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POLITICAL ADVERTISING AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Media are tools with which political advertising is made very effective and reaches many people. The media are powerful instruments of social control, social engineering and instrument of promoting and preserving culture. Media promote, preserve and consolidate the democratic process of a nation. Media have effect on different institutions including cultural, political and social institutions. Political Advertising entails the use of media by political parties and governments to get support from the public especially during election or anytime they require public support. In Nigeria, Political Advertising has grown immensely. This is as a result of the recent awareness by political parties and their candidates on the usefulness of advertising in making the electorate better aware of the candidates as better brand and in communicating their offerings in form of manifestoes to these electorates. Political Advertising has become the most commonly used technique to create a favourable image for the candidate and a negative image for the opponent. More so, media are used for social engineering, the government take hold of the media so that the citizenry will know what the government is doing and what they intend to do, it is easy for the government to provide the required information to the public using the new media. This paper asserts that media are powerful tools for political communication because it portrays both physical and intellectual pictures of political candidates. This paper also identifies the roles of the media, uniqueness of the New media in Political Advertising and Democratic Process. This work also provides a critical discourse of the concept of Political Advertising and Democratic Process. The paper concludes that Media are very powerful tools in political Advertising. As technology advances in terms of the new media, government and most politicians are increasingly using the New Media in Political Advertising and Democratic Process.

Keywords: Media, Political Advertising, Democratic Process, Political Communication, New Media.

Introduction

For any democratic system to thrive, it is vital that political parties and candidates provide the electorates with adequate information on party policies, clear-cut vision as well as their political agendas to enable electorates actively choose their candidates based on full information. To achieve this, political parties use the media in campaigns. Curran (2005, p.129) adds that the media assist voters to make an informed choice at election time. This is done in form of paid political advertising, social media campaigns, commentaries and news stories. In fact, for an election to be considered free and fair, electorates must have adequate knowledge of the candidates, political parties and election policies.

Recently, political parties and their candidates are becoming increasingly aware of the effectiveness of advertising and its role in getting the electorates to choose a particular candidate or party over the other by way of informing them. The use of political ad campaigns has become increasingly popular and is very important to the electoral process and voting behaviour because it bridges the communication gap between political parties, political candidates and electorates.

Hence, political parties and candidates all around the world devote a lot of financial resources to political ad campaigns to sell themselves as the preferred brand to the electorates. Interestingly, the most questions raised in elections are concerned with voting behaviour. Why the electorates voted for a candidate over the other and the implication of their choice.

Scholars and communication experts argue that, when the politician crafts his campaign messages as being the fight to improve voters' lives, or something similar and come with some good measure of integrity, the voters are more likely to believe him (Feyipitan, 2015). In other words, the electorates are most likely to trust candidates whose political ad campaigns offer to satisfy their basic needs as opposed to those who dwell on their personal achievements.

However, these same experts also argue that personality, appearance and language use play crucial roles in political ad campaigns. Still, many political experts question the efficacy of political ad campaigns in getting the electorates to vote in a candidate's favour.

The2015 gubernatorial elections in Nigeria, witnessed political parties and candidates flooding various forms of media with ad campaigns all struggling to win electorates votes. At the end, Akinwunmi Abode who was the candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC) emerged as the governor of Lagos State. Before the elections, his ad campaigns filled media airwaves, social media and billboards with messages for every class of people who made up the electorates. His pervasive jingles dominated radio and television stations, social media sites while his messages streamed the print and outdoor media with promises to deliver. More so, in Anambra State the gubernatorial elections will take place in November, 2021. All the Political parties have various political ads, showcasing their candidates and their manifestos.

Theoretical Framework

Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw propounded the agenda setting theory in 1972. This is a theory that postulates that the media determines what we think about. Severin and Tankard in Daramola (2003, p.60) explains that the media is the prime mover in setting the

territorial agenda. It has a great part in determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are and what people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with. The media has the power to elevate or down play the significance of any issue.

