

INDIGENOUS MEDIA SYSTEMS AND MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND ORDER IN OFFOT UKWA CLAN, UYO

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Abstract

This paper examined the use of indigenous media in the maintenance of peace and order in Offot Ukwa Clan of Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria. Personal interview and library research methods were employed in data gathering. Among the findings were that the clan relied heavily on indigenous media in maintaining peace and order. The system which is regarded in the clan as instrument sent from God for administering the affairs of the local community smoothly and harmoniously. This media system derives its acceptability and strength from being cheap, easily accessible, credible, transactional, integrative and authoritative. The media system, in addition to serving as channels of socialisation, legislates on issues, adjudicates on matters and enforces rulings and decisions of the clan council. Unlike other media systems, traditional media have inbuilt capacity to investigate criminal conducts and exact punishment on offenders. These components of the media system should be deployed by government at all levels in the fight against corruption, insecurity and vandalism plaguing the country now. The system as a cultural heritage should be protected and preserved to give voice to the majority of citizens at the grassroots.

Key words: Indigenous Media, Peace, Order, Culture, Values

Introduction

Every society has its own identity, a way of life expressed in its culture, traditions, norms and belief systems. Embedded in this cultural heritage are modes of communication indigenous to them. There is no traditional society or community that is without a communication system that sustains its growth, survival and continuity as a people. Even before the advent of civilization, the early men had devised means of passing information, exchanging ideas and relating with one another within and around them.

The indigenous media system, in addition to serving informational, educational and entertainment needs, promotes oneness and participation in the affairs of the community and social cohesion. It is a system which by virtue of origin, form and integration into the culture of the people serves as credible and authoritative channels of communication using the symbols, values, institutions and ethos of the host culture.

Culture here includes language, philosophy, religion, values, ideologies, beliefs and moral systems, arts and recreation. It also includes rules and regulations that govern the behaviour of people in the society and which distinguish them from other people or their neighbours. The basic tool of communication that relates the individual to the social environment is language, as it constitutes the ideological instrument for information sharing, understanding, transaction and instruction.

Language, in this case, does not simply mean words, but a man's world view. When we communicate we seek to establish commonness of experience and promote understanding and sameness of knowledge. This can only happen when the information coded means the same thing to both the source and receiver based on the context and situation of the communication. This is why enlightenment campaigns on programmes and policies of government are usually packaged and presented at the grassroots in the language of the environment. It is doubtful the level of success that any other media of communication would achieve in igniting and sustaining the *ubuntu* spirit of togetherness and hospitality in a typical African society such as Offot Ukwa Clan. Unlike the western media system, traditional media, in addition to serving the information and entertainment needs, have the capacity to investigate crime and punish offenders.

The trend is that criminals and people of questionable character flee from the watchful eyes of customs and traditions and the long arms of cultural practices in the village to cities and find haven where they hide and flourish in iniquity unchecked. Here lies the correlation between this paper and the current effort of government in fighting corruption, kidnapping, human trafficking, armed - robbery, vandalism, assassination, etc. in the country.

Offot Ukwa Clan, a multi-ethnic community located in the heart of Uyo, the Capital City of Akwa Ibom State, with visible trappings of urbanization and its attendant challenges, uses traditional media in maintaining peace and order in the clan, despite the attraction and sophistication of the western or new media. The experiences of traditional media channels used in meeting the informational, educational and entertainment needs, as well as maintaining peace and order in the clan is the concern of this paper.

Traditional or Indigenous Media System

Ansu-kyeremeh (1998) describes traditional communication as any form of indigenous system which, by virtue of its origin, form and integration into a specific culture, serves as channel for messages in a way and manner that requires the utilisation of their values, symbols, institutions and ethos of the host culture through its unique qualities and attributes. Ansu-kyeremeh assumes that since indigenous media systems are incorporated into a specific culture, they have a greater chance of effectiveness within that culture than other exogenously originating media systems

Ebeze (2002, p.28), taking the definition deeper, sees traditional communication, 'as the products of the interplay between a traditional community's customs and conflicts, harmony and strife, cultural convergences and divergences, culture specific tangibles, interpersonal relations, symbols and codes and moral traditions which include mythology, oral literature (poetry, storytelling and proverbs), masquerades, witchcraft, rites, rituals, music, dance, drama, costumes and similar abstractions and artifacts which encompass a people's factual symbolic and cosmological existence from birth to death and even beyond death.'

