

RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA THROUGH NOLLYWOOD HOME VIDEO: A VIDEO PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

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Abstract

*The protracted conflict among the bandit groups in Sankera geo-political zone of Benue State has resulted to the killings of innocent souls and the destruction of properties. The conflict management approach over the years has been the deployment of security such as the army, air force and the police to resolve the impasse. However, not much has been achieved, hence the adoption of multidimensional approaches. In this research, Participatory Video Approach (PVA) has been adopted, using the selected home video *This Election* with peace mechanism as a positive approach that will help the parties in the conflict situation to find novel ways of resolving the differences for peace and development in the area. The study adopted qualitative research methodology approach. Surveys, focus groups discussion, interview, analysis and review of rated literature are used as instruments for data collection. The study found out that political gladiators are the principal causes of conflict in the area. Another fundamental cause of the conflict has been the corruption that has taken over the mind-sets of the youths in the area. The paper therefore recommends that all hands must be on deck for peace and development in the area. Peace has been identified as being sacrosanct for development and progress in the area and elsewhere.*

Keywords: Home Video, Conflict, Nollywood, Participatory Video Approach, and Resolving

Introduction

Home video as a mirror and conscience of the society projects human behaviours for man to look at and adjust for good. As a medium of communication, video occupies a very strategic position in the process of socialization. It has a remarkable impact on people as it engages them to make the right choices and take different decisions on several issues, with a view of setting agenda for positive behaviour change. Not only does it influence the way people interpret different aspects of their lives, but it also serve as a guide on several matters including the nature and pattern of socio-cultural, religious and political reformation. This is most obvious when viewed from the perspective of the videos with negative behavioural content which people view for their leisure and entertainment. This implies that film has the ability of affecting the emotional temperaments of individuals, even without having such life experiences of the issues that form the contents of such films.

In this paper, the researchers hope to employ Participatory Video Approach (PVA) to the three sites in Sankera geopolitical area that is currently experiencing high rate of criminal activities. These crimes range from kidnapping, assassination, murder, possession of firearms and robbery. It is hoped that when this video *This Election*, is watched and assessed together with the residents of the area, it will go a long way in salvaging the situation. The protracted conflict among the bandits in the zone that is breeding all the aforementioned crimes is well captured in the video. So, if they watched and assess themselves, they will make a decision that will transform the area to a better place to be.

Peace and security are interwoven as there cannot be security without peace and vice-versa. Security itself can be viewed from different dimensions: food security, financial security, social security, personal security, national security, and so on. For the purpose of this paper, it will suffice to confine ourselves to the domain of national or internal security in Nigeria. Back home in Benue State, the story seems to be worst as on daily basis, lives are wasted without any convincing efforts to stop the situation. In line with this, Gov. Alia directs "The security agencies to take the battle to criminal elements disrupting the peace of the state and bring them to justice" (16). His Excellency's reaction to issues of security came at a time that threat to human lives and properties in the state has reached a crescendo. No one is safe because of the activities of both internal and external criminals.

It is in view of the above scenario that the researchers' hope that lessons from the selected home video will be replicated in the troubled area to bring lasting peace. The criminal activities in Nigeria are on the increase and as such require the attention of all and sundry for peace and development to be achieved. Shading of blood in Nigeria has become a daily occurrence without any efforts to stop the act. Similarly Desen Mbachaga laments that "Nigerian citizens have being pushed into a vicious circle of bloodletting and violence. The masses are held bondage in fear and uncertainty" (83). Because of the above scenario, all hands need to be on deck to stop the escalation of the menace.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to engage the targeted audience through the participatory video approach in resolving the protracted killings among communities in Benue State by bandits. Based on this, the specific objectives are to:

1. To examine causes of killings in the society.
2. To expose the importance of the participatory video approach in resolving in our society.

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda Setting Theory also known as The Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media, was first put forth by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972 in *Public Opinion Quarterly*. They originally suggested that the media sets the public agenda, in the sense that they may not exactly tell you what to think, but they may tell you what to think about. McCombs and Shaw went on to write on agenda setting at great length, they have produced many articles and research on the various facets of the theory. Since their introduction of this theory, there has been a plethora of research regarding its uses, and there now exists an extension of the theory called Second Level Agenda Setting.

This theory is intended to apply to the news media, although in certain cases it has been applied to other areas of the media and messages which they transmit to audiences. This theory can equally be applied in this study, since it sets an agenda for the public to follow. This theory is linked to this research in the sense that the Tiv film/home video producers can set an agenda of crime management approaches through their home videos packaging for the society to imitate and manage crime in the society effectively; pay attention to every detail that is targeted towards proffering a workable solution to reducing the rate of crime in the society.

