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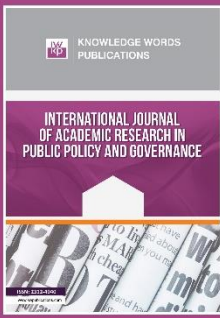
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## **Bwatiye Traditional Communication Systems and Its Role in Enhancing Participatory Democracy among Bwatiye People of Numan and Lamurde Local Government Areas of Adamawa State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines how the Bwatiye traditional communication is used in enhancing participatory democracy among the Bwatiye rural folks. The study used Participatory Communication and Democratic-Participant theory. The research used survey method and employed in-depth interview and observational approaches to gather data. The population of the study is the Bwatiye people of Numan and Lamurde Local Government Areas of Adamawa state. Random and stratified sampling techniques were employed to select the sample size. Ten (10) people (5 each) were selected and interviewed. Descriptive analysis was adopted to analyze data. The findings shows that the Bwatiye traditional communication is an effective, reliable, credible and effective means for communicating with the Bwatiye people about political issues and participation. The study recommends that town crier system should be improved by adopting the modern means like the public address system where local language and songs should be used to attract the attention of the people in order to relay the information to them. The Bwatiye traditional communication should be incorporated into the modern media like Facebook and twitter where people can access post and discuss issues affecting them. The Facebook and twitter should display some nonverbal means of communication like symbols, signs and objectifies to convey specific messages.

**Keywords:** Traditional Communication, Bwatiye Rural Folk, Participatory Democracy, Numan and Lamurde, Adamawa State.

### **Background to the Study**

Any society will be incomplete without a communication system that facilitates intra and inter-group interaction. Communication animates and sustains social relationships. Without a doubt, the process is fundamental in the transferring of meanings and defining of actions among individuals and groups in a social unit. This need has, according to Voh and Aleiyideino (1985) encourages individual societies to develop patterns and systems of communication-based on traditional, cultural, historical and philosophical norms and values.

With developments in the various facets of society, issues of communication are mostly seen from the perspective of modern socio-political, economic and technological trends. This perspective completely overlooks the socio-cultural indices that are paramount in shaping attitude, behavior, and action, especially in traditional societies. But communication in its natural state cannot be substituted by any of the modern communication systems. For this reason, Asan (2008) believes that traditional communication which in time past was neglected has now become an important adjunct for enhancing people participation in various spheres of life, including political participation. This is because it is enduring, flexible and effective in summoning rural folks to assemble themselves to undertake a cause for the development of the society.

Chiovloni (2004) explain that before the introduction of the modern means of communication in Africa, Africans had a solid communication structure in a place known as traditional or trado-communication. Through various media sub-systems inherent within the traditional communication system, Africans in different rural settings are mobilized to participate in the affairs of their locality.

The desire to look at these communication patterns in enhancing participation of rural folks in the formulation and execution of government policies in Bwatiye rural community gave rise to the current interest in ora-media studies which this work focus on.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The use of traditional means of communication in Africa to mobilize, sensitize and galvanize the people to participate in the political activities of their community is now gaining ground. This is based on the fact that the traditional communication system is people centered, community-owned and natural. Its role and influence in social dynamics of a community are immeasurable.

This research seeks to investigate whether Bwatiye traditional communication systems have been used in enhancing democratic and political participation and to also determine the role the systems have played in that sphere of community living.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This research is aimed at examining how Bwatiye traditional means of communication through its various systems, channels, and activities, is used in enhancing participatory democracy. Its objectives include:

- (i) To ascertain the systems, structure, channels and modes of the Bwatiye traditional communication system.
- (ii) To determine how the traditional communication system of the Bwatiye is used to enhance the people's participation in democratic governance.
- (iii) To determine the improvements that can be made in the Bwatiye traditional communication system to enhance the active participation of the people in democratic participation.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

For a better understanding of this research work, the following terms will be defined as they are used in this research work.

*Bwatiye people*: This refers to a particular group of people that speak Bachama dialect or language. They are commonly known and called by others as the Bachamas. They leave in Local Government Areas of Numan and Lamurde in Adamawa State.

*Traditional communication:* Traditional communication, oramedia and folk media will be used interchangeably here. These concepts in this work refer to the old simple means of communication, especially among rural dwellers.

