sartorial constructs, architectural designs, markets, town criers, social gatherings like funerals, wedding, theatre/drama, social institutions, like the extended family and other rallying points provided by the kings, village leaders and herbalists, etc.

Political Mobilization

This refers to an art of enlightening and bringing people together for participation in political activities. Through mobilization, the electorates are aware of certain political activities and the need for their participation. Mckee (1992) in Ucheanya (2003) affirms that political mobilization enables a programme such as election to win the country's political stability. Furthermore, Ucheanya (2003) writes that through mobilization, the behaviour of a very large number of

Nigerians can be modified to ensure desired action. In places where there is voter apathy, mobilization is meant to ensure large voter turnout.

Statement of the problem

Very little has been said about the relationship between traditional media and political mobilisation in developing countries such as Nigeria. Thus, it is pertinent to examine the extent to which traditional media can be used in political mobilisation especially during elections. This study focuses on the use of traditional media in political mobilisation during the 2011 gubernatorial elections in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research questions

i. What types of traditional media were used during the 2011 gubernatorialelections in Benue State, Nigeria?
ii. Why were traditional media used in political mobilisation during the 2011gubernatorial elections in Benue State, Nigeria?
iii. What is the extent of preference among the traditional media used in politicalmobilisation during the 2011 gubernatorial elections in Benue State, Nigeria?
iv. How were traditional media used during the 2011 gubernatorial elections inBenue State, Nigeria?

Theoretical framework

Uses and gratifications theory

The essence of the uses and gratification theory is encapsulated in the statement byKatz(1959:p.2)thus,

... it is the program that asks the question, not 'What do the media do to people? but'What do people do with the media?

Although the uses and gratification theory explains what the audience does with mass media it is still relevant in the context of traditional media. The uses and gratifications theory is based on the following assumptions as stated by Blumler and Katz (1974: p. 23) thus,

1. The audience is assumed to be an active user of mass media.
2. Each audience member must discern which medium will best gratify his or her needs for a given use.
3. Media outlets compete with other sources of gratification, and media cannot satisfy all human needs.
4. Empirical data assessment can help determine the goals of mass media consumers since users are self-aware enough to accurately describe their motives.
5. Judgments about the cultural relevance of mass media must be withheld in order to avoid speculation on popular culture.

These tenets stated above are similar to the conceptual framework of the uses and gratifications theory provided by Lundberg and Hulten (1968) when they studied the theory. According to Katz, et.al.,(1974: p.511), the framework for the uses and gratifications theory is as follows:

(1) The audience is conceived of as active, i.e., an important part of mass media use is assumed to be goal directed.
(2) In the mass communication process much initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member. This places a strong limitation on theorizing about any form of straight-line effect of media content on attitudes and behavior.

(3) The media compete with other sources of need satisfaction.
(4) Many of the mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves

In the context of traditional media, the audience are active users of the medium. The element of participation in traditional media suggests that the audience is not passive. When members of the audience listen to a song by a local composer they become active participants if they like the song and sing it where-ever they go. By doing so, they carry and spread the message contained in the song. This often happens with political campaign songs. Still in the political sphere, the use of icons such as brooms or umbrella and the Peoples Democratic Party whichsymbolise the Action Congress of Nigeria (2 political parties) is pertinent. Members of the audience become participants when they associate with the symbol of the broom or the umbrella (thereby expressing their support for the party) by hanging it on their streets, door steps, cars, necks, etc. These examples particularly suggest the active nature of the audience in the context of traditional media in political mobilisation.

Traditional media and political mobilisation in Nigeria

The use of traditional media in political mobilization is not new. This is due to the number of advantages which traditional media have over other media of communication. Lent (1978:1) observes that old media forms are still relevant in new settings. The use of traditional media to facilitate political mobilization underscores the disadvantages of mass media in developing countries. Mass media are often elitist thus they do not encourage participation and there is often a unidirectional flow of information which creates imbalance especially between producers of media content and rural dwellers in developing countries like Nigeria (one-way flow of information from urban centres to rural areas). The communication scenario between mass media and rural dwellers in some communities leaves much to be desired especially when people in these impoverished places lack avenues for feedback and other forms of expression.

