

Radio As A Veritable Tool For Sensitizing The Public On The Implications Of Vote Buying And Selling In Nigeria Elections.

Ejue, Kris Ejue
Department of Mass Communication
Cross River University of Technology, (CRUTECH) Calabar.
&

Etika, David Nandi
davidetika1@gmail.com
07066037924
Department of Mass Communication
Cross River University of Technology, (CRUTECH) Calabar.

DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.8.9.2018.p8194
<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.8.9.2018.p8194>

Abstracts

Vote buying is a trending phenomenon in our present days politics. This problem is flourishing by the day. In 2011 elections, there were trivial cases of vote buying. It is believed that moneybag politicians introduced vote buying after the introduction of electronic voting system in 2015, which barricaded their former gimmicks of rigging and ballots box snatching. The election that brought president Mohammendu Buhari was allegedly characterized by vote buying. Desperate political actors who want to win by all cost, having seen that good party manifestoes and integrity of candidates jostling for public offices are not longer enough to assure electoral victory. Thus, they resorts in vote buying. The paper examine radio as a veritable tool for sensitizing the public on the implication of vote buying and selling in Nigerian elections. The paper used agenda setting theory. The paper concluded that democracy is the best form of government, as we need to protect it by saying no to vote buying. We need to strengthen our

electoral institution to ensure sanity and sanctity of our democracy. Furthermore, vote buying and selling is an emerging trend that threaten Nigeria democracy and it can be curbed by the sundry recommendations that are made in this paper.

Keywords: Radio, mass media, electorate, vote, democracy, buying and selling

Introduction

Democracy is perceived to be government of the people by the people and for the people. Most nations of the world practice democracy. In Nigeria, democracy is the system of government practiced. Prior to independence, Nigeria was controlled by the British government who colonized her. On the first of October 1960 Nigeria got her independence and shortly after that, the fight, resistance, and reprisals that tore the country apart broke out and continued for a year and a half. Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, serving a second consecutive five year term, contended that he was helpless to correct the situation. Then the Nigerian military took action. On January 16, 1966, a section of the Nigerian army led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu mutinied and killed all civilian leaders and some senior military personnel. Included among the slain politicians were the Prime Minister; Chief S. L. Akintola, Western Region premier; the President of NPC, the Sardauna of Sokoto and several other ministers.

Nigerian citizens had been hoping for a change and so welcomed the military mutiny. But it soon became evident that the mutiny was the work of partisans from the Eastern Region, another example of the regionalism that continued to disrupt efforts at national unification. During the mutiny, none of the corrupt political leaders of the Eastern Region had been killed, the President himself having been away on a "health cruise" abroad; no senior military personnel of Eastern Regional origin had been killed; and the leader of the mutiny was from the Eastern Region. The commander of the Nigerian army, Major General Aguyi Ironsi, on January 17, 1966, officially took command of the country, assumed all powers of the Nigerian government, and arrested the military mutineers. The steps taken by Ironsi restored some confidence in the citizens, particularly the Western and Northern tribes, and the tribes hoped for a speedy trial and

conviction of the mutineers. Soon, however, reports circulated that Major General Ironsi did not intend the mutineers to stand trial. Quite to the contrary, the mutineers were receiving full army salaries and benefits. Jonathan (1974, p.28-29).

Nigeria began to practice democracy in 1999 after the military ruled for about two decades plus. Their government was characterized with coercion, suppression of human rights, intimidation, unnecessary anxiety, restriction of movements, suppression of press freedom and lots more. This form of government is not healthy for citizenry of any nation. It is considered as a dystopia form of government that pedestrianized human rights. Therefore, it is not worth considering.

Nigeria finally returned to democratic system in 1999, though there were several attempts made earlier by the past military rulers to pave way for democracy. One of which was General Ibrahim Babangida. Having ruled for eight years, he gave room for election to be conducted to give Nigerians the opportunity to be among the nations that practice democracy in the world. But unfortunately, the election was annulled by him after MKO Moshood Abiola won his contender Ahaji Bashir Tofa.

The perennial efforts yielded results shortly after the demise of General Sani Abacha in 1998. General Abdusalami Abubakar took over the leadership after Abacha's dead. And after he ruled for a year, from 1998 to 29 May 1999, he gave chance for the reign of democracy fully in Nigeria to operate freely. Since then, Nigeria has enjoyed 19 years of unbroken democracy. But the issue of vote buying is a conundrum to our democracy, it is a threat to democracy. Just recently, the just concluded Ekiti State governorship election experienced drastic cases of vote buying. Electorates were allegedly influenced to sell votes. The level of inducement by moneybags politicians was alarming, the people were openly influenced to sell votes for N3000, N4000 and N5000 to their detriment.

This was attributed to poverty, and it is a bad sign to 2019 general elections. Ekiti state governorship election was a testament of 2019 elections. Whatever that transpired negatively that is against the electoral Act, is a skeleton of what will happen in 2019 general elections if not redressed. The electorates need to be left alone to decide who they want. The trend of vote buying is not an emerging phenomenon, this act has been going on since the inception of

democracy in Nigeria. But the rate at which the act is proliferating shows the volume of aspirant's desperation.

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2018) opined that money has become a dominant, determinant factor in Nigeria's politics. The poor are likely to be victimized by vote buying because their limited means makes them susceptible to material inducements, including offers of basic commodities or modest amounts of money. Vote buying, in its literal sense, is a simple economic exchange – candidates 'buy' and electorates 'sell' votes, as they buy and sell goods and services.

