**TRADITIONAL RADIO BROADCASTING AS A FACTOR IN ELECTORATES’ VOTING PATTERN IN OSUN GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The suppleness, pliability and flexibility of radio makes it a unique tool in reaching diverse audience including those in rural area on socio-economy and political matters. It is on this notion that this examines the Traditional Radio Broadcasting as a Factor in Electorates’ Voting Pattern in Osun Gubernatorial Election, using Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) as case study. Mass media especially Osbc radio provides avenue for the citizens to get information about political activities, on a programme titled “political update” it did educate and sensitize masses on various activities such as voter’s card registration, how to handle voter’s card, what to wear during election, how to participate in political rally and campaign, to the activities on election day, coverage of election results, coverage of post-election activities like violence and tribunal, there should be more radio to serve different taste and language and radio should be free from few influential politicians to avoid turning the media into tools of propaganda.*

**Keywords: traditional media, electorates, rural population, voting pattern, mass media.**

**Introduction**

Political participation and election is a process through which individuals or groups of citizens get involved in choosing their leaders to enhance an effective governance and societal welfare. The participation can come in form of voting, participation in rally, contesting, partnership, among others. Chudi Oji (2013), posits that to embark on the task of electing leaders, people must be mobilized in order to get enlightened via enlightenment campaigns, sensitization through information dissemination and advocacy programmes directed at community leaders, age grades, development associations, opinion leaders, artisans and other grassroots movements in order to increase their awareness and foster attitudinal change towards active involvement and participation in politics. All these communications are tagged political communication and are enhanced by the mass media especially radio which is a medium of all ages.

Democracy which stands as the most widely embrace system in politics and governance, meaning “Rule by the people,” which implies direct participation and representative terms of rule by the people. But, in most communities, many people are still showing apathy, alienated, indifference to political participation, especially countries populated by businessmen.

However, the more information, education and enlightenment on the importance of politics the more interest, less apathy and determination in participating in it. Therefore, mass media particularly radio plays a crucial role in fostering an environment of good governance and political awareness in society. As the watchdog and interpreter of public issues and events, the media has a special role in every society.

Goodman, (2010), opines that democracy can neither be sustainable becomes strong without a free Press while Press Freedom can never be possible without democracy as the media takes the forms and colouration of the socio-political environment in which it operates according to the normative theorists Seibert et.al (1956) cited in Anaeto, (2008).

The press must, therefore, remain ever vigilant to protect and enforce people’s freedom of thought and expression and citizens’ right to all information relating to the various aspects of their life and future. Held, (2006) observes that access to information is a citizen’s right and must be taken to them. Information must be presented in a simple and palatable manner rather than name calling, propaganda and non-issue based. Right to information is inherent in democratic functioning and a pre-condition for good governance and the realization of all other human rights. Media must be credible and trustworthy; trust is the most valuable asset for any media, once lost it, cannot be earned back. It is for this reason that all media must uphold their principles to provide accurate and factual news and other programmes that can enhance free access to media of information for political news.

Jones, (2001), says press must understand the difference between politics in Osun gubernatorial and party politics. Media should not be a vehicle or used as an advocate for any political party or ideology. Political issues should be clearly understood, analyzed and presented in an impartial manner. During elections/political campaigns, equal time slots, space and right must be allocated to each of the legitimate political parties and candidates.

In the course of election, messages that encourage goodwill and harmony among all the ethnic groups, religions, genders, cultures, languages and communities should be broadcast on OSBC and other media.

Other roles expected of the radio stations before, during and after 2022 elections to prevent political violence and enhance political participation are:

1. It must work with security agencies in order to prevent rigging and other electoral violence.
2. It must provide the medium for transmitting political education to the populace such as how, where and why electorate needs to collect their PVC before election.
3. It must inform the electorate on how to conduct themselves before, during and after election.
4. It must alerts the security agencies in cases of crisis loom.
5. It must organize forum where political issues are debated such as “ Election Decides”

To this end, this research looks into the traditional radio broadcasting as a factor in electorates’ voting pattern in Osun gubernatorial election

**Statement of the Problem**

There are problems of apathy, indifference or alienated on the part of the people towards participating in politics. Most citizens show no interest and do not contribute their quota to political issues due to violence, assassination, rigging, e.t.c that is rocking the political system in Nigeria. In fact, many refer to Nigeria political arena as immature compared to the developed nations of the world. Other factors that daunt participation is unfulfilled and deceit in political promises and manifestoes by political parties.