*Participatory democracy:* Participatory democracy emphasized the broad participation of constituents in the direction and operation of political systems. It also means affording the opportunity for individual participation.

*Communication:* communication may be seen as efforts by a source to establish a relationship with the receiver. This may be achieved only if the source is able to pass across meaning to the receiver and is able to influence the receiver.

### **Explicating Literature/Terms**

#### **Participatory democracy**

Participation in democracies should go beyond taking part in voting and should include participation in governance processes. This participation should include taking part in the decision-making process and in every activity that is geared toward improving the lives of the rural folks.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory\\_democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_democracy) (2011) highlights that participatory democracy is a process emphasizing the broad participation of constituents in the direction and operation of political systems most especially in rural areas. In addition, Kumi, (2008) submits that this will create opportunities for all members of a population to make meaningful contributions to decision-making, and seeks to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory\\_democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_democracy) (2011) explains that participatory democracy tends to advocate more involved forms of citizen participation than traditional representative democracy. Participatory democracy strives to create opportunities for all members of a rural population to make meaningful contributions to decision making and seeks to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities.

UNDP in its Human Development Report (1993) strongly held that local people's participation is becoming the central issue of our time and participation requires the use of the traditional system of communication to get the people involved in any development initiative in our rural communities. They stress that Governments of developing countries can no longer fulfill all social and regulatory services by themselves, especially in rural areas. Riley (1998) observes that in their quest for greater cost-effectiveness in all their operations, governments must have the active support of/and a greater contribution from the people. Governments are thus obliged to seek new and perhaps unfamiliar partners, ranging from local leaders to rural folks.

However, traditional communication systems and channels are powerful tools used in advising people about new ideas and methods, to encourage adoption of those ideas and methods and to improve social status and activities in the society.

### **Brief History of Bwatiye**

The Bwatiye people which are popularly known as Bachama refer to a group of people that speak Bachama dialect. They are sparse across the Southern part of Adamawa State occupying two major Local Government Areas of Numan and Lamurde.

There are different views about where the Bwatiye people held from. One of the claims as stated by Nissen (1966) is that they come from an area around Sokoto in the days before the Jihad. The Bwatiye people claim descendency from the Gobir people. According to the "Garden of Memory", a book written by sultan Bello, the second Shehu of Sokoto, 1817 – 37, the Gobir people lived in Azben

about 1500, but were driven from this locality by the Tuaregs, and therefore moved south, settling in, what is now Northern Nigeria. This tribe was considered powerful and brave due to their prowess and skills in battle and artwork. As the remnant of a group of Copts who had emigrated from Egypt, they were forced by a persistent battle from Bornu people to migrate to their present locations in Adamawa State.

Nissen (1966) states that the Bwatiye and the Batta people are the same bloodline. Their separation occurred due to an enmity that existed between the two scions of the royal line, Zaro Kpalome and Zaro Dembeni (the red and the black twin). The twins are the sons of the royal chief of the Batta people. As their names in Bachama indicate, the two boys were twins, and their father, Taginaye or Palangye, who had ruled in old Demsa, had intended the older, Zaro Kpalome, to be chief after him. His wife, not the mother of the twins, on the other hand, favored the younger twin, Zaro Dembeni. Their father's younger brother had led the flight from the east because the twins could not agree on which of them should be the ruler. Zaro Kpalome had already, while the party was at Ngurori, tried to do away with Zaro Dembeni during a hunt, but their father's widow, Mbarabitikin, and warned the younger twin, and the attempt failed. When the hunters had left, Mbarabitikin, who was the keeper of all the articles pertaining to the office of chief, collected the brass flutes, the elephant tusks, the golden stool, the five foot three [pronged staff, the royal cap, the sacred pot for making rain, and the head of the late chief. With all this paraphernalia, Zaro Dembeni, Mbarabitikin, and their followers set out for the Benue.

According to Nissen (1966) when Zaro Kpalome arrived at the Benue, his brother had just reached the other side. When the pursuing chief of Demsa realised he had come too late, he cried, "Go your ways," and cast a long strip of cloth across the river, which his brother caught. Then Kpalome drew his knife and, cutting the cloth, said, "We have parted. If either of us ever drinks of the Benue again, he will surely die." With this curse, he divided the work between them. Zaro Dembeni was to look after the fetish worship and he, Zaro Kpalome, would fight the fulanis. Thus the Bachama tribe was born, and the two brothers separated, never to see each other again.