According to Edegoh *et al.,* (2013, p.379), the theory holds that most of the pictures we store in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about, most of the issues we discuss are based on what we have read, listened to or watched in different mass media. This theory implies that the mass media through their content predetermine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a given society.

Ads of various kinds and purposes are part of the content of the mass media all over the world today. This theory affirms that the media sets the agenda through the rate at which a news item or information is presented, the level of importance attached to it, the degree of conflicts contained in the messages and its cumulative effect on the people overtime. Factors like ownership policy, profit, etc. influences how the media sets the agenda for the people on a daily basis.

Most bits of information do not originate from media houses even though they air or publish the information. Political parties knowing fully the impact that placing of political adverts in the media can have on the electorate ensures that the rate at which political adverts of aspirants are published is very high. They ensure that paid adverts of their aspirants are placed in various media forms with large audience to allow for more exposure and awareness. Thus, they set the tone or agenda for electoral decision-making and choice with the myriads of adverts contained in various mass media forms in Nigeria.

Political Advertising

The use of political advertising as a campaign strategy by political parties in Nigeria has become a trend, over the years political parties employ the services of creative agencies to package persuasive message of propaganda to create awareness of the beautiful benefits electorates stand to enjoy should they cast their votes in favour of the party. McNair (2003, p.97), defines political advertising as the purchase and use of media space, paid for at commercial rates, in order to transmit political messages to a mass audience. Also, the Texas Ethics Commission(2019) defines political advertising as a form of communication that support or oppose a candidate for nomination through the use of Pamphlets, Bill boards, Fliers, Bumper stickers, Newspapers, Magazines, Radio, Television and the Internet.

The past two decades have witnessed a surge in the use of political advertising in Nigeria. According to Opeibi (2004) as cited by Olujide, Adeyemi and Gbadeyan (2011) prior to these period, political parties employed the use of political rallies, personal contacts and speeches to sensitize electorates. However, the development and diversification of the mass media has caused political parties to capitalize on these media through political advertising in order to record a wider reach of their target audience. Political advertising has metamorphosed into a lucrative business for advertisers and celebrities alike who receive huge sums of money to conceptualize, produce and endorse these advertisements especially through the broadcast media.

Political advertising can be defined as the promotion of political candidates, aspirants, political parties manifestoes, programmes and ideals, electoral body activities and political programmes of the government through advertisement placement in the media (Osho, 2008) political advertising enables candidates to convey their positions on important issues and to acquaint voters with their accomplishments and personalities.

Arens, Weigold and Arens (2011, p.600) posits that political advertising is an essential part of the democratic process and can be an important means of helping the public understand the difference between opponents. Political advertising is more in the nature of public relations campaign that aims to highlight certain achievements or upcoming programmes in politics. It aims at explaining policies, informing citizens and connecting people to their leaders. Political advertising does not stop politicians from speaking up on issues that affect the nation on the other platforms.

Edegoh, Ezebuenyi and Asemah (2013, p.376) see political advertising as one of several ways politicians and political parties mobilize the electorates. Political advertising can be done in several ways such as television programmes, radio, newspapers and display of candidates is portraits with severed promising and persuasive inscription on the billboard magazines and even the new media of communication. The basic objectives of political advertising are to gain attention of the electorates and for this reason, political advertising sometimes involves orthodox strategies to achieve its aim.

Types of Political Advertising

As with most social classifications it is difficult to strictly compartmentalise typology in political advertising. There are often areas of overlap, more so when each genre may be employed either to construct a positive image for a candidate or to destroy the image of an opponent.