To this end, the research investigated into the traditional radio broadcasting as a factor in electorates’ voting pattern in Osun gubernatorial election.

**Objectives of the Study**

Below are the objectives of this research:

i. To examine the role of radio in mobilizing people towards participating in 2022 Osun gubernatorial election.

ii. To know if the radio station educate and mobilize electorate on their civic responsibilities.

iii. To find out whether the radio station give equal coverage to political parties.

iv. To study if the radio station influence the voting habits of electorates.

v. To know how the radio station enhances free and fair in 2022 election.

**1.4 Research Questions**

In this study, an attempt was sufficiently made to answer the following research questions:

i. How is the radio mobilizing people towards participating in 2022 election?

ii. To what extent is the radio station educates and mobilizes electorates on their civic responsibilities?

iii. Do the radio station give equal coverage to political parties in 2022Osun gubernatorial election?

iv. Does the radio station influence the voting habit of electorates during 2022 election?

v. How has the radio station enhances free and fair 2022 election?

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study will help to create awareness on the role of radio before, during and after election to persuade and enlighten the people on the usefulness of the radio in political process.

This study will help to know how effective radio can be when used in implementing political oriented programmes and other programmes meant for people living in the rural area.

The contestants and the electoral body will be opportune to choose and select communication channels involving in executing any political programmes.

It will serve as a point of reference or consultation for present and future researchers and students.

Media practitioners will gain from the research findings as it will expose them to what responsibilities media are to play in political society.

Finally, this study will encourage and motivate people of OSUN state in particular on the need to participate in future elections.

**Scope of the Study**

The study revolves on the traditional radio broadcasting as a factor in electorates’ voting pattern in Osun gubernatorial election using Osbc, Osogbo as a case study. The work has been narrowed in scope to Osbc, Osogbo due to time, geographical locations, fund and other logistics. This cannot be effectively discussed without considering the demographic factor of residents in Osogbo town.

**Definition of the Terms**

There are some outstanding terms in this work with their appropriate definitions given. They are:

**Mass Media:** They are the agents of mass communication which help in reaching or disseminating information and influencing heterogeneous people in rural and urban areas e.g such as: Osogbo, Osun State.

**Radio:** The medium used in broadcasting political and electoral messages through the air to the people of Osogbo.

**Politics:** This is the activity that involves people to participate in the running of their government by taking part in the exercise that will influence or affect the choosing process.

**Mobilization**: It refers to radio programmes designed to encourage people to participate in political exercise in order to achieve needed development in the community and to change government.

**Participation:** This is the act of taking part or being involved in political activities or events by the people of Osogbo in OSUN State in order to get or elect their decision makers or representatives.

**EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

**Voter Education by Nigerian Broadcast Media**

Lots of Nigerians writers have carried out much research relating to the subject matter being studied. For instance, in the research conducted prior to the 2015 election by Godwin, B. O. (2014) titled ‘Voter education by Nigerian Broadcast Media: A normative Appraisal of three Radio Stations in Port Harcourt Metropolis” and published in *Global Media Journal Indian Edition.* The research dwelled on the fact thatNigeria’s democracy has been marked by a paradigm shift where ultimate power no longer resides on the electorates but on the elected. Scholars have attributed this aberration to widespread voter apathy and disenchantment.

The presupposition is that voter apathy can be systematically eroded through intensive democracy education. It is in the light of the foregoing that this study finds out how well the Nigerian broadcast media, especially radio, has efficiently and effectively carried out its role of informing and educating the populace on a wide range of issues, such as civic education of which Godwin, (2014) adopted content analysis to purposively selected three major radio stations in Port-Harcourt

However, the findings show basically, that there is a preponderance of news and commentaries over other programme genres. Descriptively, Radio Rivers II has a running time of 8 hours for programmes that have potentials for voter education thus representing about 40% of its broadcast time. Rhythm 93.7 FM presented a somewhat different scenario. Figuratively presented, Rhythm 93.7 FM has 7 hours of its air time allotted to programmes that hold potentials for voter education thus representing 29% of its broadcast time while Wazobia has 3 hours of its air time, within the context of the discourse, thus representing 13%.

Also, the actual air time allotted to voter education was found to be significantly shrift. Out of a running time of 480 minutes, for programmes that lend themselves to voter education, Radio Rivers II allotted 7 minutes which represents about one percent while that of Rhythm 93.7FM was 3 minutes out of 420 minutes. In summation, this was found to be less than one percent (0.7%). For Wazobia, it was one minute out of 180 minutes representing an insignificant percentage (0.5%).