Jacques (1994) believes that the dynamic strategy behind people's participation and community mobilization is to release the energy of rural people by building their confidence to make decisions and carry them out as a community in a self-reliant way and to prove that they benefit from such efforts. Traditional communication in this regard becomes central in performing this task in many ways. For instance, it will help planners and other extension workers, when identifying and formulating development programmes, to consult with the rural people in order to take into account their needs, attitudes, and traditional knowledge. This will help in harnessing the creative ability of the people in regards to participating in any democratic activity. Only with traditional communication will the project beneficiaries become the principal actors to make development programmes and any democratic activity successful.

Deducing from the above submission, it is worth of note that real success in terms of engaging rural folks in participatory democracy hinges on the need to enhance and prickle their desire to become sole partakers of any activity via the stringent use of oramedia. This means that rural folks rely strongly on their commonest traditional means of transacting with each other to tackle issues affecting them most especially political reforms. It will also ignite them to set up apparatuses like cultural festivals which will encourage mass mobilization and task the rural persons to fully participate in the formulation of policies that will have a direct impact on them. Building on those experiences, Mowlana (1983) states that a Population Communication Project in Malawi decided to

invite grassroots artist, most of them belonging to the very audiences the project were trying to reach, for a week-long workshop: drummers, dancers, musicians, actors, clowns and storytellers thought together, wrought together and laughed together. He adds that all the result of this dynamic interaction between performers and communication facilitators was the production of a coherent package of songs and dances, stories and plays, village clowneries and drum shows, that use idiom, imagery, rhythm and humor to deal with a variety of population issues and lifestyles.

Mowlana (1983) adds that the success of the programme was hugely dependent on the talent, creativity, intuition and instinct of the artists which triggered a process of village participation in the rural areas of southern Malawi. The emotional excitement created by the launching of village campaigns gave way to the spontaneous development of traditional songs, dances and popular plays by other village artists. This is done through a truly participatory process, sharing information and knowledge. Traditional communication in this regard has proved to be credible in engaging communities to be active participants in all activities in bettering their lives, public programs and making policies real and sustainable.

Participation in any democratic activities cannot come to bear without the use of several groups or unions like age grades, market women associations, elders' council, peer groups, town hall, schools associations, etc. They play an important role in ensuring that people are mobilized and gingered to participate in the democratic activities of their community. The need is to achieve the notion of a participatory community. As Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998) explains that people that are exposed to information materials may understand its significance in different ways, but the analysis and decision that follows will be to clarify the issues and lead towards a consensus. Communication in this regard is central and it's at the heart of every transaction and activity taking place in the community.

However, it is important to use familiar lines of communication that the people are conversant with, which is flexible and easy to use. As the world move towards greater democracy, decentralization, and the market economy conditions are becoming more favorable for people to start steering their own course of change. But it is vital to stimulate their awareness, capabilities and encourage participation in these activities. This is possible when the rural persons are allowed to be deeply involved in determining their own future by taking necessary and decisive initiatives to better their lot. This means that any initiative or program that regards people as mere recipients, rather than as the actual creators of change and progress, usually fails. UNDP in its Human Development Report (1993) states that Governments of developing countries can no longer fulfill all social and regulatory services by themselves, especially in rural areas. Consulting with the people and actively involving them in making the decisions that will affect them virtually ensures the program's success.

Traditional media in this regard help the people at all levels to communicate with each other and empowers them to recognize important issues and find common grounds for action, and builds a sense of identity and motivation in order to implement their decisions.

Traditional communication has been identified as a potent forum for bringing the people together to undertake a cause for the progress of the community. This has manifested itself in the way Bwatiye people use their traditional means of communication in bringing practical and physical changes in the community in terms of enhancing their involvement every democratic activity.

An earlier study by Moemeka (1998) had concluded that: In truly and authentic communalistic communities, communication (whether horizontal or vertical, verbal or nonverbal, or for social, religious or political matters) is carried on strictly according to the established norms (i.e. communication rules) of the community. These norms are, on the whole, based on several

fundamental principles that have been shown to have strong philosophical implications that underscore the rationale for the unique communication patterns.