Radio is one of the mass media instruments, it plays role of transmitting information to the public as events unfold. Radio involves the process by which messages are sent through electrical waves. In other words, sound would be sent and received through the waves (Sambe, 2008:75). The history of Radio dates back to the 19th Century when Samuel Morse invented the electric telegraph. According to Bittner (1989:93), Guglielmo Marconi built on this invention to produce electromagnetic impulses which would be sent through the air without the use of wires.

The voice was carried over long distances. Thus in 1866, signals were transmitted from England to America without wires. (Sambe 2008:75) posited that in 1888, Heinrich Hertz, working on the electromagnetic theory propounded earlier by a British scientist James Clark Maxwell, produced the first radio waves. What is known today as Television was coined by a Frenchman called Persky. And the word is made up from Greek tele meaning at a distance and the Latin Videre means to see. Boris Rozing, a Russian, is said to be the first person to build a television system. In fact, he is regarded as the Father of Television. In 1923, another Russian, Vladimir Zworykin improved on Boris Rozing. He developed and presented to the world an electronic camera known as iconoscope. Further, according to Idebi (2008:1) the word Radio is defined as the process of sending and receiving messages through the air, using electromagnetic waves. It is also about the activity of broadcasting programmes for people to listen to the programmes being broadcast. Akpede, Josef, Oladokun, Christine, and Chidinma (2018, p.9).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study was to assess radio as a veritable tool of sensitizing the public on the implications of vote buying and selling in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The concept of Radio

Akpede, Josef, Oladokun, Christine, and Chidinma (2018, p.10) asserted that "radio can be defined as a medium used for sending and receiving messages through the air using electronic waves". It is also about the activity of broadcasting programmes for people to listen to being broadcast (Idebi, 2008:1). It can also be defined as the broadcasting of programmes for the public to listen to. It is equally the system of sending sound over a distance by transmitting electrical signals (BBC English Dictionary, 1992:946).

The growth of radio in Nigeria has been a slow but interesting process. Radio was introduced in Nigeria as a wired system called radio distribution or radio re-diffusion by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). In this process, wires were connected to loudspeakers installed in houses of subscribers. The wireless system was introduced by the BBC in 1930. The wired broadcasting services were commissioned in Lagos on December 1, 1935, and two relayed stations were located at Ikoyi and the Glover Memorial Hall, both in Lagos.

The main duty of the relay was to carry BBC programmes, with just one hour available for local programmes featuring news, entertainment as well as local announcements. Other stations were later opened at Ibadan in 1939, Kano 1944, Kaduna, Enugu, Jos, Zaria, Abeokuta, Ijebu Ode, Port Harcourt and Calabar in the subsequent years. The colonial government then came up with a policy to carry out a survey on radio broadcasting in all the British colonies including Nigeria. A committee was set up headed by L. W. Turner of the BBC Engineering Department and F. A. W. Byron of the Telecommunications Department of the Crown Agents. The committee recommended a wireless system of broadcasting for the colony of Nigeria.

According to (Ladele 1979), cited in Sambe (2008:83), an old building on 32 Marina, close to the General Post Office, was renovated as temporary headquarters. In addition, the Kaduna and Enugu Radio Diffusion Services were restructured and converted to regional broadcasting houses. The Radio Diffusion Services (RDS) later became the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) and was basically concerned with satisfying the programme needs of its audience, with the traditional role of informing, educating and entertaining the audience

members. The NBS put up a remarkable performance, especially during the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Nigeria. The NBS upheld the role of impartiality; the colonial government on the other hand did not give all the Nigerian nationalists the opportunity to react to accusations leveled against them.

Against this backdrop, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation was established on April 1, 1957, to replace the NBS. The establishment of NBC marked the first public broadcasting corporation established in any British colonial territory. But not satisfied with the new arrangements, the Western Regional Government established its radio and television station in 1959. Eastern Nigeria followed suit in 1960 on the day Nigeria had its political independence from Britain. Northern Nigeria followed same in 1962. Today, virtually all the states own and operate both radio and television stations. Akpede, Josef, Oladokun, Christine, and Chidinma (2018, p.33-34).

Naghmana (2012, p.71) validated that "the potentials of Radio as a tool of social development is being utilized throughout the globe, be it developing or developed world". It has a long history of penetration at grassroots through community radio in the western world. In Asia, though community radio is comparatively a new arrival, but over the years, community radio broadcasting has made its roots and playing a vital role in the development of small communities. In Pakistan, radio has for long remained a state monopoly. After the promulgation of PEMRA Ordinance in the year 2002, the electronic media in private sector is emerging at a fast pace. Besides issuing a large number of licenses for FM radio it is catering to the entertainment needs of urban elites only, while community radio is still a far cry in the Country.

With the rampant illiteracy, unemployment, ignorance and multiple social and ethnic issues, the usage of radio as an agent to bring about social change is the demand of time. Since the community radio has the potential to ensure maximum community participation in the development processes, therefore in our opinion it is high time for Pakistan to take initiatives in this direction.

Radio developed in very different ways in different parts of the globe. Before the first radio broadcast in 1920's the world of information and communication was confined to few literate urban, those who could purchase and read newspapers. The invention of radio virtually

radicalized the process of social communication. It was envisaged as a democratic medium also, and was operated and controlled differently in different parts of the world. In United States it is a synonym for competition and commercialism. In Europe and its colonies including the subcontinent, radio operated under centralized state control. In Canada there is a combination of the two, a strong centralized State network on the national level and competition and commercialism on the local level. In Latin America they developed a mixture of all, private, church, university, special interest and indigenous people radio stations. With the passage of time the models of radio broadcasting kept on changing throughout the world.