It was also found that the programmes that lend themselves to voter education range from news/commentaries to public service announcements and jingles. It was however found that the stations studied hardly utilized these programmes to enlighten the listeners on the mechanics and dynamics of elections. One may however wonder if it is really the business of these stations (especially Rhythm and Wazobia) to devote their airtime to voter education being that they are commercial broadcast stations. Interestingly, it may not be totally out of place for them to significantly devote air time to the subject matter knowing that it falls within the purview of social responsibility. Ironically, studies have also shown that the economy of any nation is structurally tied to the polity.

Therefore, a sound electoral system accords legitimacy and stability to government which no doubt metamorphoses into good governance. In the light of the foregoing, not devoting significant airtime to voter education by the stations studied eloquently amount to a great disservice to the society by the stations studied.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Some relevant theories suitable for this study were explained, some for the theories are:

**Social Responsibility Media Theory**

The theory was developed by F.S. Siebert, T.B. Peterson and W. Schramm in (1963) and the basic assumptions of the theory according to McQuail (1987) cited in Ojobor (2002) as follows:

1. That media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society.

2. That, through professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance, these obligations can be met.

3. That media should regulate itself within the framework of law and established institutions to be able to carry out its responsibilities.

4. That whatever might lead to crime, violence, civil disorder or offence to minority groups, should be avoided by the media.

5. That the media should reflect its society’s plurality, giving access to various points of view and granting all the right to reply.

6. Based on the principle in (1), the society has the right to expect high standards of performance from the media. Intervention can only be justified to secure public good.

7. Accountability of media professionals should be to the society, employers and the market.

The major premise of the social responsibility theory is that freedom carries concomitant obligations, and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under the government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication such as educating and informing the voters on electoral process and how to contribute their quota to the 2022Osun gubernatorial elections in terms of voter registration, collection of PVC, equal attention to all political parties.

**Agenda Setting Theory**

Agenda Setting Theory was postulated by Maxwell McComb and Donald Shaw in 1972/73 in Anaeto, (2008). The basic assumption of the theory is that media may not tell people what to think but they present to people what to discuss or talk about, therefore, media essentially determine what may after all preoccupy the mind of the society. This is giving credence to the consideration that media is one of the major factors that control the Osun gubernatorial direction of the political and economical fate of any nation.

However, as 2022Osun gubernatorial election draws nearer mass media particularly radio and television are educating, enlightening and sensitizing electorates and other stakeholders on various electoral process such as the need to use Permanent Voters Card (PVC), how to collect PVC, use of PVC Biometric Reader and reasons for its justification, how to ensure peaceful poll rather than dividing the state as it was been speculated, monitoring and reportage of distribution of election materials and coverage of election result announcement etc.

**Research Methodology**

The research methodology covers the research design, the target population, sample size determination, description of sampling procedure, research instruments and statistical techniques, sources of data, and method of data analysis. It also covers the validation and reliability test.

**Research Design**

The research design for this research is quantitative with the use of survey method. Survey method afforded the researcher to use questionnaire in gathering data from the respondents who were residents of Osogbo of Osun State.

**Sampling Technique**

Non-probability sampling technique is used for this research in which researcher purposively selected Osogbo Town because of the proximity and being the sitting of Osbc where most of the activities take place while 100 females and another 100 male respondents making 200 respondents were selected based on convenience.

**Sample Size**

The sample size for this research is 100 female and 100 male making 200 respondents that were selected based on convenience. Sample size in context is defined as a process of selecting a portion of the population for the purposes of Osun gubernatorial election using the findings about the sample itself.

**Method of Data Collection**

The method of data collection for this research was face to face administration of questionnaire to the respondents. The consent of the selected respondents was sought before administration of the research instrument (questionnaire) for immediate and later collection depending on respondents’ disposition.

**Data Analysis**

Out of two hundred (200) copies of questionnaires administered within Osogbo Town, one hundred and ninety (192) copies of questionnaires were retuned which is (95.5%).