In certain rural communities (in Nigeria), traditional media are the replacement of the modern media of communication based on the fact that the modern media cannot deliver in terms of mobilizing the populace to participate in political activities. This is often due to peculiar social, economic, cultural and religious factors which hold sway in these rural areas. Traditional media are media that are right at the disposal of local peoples and communities across Nigeria. This means that they are the media of the people for the people and by the people. Ranganath (1976:25) comprehensively described traditional media as being intimate with the masses, rich in variety, readily available at low cost, relished by different age groups and by both sexes, theme carriers traditionally and having greater potential for persuasive communication, face-to-face communication and instant feedback. Ranganath (1976) believes that some folk media can carry modern messages effectively. These media are comparatively cheap. They do not have to be imported and, therefore, involve no foreign exchange. They belong to the community and not to individuals, state or private/public industry. According to this view by Ranganath (1976) mobilization during political campaigns and elections has to be aimed at the communities as a whole rather than at individuals if participation is to occur. However, this is arguable. It may be easier to assess a community as a whole but there may be individual differences which need to be catered for, or else the essence will be lost. Eapen (1976:18-19) reiterates the importance of traditional media when he writes that local talent and localized message would have more credibility than those centralized ones emanating from state capitals. The fact deduced here is that traditional media are people oriented. They are in the community and for the community

members unlike some mass media of communication that are located mainly in the urban centres (especially television stations and widely read newspapers). These modern media are hardly concerned about the plight of the common people in our society. Eapen (1976) says that folk media are egalitarian. According to him:

> They may prove a better outlet for egalitarian messages than the present elite press, film or video TV. There is a commonality about them. Acceptability, cultural relevance, entertainment value, localized language, legitimacy, flexibility, message repositionability, instant two-way communication, etc. are among their virtues. Folk forms may be better carriers of the 'total' message-welfare of the whole society in the many-sidedness of cultural, economic and social development-for up-lifting the quality of rural life in its entirety rather than bifurcated and narrow message beams such as those of family planning.

The attributes contained in the above expression are true about traditional media of communication. Traditional media carry every member of the society a long, irrespective of educational attainment, position in the society, financial status. These attributes are absent in modern media which normally are more concerned only about issues bothering on prominent persons in the society. This makes traditional media a relevant tool for political mobilization which is expected to a take a holistic approach.

Traditional media have a number of advantages over mass media especially in the political sphere. Dissanayake (1977:122-124) lists a number of potentials which folk media have over mass media. According to him, traditional media are more credible, these media have existed among the rural folk for a long time, they give local people the opportunity to express their deeply felt communal joys, sorrows, triumphs and defeats. Dissanayake (1977) added that traditional media employ the idioms of the people and the symbols which are the people and the symbols which are readily intelligible to them. These traditional media reach a part of the population that is impervious to the influence of mass media and demand activeparticipation in the process of communication. Dissanayake, further maintains while discussing traditional media that:

> It is important to remind ourselves that they are not mere quaint relics of the past, but vigorously active and highly functional cultural institutions performing functions vital to the well-being of society: They provide entertainment, disseminate information, inculcate socially accepted norms and values, and perform general socializing functions.

This signifies that traditional media were not only valuable in the past but are still relevant today. They are influential, valuable and credible for mobilizing the populace during political activity. Ugboajah (1985:175) observes that "oramedia have force, oramedia have credibility and prestige. They inject stability into Africa's social systems and indigenous institutions... and are the real media at the grassroots level." Information that gets (if at all it ever does) to the ruralites who constitute the majority through the use of mass media makes little or no impact on them. The information which makes maximum impact is that which emanates through traditional media, Adesanoye (1990:43), agrees with this when he says that through traditional media "information is transmitted in usual, familiar local channels which greatly increase the interest

levels and depth of understanding of the rural audience." Wilson (1987:92) sees the traditional media systems as an on-going, long-standing and modernized practice and as one system which has defied all efforts by western media to cannibalize and supplant. Even where modern media have penetrated isolated areas as is gradually becoming the case, McBride etal (1980:69) observed that other forms of communication (i.e. traditional media) maintain their validity, particularly when used to influence attitudes, instigate action and promote change. Nwabueze (2004:296) writes that:

> Traditional media make it possible for messages to be packaged and transferred in locally popular artistic forms. This cannot be rivaled by any other means of communication with regard to reaching the ruralites. Examples exist where song, drama, dance groups and the likes are used to promote campaigns against social evils such as child and women trafficking, alcoholism, burdensome dowries, discrimination against women, archaic taboos etc; or for encouraging advances in farming, health, nutrition and family welfare, agricultural reforms, national integration and similar goals.