Methodology

This study adopted qualitative research methodology. The qualitative approach made use of; surveys, focus groups discussion, interview, content analysis and review of related literature as instruments of data collection, to give credence to the study. The scope of study is Sankera geopolitical zone of Benue State Nigeria. The axis consists of three local governments with this population; Ukum LGA, Katsina-Ala LGA, and Logo LGA. Because of the volatile nature of the security situation in the zone, three sites were selected, one each from the three local governments areas. In Ukum LGA, Zaki/Biam was selected, Katsina/Ala town, was chosen in Katsina/Ala LGA and Ugba, selected in Logo LGA.

The targeted audience, was geographically defined as any resident in Sankera is aware of the insecurity rocking the zone, day in day out. So, every resident can be part of the focus groups or interviewee. The focus groups were divided into three; the followers, family heads and community leaders. The analysis of data

collected is based on the larger proportion of the groups as it affects the selected sites in the three local government areas in the axis.

The Causes of Conflict in the Society

There are so many reasons why there is conflict in the society, especially the Sankera axis which is the study area of this research. Such reasons include but not limited to the following; fight for supremacy among the bandit groups, political tussles for leadership by politicians, market association leadership struggle, land disputes, proliferation of weapons in the hands of unauthorised people, non-prosecution of the offenders and commercialization of the act.

The above reasons accounted for why unprecedented killings are the order of the day especially in Sankera zone. In an interview, Matthew Ashaver adduces that "struggle for supremacy by the armed bearing youths is another cause of conflict in the area" (Oral Interview 2024). This implies that as these bandits fight for leadership in their domain the resultant effect is the killings of both the bandits and defenceless civilians. Bullets has no friend. It kills whoever is standing on its way.

From another perspective, Awase Bosha, a politician in Katsina-Ala Local Government "blames the politicians for being behind the numerous killings of innocent citizens going on in the area. Accusing them of using and dumping them during and after election with no commiserate job to take them off the street to be self-reliant" (Oral Interview, 2024). Since these youths are not properly engaged after election they rather resort to use the acquired arms for money making venture. This was the position of Henry Apeife of Logo local government area. (Oral Interview, 2024) The resultant effect of this act is the continue massacre of the masses with no hope at the moment.

In a similar vein the General Officer Commanding (GOC), 82 Division, Nigeria Army Major-Gen. Hassan Dada has expressed concern about the high number of weapons in unauthorized hands in Nigeria. According to him, "we need to take out these weapons in our midst, we need solutions, we need to think out of the box so we can take away these weapons" (1). The availability of these weapons in the hands of unauthorised and untrained people is another cause for the continued killings in the society today. These weapons need to be taken away from them since they are not authorised and trained to handle them.

Non-prosecution of offenders by the appropriate authority is another cause of crime in the society today. If the perpetrators of these criminal activities are apprehended, prosecuted and punished as the law stipulates, the level of crime and criminal activities would have diminished to the lowest ebb. Along the line, Peter Agbo opines that, "There is no doubting the fact that non prosecution and punishment of the crimes encourages the wide spread commission of crimes and the belief that crime is profitable" (3). Impunity to the committed crime poses no danger and threat to the criminal elements. If the criminals are allowed to face the full wrath of their action, it would go a long way to minimize crime in the society.

The Synopsis of *This Election*

This Election is directed by Hunde Solomon. It is a video that focuses on two notorious bandits, by name Gabi and Igbono. The impasse between the duos was caused and aggravated by the clash of interest of their political pay masters in the general election of who becomes the governor of the state. The conflict between the two was characterised by kidnapping, robbery and assassination of the innocent citizens of their community as way of fighting each other. This hostility lingers, for years after the general election was over.

However, after several years of the hostility between the duos, they decide to cease fire and allow peace to reign in their domain. The peace meeting was initiated by Gabi and both consented and came to a compromise to lay down arms and allow the electorates to vote candidates of their choice in the forthcoming general election. Gabi whose conscience pricks him for a change of life, initiated the meeting by calling Igbono on phone to come so that they can reason together on the way forward of their future and children. Both came fully armed with their cohorts should anything happens, there will be exchange of gun battle.

This is another avenue that crime could be managed for the perpetrators to refrain from the act since it has no positive benefit. They did not see any reason killing their kinsmen any longer for the interest of their political principals whom their children are outside the country studying in good schools and living a better life. The home video has a suggestive ending that sales the idea of quitting the evil way by criminals themselves. After several years of killing their fellow human beings, there was no gain at the end of the day, but regret for wasting their precious time for the politicians that have no regards for them and their families. What matters to the politicians is to take care of their families and give them the best life can offer. Therefore, it is waste of time and effort in futility trying to please and do their bidding(s) in life.