Onozare, (2016, p.9) stated that "radio is the chosen medium because it is relatively cheap and available, there is also an adequate radio broadcasting infrastructure in Nigeria which has existed since the 1940's" (Umar 1997) Also, and most importantly, the Northern audience is considered to be essentially a listening audience (Yusuf, 2003) As a rural- oriented medium, the radio is believed to have a multiplier effect as A tells B what he heard on radio and so on. This is especially true of rural radio which increases the capacity for knowledge sharing and potentially the rate of development through community involvement.

Mass Communication and Development scholars like Akinfeleye (2008) and Quebral (1973) are of the opinion that, the mass media (in this case radio) constitute both "cause" and "effect" of development where "cause" is the mass media programmes in terms of broadcast media messages and "effects" is the response to the stimuli of messages (Dominick, 2010). In addition to these radio has some unique features which include portability, cheapness, universality and selectivity (Dominick, 2010).

According to Umar (1997) in Onozare (2016,p.10) he asserted that "in Nigeria and indeed most African states, broadcasting, that is radio and television, are used as tools for promoting development at least in theory". In practice however entertainment seems to dominate though development is supposedly the major objective with entertainment formats being used for educational purposes (Nwuneli, 1985) cited in Umar (1997):

*"Radio stations seem to devote a high percentage of their
airtime to purely entertainment programmes while other*

informational types of programming are presented in such a way that they appeal only to the educated elite leaving out the majority of the population who are rural based and largely uneducated”.

Rural Radio / Community Radio

Linje (2008, p.12) averred that "rural radio, on the other hand, refers to both broadcasting strategies (where centralized broadcasters produce programmes meant for rural audiences) and decentralized broadcasting stations that are located in rural areas" (these can be commercial, community, government or rural networks) (Manyozo, 2007; Hambly Odame and Atibila, 2003). While rural radio focuses on development needs, and is located in local rural areas and within indigenous knowledge structures and processes, community broadcasting focuses on correcting social and economic marginalization and is thus more correctly referred to as an alternative media source (Keita, 2001; White, 1990; Ilboudo, 2001, 2003; Da Matha, 2001; Castello, n.d; Hambly Odame, 2001; Pickstock, 2005).

Naghmana (2012, p.72-73) observed that despite its diverse origin and expanded networks, the commercial radio makes very little use of its special opportunities for local communication throughout the world. Normally such stations quickly linked up into networks in order to enlarge their distribution area and advertising revenue. They also have their major focus on easily consumable music programmes. Similarly the public service providers or state radios also keep on increasing their coverage area may be due to political and other reasons and keep the national distribution objective on their priority. A third type of radio therefore emerged in between these two, aiming neither at profit nor at geographical expansion, and has been able to establish itself.

As an alternative to commercial and State radio stations, most distinguished characteristic of community radio is its commitment to community participation at all levels. The concept behind this type of radio station is to ensure public participation at all possible levels; here listeners are also producers, managers, directors, actors and financiers. The popularity of this kind of radio lies in the fact that these are aimed at working for those who are at the margins of society and for those who seek change but are far away from the mainstream media. The role of

community radio is to respond to the priorities set by the community, to facilitate their discussions on issues confronting them and to reinforce their social development agenda through communication. These community run and managed radio stations eventually provide voices to voiceless throughout the world.

Salient Features of Community Radio

- UNESCO defines community radio as radio run by, for and about a community. This broad principal distinguishes between; state-owned or public service broadcasting, commercial broadcasting and community radio.
- Community radio is not for profit. This does not mean that community radio can not engage in revenue generating activities, which tends to be vital for survival and sustainability. This means its main objective is not revenue generation like commercial radio.
- Community radio incorporates open access in some form. In some station all broadcasters are volunteers while at some other it is a mix of volunteers and paid staff. Not only this, it is also managed by the community itself. The communities are involved in active ownership of the station. This is usually done by the community electing a management committee for the station.
- The programming is all about the community, of direct relevance to them. It needs to be community specific.
- The main difference between community radio and state owned radio is the concept of community ownership. This empowers the community to use this radio for community benefits like, poverty eradication, reducing gender disparities, health, hygiene, and much more. Naghmana (2012, p.72-73).

Functions of Radio in Sustaining Democracy

Radio is part of broadcast media which consists of radio/television. The broadcast media play a symbiotic role though there are slight differences. Radio deals with sounds or audio. While television integrate the two, that is both audio and visuals. Traced back antecedent, it is quite glaring that radio have been instrumental for the struggle of Nigeria independence and actualization of democracy. The history of broadcast media radio in Nigeria has been very successful. Radio has contributed greatly for national development and the sustenance of Nigerian democracy. Below are functions of radio and instances where radio has contributed immensely for the sustenance of Nigerian democracy.

- ❖ **Informative:** Generally, broadcast media perform intrinsic role of bringing to the fore, issues of public interest. Radio being an apparatus of broadcast media, its essential role to the society in general is enormous. There are numerous radio stations in Nigeria, some of which are owned by private individuals, while others belong to the government. Public stations are said to be comprehensive in their reportage, while private focus more on commercials. Though the two complement each other. Nineteenth years of Nigerian unbroken democracy is enhanced by the contributory role of radio. It is believed that, radio reaches all the nooks and crannies of the society. Those who lives in rural areas have access to radio because of its reachability. For example, Radio Nigeria (FRCN) is the largest radio network in Africa with about 25 sub stations across the country that hook up daily from the headquarters for network news to keep the people informed on political trends and other vital issues in the society.
- ❖ **Educating:** Radio play a special duty of educating the public on political trends. It is presumed that most citizenry does not know how to vote, the essence of participating in politics to vote a candidate that have the interest of the people at heart. Some leaders are very corrupt, while some lack credible leadership attributes. Such people most times are not allowed to go back for the second term. It is the radio and other mass media platforms that inform the public about all these ills. They educate them on the need to actively participate in politics, they also fight for the interest of the masses so that, they will not be disenfranchised, and give the electorates voters education.