Peter (2000) supports Asan (2008) by saying that traditional messages bearer or messengers in the Northern Nigeria used donkeys, horses, camels or trek on foot all the way long to deliver the information to the receiver. This is the replica of Bwatiye standard way of message delivery. Traditional communication is vital in championing participatory democracy. This is true of Health Education, Advocacy and Community HEAT Module (2014) who highlights that:

- i. They are realistic and based on the daily lives of ordinary people; they can communicate attitudes, beliefs, values and feelings in powerful ways; they do not require understanding that comes with modern education in the majority of instances; they can communicate problems of community life; they can motivate people to change their behavior and they can show ways to solve problems.

Jacques (1994) believes that traditional communication is central to this task in many ways. For example, it enables planners, when identifying and formulating development programmes, to consult with people in order to take into account their needs, attitudes, and traditional knowledge. This dialogue can be enriched by understanding how development issues affect them, discovering what others think in other communities, and seeing what other communities have achieved. This will serve as the basis for giving a meaningful contribution and supporting all the ideas meant to improve social life of the rural folks.

From the above submission, Zohaib (2011) summarizes that traditional media makes it possible for messages to be packaged and transferred to locally popular artistic forms which are rivaled by any other means of communication with regard to reaching the rural ties. For instance, song, drama, dance group are use to promote campaigns against social evils such as child and woman trafficking, alcoholism, burdensome dowries, discrimination against women, etc. MacBride (1980) observes that other forms of communication maintain their validity, particularly when used to influence attitudes, instigate action and promote change.

Riley (1998) ascribes that traditional communication has helped in promoting effective family planning practices, and reduced teenage pregnancies and child abandonment among the people in most parts of Africa. This implies that oramedia over the years have proved to be a potent tool for making ruralites engage in several political activities that have changed their lives positively. In contribution, Ayantayo (2001) adds that myths, songs, and story-telling are used to emphasize moral issues like public honor, appreciation for good behavior, while condemnation, ostracization, beating, punishment, disgrace etc, are the reward for bad behavior. The point from the foregoing is that oramedia is a vibrant communication tool in African communities. It serves as a social commentary for galvanizing African societies. It passes important information during festivities and celebrations, as well as mobilizes the people to participate in the social development of their rural areas.

Zohaib (2011) points out that traditional forms of communication that are used to mobilize the people to participate in democratic activities are for instance mythology, storytelling, songs, proverbs, religious custom, artistic, musical, dance and theatrical elements, as well as pottery, textiles and wood art. These forms of communication have their different communistic value. But all of them are effective tools in enhancing message delivery and understanding. These tools are used to share information and to exchange ideas in a positive and productive fashion.

McCombs and Shaw (1979) stated some important reasons for the use of traditional communication as to form an opinion of the day-to-day events for relaxation and entertainment to provide reinforcement for views already held among others.

Kur (2010) states that traditional media such as folk theater, dances, puppet shows and popular poetry, as well as the rural press, have been wonderful tools that are highly effective for disseminating development information and for stimulating community action. It is a vibrant medium for reaching traditional zones of silence. This means that oramedia is irreplaceable in terms of communicating, mobilizing and motivating the rural community and folks for any activity in the community.

Moemeka (1998) believes that communication (whether horizontal or vertical, verbal or nonverbal, or for social, religious or political matters) is carried on strictly according to the established norms (that is, communication rules) of the community. These norms are, on the whole, based on several fundamental principles that have been shown to have strong philosophical implications that underscore the rationale for the unique communication pattern in communalistic cultures.

Jacques (1994) adds that interpersonal communication techniques such as peer counseling have the capacity to develop coping mechanisms, self-esteem, and images of a better future among teenagers, especially if combined with group discussions and other tools which create a dialogue. Social communication activities based, for example, on street and village theater, and using truly participatory methodologies, can pioneer attitudinal changes at the community level and stimulate non-threatening environments in which teenagers wish to learn about life. Traditional communication is regarded an important adjunct used to advise people about new ideas and methods, cautioning them about the phenomenon and to encourage the adoption of those ideas and methods. This means that unless people themselves are the driving force of their own development, no amount of effort, investment or provision of technological inputs will bring about any meaningful and lasting improvements in their living standards.