The Nature of Crime and Crime Management Approaches Adopted in the Home Video *This Election*

The home video *This Election* projected the formation of bandit groups by politicians to continually rig election in their favour to perpetually remain in power with their cohorts and stooge. The major bandit groups formed in the video are headed by Gabi and Igbondo. These groups constantly kidnapped, robbed and murder their perceived enemies as directed by their pay masters before, during and after election. Those eliminated are considered to be a threat to them for winning election. These are candidates that are loved by their constituents due to their track records in their previous assignment. Kidnapping, robbery and murder are criminal offences that are punishable by law. More so, unlawful possession of firearms by these bandits is another crime that is prohibited by the law. These are crimes that are projected in this home video. The crimes were orchestrated by political heavyweights in the community to eliminate their political enemies that are more popular than them, and can easily win the heart of people during election.

The crime management approach used in the home video is the rethink and withdrawer of the bandit's leaders, Gabi and Igbondo from continuous shading of the blood of the innocent people to please their pay masters. This is another way that crime could be managed in the society. If the perpetrators have a rethink of their actions and change from their evil ways to a better life, these political gladiators will not see anybody to carry out their dastardly act again. This will go a long way in reposition and instilling peace in the society. Only if the unknown gun men in Sankera can allow their conscience to prick them as it happened to the characters involved in this home video, these crime of kidnapping, assassination, robbery and murder will be a thing of the past, and their innocent brothers and sisters will enjoy life again

Data Presentation and Analysis

The researcher takes a critical look at the various responses given by the focus groups; the parents, family heads, community leaders and others with a view of analyzing and interpreting the data based on logical appraisal. The data collections were arranged on focus groups' format. The analyses were made emphasizing on the larger proportion of the respondents and some few respondents' responses were recorded.

Question 1

What lessons did you learn from the home video?

At Zaki/Biam, Katsina/Ala and Ugba all the focus groups admitted that the selected home videos are timely considering the frequency and magnitude of crimes in Sankera geopolitical axis and elsewhere. They all accepted that the lessons learnt from the selected home videos will go a long way in transforming the area with time. According to ManmwueseTsavnum who she reaffirms her earlier position that " Home video had both positive and negative lessons, especially on the younger ones".

The followers, family heads and community leaders were so much impressed on how Gabi and Igbondo in the home video *This Election* were able to resolve their long standing misunderstand as kinsmen and laid down their arms for peace to prevail. In the majority responses of these two focus groups, the best way of resolving issues of misunderstand between kinsmen was coming to a compromise. They cited instances of how communal crises in Tiv land were resolved through this means. They further emphasized that until the Tiv people go back to this traditional peaceful approach of resolving issues, there will not be peace and progress in the land.

An interpretation of the above analysis shows that a bulky proportion of the respondents believe that dialogue and punishment of the offenders were the lessons learnt from the selected home videos. This might be connected to the assertion that a problem discussed is a problem half solved. It might also be that others will take precautions if perpetrators of crimes are appropriately apprehended, prosecuted and punished as stipulated by the law. So, the continuous criminal activities in the zone could be connected to the fact that the perpetrators and their cohorts' were not apprehended and punished as shown in the selected home videos. Only if the imaginary actions in the selected home videos are replicated in real life, the crime rate in the society would reduce considerably for peace to reign.

Question 2

Why are you satisfied with the content of the home video?

Most respondents of the four focus groups, in the selected areas in Sankera axis were satisfied with the content of the selected home videos. In their responses, the selected home videos have addressed the issue of crime that is ravaging the zone and Nigeria as a whole. What can be deduced from the above responses is that, noticeable correlations of the respondents were satisfied with the content of the selected home video. This might be as a result that the contents were related to the happenings in the society. Issues of election, crime and crime management and other every day's issues affecting humanity were projected. So, the respondents were interested to know how home videos have captured and represented those issues for the audience to understand and appreciate better.

Question 3

To what extent do you think this home video is capable of minimizing crime in the society?

In Katsina/Ala, Zaki/Biam and Ugba, the followers and the family heads were unanimous that the selected home videos are capable of minimizing crime in the society to a certain degree. Their assertions were based on the ground that most of the things they are doing today were learnt through watching home video. They believe that if such home videos are made available for their age mates in the zone to watch, the act will go a long way in minimizing the nature, magnitude and frequency of crimes being experienced in the axis. In the view of TerdooAondoakura "the home videos have made him to be more resolute to resist any temptation of joining the bandits group that is a common practice among his age mates in the zone".

However, community leaders, doubt whether the people of nowadays will be pricked by their conscience, to change even after watching the selected home videos. Majority of them did not concert to such postulation. Although, some believe that all hope was not lost, hence all the available means of sensitizing the youths of the areas to desist from such act should be encouraged. According to MaseshinAngahar "the fight against crimes in the society today is an inclusive affairs. It must begin at the family level to whatever means that is available to disabused the minds of the people not to be willing tools in the hands of gullible politicians for mass destruction of lives and property".