- ❖ **Mobilizing:** This function of radio is very key and instrumental for the sustainability of Nigerian democracy. Before now, many citizens of Nigeria were less-concerned in political participation. People held awkward myths about participating in politics. The situation was just no man's business. But in recent times, the story is quite different. Following the political mantra in 2015 general elections which brought the leadership of Peoples Progressives Congress (APC). It was the mobilizing role of the media that made people to turn out and participate actively for a change of government. Nigerians were tired of the People's Democratic Party's (PDP) government which ruled for 16 years. Political gladiators also uses radio to reach out to their constituents to mobilize them to vote for them.

- ❖ **Entertaining:** Radio entertain the public in the society. Like they say, all work without play makes jack a dampen boy. There are different entertainment programmes that radio broadcast to the public. For example, one of the entertainment role of the radio is the live broadcast of political campaign during elections. Most times, it is true that not everybody that are there during the campaign. Though one may imagine who radio entertain during political campaigns? Remember that, during electioneering campaign, political actors usually use musicians to pass campaign messages in audio or live performing format which radio transmits live to diverse audiences.

- ❖ **Pacesetter:** Radio is tagged as a pacesetter of the society. Broadcast media radio is viewed as the agenda setting platform. They set agenda and others follows. The pacesetter function of radio is found in their daily reportage of events, news programmes, documentaries, news commentary, drama, etc. Across all levels of the society, they cover events to inform the public on recent happenings, including political trends. There were national issues that government did not give concern or attention but because of the magnitude at which radio hammered campaigns on the issue, necessitated government concern. One of which was the issue of NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN BILL after concerted efforts made by the agitators of this bill through the aid of the media, it was assented to by the President and eventually passed into law.

The Conundrum of Vote Buying and Selling in Nigeria

Ovwasa (2013,p.2) averred that "democracy which is adjudged to be the best form of government all over the world is also being constantly assaulted in Nigeria due to the phenomenon of money politics and vote buying". Although, Nigeria enthroned democratic governance in the fourth republic on May 29th, 1999, the dividends of democracy to the people are very scant and far apart. This is because the concept and practice of democracy appears to be at variance in Nigeria. Actually money and vote buying have vitiated the good qualities of democracy in the country. In fact, the destructive power of money politics has been fingered as one of the factors that undermine good governance in Nigeria.

The role that money and vote buying play in Nigeria politics today have earned them a dominant position in the election of officers into position of authority where they can authoritatively decide who gets what, when and how. Money seems to have taken the center stage in the political process in most countries and in Nigerian politics, it is, sadly, now playing an increasing critical role to such an extent that the word, 'money politics' with a pejorative connotation, have crept into the country's political lexicon", (Davies: 2006:5). The problem with this situation is that the electoral process is often compromised resulting in elections not being free and fair.

Mahmood (2018) posited that brazen act of vote-buying was reported during the recently held governorship election in Ekiti State. As that wouldn't be the first time such incident was reported during an election, political analysts assert that the phenomenon can hurt the country's democracy in the long run , writes JESUSEGUN ALAGBE. A former Prime Minister of Albania, a republic on the Southeastern Europe's Balkan Peninsula , Mr. Fatos Nano , once said , " Organising free and fair elections is more important than the result itself . "However, the result seems to be the main priority of political parties and politicians in some countries, including Nigeria, where the Independent National Electoral Commission is the body vested with the powers to conduct elections.

Elections are said to be a central feature of democracy and for them to express the will of the electorate, they must be free and fair, according to scholars. Democracy proponents believe that if an election is “free,” it means that all those entitled to vote are rightly registered and are totally free to make their choice of candidate without imposition or inducement. Perhaps this cannot be said of elections in the country, where the inducement of voters by parties and politicians have somewhat become the order of the day. In the past, there were more cases of snatching of ballot boxes and other forms of violence by politicians wanting to win elections by all means, but recently, the country has seen a wave of vote-buying during elections.

According to an Associate Professor of Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the United States, Frederic Schaffer, vote-buying is giving reward to a person for voting in a particular way. In his piece, *Poverty, Democracy, and Clientelism: The Political Economy of Vote Buying*, Schaffer noted that vote-buying, in its literal sense, is a simple economic exchange, wherein voters sell their votes to candidates, sometimes to the highest bidder in an election.

According to the Electoral Act, 2010, Article 130, “A person who – (a) corruptly by himself or by any other person at any time after the date of an election has been announced, directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays money to or for any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote or refrain from voting at such election, or on account of such person or any other person having voted or refrained from voting at such election; or (b) being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph (a) of this section, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N 100, 000 or 12 months imprisonment or both.

But in spite of the commission’s stance on vote-buying, the act has gradually been turning into a regular phenomenon, as reported during the recently held governorship election in Ekiti State. During the election, anxiety had set in when allegations of vote-buying were levelled against party agents by voters in some polling units. Several video recordings had emerged, showing brazen sharing of cash among the electorate by politicians and parties. It was reported that in some cases, the situation led to friction among supporters of various political parties.