This symbolic interaction manifests more when persons in communication situation adopt goal-seeking activities which are relevant to their environment. That is to say, the communication is modeled to certain societal needs. This supports the opinion that traditional media involve all social conventions and practices, modes of speech, and social organisations whose main concern may not be with communication but with other activities (Wilson 1991). Wilson further asserts that the media system is the most important way by which rural dwellers communicate among themselves, and in effect with others. It pervades all aspects of rural and urban life in Africa since it is rooted in the culture, tradition, and practices of the people.

Udoakah (2001) supporting this view point, says the peculiar situation in which many Africans are not educated, and may not have access to the western media makes it imperative to interpret mobilization messages and to use communication channels accessible to the target audience. It therefore means that since trado-media utilize symbols, values and conventions which directly appeal and readily connect with the people, and thus enhance the variety and effectiveness of messages that circulate in the community (Akpabio, 2003), no mode of communication appeals, affects and serves the information needs of the rural dwellers more than the traditional media.

In the same vein, Nwagbueze (2009) describes traditional media system as customized communication channels which people in specific societies adopt in

sharing ideas, meanings, values and information.. An earlier definition by Hatchen (1971) sees indigenous media as methods of transmitting or transferring information in the traditional African society. Corroborating this, Osazee-Odia (2006) defines traditional communication as all forms of indigenous organs that are capable of enhancing the scope of grassroots awareness and capable of stimulating interest.

It is the opinion of Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998) that the various definitions accorded indigenous media system connotes a certain degree of semantics, conceptual confusion and misapprehension about what constitutes traditional communication. This arises from the use of the word ‘traditional’ as a qualifier in discussing communication generally. According to him, this view envisages the traditional system as being mutually antagonistic to what is known as modern system of communication.

Ansu-Kyeremeh adds that the traditional media are what essentially sustain the information needs of the rural population and useful to the system as seen from the traditional standpoint of an ongoing, long standing and modernized practice and those which have defied all efforts by western media to cannabalize and perhaps suppress them. In the same vein, Awa (1988) notes that traditional media perform all the functions of the modern mass media such as radio, television, magazines and newspapers.

Akpabio (2003) identifies three themes from most of the definition:

- (i) Traditional communication is part of the way of life of a people.
- (ii) It utilizes symbolisms from the community, hence readily connects with the people.
- (iii) Values of the community as well as agreed institutions come into play in the communication process.

Wilson (1997) observes that beyond the various definitions, traditional media display a wide variety of characteristics which are attributable to their nature and functions, and could be classified as source-oriented, message-oriented and channel/media-related characteristics.

Source-Related: By this it means that the media are authoritative and legitimate. They are served locally; have credibility, the messages are easily believed and accepted by the rural community who constitute the message receivers.

Message-Oriented: There is a dynamic setting of meaning sharing between the source and receivers. It is integrative as it brings together different sections of social classes in the society. Each participant gives and receives information, agreeing and disagreeing, pleasing and displeasing, acting and reacting during transaction. They

are integrative and non-alienating because the people are familiar with the codes and personnel. Also, definitive, explanatory and illustrative.

Channel/Media-Related: This means they are customary and familiar because of their long existence, and are readily available and the message received in every part of the society. They are also ubiquitous, low-cost, time-honored, adaptable and popular.

Classification of Traditional Media System:

Wilson (1997) presents taxonomy of traditional communication modes to include:

Instrumental Mode: These consist of modes which use idiophones, aerophones, membranophones and symbology. Idiophones are self-sounding instruments which produce sound when beaten, pricked, struck or plucked by hand or by the use of sticks. They produce sound without the use of an intermediary medium. The sound emanates from their surface. These instruments are used to send messages or signals. They include; metal gong, woodblock (*ntakrok*), wooden drum (*obodom*), bell, rattle, xylophone and pot drum (*abang*). They are capable of producing their messages, (Nkana & Samson, 2013). Aerophones are instruments which produce sounds as a result of the vibration of a column of air in them. The sounds produced may be messages as well as signals. They include: whistle, flute, horns elephant tusk, ivory tusk and rinds from plants and animals.