Nevertheless, from the primitive days of "Eisenhower Answers America" form of political advertising whose rehearsed, constructed quality was obvious to the audience to the internet participation concept successfully employed by Barack Obama to win the US presidential election in 2008, the following classification of political advertising have been identified:

1. **Talking Head Advertisements**: These are issues-oriented advertisement designed to enable the candidate project the image of one capable of handling the responsibilities of the political position sought. The emphasis is on ability to deliver on the job

2. **Concept Advertisements**: These are designed to convey important ideas about candidates, i.e what they represent. They are usually generational in nature and seek to avoid overly personalising a campaign. Instead they try to promotes particular ideas which the candidates represent. For example, in Ronald Reagan's time, the central ideas of his campaign were "getting government off back of the people" and "being tough with the commies (communists)". The concepts in George Bush's campaign were "experience" and "reliability" while in 1992, Bill Clinton harped on "change" – the need for it and the impression that he embodied it. The "change" concept saw Barack Obama through his successful bid for the presidency in the USA in 2008, although he added "trust" – "change we can trust". In the 2007 presidential election in

Nigeria it was "continuity" for the successful candidate, Umaru Musa Yar' Adua while his opponent, Muhamadu Buhari, paraded "integrity".

3. **Negative Advertising**: This is the type in which political contrive to smear or dent the image of opponents through mudslinging and attacks on the opponent's record to gain electoral advantage. The focus is on the perceived weakness of an opponent's rather than on the positive attributes of the candidate him or herself

4. **Cinema Verite**: These are commercial which depict the candidate in "real life" settings in which he or she is seen interacting with "the people". The tactic often employed, particularly by incumbents is the use of archive news footage to show the candidate in presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial or other such activities. It can also make use of informal setting in which the candidate is shown visiting and talking with "ordinary people" on the streets and markets or in scenes depicting the candidate's home or work life. These are often scripted and rehearsed although the intention is usually to give the impression of spontaneity

5. **Symbolism**: This type applies to socio- psychological theories of motivation and consumer behaviour prevalent in the commercial world in projecting candidates for political office. In this type, the advertiser avoids providing rational information about policy to the electorates. Rather, his or her emphasis is on the fears anxieties and deep-rooted desires of a culture which are then associated with the candidate. Symbolism may serve positive ends when it seeks to promote a candidate or may be negative when it is employed to attack an opponent.

6. **Power Signification**: These exploit symbols of power and status to the advantage of the incumbent candidate or party. A candidate in office invariably acquires significant experience and credibility which can be represented in advertisements by use of archive footage of press leaders, war records etc. These visuals along with an opponent whose administrative experience may be limited in scope.

7. **Testimonials**: In this form of political advertising, the views of non-candidates are enlisted for the purpose of endorsements using the 'vox pop' interviewing technique to demonstrate voters' support for a candidate or condemnation of an opponent. Where respected personalities in industry, politics, sports or entertainment are interviewed for the purpose of endorsing a candidate, the advertiser seeks thereby to transfer to him or herself the authority and status of the interviewees.

8. **The Neutral Reporter Format**: in this, the audience is presented with a series of apparently factual statements about a candidate (or opponent) and are then allowed to reach their conclusions. It uses the simple narrative conventions which tend to give the impression of neutrality whereas the facts presented are intended either to enhance the image of the candidate or to damage that of an opponent.

Political Advertising and the Democratic Process

Political Advertising has become an essential part of the democratic process and can be an important means of helping the electorate to understand the difference between opponents.

However, inherent in this is the desperation of most candidates to dent the image of opponents through mudslinging and attack advertisements to gain electoral advantage. Say Kumar and Mittal (2002, p. 308)

Politicians use advertising to make voters aware of their record, their stand on issues and then political vision. Early in their campaign, political candidates often run ads with a positive message to build credibility with voters. Then – in an effort to differentiate themselves- they often follow up with ads that attack their opponent's record.