Voters had accused parties of offering up to N5,000 to those who had Permanent Voter Cards to secure their votes. “I was offered N5,000 to vote by one of the parties, but I rejected it. I am a 73 -year -old retired teacher. I cannot allow the future of my children to be bought by moneybags,” a voter had said .In some areas of the state such as Ayegbaju and Oye - Ekiti, it was alleged that party agents paid those who had no PVC N 2,000 to vote in connivance with some INEC officials. It was reported that parties involved in the act started distributing cash inside envelopes from house to house on Thursday night up till Friday morning. “We were already asleep on Thursday night when they came and knocked on our gate and handed envelopes to three persons whose names were on their lists. “ Those who were given envelopes opened them and discovered that there was N4,000 inside each envelope,”.

Hakeem, Suzanne and Ufo (2015, p.1) affirmed that "in Nigeria, political parties budget to bribe security and INEC officials". This is a very serious challenge to our democracy. The above remark was made by Attahiru Jega, the then chairman of Nigeria's electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to lament the sorry state of elections in that country. This statement corroborates the many narratives of fraud and malpractice in the successive elections held in Nigeria since its return to democracy in 1999. Clearly, a significant part of the problem with Nigeria's electoral process, especially in the light of Jega's statement, has been the prevailing incidence of vote buying (exchange of cash or gifts for votes), which has almost become a norm during elections. Indeed, vote buying in its different dimensions has been a common and recurring feature in the reports of observers in Nigerian elections. The reports are characterized by statements such as: a politician was alleged by voters to have distributed money to people who queued to vote as well as electoral and security officials at a polling station.

A constitutional lawyer and President, Voters Awareness Initiative, Mr. Wale Ogunade, noted that politicians took vote- buying in the Ekiti State governorship election to a higher dimension. He said that while previous acts of vote- buying were done in secret, it was done openly during the Ekiti State governorship election, saying that the rising phenomenon of vote- buying during elections call for deep concern .He said, “Vote- buying is not a new phenomenon in the country. Before now, we have had it in Anambra State, and before Anambra State, we had it in Edo State. “ But before the elections in Edo and Anambra states , it had always been done secretly – like stuffing naira notes inside loaves of bread or giving out food items and clothes –

all with the intentions of wooing voters against their conscience to vote for them.“ But no doubt, the Ekiti election took vote-buying to a higher dimension. It has now opened it up because it was done with reckless abandon.”Describing vote- buying as “democracy on sale”, Ogunade added that the phenomenon could hamper the development of democracy in the country .As Ogunade stated , the phenomenon was also reported as rampant during the November 2016 governorship elections in Ondo State. Rotimi Akeredolu of the APC eventually won the election .During the election , it was alleged that some voters were bribed with between N 3,000 and N 5,000 in some polling units to vote for the candidate of the vote buyer .It was the same scenario in the November 2017 Anambra governorship election when politicians were alleged to have bought the electorate’s votes for an average of N5 ,000 each , depending on the location .It was reported that in the rural communities, votes were sold for N5,000 each while in the urban areas, they were sold for between N 7,000 and N10, 000 each.

When the Edo State governorship election was conducted in September 2016, the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room, described the exercise as marred by incidents of “inducement and vote -buying. “It said, “There were concerns of widespread inducement and vote-buying in which two of the major contending parties were cited. “ The vote- buying also led to the monitoring of the votes that were cast by officials of the said parties, apparently in a bid to ensure that voters who were paid, voted as agreed .“ This monitoring was aided by the placement of the voting cubicles in a manner that enabled the party agents to monitor the ballots cast, thus violating the principle of secrecy of vote. ”

A policy analyst in Abuja, Mr. Micheal Adetola, said vote -buying was a corrupt election practice which could hamper the growth of democracy in the country. “It’s a threat to the conduct of free and fair elections. The manner in which it is being done these days is alarming. It’s now done openly, without fear,” he noted. “It is a threat to the future of democracy. But then, it shows the level of poverty that is being experienced in this country, to the extent that some people could sell their votes, their future, for as low as N5, 000. ”In an article titled, Cash for Votes: Political Legitimacy in Nigeria, the Senior Programme Officer at the Africa and West Asia Programme , International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Gram Matenga, said that vote- buying could drive up the cost of elections for parties and candidates and might prevent credible candidates from running for political office .He said , that it breeds

cynicism among voters, who feel disenfranchised by a corrupt system that fails to adhere to democratic ideals .

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2018) stated that vote buying is also evident during the candidates' nomination process by political parties. During the All Progressive Congress (APC) presidential primary in Lagos State before the 2015 elections, over 8,000 delegates who participated allegedly made US\$5,000 each from the candidates. Delegates were supposed to have received US\$2,000 each from the Atiku Abubakar group and also US\$3,000 each from the Buhari group. Given that more than 8,000 delegates were reported to have attended the primaries, the competing camps could have spent more than US\$16 million and US\$24 million respectively on vote buying at the primary stage. The 2015 general election followed the pattern of the previous year during the governorship election in Ekiti State, which was won by a candidate (Mr. Ayo Fawose) who was not widely favoured according to opinion polls conducted before the vote. It was a case of the 'highest bidder' emerges the winner.

Chyi-Lu, and Chun-Ping, (2016, p. 593-594) submitted that vote buying represents the exchange of money, gifts, goods or services for a vote. A "vote is literally 'bought' or 'sold' depending on whether one adopts the perspective of the candidate or the voter (Schaffer, 2002, p. 1)". The process of vote buying is accomplished via vote brokers, called the tiau-a-ka (Rigger, 2000). The vote brokers propose money, goods, or services to the voters in return for their vote (Wu and Huang, 2004). During the election movement, the vote brokers supply "large blocks of votes" to their respective candidates (Rigger, 2000, p. 144). Wu and Huang (2004) document a variety of vote buying techniques employed by vote brokers in Taiwan, i.e., utilization of money and gifts, procuring voters' documents, gambling on election outcome, removing loans, election dinners, raising workers' income, and reimbursing voters' tax fees. In addition, the critically important role of vote brokers is to persuade the voters that they "invested their votes profitably (Rigger, 2000, p. 144)".