Based on their numerous potentials, traditional media are used in various fields apart from political mobilization. Nkala (1990) postulates that end users are oftenignored in communication aimed at development. Both the behavioural change and interest demanded from rural dwellers are largely dependent on the medium used in transmitting the message to them. With regard to rural dwellers, traditional media can do the "magic." This is because a significant number of Nigeria's population resides in the rural areas. Apolitical manifesto presented on a newspaper page or on radio or television screen is not for the 80% of the Nigerians that live in the hinterland. This "forgotten" population is oblivious of such information that is placed in impervious channels. It is in furtherance of this that Wilson (1987:88) rightly observed, "Traditional communication remains what essentially sustains the information needs of the rural dwellers that represent over 70% of the national population of most third world states." In his study, Murphy (1979:20) focused on the pre-voting registration information campaigns for the 1979 presidential election in Nigeria and found that while 41 percent of the respondents learnt of the exercise from the modern communication media, 59 percent did so from interpersonal channels. The importance of interpersonal channels of communication (which traditional media is a part of) is reiterated by Everett Rogers in the diffusion of innovations theory.

The relevance of traditional media in political mobilization cannot be over stated. Ansu-kyeremeh (1998:120) has argued that folk media, as forms of communication, have evolved as grassroots expressions of the values and lifestyles of the people, and, because they use local languages with which the people are familiar, have become embedded in their cultural, social, and psychological thinking. Folk media as he noted are used to communicate entertainment, news announcements, persuasions, and social exchanges of all types. According to Hubley (1993:65), folk media are means by which a culture is preserved and adapted. Research has shown the importance of informal interpersonal contacts in persuading people to adopt or reject innovations or partake in political activity. These contacts are often made through folk media.

Related empirical studies

An Analysis of traditional media perception and uses in Nigeria

In the study, "An Analysis of traditional media perception and uses in Nigeria," Nwabueze (2004) seeks to ascertain the effectiveness of traditional media in rural development communications, to understand how the rural people or inhabitants of rural communities regard the traditional media around them. In accomplishment of these objectives, survey research method was used with the sample size population of 150, randomly drawn from three communities under study. Findingsrevealed that, respondents are aware of the existence of traditional media in their domain.

Audience perception of Traditional and Modern communication systems in Nigeria: A case study of Enugu state

In the study, "Audience perception of Traditional and Modern communication systems in Nigeria: A case study of Enugu state," Ede (2005) attempts a comparison between traditional and modern communication systems. The main objective of the study was to compare the way in which the audience perceives both traditional and modern communication systems in Nigeria. The methodology used was survey, with questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The sample size of 150 was used. Findings derived from the study revealed that:: harmonization of traditional and modern media of communication has helped to improve the understanding of the media messages, draws the attention and enhances the interest of the audience; most people are accessible to radio, television, church, town crier, and market in their respective localities; the study also revealed that time, content of the message, relevance to the experiences and aspirations of the audience and the emphasis placed on a particular message are some of the factors that declared the audience in patronizing media messages more; hat, the electronic media (radio and television) had some negative impact on the people's culture. These negative impacts are often propaganda, relaying of aggressive and violent scenes. According to respondents, it debases their culture and lowers their moral standards.

The study concluded that respondents acknowledged the enormous roles which the electronic media are playing in the area of education, entertainments and information dissemination. However, they observe with dismay all forms of negative influence which electronic media have on their culture, moral and value systems. Their responses generally advocated for a harmonization of the two modes of communication. The study recommended that there should be adequate and effective legislation to safe-guard our local language and culture in the hands of foreign media and; there should be creation of more awareness on the use of traditional communication.

Research method

The research method used in this study is survey research design.

Population of study

The population of this study is the electorate in Benue State. This population includes all adults of voting age. In order to select a representative sample, thepopulation census figures were a good starting point. According to 2006 National Population Census figures, Benue State has a total population of 4,253,641 people (Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, 2009). The breakdown of the population shows that 2,144,043 people are men, while female constitutes a total of 2,109,598 people. The population of adults of voting age was not determined from the

population statistics due to inaccessible records. Thus adults of voting age were selected at the point of administering the questionnaire after the sample size was determined.

Sample size determination method

The sample size determination method used in this study is the Taro Yamane method. According to the formula: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$

Where n = sample size, N= population, e = level of significance (0.05)

Thus, $n = \frac{4253641}{1+4253641(0.05)2}$

$\frac{4253641}{1+4253641(0.0025)}$

$\frac{4253641}{1+10634.103}$

$\frac{4253641}{10634.103}$

= 399.96 approximately 400

Sample size = 400

Sample size

The sample size for this study is 400.

Sampling techniques

Sampling techniques used for this study include simple random sampling, stratified sampling and purposive sampling.