Membranophones are communication instruments made from skins of animals such as talking drum commonly used among the Yoruba-speaking people and other Nigerian and African cultures. They are used for both entertainment and communication. Sound or their messages are produced when they are struck or beaten by hand or stick. They are made in various shapes and sizes. They include skin drums of all sizes. Examples are *ibit*, *ekomo*, the Yoruba-talking drum, among others.

Symbology is the use of cryptic representation in the form of writing (pseudo-writing) made on the surfaces (hard or soft) like the bamboo, walls, cloth or the ground. This is a symbolic writing mode or representation which may be employed in communication among members of an exclusive club. The best known example is the *nsibidi* writing found among the people of Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Imo, and Anambra States of Nigeria. Others are tattoo, chalk marks, among others (Wilson 1998).

Demonstrative Mode: This consists of the use of music and signals in communicating with people. Music is not just a medium of entertainment, but a vehicle for the spread of ideas and doctrines. Signal is the use of instruments to

produce sounds that signify or symbolise a communication event within the context of a specific social setting. The sounds of different drums, flutes, horns, bells and gongs serve as signals of communication. They are often accompanied by oral or visual messages depending on the communication context.

Iconographic (Objectified Communication) Mode: This consists of the use of objects and floral medium in communicating meanings or ideas among members of the community. It is a signification in which objects refer to a thing, event or concept. This concrete representation may have a limited meaning or may have a universal application or significance within the context of the presentation and also has symbolic meanings. This same goes for the presentation of charcoal, white pigeon or fowl, white egg, feather, cowries, mimosa, flowers, sculpture among others. Floral communication involves the use of selected flora of the local vegetation for the purpose of communicating meanings or ideas to members of the community.

Institutional Mode: This is the use of certain social, spiritual, traditional, and cultural institutions as channels for communicating ideas, messages and concepts. Wilson (1998), identifies marriage, chieftaincy, secret societies, shrines, masquerades and cults as the most important of these institutions. The marriage institution for instance and all ceremonies pertaining to it is a combination of secular and spiritual celebrations. This is akin to Christian rituals as well as cultural communication of the norms and mores of the society or group.

Wilson says the institutions are revered for reasons which include powers - spiritual and temporal- which they possess. Akpabio (2003) says they can order physical sanctions on offenders or non-conformists and invoke the wrath of deities to ensure compliance with their directives.

Extra-Mundane Mode: This is a mode of communication believed to take place between the living and the dead or between the living and the supernatural or supreme-being. On the surface, it usually seems unidirectional but participants at religious crusades, prayer sessions, rituals and other religious and pseudo-spiritual activities know there is often a form of feedback which may come through intra-personal process, physical revelations or magical or other wordy verbalization (Wilson, 1998). This mode includes: prayer, chants, sacrifices, rituals, incantation, invocation, libation, conjuration, prophesy, vision, witchcraft, contemplation, exorcism, obituary and in memoriam notices and tombstone messages are the graphic forms of this mode of communication.

Visual Mode: This is the use of colour, dressing, appearance, and general comportment to poise to convey certain feelings, emotions and attitudes (Wilson, 1990). This can be seen as pictorial communication. They include: white, red, dressing, hairstyle etc.

Functions of Traditional or Indigenous Media Systems

One of the numerous functions of trado-media is credibility; particularly among rural population which modern media often lack. Newspaper, radio, television and cinema are often 'alien and elitist in outlook', and those at the periphery of modern life tend to identify them with centres of power. They employ, the idioms of the people and are readily intelligible to them. Even the poorest have access to indigenous media, whereas radio and television may be beyond their means and newspapers beyond their competitiveness (Riloy, 1998).

Uwakwe (2003) observes that face-to-face communication situations in meetings, clubs, festivals and formal gatherings in folks media channels greatly enhance meaning sharing and promote understanding among rural population. Wilson (1997) notes that trado-media mobilize people at the grassroots towards development and national consciousness. No serious mass-oriented development programme in rural communities succeeds without the active involvement of the inhabitants within the traditional system.

They are the main sources and channels of cultural, political, health and other educational enlightenment programmes, for the masses, leading them towards self-actualization and national development employing songs, instructions, theatre performances and general surveillance to provide traditional education.