The above was evident in the advertising campaigns of most of the presidential candidates during the 2007 general election in Nigeria. For example, Umaru Musa Yar' Adua of the people's Democratic party (PDP) began his campaign with his simple "lest we forget series, which painted a picture of him as "MR. INTEGRITY", with an unblemished record as governor of Katsina state while most of his colleagues in the other state lived in the fear of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for corrupt enrichment while in office. His "letter of my country men and women" spelt out his unique attributes and those of his running mate, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan as the ideal presidential candidates for the 2007 election. Yar' Adua was advance to the "MOVING FORWARD", "REAL CHANGE – GOOD JOBS" subjects in which he promised Nigerian constant public power supply better education and good jobs.

However, in the last week of the presidential election campaigns, Yar' Adua abandoned his "ideal candidate" sale of his manifesto and embarked on negative and knocking advertising in which he portrayed his major rivals, General Muhammadu Buhari and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as "unrepentant dictator with a track record of injustices. Basic to his campaign was the need for stability in the polity by voting for the "PDP for continuity"

Atiku Abubakar's advertising campaign in newspaper began with a manifesto of a NEW NIGERIA FOR ALL NIGERIANS, which would:

a. Provide 10 times more electricity in five years
b. Create a cabinet ministry to resolve the Niger Delta problem
c. Provide massive job opportunities
d. Boost healthcare and road construction
e. Fight corruption with fairness, firmness and justice.

However, while hinging his campaign on the "New Nigeria…."Theme. Abubukar was to later engage in knocking advertising in which he outlined "cogent reasons" why Nigeria should abandon the PDP, sweep "continuity" away and vote for him and the Action Congress.

It was not different for Atahiru Bafarawa whose campaign was based on the theme: "Unity, Transparency and performance", which he claimed to his credit in his eight years as governor of Sokoto state. He was, however, later to attack the PDP's failed promise "to solve Nigeria's problems… electricity in months... unemployment… bad road… Niger Delta Crisis" while calling on voters to accept his candidature and all that the Democratic People's Party (DPP) stood for.

Not to be outside in the spate of adversarial advertising, Orji Uzor Kalu of the Progressive People's Party (PPA) initially kept to his simple theme of providing Nigeria with "The Real Benefits of Democracy" but later moved on to attack the failing of the incumbent PDP government. His attack was centred on the PDP governments' claim to have reformed the economy of the country and General Obasanjo's (former president) assertion that the 2007 elections were a "Do or Die Affair (Vanguard, February 11, 2007)

General Buhari of All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) tried to remain focused in projecting his candidature to Nigerian as an unblemished leader and former Head of state with his "INTEGRIY" still intact without going adversarial.

However, his "General Muhammadu Buhari's Campaign statement", although couched as a voter enlightenment "advertorial" was, nevertheless, an indictment of the General Obasanjo (PDP) regime and its failed promises over an eight-year period.

Only Patrick Utomi of the African Democratic Congress steered away from attack advertising altogether. His advertising was built around the themes:

a. "I stand for a New Beginning…that Nigeria may Excel".
b. "The New face of Africa for Nigeria's National Transformation… that our country would be blessed". This theme was premised on a nine-point agenda culminating in "Endless Possibilities".

Obviously, therefore, the majority of the 2007 presidential election candidates engaged in negative and adversarial advertising while trying to sell their candidature and parties to the electorate. How much was benefited from such smear campaigns or how they impacted on fortunes of the candidates remains to be seen.

But some critics believe that negative political advertisements contribute to the severe distrust of politicians. For many, therefore, elections have become a question of choosing the less of two evils as projected by the smear and cynicism. In the words of Arens (2004, p.312):

> In a recent survey of voters in Virginia, approximately three fourths of the sample indicated that negative campaigns were likely to discourage them from voting at all. Notwithstanding, the desperate final week of any hard fought campaign typically brings out the worst in candidates and their campaign strategies and media advisors.