Sampling design

In order to select a representative sample from the electorate in Benue State, the state was first of all divided into the three senatorial districts namely: Zone A, Zone B and Zone C. These senatorial districts are listed below as follows:

Benue North-East----------Zone A
Benue North-West---------Zone B
Benue South----------Zone C

In each of these senatorial districts, three (3) local governments were purposively selected based on those that had heavy use of traditional communication for political mobilization. Heavy use of traditional communication in some communities was evident and verified from the respondents. In addition to these selected local governments, Makurdi local government, the capital of the state was also selected. Makurdi local government was selected because it is the capital of the state. This makes a total often (10) local governments selected for the study. There are twenty three (23) local governments in Benue State. The selected local governments in the senatorial districts are as follows:

Benue North-East------Zone A------(Kwande, Ushongo and Vandeikya LGA)
Benue North-West— Zone B------(Tarka, Guma, and Gboko LGA)
Benue South----------Zone C------(Otukpo, Ohimini, and Obi LGA)
In each of the ten (10) selected local governments, two (2) council wards were selected using simple random sampling using the ballot method. Thus, twenty (20) wards were selected across the ten (10) local governments selected for the study. In each of the wards, ten (10) compounds were purposively selected according to people who have experience and understanding of traditional media in political mobilization. Compounds are a cluster of houses (sometimes huts) all belonging to one household. These are easy to identify and select accordingly. In each of the compounds, purposive sampling was used to select two knowledgeable adult respondents and the questionnaire was administered to them. Knowledgeable adult respondents are those who have.experienced traditional media in politics so that they can give informed answers to the study. Thus the study had four hundred (400) respondents.

Instrument of data collection
The instrument of data collected used for this study is questionnaire containing eight (8) close ended items.'

Data presentation
Table I: Uses of traditional media in political mobilisation

Uses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Voter education against rigging	33	8.25
Information on dates for political activities	27	6.75
Promotion of political candidates	10	2.5
Appeal for voters' participation	15	3.75
Advise to electorates to vote credible leaders	28	7
Encourage for free and fair elections	50	12.5
Warn people against political violence	12	3
Project manifestos	45	11.25
Attack corrupt politicians	25	6.25
Advocate for or against the change of incumbent government	85	21.25
Attack political opponents	70	17.5
Total	**400**	**100**

Most respondents, 21.25 percent of the total respondents, indicate "advocate for or against change of the incumbent" as the most frequent use of traditional media in political mobilisation; while few respondents 2.5 percent of the total respondents) indicate "promotion of political candidates" as the most frequent use of traditional media in political mobilisation. Other uses of traditional media during the 2011 gubernatorial elections in Benue State include: voter education against rigging; information on dates for political activities; appeals for voter participation; advise electorate to vote credible leaders; encourage free and fair elections; warn people against political violence; project manifestos; attack corrupt politicians and; attack political opponent.

Traditional media was used in most cases to advocate for change against the incumbent. With control of mass media in the hands of the state, dissenting voices had to use alternative channels in order to voice opposition. Thus, traditional media was an avenue to champion the cause for removal of the incumbent government.

Table II: Most significant reason for use of traditional media in political mobilization

Reasons	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Embedded in local culture	86	21.5
Easy access	35	8.75
Easy to understand	15	3.75
Unrestrained expressions	45	11.25
Humour	17	4.25
Highly participatory	65	16.25
Linguistic appropriation	55	13.75
Memorable	40	10
Lower costs	20	5
Catchy phrases	22	5.5
Total	**400**	**100**

Most respondents, 21.5 percent of the total respondents, indicate that traditional media is used because it is embedded in local culture, while few respondents, 3.75 percent, indicate that traditional media is used because it is easy to understand. Other reasons for the use of traditional media instead of mass media in political mobilization include: easy access; unrestrained expressions; humour; participatory nature; linguistic appropriation; memorable; lower cost and; catchy phrases.

The most significant reason for use of traditional media in political mobilization during the time was because it is embedded in local culture. Since it is part of the local culture, people accept it and understand it. And the y accept and understand it, they will easily internalize the messages passed through such media. If traditional media were alien to them, they will keep away from it and not accept it. However, reverse was the case here.

Table III: Traditional media used during the 2011 elections

Traditional Media	Frequency	Percentage
Songs	103	25,75
Folk tales	10	2.5
Dance	20	5
Musical instruments	50	12.5
Town crier	12	3
Puppets	100	25
Masquerades	10	. 2.5
Iconography	95	23.75
Total	**400**	**100**

Most respondents, 25.75 percent of the total sample, indicate that the most often used traditional medium was songs (in local languages) while few respondents, 2.5 percent, indicate that the most often used traditional medium was masquerades and folk tales. Other traditional media used in political mobilisation include: iconography, masquerades, puppets, instruments, dance and folktales.