Nwosu (1966) stress that traditional communication is culturally bound or culture-centric and emphasize its importance as an area which media practitioners and marketing communicators who operate within the developing parts of Africa must familiarize themselves with. Traditional and popular media such as folk theater, dances, puppet shows and popular poetry, as well as rural press linked to literacy programmes, and audiovisual materials, can be highly effective channels for disseminating information and for stimulating community action.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The concepts of Participatory communication and Democratic participant theories are adopted for this study. The essence is to look at how these theories provide the basis for facilitating the participation of rural folks in their democratic or community activities.

Mody (1991) opines that Participatory Communication is the theory and practices of communication used to involve people in the decision-making of the development process. It tends to return to the roots of its meaning, which, similar to the term community, originate from the Latin word 'communis', that is, common.

In this context, common implies the use of familiar (oramedia) means of communication to mobilize the rural folks to be pro-active participants in the democratic/ development programs or activities in their communities. In essence, participatory democracy strives to create opportunities for all members of a population to make meaningful contributions to decision-making and seeks to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities.

The Democratic-participant theory, on the other hand, was propounded by Denis McQuail in 1987. This theory embraces the principle of democratization of the media for the purpose of accessibility by all and sundry. It lays emphasis on the need for popular participation in all spheres of



the community activity. The bottom line of this theory is that every individual and every part of the society – religious institutions like churches, mosques, ritual groups and many others in the society should have access to the media so that they can express their views freely about happenings in the society.

Democratic participant theory according to Folarin (2006) who cited Kunczick (1988) calls for greater attention to the needs, interests, and aspirations of the receiver in a political society. It calls for “horizontal” in place of top-down communication, a concern for feedback in social-political communication and an acknowledgment of the feedback so as to realize the “completed communication circuit”. In essence, Folarin (2006) states that the theory accords priority to the “associational” mode over the “command” mode, and, even the “service” mode of socio-political communication.

Therefore, these theories are appropriate for this study because they advocates for active participation of rural folks in every step of democratic and development programme of their communities. It also recognizes the importance of media of communication (oramedia) as an effective tool in enhancing participatory democracy and places greater attention on the associational mode of all the rural folks as the basis for participation in their political yearnings. The two theories place priority on the use of horizontal communication approach where people can have equal say and equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and in the implementation of such ideas. They also stressed the need for popular participation in all spheres of the community activities. This means that unless people themselves are the driving force of their own development, no amount of investment or provision of technology and inputs will bring about any lasting improvements in their living standards.

### **Methodology**

This study made use of qualitative survey method i.e interview and observational approaches to gather data. The approach explored the extent to which traditional media systems are used in mobilizing the Bwatiye folks to engage in the political activities of their society (Numan and Lamurde LGAs of Adamawa State).

The sampling techniques adopted for this research work are the random and stratified sampling techniques. The technique gives every item, subject or respondent in the population an equal opportunity of being selected. This means elderly and young rural folks who used the system for a period of time and have had a vast knowledge about the subject matter will be contacted to give in-depth details of the use of Bwatiye traditional media. The various responses collected will be based on their personal experiences of the research topic.

The method of data collection for this study was a face-to-face interview with the respondents from the two selected Local Government Areas (Numan and Lamurde). However, the method of data analysis adopted for this study is descriptive analysis.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Findings**

The study was carried out among 10 selected elders and youths in the two selected Local Government Areas (Numan and Lamurde) who were interviewed face-to-face.

The study revealed that 3 of the elders are within the ages of 50-60, while 2 are within the ages of 61-70. On the other hand, 3 of the youths are within the ages of 20-25 while 2 are within the ages 26-30.

The researchers interviewed youths and elders in order to get the true picture of the use of Bwatiye traditional communication and its role in enhancing participatory democracy.

The following themes emerged in the course of the researchers' interaction with the selected youths and elders:

**Question 1: The Various Systems, Channels and means through which The Bwatiye people are mobilize to engage in Democratic Activities.**

To provide answer to the above research question, questionnaire questions i, ii, iii, iv and v are used. These are presented below:

*What are the various systems and channels that are used to mobilize the people to engage/participate in democratic activities?*

Among the ten people interviewed 8 (80%) of the respondents identified the following as channels and systems the Bwatiye people used to mobilize themselves.