Trado-media provide cheap and readily available sources of entertainment through arts and cultural festivals, musical shows, dramatic performances by choral, musical, masquerade, market square simulated gossips, peer group fora, royal voices and theatrical groups.

The system offers a dependable channel for fostering both intra-cultural and inter-cultural relationship and meeting other communal needs, thus leading to group and national unity. Yam and Ekpo festivals are examples of large traditional communication settings which bring about inter-cultural and mass communication. Trado-media give expression to cultural and other activities of the different parts of the society.

The indigenous media system conveys authority as an unmistakable voice of the people on all matters that affect them with force of law in addition to informational purposes such as: local news, announcements, issuance of directives

and reports on the activities of society. Trado-media serve a variety of other functions and uses in rural society such as advertising, public relations, brand marketing/promotion and publicity.

However, the numerous functions notwithstanding, trado-media also have some problems or shortcomings such as: lack of a standard technical vocabulary and universally applied language system for the concept, scientific and technological knowledge to improve the system, the problems of diversity in traditional political system and time-value orientation of most African countries, socio-economic system and urbanization.

Offot Ukwa Clan

Offot Ukwa Clan is one of the four (4) clans that make up Uyo Local Government Area. It consists of 21 villages namely: Uyo, Aka, Iboko, Effiat, Afaha, Atan, Ikot Oku Ubo, Anua obio, Obio Offot, Ewet, Eniong, Ekpri Nsukara, Ibiaku, and Use Offot. Others are: Nsukara Offot, Ikot Anyang, Ikot Akpe, Use Ikot Ebio, Ikot Ntuen, Ikot Oku Ido and Anua Offot. About 40% of the four hundred and twenty nine thousand, nine hundred (429,900) people, estimated population of Uyo local government area reside in the clan.

These villages have village heads under the overall supervisory control of the Paramount Ruler of Uyo Local Government, Edidem Sylvanus Edem Okon, who also doubles as the Clan Head of Offot Ukwa Clan and Village Head of Eniong Offot. The Clan provides both the political base for Uyo Local Government Area and Akwa Ibom State, with Uyo serving in dual capacity as local government headquarters and state capital, respectively.

Offot Ukwa, though heavily impacted by the urbanisation and development drive of the capital city, uses and maintains some traditional modes of communication and institutions such as *Ekpo* and *Ekpe* societies, *iban isong*, chieftaincy and marriage institutions, women and youth groups, *nsibidi*, *eyei*, *okono* tree, plantain sucker, *mbiam*, *idiong* consultation/divination, libation, rituals, colour schemes, kindred system among others.

Others are festivals, music, choral and dance (*itembe*) groups, wooden drum, wood block, colour schemes, hand-shakers, drums, cannon/gunshots, charcoal, kola-nut, egg, beads, feather, cow-tail, whistle, metal gong, bell, ivory tusk, dressing among others. These modes of communication are very effective in the promotion of peace, maintenance of law and order.

The Use of Indigenous Media Systems in Maintaining Peace and Order in Offot Ukwa Clan

Communication is essentially the exchange of information and sharing of ideas using familiar codes, symbols and available medium or media, aimed at achieving certain goal or goals. It fosters interrelationship between individuals, groups, communities and nations, as a social affair.

As Akpan (1987) notes, the outcome of this interrelationship is social cohesion, understanding, mutual dependence and enhancement of the growth of social units, from the rural interiors to the nation state. The symbolic interaction manifests more when persons in communication situation adopt goal-seeking activities which are relevant to their environment. The fact is germane that traditional media systems are modeled to meet societal needs such as the maintenance of law and order in Offot Ukwa Clan.

Findings from this study revealed that the clan uses the wooden drum, wood block, drums of various sizes, metal gong, bell and whistle both as musical instruments and channels of communication. The drums reproduce tonal pattern of a sentence in the proper sequence that can be heard over a long distance. Their functions are two-pronged: official and social. Officially, they are used to summon meetings, make official announcements, issue directives and reports on the activities of the clan, warn of impending danger and pump the adrenaline during strife.