Vote brokers utilize three approaches to induce individuals to vote or not to vote for a particular candidate: (a) instrumental, (b) normative and (c) coercive compliances (Schaffer, 2002). In what follows, we briefly describe these compliances, as detailed in Schafer (2002). The instrumental compliance suggests that voters alter or do not alter their electoral behaviour in exchange for substantial gifts. Normative compliance indicates that voters change or do not

change their electoral behaviour due to sentiment of obligation or the proposal by the vote broker persuades the voter of the integrity, honesty, and merit of the candidate. In contrast, coercive compliance refers to vote brokers intimidating the voters to modify their electoral behaviour. Hence, voters fear of retaliation if they refuse the offer produced by the vote broker and if they do not vote as intended subsequently to the acceptance of the offer. Coercion compliances generally consist of “crude violence, threats of punishment, or the withdrawal of benefits that clients usually enjoys (Wang and Kurzman, 2007, p. 227)”.

The Implications of vote Buying to Nigerians and 2019 General Elections

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2018) avouched that in vote buying transactions in Nigeria, voters are usually offered money, commodities such as food or clothing, and jobs. In countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe and Uganda, cash-for-vote transactions are quite limited and exchange of votes for goods and services are most common. For example, in Malawi, the governments farm input subsidy initiative has widely been observed as susceptible to political manipulation where issuing of coupons for inputs ‘indirectly’ translate to vote buying. The practice rests upon payoffs that are not directly and explicitly tied to reciprocity in the polling booth.

The issue of vote buying has a multiplier effects on the public. Majority of literate and illiterate fellows were susceptible to vote buying in Nigeria. The just concluded Ekiti governorship election recorded massive cases of vote buying. It is assumed that the public are not much aware of the negative implications of selling votes. Moneybags politicians are just after their personal interest and not for the concern of the public. Below are the effects of vote buying or selling to the public and 2019 general elections;

- ❖ **Denying of Dividend of Democracy:** Democracy encourages social justice and inclusiveness. Therefore, it should be protected. The negative effect of selling vote or buying vote is so enormous. Majority of people are naive, they don't know that political gladiators that comes with peanuts and give to them in exchange for votes are doing that to the detriment of the electorates, and for their personal interest. Come to think of it, we

have seen these moneybags politicians in the past. As soon as they gain access to power, they usually turn back at the public. Many of them are not assessable. They go there to make money for their families. Their apex priority is their loved ones. They have no public interest at hearts. Their children school abroad, while others who can't afford weighty sum of tuitions remain in Nigeria to school in our institutions that facilities are obsolesces, dilapidated, below standards and many more negative factors bedeviled our educational system. Democracy comes with bumper benefits, in a democratized milieu, people enjoy certain dividends such as, infrastructural development, scholarship, good access to basic social amenities, robust social services etc. But with the trend of vote buying and selling, these dividends are threatened, and development is drowsy.

- ❖ **Emergence of Wrong Candidate:** One of the greatest things that happens to the people in governance is to elect a credible candidate to represent them. A candidate whose candidature is free from ambivalence, disgruntlement and idiosyncrasies. But if the wrong candidate emerges, the people suffers. The recent misdemeanor of vote buying is a problem to democracy. Selling of votes facilitate the emergence of wrong candidate. We have moneybags politicians who are desperate to bag power by all cost. They are the ones that use money to buy votes. Remember that, you that sells your vote, you are denying yourself certain benefits of democracy, you are selling your right. Every citizen is entitled to all the benefits that government is supposed to make available for its people. Representatives of every constituency are accorded some obligations to bring to their constituents developmental projects. But in most cases, these projects are not carried out because, those fellows that represent them are not the right candidates. It could be that they manoeuvre their ways into the positions they occupy. Reminisce that, vote buying is not a new trend. It has been going on in the past, though it was miniature. It was only going on in the pipelines but not too brazen as it is today.
- ❖ **Stagnation of Development:** Development is one of the intrinsic aspects of human life. Every society crave for development, and cuts across different levels. Nigeria is undergoing development, we are classified among underdeveloped nations in the world. To achieve modernization, we need pragmatic leaders who are proactive and responsive

to human needs. The issue of vote buying is lethargic to development and it is very harmful to our nineteenth years of unbroken democracy. Selling of vote entails that, the social amenities that would have been brought to you, you have sold them. The unaccessible road in the community that would have been fixed or tar, have been sold to greedy politicians who gives four to five thousand naira to vote for them.

❖ **Corruption:** Vote buying is capable of bringing corrupt leaders back to the system. Etika and Ejue (2018,p. 5-6) avouched that corruption is a societal phenomenon that has deprived citizens of most countries their right of social services because, funds meant for public use are usually misappropriated by corrupts leaders or public office holders. Corruption is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into our marrows and it requires concerted efforts to win this fight, because the rate at which these syndrome has spread is alarming and worrisome. Corruption is mostly perceived to be embezzlement of fund or stealing. But corruption goes beyond looting of public funds, it goes far above mere perception of stealing, looting or embezzling. Nepotism, favouritism and the issue of godfather are all classified to be corruption. Most people in high places of authority employ man -know -man clause for one to be given a job. There are situations where people who possessed requisite qualifications to get the job, but because they don't have anyone at the apex, they tend to deny them the opportunity to get the job. Therefore, the recent issue of undisguised or barefaced vote buying will encourage corruption and 2019 elections will be characterized with irregularities and incessant vote buying and selling. This problem needs to be tackled.