In tune with the above, Ansolabehre and Iyengar (1995, p.9) are of the view that negative advertisement suppress voter turnout, are of the view that negative advertisements suppress voter turnout, are responsible for record lows in political participation and record highs in public cynicism and alienation. Thus, they pose a serious threat to democracy. But it is indeed becoming increasingly common for political advertisement to contain negative one- sided attack on opposing candidate's weakness such as character flaws, voting records, public misstatements, broken promises, war records, past administrative bungling and the like (Meirick, 2002, p.52)

Invariably, the goal of these advertisement is to discredit the character, record or position of an opponent and create doubt in the voter's mind about his or her ability to govern effectively.

According to Pinkelton, Um and Austin (2002, p.22);

> A major reason why negative political advertisements are used successfully is that voters often tend to weight negative information more heavily than positive information when forming Impressions of political candidates

However, studies have shown that the use of "attack advertising" by politicians can result in negative perception of the candidate himself (Pinkleton, 1997). Indeed, Arens (2004, p.313) is convinced that sometimes, negative advertisement serves "more as a reflection of the sponsor's poor taste than apparent lack of suitability" of the opponent.

The effects of political advertisements are, therefore, sometimes determined not by content alone, but also by environmental factors within which a political message is sent and received.

Political Advertising Campaign in Nigeria

In Nigeria political advertising has grown immensely in the past years. This is as a result of the recent awareness by political parties and their candidates on the usefulness of advertising in making the electorates better aware of the candidates as a better brand and in communicating their offering in form of manifestos to these same electorates. Olujide et al (2010) note that, advertising have become the most commonly used technique to create a favourable image for the candidate and a negative image for the opponent. Before now, political parties and candidates channelled most of their resources into political rallies, speeches and direct contact to gather the support of electorates (Opeibi) 2004

Between the 2007, 2011 and 2015 elections in Nigeria; presidential and gubernatorial, the use of political advert campaigns have widened from mode of delivery, type of language used, to forms of media used to communicate these messages. The 2007 gubernatorial elections in Lagos state witnessed the flood of both traditional and new media with media campaigns of the three strong contenders who were; Babatunde Fashola of AD, Musuliu Obanikoro of PDP and a fresh face, Jimi Agbaje of Accord. Because of the popularity of these three candidates amongst the electorates, campaigns became highly competitive. Each candidate tried to outdo the other using political advert campaigns. They came up with various jingles. i.e: everybody loves Jimi Agbaje….", slogans like "…. Ekoonibaje o" amongst others. Also, according to Nworah (2011), the 2011 presidential election between former president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the PDP and General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC had its peculiarities. In the sense that, Since Goodluck Ebele Jonathan had not been elected president during his first term, he was saddled with the responsibility of convincing the electorates that he was a better choice than his strongest opponent. This he did by investing a lot of funds into media campaigns which included traditional media and the new media.

Even though it is generally agreed by most scholars and marketing professionals that political advertising is important to every election campaign, yet some scholars and political consultants remain divided on the extent to which political advertising influence voting behaviour. In the past most political campaign researchers agreed that political media campaigns had a great effect on voting behaviour. However, recent studies have shown a better understanding on the effectiveness of political advertising communication in elections. Hoolbrooks (1996) concluded that, "variations in candidate support during the campaign season are largely attributable to the occurrence of campaign events". In support,

Ansolabhere and Iyenga (1994) state that political advertising is persuasive and not manipulative and that its messages inform voters about the candidates ‟position and allow voters to develop differentiated images of the candidates.

Interestingly, Nigerian electorates are becoming ever more exposed to political advertising a lot more than in the past which in turn raises awareness on political decisions before they are taken. Electorates are becoming more aware about political information; information about candidates and their manifestos, party policies and election guidelines through continuous use of political advertising in election campaigns in Nigeria.