Songs and music are generally accepted in many communities. The rhythm and the lyrics of the song may often make people commit it to memory. During the gubernatorial elections in Benue State, songs were the most often used form of traditional media. At a point, certain songs became more like "mantra," as people kept repeating, making fun and teaching others. These songs were produced on compact discs and sold publicly as well. Furthermore, campaign vehicles passing through the streets played the songs as well.

Table IV: Preferred of traditional media during the 2011 elections.

Traditional Media	Frequency	Percentage
Songs	105	26.25
Folk tales	10	2.5
Dance	08	2
Instruments	70	17.5
Town crier	02	0.5
Puppets	100	25
Masquerades	07	1.75
Iconography	98	24.5
Total	**400**	**100**

Most respondents, 26.25 percent of the total sample, indicate that they prefer the use of songs in political mobilisation while few respondents, 0.5 percent, indicate that they prefer the use of town criers in political mobilisation. Other traditional media preferred in political mobilisation include: iconography, masquerades, puppets, instruments, dance and folktales.

The popularity of songs as a form of traditional communication during the gubernatorial elections in Benue State highlights the importance and influence of music on the human psyche. Many communities across the world have developed music in various spheres of endeavour. Thus, the political sphere is not an exception. Songs are extremely useful in political mobilisation. Apart from the popularity of the songs among adults, campaign vehicles played the songs through the streets, thus averting state control of broadcast media. Opposition groups may not have been given much time on state owned radio but they still play the music in the streets and sell copies on compact discs.

Findings

Traditional media was used during the 2011 gubernatorial elections in Benue State to advocate for or against change of the incumbent. Other reasons for the use of traditional media during the 2011 elections include: voter education against rigging; information on dates for political activities; appeals for voter participation; advise electorate to vote credible leaders; to encourage free and fair elections; to warn people against political violence; project manifestos; attack on corrupt politicians and attack on political opponents.

Traditional media was used as opposed to mass media because it is embedded in local culture. This gave traditional media an advantage in political mobilisation as the electorate did not perceive it as alien. Rather it was seen as coming from within and indeed their way of doing things. Since traditional media is also a cultural expression, members of the public were more willing to accept it. It is not an alien medium, rather, it has been with the people for a long time. This means that they were not suspicious of it.

Songs are the dominant traditional medium that was used during the 2011 gubernatorial elections in Benue State. It is impossible to find a community without musical expression. Thus, music and songs are universal concepts. Using the right words and rhythm, musical is effective as a tool for political mobilisation. Added to this is the fact that when music is expressed in a relevant cultural context, people pay attention to it and carry the messages contained in the songs via interpersonal contacts.

Conclusion

Traditional media are versatile and can be put to many uses in political mobilisation of the populace during elections. It is embedded in local culture. The versatile nature of these traditional media suggests that multi-media approach can be embarked upon by using a convergence of traditional media and modern media. The cultural inclination which traditional media have ensures participation. Soon after political campaign, songs are composed and performed, people start singing these songs and carry the messages contained in the songs as they go about their daily business.

Traditional media are often preferred over mass media for a number of reasons. In the first place traditional media are part of the local culture. Thus messages sent via traditional channels are most likely to reach the target audience and elicit the desired response. Mass media on the other hand, are largely elitist and alien to majority of the local population in developing countries like Nigeria.

Songs are effective traditional media because it easily becomes popular once the words and the rhythm is right. Findings in table IV of this study show that songs were the most preferred traditional media, thus it is important to explore the nature of songs in a Nigerian context. Furthermore, songs are flexible as they can be composed in various local languages and,dialects. This simply means that people in various localities can compose songs to suit their preference. The popularity and acceptability of songs as an art form in many communities across Nigeria and indeed the world over makes it an effective medium in traditional communication. In every community there are composers and local musical artists often limited to their sphere of influence. The aforementioned attributes of song make it acceptable and preferred medium of traditional communication in political mobilisation during the gubernatorial elections in Benue State.

Recommendation

Political candidates as well as political parties should recognise the importance and relevance of traditional media in political mobilisation. Although mass media is efficient in some respects, traditional media is still relevant in Nigeria due to the under developed nature of many communities which dominate the heartland. These political candidates and political parties should encourage local creators and artists in the field of traditional media by financing these projects adequately. They should also promote the use of traditional media by patronising creators of local content such as musicians, dancers, praise singers, artists, etc.

Producers of political programmes, jingles, public service announcements and other advertisements on radio and television should incorporate aspects of traditional media to ensure relevance and acceptance in the communities in which they operate. Traditional media has a number of advantages which broadcasting can key into by incorporating selected and relevant aspects of traditional media into broadcast contents.

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