❖ **Massive threat to Democracy:** Democracy is government of the people by the people and for the people. The carnage of vote buying is perceived to be a hiccup for the growth of our democracy. Pundits and scholars have pointed out emphatically the multiplier effects of vote buying to Nigerian democracy. If we remember vividly, the military took over power from civilian in Nigeria because of governance impropriety and corruption. It never augured well with us, we cried and craved for democracy because of military assaults, intimidation and undue suppression. Now that we are enjoying democracy and its dividends, why can't we sustain it by refraining from acts that are capable of jeopardizing our nineteenth years of uninterrupted democracy? Why can't we “SHUN OR

SAY NO” to "VOTE BUYING" for the betterment of public interest and Nigeria democracy.

- ❖ **Negative Image:** A befitting image is key for bilateral ties amongst nations. For a nation to attract neighboring counterparts and far distance leaders to create bilateral relations, such country must have a terrific image among the comity of nations. Negative image is attributed to corruption, electoral offences etc. Therefore, Nigerians should shun any act that would depict our country in a bad light.
- ❖ **Poverty:** Experts have ascribed poverty as the root cause of vote buying in Nigerian elections. This act is very inimical to democracy. The rate of poverty in Nigeria is alarming. According to United Nations index of poverty in Nigeria asserted that an average Nigerian feed less than one dollar per day. This validation is true to some extent because, if you take an inventory to ascertain the level of poverty amid Nigerians, you will concur with UN position. Nigeria is blessed with arable land, human and natural resources that if judiciously harnessed, would be competing with developed nations and our economy would be robust than we ever anticipated, the problem is that, corrupt leaders have in the past robbed Nigerians their virility of enjoying a better life. This is the time Nigerians are supposed to choose credible leaders whose concern is to ameliorate poverty by embarking on projects that have direct impacts on the populace. Leaders that will feel the cry of the masses, rather than allowing greedy politicians to lure them in disgruntle act.
- ❖ **Dwindling life Expectancy:** The truth about life is, if you have money, chances are that, you can afford basic necessities of life including good medical services. But if there is no money, you can easily die in the situation that requires emergency. Lack of proper medical attention have made a lot of people to die. Malnutrition and starvation have been a causative factor to the demise of many individuals in Nigeria and across Africa. For example the issue of youths irregular migration in Nigeria was as a results of those seeking for a better life, in which thousands died on their way for scavenging for greener pasture in foreign lands. Those who ordinarily would have enjoyed longer life expectancy have died because of one problem or the other.

- ❖ **Electoral Malpractice:** Electoral malpractice is a grievous offence according to Electoral Act 2010, article 130 which stated that “ A person who – (a) corruptly by himself or by any other person at any time after the date of an election has been announced , directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays money to or for any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote or refrain from voting at such election , or on account of such person or any other person having voted or refrained from voting at such election ; or (b) being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph (a) of this section , commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N 100, 000 or 12 months imprisonment or both. The truth is that, the implication of vote buying for 2019 general elections will be enormous. There will be likelihoods of massive malpractices and irregularities. Wrong leaders will emerge as winners of the forthcoming elections because they are going to employ coercive measures and aggressively aggravate vote buying gimmicks to ensure they win.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda setting theory was introduced by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. It is a theory that state what the public thinks about what is set by the media. The radio plays an integral part in sensitizing the voters on the need to shun vote selling and buying. The amount of time spend on an issue and the information relayed in a news story, along with the story’s position, determines how much a reader or listener knows the amount of importance placed on the issue. The agenda setting theory seeks to describe the ability of the news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important.

Before the term “Agenda Setting” by McComb and Shaw in 1972, Walter Lippmann’s in 1922 in his book titled “Public Opinion” says “the world outside and the picture in our heads”. Lippmann argues that the mass media are the principal connection between events in the world and the images in the minds of the public. Without using the term “agenda setting” Walter Lippmann was writing about what we today call “agenda setting”.According to Folarin (2002, p.

75) Agenda setting implies that the mass media pre-determine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a given society. It does not ascribe to the media the power to determine what we actually think; but it does ascribe to them the power to determine what we are thinking about.

The underlying fact behind this theory is that, it helps to give priority to events in the society and help people to ponder or reflect on them. If people are exposed to the same media, they will place importance on the same issues. However, this theory can solve the problem because media in stream of study and practice are vital for human development. Studies have established that the communication process in the media are centrifugal force to self-employment practices through which respective communities are able to arrive at their own understanding of issues, consider them important, discuss ideas, innovate, negotiate and engage in public debates at the community as well as the national level which are relevant to this work.

Wilbur Schramm (1962) says, the media have the potent power which could easily propagate ideas of social change which is the basic tenet of the theory when it comes to development. He also noted that the media serve as “magic multipliers” for facilitating development as they will be very active in enhancing development campaigns in terms of Elections, sustaining democracy, selection of credible leaders etc through their emphasis in the news which is directly correlated with the theories.

Therefore, the mass media accord priority to politically, geographically and culturally contiguous in developing countries in their coverage as part of the holistic strategy for less developed societies and which is exactly like setting agenda for the public through their priority to events and supporting government for development, will help to teach, manipulate, sensitize and mobilize people through information dissemination.