The Role of Media in the Democratic Governance in Nigeria

Information Role

The Nigerian Press arose from the need to awaken the dormant consciousness of the people towards good governance through a credible, free and fair electoral system. Quoting Zik, Anegbode and Azelama (2003) state that "There is no better means to arouse the African people than that of the power of the pen and tongue. The Nigerian press has lived up to expectation in spreading useful and developmental information to its society. This accounts for the news stories, editorials, commentaries, interviews and other information giving activities of the media in both the Print and electronic media. The media has helped the Nigerian people to keep abreast of the developments in the political space of the country. The "Nigeria Decides" programme on NTA and the "Mandate Studio" on FRCN during elections as well as many special programmes created by private television and radio stations on the elections, typify the information giving role of the media in making the electorate to get a "blow by blow" account of the electioneering and the profiles of their potential leaders.

Stressing on the importance of the information role of the media, Opubor (2002) asserts that: Many people in our urban areas will find it difficult to imagine life without the media. Just think how it would feel to wake up one morning, turn on your radio set and receive nothing but static noises. Many of us would not want to experience such a deprivation more than once in a lifetime. The scenario painted by Opubor shows the deprivation we could suffer without the media in the society.

Leadership Role

The Nigerian press has always been useful as a medium for structuring the political landscape of the country, an avenue for agitation and proper political leadership. **One of the tenets of the social responsibility theory is enlightening the public and making them capable of self-governance.** This tenet therefore puts on the shoulders of the media, the responsibility to ensure good leadership in the society in which it operates. Anegbode and Azelama (2003) wrote on the leadership role of the media in ensuring independence for Nigeria, when they affirm that:

One of the instruments of African (Nigerian) Nationalism therefore, was frequency or longevity; each Nationalist newspaper was a vehicle for the formation of public opinion. The press was a medium for agitation and political leadership.

The press referred to here, were the newspapers like Iwe Irohin, The Comet, Lagos Times, West African Pilot, etc, which were instruments for fighting colonialism or bad policies in

different capacities. The aim was to arouse empathy and political awareness in the demand for independence. The media does not only agitate or draw attention to the bad polices of government but also drum support for the positive initiatives of government. The efforts of the press in lending to credible government policy is seen in the instances of organizing press conferences and interviews, undertaking public campaigns on important national issue like the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution, Road Safety Campaign, MAMSER, Census and a host of other government programs.

The Watchdog Role

The media being described as a watchdog is in recognition of its watchful and criticizing role against the bad practices of the government. Ralph Akinfeleye describes Journalist (media) as "corps of intrepid reporters who were always caught in the web several steps ahead of the goons" (quoted in Ugulah and Erebi 2008). The political leaders and their cronies at one time or the other try to find ways to tailor the constitution to suit their selfish needs and aspirations. Ugulah and Erebi (2008) agree with Ralph's position on the power of the media to avert such activities when he maintains that:

…Obasanjo's third term agenda would have succeeded but for the vibrant media and a coalition that Nigerians were properly informed to resist the unconstitutionality.

Olusegun Obasanjo in pursuit of third term in office, an attempt to remain in power for long, motivated the law making organ of the government to attempt to circumvent the constitution. But the media in performing its watchdog role drummed publicity to this ignoble act and his ambition to perpetuate himself in office longer than necessary was truncated. Another example bordering on Obasanjo that the media called attention to and criticized was his donation of a huge sum in millions of naira to his party – the People's Democratic Party (PDP) during the 1998 local government elections. The 2015 election is one still fresh in our minds. Sahara Reporters and Premium Times inundated us daily with cases of fraud in the electoral system. **The latest is the Abia State imbroglio and the rulings and counter rulings from the courts.**

The Electioneering Role of the Media

The mass media is very useful in the electoral process of any nation. **The media in its agenda setting role help the electorate to have an insight into the personalities of the political office seekers and their party manifestoes.** During the transition from the military to democratic rule between 1998 and 1999, the media lived up to its expectation by keeping the public abreast of happenings in the political space of Nigeria. This explains why the Tell Magazine did a countdown to the handover in every single issue of its publication between July 1998 and May 1999 The late Mr. Tunji Oseni (a senior Journalist) organized an agenda-setting seminar for newsmen in August 1998, entitled "The Media and Transition" to reflect on the transition programme (Olukokun 2003).