Town crier- *Hinato*

Ward head- *humi kabe*

District head- *humi kwaha*

Age grades- *Ji mwasato*

Drum- *hobuduwe*

Market women association- *Ji lomo*

Smoke- *Towu diyé*

Meeting- *Peto*

Sharing ideas together- *Shalale*

Agreement- *Kulosoto*

Making promises- *Vosokwame*

Gun shot- *Nbudikito*

Hunting- *Humto*

Story telling- *Gbamato*

Festival- *kwete, vayati Gamadiyo and Imbru, Farai*

Signs

Symbols

Alarm- *Kawahome*

The sound of the elephant tusk- *Linto*

Ululation- *Nzukombe*

Village head - *kpana*

While 2 (20%) of the respondents believe that the modern media are most effective. They include:

Radio

Television

Newspapers

Postal

Handbills

Telephones

Printed T-shirt, music, interviews and debate.

The other tools used in passing across political related issues are mostly direct contact through the use of persuasion, written memoranda, and gifts of items /money

(ii). *Why are those systems and channels used to mobilize the people to engage in democratic activities?*

It is effective, reliable, credible and efficient means for communicating with the Bwatiye people about political and development issues.

It is potent and authentic in nature whereby the people totally rely on it for every communication need like political and development initiatives.

The king, chiefs, ward, district and village heads, age grades, town crier system and other traditional groups are reliable in that any message emanating from such media is taken seriously because they are original and truthful.

Music and songs are viable means to scold, to encourage a positive attitude, or to ask the people to converge for a discussion that would benefit them and the community at large.

(iii). *How effective are these systems and channels in mobilizing the people?*

Out of the ten (10) respondents interviewed 7 (70%) of them listed the following:

It is used to market a particular candidate or discussing issues that may allow the people to take a decision about which candidate or which political party is offering better options.

The town crier is a reliable means of disseminating information that is coming from the king, district head, ward head, and the community leaders such information is always taken seriously.

During market days where women exchange ideas with other women about what the town crier had announced in another village. They will then take such message back to their villages, their husband, and neighbors.

They are used for rallying, uniting and binding the people together.

Direct communication with the people. For instance, the people may sit down in front of fire to listen to a community leader explaining the circumstances of why they have gathered.

While 3 (30%) of the respondent believed that modern media are more effective. They include Handbills, Billboards, Posters to capture the minds and attention of the people through the use of appeals.

(iv): *What are the various tools that the people rely on in discussing or passing across politics related issues?*

The data collected shows that all the ten (10) respondents interviewed identified the following as tools the Bwatiye people relied on in passing across political related issues:

Debates and village meetings

Age grade discussions

Burial ceremonies

Songs and music

Drums, especially the *hobuduwe*

The use of the Bwatiye language

*Kawahome* - alarm

*Linto* - the sound of the elephant tusk

*Nzukombe* - ululation

*Kulosoto* - promises

(v): *What role do the Bwatiye traditional systems play in the sphere of community living?*

Out of the ten (10) people interviewed 100% believed that the following are the role Bwatiye traditional systems play in the sphere of community living.

Songs are used to scold, encourage, teach and motivate people to be active members of the society.

The burial ceremonies are used as avenues to disseminate political information and to warn the village people about a particular phenomenon.

The king, ward, district heads, chiefs, age grades, market women association, elders' council are important media for mobilizing the people to participate in every activity taking place in the community.

### **Question 2: The Traditional Means of Communication the Bwatiye use in Enhancing Participatory Democracy?**

In order to provide an answer to the above research question, questionnaire questions vi, vii, viii, and ix are used. These are presented below:

(vi). *How do you use Bwatiye traditional means of communication in enhancing participatory democracy?*

Among the ten people interviewed 8 (80%) of the respondents identified the following through which the Bwatiye traditional means of communication can be used to mobilize people.

The local language of the people can be used to gather the people together. It is an effective channel for assembling the Bwatiye rural folks.

District head comes out and sit-down under a designated shade, the community leaders, family heads will come out while they sit down. He then passes the information in a single day to family heads. They too can pass it to the other families about anything happening in the community.

Messages from king are taken seriously because they are reliable. The content of such messages could be an instruction to mobilize women, men, and age groups.

The communal way of life, respect and obedience to their traditional rulers makes them respect information coming from the king (*Homun*) through the district heads, the village heads (*kpane*), through ward heads (*Homi kwabe*) and finally to the general public by way of town criers, or meeting in which decisions are taken in line with the directives of the king (*Homun*).