Socially, they provide entertainment during festivals and ceremonies like the new yam festivals, wedding and chieftaincy titles. They create an atmosphere of suspense and tension during wrestling matches through their mastery (Asemah 2011). Gun/cannon shots fired indicate the passage of a royal father, herald the commencement of important festival or the coronation of a king.

According to the Clan Head of Offot Ukwa Clan, Edidem Sylvanus Edem Okon, the clan as a traditional community relies heavily on divination/*idiong* consultation, *Iban Isong*, fresh palm frond (*eyei*), *ekpo nka owo*, plantain sucker, kindred system, *ekpo* and *mbiam* to maintain sanctity and order in the clan. *Mbiam* for instance is used to establish the veracity of a matter when a party or parties in dispute refuse to speak the truth or admit the common fact inherent in the case. *Mbiam* also investigates robbery incidents, acts of vandalism, assassination, untimely and mysterious death in the community. Parties involved or persons concerned are made to swear to the oath by the chief priest.

According to Esen (1982) '*mbiam*' is the automatic detective, judge and executioner. Umana (1996, p.52) says: '*Mbiam* is a form of god that is owned , sacrificed unto and taken care of, if it is to be responsive to doing the evil services

the owner always seek to put it to.’ Where the culprit is not known, the spirit is invoked by pouring it in spots or locations in the community. Not long after, the offending party or culprit will develop swelling in the stomach, feet and cheek, if restitution and appeasement are not done on time, death occurs. Usually such a person is denied decent burial.

Idiong consultation/divination or sooth-saying are channels for knowing causes of persistent problems and finding solution to them, loss of love one or valuables, reading and predicting ones future as well as determine upcoming events in order to comprehend them better through communication. While, *Iban Isong* (women association) teaches women how to manage their homes well, be good wives and mothers (Ekpa, 2004). They ensure that the marriage institution is accorded respect and held in high esteem without misbehaving or talking carelessly. The group promotes chastity, self-control, prohibits stealing and prostitution among women. They serve as watchdog on the conducts of their folks and activities in marital homes and treat as taboo premarital sex and abortion by young girls.

Ugboajah (1985) describes these roles as the functional and utilitarian functions of traditional media with the purpose to teach and often initiated with the aim of imparting traditional aesthetics, historical, social, ethical and religious values. He further notes that the system provides a legal code which rests on stories and spoken words that unite and give them a sense of cohesion.

The clan uses *Ekpo Nka Owo*, the ancestral family spirit which punishes a woman who is unfaithful to her husband to sustain the sanctity of the marriage institution. Marriage among the people is considered sacred, and the woman in particular must not be defiled. However, the ancestors and gods can be appeased by the offering of some traditional sacrifices.

According to the Akwa Obonganwan Offot Ukwa Clan, Obonganwan Margaret Brownson, infidelity if condoned by the husband through his failure to expose her and collect the customary items of sacrifice from the wife to the ancestors, would result in strange ailment, which may likely kill him, sometimes with his wife and/ or children. As a condition for traditional purgation she must confess mentioning the man or men with whom she had the extra-marital affair. In some families the husband’s relations may force her out of the marital home to serve as deterrence and a way of averting re-occurrence.

The use of *eyei* (fresh palm frond), *okono* tree, plantain sucker and colour schemes in the clan convey volumes of information, directives and instructions. *Eyeyi*, when presented to a person serves as summon to the traditional court, waving during conflict or war situations imposes instant cessation of hostilities by parties in the

feud. The object when tied around the stem of a plant or tree prohibits climbing or plucking, when tied around a portion of land indicates a no trespass injunction.

This happened recently at the secretariat of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Akwa Ibom State Council, when the union wanted to erect a perimeter fence in the press centre. Some youths and elders in the community claimed that a portion of the land meant for clearing for the fence project housed their ancestral shrine, and so obtained *eyei* from Aka Offot Village Council and cordoned off the area. Work did not continue in the portion, until their demand for appeasement, and relocation was met by the Union. The fence project continued after settlement.

Eyeyi, when tied across a road or foot path means closure. Ani (2011), says the medium prevents violence, strife, loss of lives and property arising from conflict, creates room for forgiveness and truth which enhances societal peace and development as well as friendship and love among the people. It also, eliminates fear and insecurity and builds confidence and relief at the end of the conflict. Uko (2000) asserts that this method is effective in communicating a warning, expressing a threat or conveying an injunction and as a veritable means of traditional communication is widely understood and accepted. That if afterwards, the party(ies) involved dare(s) the warning or injunction, the result is usually catastrophic.