Electoral Reforms

The role of the mass media is essential to the political and electoral process in any country. It is worthy of note that the media in Nigeria has played a positive role in the process. **During the last elections in Nigeria, the media was alive to its duty of creating awareness, sensitizing and mobilizing the electorate to participate in the election.** This is evident in the

various media coverage, interviews of politicians, giving insights into their profiles and making their manifestoes heard. The publicity no doubt helped Nigerians to make their choice on whom to vote for.

Although elections are over and elected officers are already serving in different appointive capacities, the credibility of the elections are still being questioned as evidenced in the election tribunals. The media is also at the forefront of the agitation for electoral reforms by reporting the irregularities and malpractice that characterize the 2015 elections and calling for immediate action after the election. In President Umaru Yar'Adua's inaugural speech (VOA news May 29th, 2007) he accepted that the 2007 general elections were flawed with irregularities and therefore promised to make reforms. In his words: "I will set up a panel to examine the entire electoral process with a view to effecting reforms and to ensure that we raise our general elections to meet international standards. The press did not only go to town with reports of election malpractices but are also part of the changing process. Reuben Abati, Chairman, Editorial Board of the Guardian Newspaper emphasized this stand when he observed that "the media has played a role in the electoral reforms by carrying out civil campaign on problems of the electoral reforms and are doing a good job of it" (the Sun March 18, 2008).

The Nigerian media professionals have in furtherance of the electoral reform process attended a training organised by the International Republican Institute (an international body that ensures the growth of democracy in countries of the world) to train journalists to effectively report the major issues at stake during electoral reform process. The training enabled them to educate the citizenry on the process and improve the technical competence of participants.

The New Media and Democratic Process

Ever since the media changed its form in Nigeria in 1859, it has been used by its owners from the colonial era till present. It was first used by Revered Townsend for commercial educational and religious purposes. The media has been used for political commercial and propaganda purpose overtime.

There can be no sustainable democratic governance if there is no platform where a degree of interactivity or dialogue on issues and policies take place between the government and the governed. The media is a major platform through which this can be done. Irrespective of its form, the media ensure that the activities of those in government and the views of the governed are brought to the fore front for all to see. That is why it's fondly called the watchdog of the government and the society.

The Nigerian media on its own has been one that has been on survival lane since it started its evolution in Nigeria. It has been attacked and put under gag by the colonial masters, the military rulers and the democratically elected government of Nigeria from the first republic to the fourth republic. The Nigerian media in all its forms must not relent in making sure that the people get the information that they need to progress and be kept informed of all governmental actions and policies that will affect their lives in one way or the other The media in Nigeria has played the role of watchdog by ensuring that the electoral officers, citizens officers, politicians, security officers and citizens do things right. The media has also ensured that the activities, decisions and policies of those in government are well analysed and

explained. This is despite of the fact that most media houses in Nigeria are owned by government and individuals who have had political objectives at one point or the other. Their content is mostly one sided as who pays the piper dictates the tone.

Like other forms of media in Nigeria New media is gradually expanding its audience and usage status in Nigeria. There have been calls for its regulation because of the ways it has been used to share information, mobilize people, criticize politicians and promote propaganda. The former senate president, senator David Mark, delivering a key note address at the Senate Press Corps Retreat (2012) in Umuahia, Abia State expressed the belief that

> "There must be a measure to check the negative tendencies of the social media in our country. I say this because media in our country. I say this because media practice, particularly journalism, process news gathering and dissemination. It also operates a feedback mechanism and where the practitioners erred there is room for rebuttal. But in the social media a faceless character can post any information that is absolutely false and misleading but will never retract it. At the end of the day one is bombarded with questions over what one has no business with. I suggest that schools of mass communication and journalism should review their curricular to include the operations of social media"

The senate president said the need to check social media became necessary, as they do not have the avenue for retraction of whatever they have done. While acknowledging that the media has come to stay, as part of the process of governance in the country, since the return of democratic government in 1999 and performing its responsibility of checking the excesses of the leader's senators Mark however, urged reporters to always cross check their facts before writing so as not to mislead people, who depend on them to know what goes on around them.