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This chapter dwells on the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire administered to the respondents within Osogbo Town of OSUN State. As stated in the previous chapter, two hundred (200) questionnaires were earlier distributed, out of which, one hundred and ninety two (192) copies were retrieved. This gave a response rate of 96% of the population, frequency distribution

This section therefore comprised of three parts: 4.1 is the analysis

**TABLE 1:** Radio listening of respondents

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VARIABLES** | **FREQUENCY** | **PERCENTAGE** |
| Yes | 125 | 65% |
| No | 44 | 23% |
| Partially | 20 | 10.4% |
| Undecided | 3 | 1.6% |
| **TOTAL** | **192** | **100 %** |

**Source**: Field Survey 2022

**Analysis:** The table above indicated that, 125 respondents representing 65% listen to radio programmes, 44 respondents representing 23% do not listen to radio, 20 respondents representing 10.4% partially listen to radio, 3 respondents representing 1.6% did not decide. It is obvious that majority of the respondents listen to radio.

**TABLE 2:** Radio stations’ preference of respondents

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VARIABLES** | **FREQUENCY** | **PERCENTAGE** |
| OSBC FM | 80 | 41.6% |
| Rave FM | 20 | 10.4% |
| Fresh FM | 43 | 22.4% |
| Raypower FM | 30 | 15.6% |
| uniq FM | 10 | 5.2% |
| Others | 9 | 4.7% |
| **TOTAL** | **192** | **100 %** |

**Source**: Field Survey 2022

**Analysis:** From the table above 80 respondents representing 41.6% listen to programmes on Osbc, 20 respondents representing 10.4% listen to Rave FM, 43 respondents representing 22.4% listen to Fresh FM, 30 respondents representing 15.6% listen to Ray Power FM, 10 respondents representing 5.2% listen to Uniq FM while 9 respondents representing 4.7% listen to other FM stations. Thus, majority of the respondents listen to Osbc and Rave FM.

**TABLE 3:** Does your intention to participate in the 2022 election depend on your exposure to radio programmes?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VARIABLES** | **FREQUENCY** | **PERCENTAGE** |
| Yes | 88 | 45.8% |
| No | 101 | 52.6% |
| Undecided | 3 | 1.6% |
| **TOTAL** | **192** | **100 %** |

**Source**: Field Survey 2022

**Analysis:** From the table above, 88 respondents representing 45.8% agreed that their exposure to radio programme on political matters influencing their intention to participate in the 2022 election while 101 respondents representing 52.6% said it did not. Therefore, electorates’ intention to participate in the 2022Osun gubernatorial election partially influenced by electorates’ exposure to radio programmes.

**Discussion of the Findings**

Having reviewed related materials and analyzed responses collected via questionnaire, male respondents dominated the returned rate with 53.1%. Also, most of the respondents are between the age of 18-40 with majority of them 22.4% and 21.4%.Most of the respondents who participated in the 2022 gubernatorial poll were single and the married. Similarly, it shows that majority of the respondents were literate. Students, government and private workers including entrepreneur formed the majority of the respondents.

Larger percentage of the respondents admitted that they listen to radio programmes regularly particularly Osbc FM and Rave FM. It is noted that majority of the respondents regularly listen to political parties’ programmes and manifestoes via radio.

Larger percentage of the respondents established that radio mobilize them for 2022 election particularly on voter’s card registration, voter’s card usage, voting pattern, how to protect vote, broadcasts political campaigns among other things.

Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that radio stations educate and mobilize electorate on their civic responsibilities. Many respondents strongly agreed that radio stations give equal coverage to political parties.

It is observed that majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that radio stations are influencing whom they want to vote for in the 2022 election. It is noted that radio enhances free and fair 2022 election if it report live on election days, alerting security personnel, monitoring of election material and educate electorate on voting pattern among others.

**Conclusion**

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It is observed that majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that radio stations are influencing whom you want to vote for in the 2022 Osun gubernatorial election. It is noted that radio can enhance free and fair 2022Osun gubernatorial election if it report live on election days, alerting security personnel, monitoring of election material and educate electorate on voting pattern among others.

**Recommendations**

Having carefully examined the study from the introductory aspect to the respondents’ responses, the following points can be recommended:

1. There should be more TV / radio to serve different taste and language.
2. Broadcast media (radio) should be free from influential politicians to avoid turning the media into propaganda platform.
3. Nigeria should adopt America style where all media houses do not run commercial political campaign once political band is lifted. So that the rich will not dominate the air.
4. State media and private media should not allow itself to be used to compromise as evident in the 2022 presidential election when NTA and AIT broadcast a documentary about Muhammadu Buhari and Bola Tinubu on the Eve of the election.

**Recommendation for Further Studies**

1. Impact of transit media in political mobilization and awareness
2. Factors influencing electorate voting behaviour in 2022 gubernatorial election.

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