In Offot Ukwa clan, land boundaries are demarcated with *okono* tree, plantain sucker presented during marriage ceremonies symbolizes fertility and prosperity and when planted indiscriminately in a plot of land indicates ownership dispute. Also, red colour indicates danger, while white indicates purity or innocence and black mourning or evil.

The clan also, relies on '*Ekpuk*' or '*Ufok*', '*Eyeyen*', '*Ukot*' and '*Iman*' (kindred system) in maintaining peace and order. Issues are treated at these levels first before taken to the village council if not amicably resolved. Wilson (2009) describes it as a structure that leverages on kinship ties, citing the German *geneinschaft*, meaning; a structure which reflects the ties of kinship and long established friendship, by familiarity and liking, and by age-old habit and customary ways of doing things. Whatever the nature or type of problem, any of these channels, especially the *Iman*, can successfully mediate and broker peace. Chieftaincy tussles and other serious cases in Offot Clan are usually settled by similar institutions by *Itam* Clan (their *iman*). William and Udo (2012) in giving account of the peaceful settlement of the century old strife between Mbiakong and Ifiayong Uruan say, the god of *ukot*, *iman* and *eyeyen* was invoked on warring communities, and *mbiam* (curse) was placed on anybody or group of persons that would violate the peace agreement.

The Elders' Council, *Ekpe* and *Ekpo* societies are forms of government made up of highly respected and influential men who take decisions on major issues in the community. The elders' council who constitutes the traditional authority are held in high esteem, and are concerned with administering the community, treat such matters or policies in high secrecy.

Ekpe society is one very significant cultural institution that promotes linkages and relations in Offot Ukwu Clan. The authority of the *Ekpe* is used to mobilize clan activities, sanitation, suppress disturbances by placing injunction, imposing fines, debt collection and can apply effective sanctions against members and non-members. Such sanctions include placing offending person on interdiction which prohibits other people from trading or communicating with him, (Akpan, 2019, p.121).

Ekpe Society, could also seal off property, effect arrest, detain, fine or even kill an offender. There is evidence that as the monarch becomes less absolute, *Ekpe* becomes more powerful since it could back its decisions with physical coercion. Aina (2002) notes that rural populace hold their leaders in reverence because of the belief that they gain power through providence or that they are sent to rule by supreme-being. Acknowledging the importance of these institutions at the grassroots, Oso (2003) explains that the elders and clan councils in sitting together to discuss and decide matters of importance and articulate their position in their own language, promote peace, unity and understanding among the people.

Also, Onyilo (2007) posits that the village square or the council creates forum for the rulers and the ruled, offender and the offended the opportunity to interact as well as listen and be part of decision making. In the same vein, Anaeto (2010) admits that the use of local language and terms in messages and situations put in familiar context to stimulate discussion and understanding of issues of interest among community members are highly persuasive because they are familiar with them and at the same time earn their trust.

In addition to serving as the official media organ for announcing decisions of the clan council, *Ekpe* and *Ekpo* societies enforce and ensure compliance with regards to sanitation, communal work, levies and matters of interest and concern in the community. It is a pride to belong to any of these social groups as they are always morally upright, and no social deviants identifies with them.

The use of music in various activities including rituals, marriage, burial, festivals among others in the clan is very common. The yearly Offot Ukwu Festival which serves as a melting pot for cultural displays, music and dance, praise singing, proverbs and story-telling among others, conveys messages and meanings that relate

to their cultural norms and value system. Chukwuma (1994) asserts that such festivals help to bring people together, foster integration and attracts the best the clan can offer in terms of artistic expression. Opubor (1985) supporting this view, notes that they are the ways communalism manifests itself in typical African societies.

The *Itembe* cultural dance and entertainment group performs in almost every social event in the clan. The songs they render could be a warning, entertainment or simply information. It is in support of this fact that Wilson (1994) opines that traditional African music is not just meaningless, but that they communicate diverse messages and that in some societies, grapevine stories are presented in songs by cultural groups and other social groups. He refers to it as a demonstrative mode of communication that enhances the sharing of sentiments between individuals and groups, and facilitates the communication of both aesthetics and social values.