The use of New media platforms are important tools within political communication campaigns to secure victory and encourage interaction between political parties/candidates and voters, and most times to portray positive image of the political candidates" (Austin, 2008).New media are new information network and information technology using a form of communication utilizing interactive and user-produced content, and interpersonal relationships are created and maintained. Typical social media network services could be content sharing, web communities, and Internet forums (Austin, 2008). Acheaw and Larson (2015) revealed in their study that social media has a strong relationship with the performance of the students.

Faced with a sharp decline in party membership and a more demanding, assertive and distrustful public increasingly willing to intervene directly in the political process (often through the use of digital media-enabled personalized forms of participation), political parties and candidates embraced new online tools as part of their campaign communication (Gibson,2013). Social networking sites like Facebook, microblogs like Twitter and video-sharing sites like YouTube have not only given politicians a powerful avenue for interacting with a more demanding citizenry, but also have allowed them to offer more personalized images to the public and have given less resourceful parties the opportunity to match well-funded campaigns in sophistication, using creative and relatively inexpensive strategies (Gibson, 2013). Through social networking sites, political organizations and candidates have

not only the possibility to directly communicate with their publics, but also to interact with them (two-way communication).

In this era of social media, the demand for a public relations function based on direct and trust-based communication with publics for better relationship building is great (Breakenridge,2008). At the same time, the emergence of social media can also provide one of the best venues for new public relations (Breakenridge, 2008; Scott, 2007; Weil, 2006), which can function as the hub of dialogic, participatory communications between publics and organizations. In either case garnering credibility from publics is essential.

Majority of the Nigerians now own android phones, I-pads, I-phones, blackberry phones or a PC to do many of their communications and transactions online. The reason behind this **"Communication Myopia"** is best known to them, but the fact still remains that this social media networks is the trend and any politician and political party that really want to target a profitable and viable audience must key into it. That is the only way of achieving success in this millennium's many electioneering campaigns. Also, the youths are the future leaders of tomorrow and because they perceive the image of politicians as bad, the social media is urgently needed to change their attitudes and worldview.

The role of New Media cannot be overlooked as it has been used in positive and negative ways by Nigerians that has affected the very foundation of Nigeria. The impact of the New media in mobilizing people for the fuel subsidy strike that lasted for a week in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized the recording of the burning alive of four students of the university of port Harcourt on YouTube.com who are alleged to have stolen mobile phones and laptops. The use of New media during the Endsars Protest in Nigeria. The use of new media in sensitization of Nigerians about the Electoral Act cannot be overemphasized. Adeagbo (2012) posits that the social media and its pervasiveness must also be used to capture political vision, interact effectively with the citizens.

Conclusion

Political advertising is the promotion of political candidates, aspirants, political parties manifestoes, programmes and ideals, electoral body activities and political programmes of the government through advertisement placement in the media. Political advertising enables candidates to convey their positions on important issues and to acquaint voters with their accomplishments and personalities.

The role of media in Democratic society media has given political parties the tools to reach large number of people and can inform them on key issues ranging from policies to elections. In theory, media should be seen as an enabler for democracy having better educated voters would lead to a more legitimate government.

Citizens receive the information the government want to convey, while they also air their grievances and concerns to the government. New media is very beneficial to the citizens they help the citizens to choose the information they want and communicate with each other or their representatives directly without any influence of the editors. The new media provides fastest access to information compared to the traditional media.

The media is very powerful because it portrays both physical and intellectual pictures of political candidates in this sense media might popularize a candidate even though such a candidate was not popular among the vectors. However, some electorates are illiterate or too old to rely on the social media for selecting their suitable candidates. Moreover, some people have limited resources to access social, print and electronic media.

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