While 2 (20%) believe that people use the following modern media in enhancing participatory democracy:

social media

Radio

Television

Mobile phones

(vii). *How is Bwatiye traditional communication used to mobilize the Bwatiye rural folks?*

The data collected shows that 9 (90%) of the respondents interviewed identified the following:

The exchange of ideas through debates and the village meetings.

Non-verbal communication like the drum is used. The *hubuduwe* (drum) have several sound patterns used to communicate different messages. When it is beaten, it could mean to gather, a warning, signal for war or to send a specific message.

Music accompanied with several dancing steps is used to attract the Bwatiye people to mobilize themselves. This is because the Bwatiye people are dancing and music loving people, whenever they hear the sound of music they will quickly gather there.

Villages pass information to other villages by lighting up a fire. They create a smoke in a certain pattern. People in other villages see the smoke and read the meaning.

While one out of the ten (10) respondents identified the following as they are used in mobilizing the rural folks:

*Kawahome* -alarm.

*Huboduwe* -the second of the big drum.  
*Linto* –the sound of the elephant tusk  
*Nzukombe* –ululation and a host of many others.

(iix). *How effective is the Bwatiye traditional communication in this modern times?*

The data collected shows that 4 (30%) of the respondents believed that the traditional system of communication is becoming ineffective due to the emergence of the modern media. Their reasons are thus:

The public address system is more effective and has the ability to reach two hundred (200) or four hundred (400) people at once than the town crier system.

The use of mobile phone by the king, ward and district heads do make calls to the various villages to deliver the information. This is done within few minutes than sending a messenger or town crier to do the work which will take plenty of time and energy to deliver the message.

Equipping the town crier with a mobile phone instead of using his voice, he can now have a mobile phone or a car with speakers mounted on top to move around from place to place and pass across information.

District head can have a Facebook page so that any information can be posted there. While 6 (70%) of the respondents said that they are still effective.

The language of the Bwatiye people is very effective because 98% of the people can still communicate with it fluently.

Music and drum are still used in most part of the Bwatiye land to entertain and communicate with the people.

The town crier is still very much effective and relied upon for information delivery.

(ix). *What are the verbal and non-verbal means of Bwatiye traditional communication used to communicate effectively with one another?*

All the respondents interviewed identified the following as the verbal and non-verbal means of Bwatiye traditional communication:

#### **Verbal means of Bwatiye Traditional Communication**

Songs - *Gemshi*

Town crier- *Hinato*

Ward head- *humi kabe*

District head- *humi kwaha*

Age grades- *Ji mwasato*

Market women association- *Ji lomo*

Meeting- *Peto*

Sharing ideas together- *Shalale*

Agreement- *Kulosoto*

Making promises- *Vosokwame*

Story telling- *Gbamato*

Festival- *kwete, vayati Gamadiyo and Imbru, Farai*

Village head - *kpana*

### The Non-Verbal means of Bwatiye Traditional Communication

Signs

Symbols

Alarm- *Kawahome*

The sound of the elephant tusk- *Linto*

Smoke- *Towu diye*

Gun shot- *Nbudikito*

Drum- *hobuduwe*

Ululation- *Nzukombe*

### Question 3: Bwatiye Traditional means of Communication can be improved upon for Proper Enhancement of Democratic Participation.

Questionnaire questions 8 (x) is USED to answer the above research question.

(x). *How can the Bwatiye traditional communication be improved upon to meet up the demands of effective communication among the Bwatiye people to aid participatory democracy?*

All the respondents 10 (100%) suggested the following improvements that can be made on Bwatiye traditional communication.

The king, district and ward heads can have a Facebook page where traditional signs, symbols, and objects can be used to send specific messages.

Equipping the town crier instead of using his voice, he can now have a mobile phone or a car with speakers mounted on top to move around from place to place and pass across information. Community radio where programs are disseminated in the local dialect.

Traditional language should be used in the production of written materials like pamphlets.

The signs and symbols should be used on those printed materials so that once the Bwatiye man or women see it, he or she would understand the information.

The use of Bwatiye songs which is largely in use should be well used in mobilizing the people. And because the Bwatiye man or woman likes music and dance, this should be properly harnessed through the use public address system.