Also, since some media practitioners are always used as agent of propaganda in most cases, to report in the interest of the government instead of the public as monetary inducement is always given to kill a negative story and write positive story and as such not performing their watchdog function well. This theory has helped government officials and media practitioners to know that there are to partner with themselves to enlighten the electorates on the need to stop or reduce incidences of votes buying and selling like the case of Ekiti State just concluded

governorship election which recorded massive votes buying and selling. Therefore, priority should be given to electioneering programmes most especially during elections period more than other news stories to take Nigeria out of this conundrum of votes buying and selling.

Conclusion

The picture is very obvious that vote buying is intended to favour political actors to the detriment of the public. Political analyst, experts and social commentators have reacted to the issue of vote buying. The brazenness of vote buying and selling in Ekiti governorship election sparked public concern amongst Nigerians. This act shows that, vote buying has been neglected in the past and now is gradually becoming a normal business where people trade on votes during elections.

Chyi-Lu, and Chun-Ping, (2016) posited that to start, vote buying may generate inefficient and ineffective outcome in an election because voters may not change their electoral behaviour in exchange for substantial gifts. This is because voters would rather express support for their preferred candidate in an election (Hortala-Vallve and Esteve-Volart, 2011). From this preceding, not all voters that are influenced will take their stand without being influenced by the peanut given to them. Most people are chicken little hearted, they are easily hoodwinked. A little attempt made by political actors, affect them.

For our hard earned democracy not to be jeopardized, we must rise up and say no to vote buying. This may sound so obscure to many fellows. But the truth is glaring and efforts must be put in place to condemn this wrong act. Democracy is the best form of governance, as such we need to protect it by saying no to vote buying. We need to strengthen our electoral institutions to ensure sanity and sanctity of democracy.

Recommendations:

- ❖ Electoral laws should be strengthened to give it a solid backings so as to gain its efficiency in order to deal with electoral offenders appropriately.
- ❖ Mass media should consistently campaign against vote buying in Nigeria until the menace is curbed.

- ❖ Civil society, organizations, activist, political analyst, societal elites, chiefs and elder statesmen should as a matter of urgency, answer their clarion call by organizing workshops, campaigns, or symposium to educate the public on the dangers of vote buying and vote selling during elections.
- ❖ INEC have at one time or the other stated that, they have no power to investigate and arrest violators of electoral offenders. This statement does not mean well to tackle the issue of vote buying. Therefore, government should assign the appropriate agency that prosecutes electoral offenders to work closely with INEC to ensure that whoever faulted the law will not go unprimanded.
- ❖ The electorates should know their worth or value when those involved in vote buying come to them. They should be civil and think of what N5000 will offer them if they sell their votes.
- ❖ Voters should report any form of inducements to the appropriate agencies or authorities to ensure that they are punished, if they do so, it will go a long way to stem the plague.
- ❖ Vote buying and selling involve two parties and above, the first party is the candidate, that is the buyer who is seeking for the vote, and the second party is the voter who sells his/her vote. And the other sub contributors or facilitators are the security agents and the INEC officials who are usually present in the polling booths. Therefore, they should all desist from this act, anyone found guilty should not be spared.
- ❖ Certainly vote- buying does not happen unless some INEC officials and security agents give consent or compromised the process. INEC should arrest those involved to cushion this conundrum.

References:

- Akpede, K. S., Josef, B.M.,Oladokun, O., Christine, I. O. and Chidinma H.O. (2018). *Introduction to radio and television*: National Open University.ISBN: 978-978-8521-12-9.
- Chyi-Lu, J. and Chun-Ping, C. (2016). *Vote buying and victory of election: the case of taiwan I*: Prague economic papers volume 25. Number 05.
- Etika, N.D. and Ejue K. E. (2018) *.Broadcast media coverage of corruption issues in Nigeria: a study of Goodluck Jonathan administration and president Mohammendu Buhari administration*: Global Journal of Transformation in Law, Human Rights and Social Justice Vol. 2, Issue 1. ISSN: 2581-4001.
- Folarin B. (2002). *Theries of Mass communication*, Otai Bakinfo Publication.
- Hakeem, O., Suzanne, F. and Ufo, O.U. (2015). *Oil corrupts elections: The political economy of vote buying in Nigeria*: Africa Studies, Quarterly volume. 15, Issue 2.
- Jonathan, A. A. (1974). *The development of radio broadcasting in Nigeria, West Africa*: Published thesis by Graduate Council of the North Texas State University, Denton, Texas.
- Linje, M. (2008). *Communicating with radio: What do we know? Findings from selected rural radio effectiveness evaluations*: African farm radio research initiative (AFRRI) farm radio international Ottawa, Canada.
- Mahmood, Y. (2018) *.Vote-buying, a danger to Nigeria's budding democracy*: <http://punchng.com/vote-buying-a-danger-to-nigerias-budding-democracy/>
- Naghmana, S. T. (2012). *Community Radio , a Tool of Social Change*: Still a Far Cry in Pakistan:Pakistan Vision Vol. 11 No. 1

Ovwasa O. L. (2013). *Money politics and vote buying in nigeria: The bane of good governance:*
Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences Volume 4, No. 4.3. ISSN: 2229 – 5313.

Onozare, A. (2016). *Audience perception of radio broadcasting as a tool for creating awareness
on girl-child education in Kaduna state: A study of ksmc radio's a cece su.:*Department
Of Mass Communication Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria.

Schramm W. (1964), *Mass Media and Naional Development:* stanford Calif, standford
University Press.

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2018). *Cash for Votes: political legitimacy in Nigeria:*
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/gram-matenga/cash-for-votes-political-legitimacy-in-nigeria>.