The group dances and entertains using all kinds of songs to praise, satirize or criticize wrong doings by individuals in the society. The lyric which is usually rendered in local dialect uses entertainment to present the latest gossip in town and blow open the secret or immoral conducts of some persons in the clan.

Ojuode (2006) observes that participants in dance and music have a particular message which they put across to the society. He describes it as a link between non-verbal and verbal communication with the capacity to fill the gaps in human knowledge, which other means cannot provide. Agreeing with this assertion, Rasaki (2002, p.164) says, the dance composer, just like any other communicator, has something to say and chooses to say it using paralinguistic elements like: body movement, facial expression, gestures (kinesis), spatial placements, special configuration, spatial relationships, floor pattern (proxemics), colours, costume and make-up (adornments).

In his view, Nketia (1975) notes that dance can be used to communicate affirmation of status to servants, subjects and others, just as it can be used to express belief by the choice of appropriate dance vocabulary or symbolic gestures. These concepts, in the thinking of Okoro (2008), are the common unifying concepts in all communication arts.

The Paramount Ruler of Uyo and Clan Head of Offot Ukwa, Edidem Sylvanus Okon lending credence to the numerous attributes and functions of indigenous media system, acknowledges them as, God's way of administering the rural communities effectively and harmoniously, and that with the application of traditional media, wanton destruction of public property, corruption and associated criminal conducts would be eradicated without the capacity to fight back. The Offot

Ukwa Clan Head states that the media system draws strength from the traditions and norms of the people which give it legitimacy, authority and acceptability.

Conclusion

This article examined the use of traditional or indigenous media systems in the maintenance of peace and order in Offot Ukwa Clan in order to facilitate development. Findings revealed that traditional media in addition to serving the informational, educational and entertainment needs of the clan, are also effective in meeting social and cultural needs of the people through their ability to legislate on subjects, adjudicate on matters, execute and enforce laws and decisions reached by the clan council, makes the media system very ideal for the rural communities.

Typical of the communal life that Africans are known for, the media system is integrative, transactional, familiar, cheap and available. And in the communication process, both the sender and the receiver are stakeholders.

The bane of development in many societies is corruption and associated criminal conducts, the media system instils discipline, order and respect for constituted authority by investigating and exacting punishments on moral deviants, offenders and defaulters.

The present state of insecurity, kidnapping, assassination, armed robbery, wanton destruction of public property among others, makes it imperative for rural societies to rely on these god-given methods (*mbiam*, oath, *idiong* consultation, among others) of protecting and securing lives and property in the clan.

The efficacy of the traditional media system lies in the recognition accorded the institutions as symbols of their collective authority and soul of their civilization believed to possess and exercise power gained through divine providence or sent to rule them by supreme-being.

Finally, the media system as products of environment, rooted in their culture is part and parcel of their life. “*Born Come See*”, as they call it.

Recommendations

It is a fact that government programmes and policies fail at the grassroots because the media systems of the environment are ignored. The socio-cultural components of indigenous media system should be incorporated in to development campaign strategy for successful implementation of programmes and projects at the grassroots.

What retards development in many societies today, especially in Africa is corruption, traditional media have an inbuilt capacity to check crime and instil sanity.

These attributes should be gainfully deployed in the war against corruption, crusade for attitudinal and moral rectitude by government.

The contributions of traditional media to human development should be acknowledged for giving the majority of the country's populace who reside in the rural areas a voice and opportunity to participate in the affairs of their community, articulate their interest in their language which fosters bond with self and the outside world. It should be developed to complement the modern mass media in doing more.

The traditional institutions and their custodians should strive to preserve jealously the trust and confidence repose on them so as not to vitiate the credibility and general acceptability enjoyed by the media system.

As no media system works in isolation. There should be a synergy between the mass media and traditional media systems as the two are essential and important in the development process of rural communities.

Indigenous communication or traditional media are people and culture-oriented. The system should be protected from the pervasive influence of the modern mass media, developed and repositioned to preserve and propagate the cultural heritage of the people from generation to generation.

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