Proper and accurate documentation of information, agreement and resolution and the adequate production of a memorandum to circulate the entire community.

Printing the Bwatiye traditional signs, symbols, and codes on T-shirts

(xi). *Which aspect of the Bwatiye traditional communication would you recommend for improvement and why did you recommend it?*

Four (4) respondents recommended the town crier system for improvement. The reason is that villages and towns are growing bigger; it will be difficult work for an individual to go from ward to ward to pass across information. So, the town crier should be equipped with a public address system which will help him talk to more than 400 people at once.

Three (3) other respondents recommended that the *shalale* and the *kulosoto* of the Bwatiye community be improved upon. This is because the two are the points where agreements are reached and activities are taken.

While the other (3) recommended that the signs and symbols should be used on printed materials so that once the Bwatiye people see them they will recognize and understand the information. Another thing is to use the Bwatiye songs through the use of sound system mounted on vehicles.

(xii). *How can the Bwatiye traditional communication be sustained?*

The Bwatiye traditional communication can be sustained only when the people used their language constantly.

The king, district and ward heads can have a Facebook page where traditional signs, symbols, and objects can be used to send specific messages.

The king, district, and ward heads can have a Facebook page where traditional signs, symbols, and objects can be used to send specific messages.

It can be sustained through literacy programs. Let the entire Bwatiye people be able to read and write in the Bwatiye language; let the language be preferred and used above any other language during occasions, meetings, and preaching.

A cultural center should be created where all the artifacts will be kept. This center will contain things that the people were using in the past like signs, symbols, and cooking utensils among others. Once these things are preserved it will help the people in understanding how things are done in past and in the present.

### **Findings**

The findings show that the Bwatiye traditional communication system is an effective, reliable, credible and efficient means for communicating with the Bwatiye people about political participation. The Bwatiye people totally relied on it for every communication need like political and development initiatives. They are always at the center of any decision making regarding political activities.

The king, chiefs, ward district and village heads, age grades, town crier system and other traditional groups are dependable and standard media for mobilizing the people. It is potent and authentic in nature.

The Bwatiye traditional communication channels like the music and songs could be adopted and magnified via the use of a public address system which substitutes the town crier system. These songs are used to scold, to encourage a positive attitude, or ask the people to converge for a serious discussion that would benefit them and the community at large.

### **Conclusion**

The Bwatiye people have a well-established and functional verbal and non-verbal system of communication. This implies that the Bwatiye traditional communication is effective, reliable, natural and easy to use. It has proved to be a credible source of disseminating reliable information. They have relied on it for any social, economic, health, cultural and political communication.

The Bwatiye traditional communication system was and is still very effective. Its content is not ambiguous. They are simple, easy to understand and the rural folks believe in it for any social and political transaction.

The Bwatiye traditional communication systems serve as a complementary tool where the modern media could penetrate and be effective. The town crier system, ward, district, chiefs, age grades and village heads are still very much effective despite the presence of the modern means of communication.

It is believed that the Bwatiye traditional communication system will always maintain its relevance if it is incorporated into the modern media like Facebook and Twitter. Some of the modern media are a transposition of the traditional communication as it can be seen in the modernization of local instruments like the flute and trumpet to the modern mobile phone as well as gunshot, horns, and drum sound been modernized to loudspeakers.

## Recommendations

There is a need to improve the town crier by adopting the modern means of the public address system where local language, music, songs and ululation could be used to attract the attention of the people in order to relay the information to them.

The Bwatiye traditional communication system should be incorporated into the modern media like Facebook and twitter where the Bwatiye people can access post and discuss issues affecting them. The Facebook and twitter should display some non-verbal means of communication like symbols, signs and objectifies to convey specific messages.

This work will attract other researchers to explore the true nature of traditional communication and how it can be used facilitate and to enhance political participation in every sphere of the community.

The young Bwatiye people should have to learn the dialect through the use of proverbs for conveying specific information. There is also a need for the State and Federal government to sponsor researches in this field so as to understand its true nature and used it to bring about development in the community.

Bwatiye traditional festivals like *Farai*, *Kwete*, *Vayato*, marriage ceremonies and other important festivals should be publicized by through the radio, television, and print medium. This will instill pride in the people and them to be more decorum and obedient.

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