From the interpretation of the above responses, an exalted number of respondents accorded that the selected home videos were capable of minimizing crime in the society to a certain level. This might be as a result of home video/film effects that have been in the society as so many areas of people's lives as being projected in Nollywood.

Question 4

How do you think this home video can reach everybody in the zone?

The followers, family heads and community leaders in the selected towns of Zaki/Biam, Katsina/Ala and Ugba suggested that the only way that the selected home videos could reach everyone in the zone including those perpetrating crime was through phone transfer. According to them, once some few people in the area have access of any information on the phone, such information becomes available greater number of the people in the zone and beyond.

According to most of the community leaders, people in the selected towns, they do not know how the home videos will get to everyone in Sankera area, especially the criminals that are so deadly having contact with them, since they have no regard to human life. In the view of Rebecca Ngueigba "She did not dream of going near these criminals as they have sold their conscience to the Devil and have no pity for human life".

A careful analysis of the above responses signify that a stupendous apposition of the respondents viewed phone/social media/viewing centres as the best options of getting even the criminals to watch the selected home videos and many others with similar theme and approaches of crime management. Their position might be connected to the fact that even the criminals have phone, they are on social media and are always among the people watching ball at viewing centres. So, the possibility of getting them to watch the selected home videos and other similar ones is 85 percent if the above mentioned means are utilized.

Question 5

Does the society need more of this home video?

Almost all the respondents in the four focus groups in the selected towns of Zaki/Biam, Katsina/Ala and Ugba concert that considering the deteriorating nature of the society today, it needs more of such home videos that preach against criminality, but exhorted virtues of integrity, transparency and equity before the law. They were impressed that the selected home videos do not celebrate criminal as it is a common practices with most Nollywood films/home videos. One of the respondent, Henry Apeife opines that 'the producers of the selected home videos should continue to focus more on lampooning the side effects of crimes against the flamboyant nature as it is the practice with some producers'.

Going by the statistics on the above responses, it indicate that a considerable number of the respondents were in uniformity that the society in her present condition needs more of such home videos that project how crime could be managed in the society today. Their agreement to why the society needs more of such home videos might be as a result of the rising wave of crime in the society today. So, for the society to keep moving, the inhabitants must look outside the security architecture of the country to curtail the frequency and magnitude of criminality.

Question 6

How has crime affected Sankera area?

In the three selected towns of Zaki/Biam, Katsina/Ala and Ugba, all the focus groups concerted that crime has negatively affected the area tremendously. They all postulated that a once crime free area in the state has become a ridicule zone, anywhere the name Sankera is mentioned. According to them, many people both indigenes and non-indigenes of the area have relocated to places like Gboko, Makurdi and other places within the state and beyond for safety. According to Nicolas Imande, "he never dreamt of leaving Zaki/Biam, but with the increase in criminal activities continuously, he has relocated to Gboko in order to sleep with his two eyes close".

From the analysis, the entire proportion of the respondents agreed that crime has negatively affected Sankera zone greatly. The negative effects have resulted in the low economics, social, religious and political lives of the people in the zone. Most investors had moved away from the area in fear of being kidnapped or killed. The area has been tagged by many as a no go area. In the assessment of Ikechukwu Sunday asserted that "he is now in Abuja doing his business in order to be alive and take care of his kids".

Question 7

Which group of people is responsible for crime in Sankera?

All the focus groups interviewed, pointed accusing fingers on the politicians and traditional rulers for being responsible for crimes in the area. According to the unanimous responses from all the focus groups, before now, Sankera area was the most peaceful area in the whole state, but things stated changing with the return of democracy in 1999. Most of the focus groups asserted that the grooming of banditry started in Gbisha/Katsina-

Ala local government area of Benue state immediately after the 1999 election by one notable politician (his name withheld) to continually rig election for him and his cohorts. Thereafter, the gang was not engaged and they started causing havoc in the area with no particular attention paid on the issue which was metamorphosed to what it is today. They also accused the traditional rulers for being complacent on their stand which has given their subjects enough room to continue with their activities.

The responses therefore indicate that there are a large proportion of respondents pointing at politicians/traditional rulers/bandits as being responsible for crime in the area. The respondents accused the politicians of being the secret patrons of the various groups of bandits that exist in the area. They equally allege that most traditional rulers give their fatherly blessing to these bandits at any giving opportunity and benefits from the proceeds of their criminal activities.

Similarly, respondents accused most security personnel posted in the area for conniving with the bandits to cause more mayhem in the zone. The bandits were also accused of having the evil mind to kill their kin men and commit more atrocity. Finally the general public were also accused of serving as informants to these various groups of unknown gun men that existed in the area.

Question 8

Has home video/film ever changed any bad behaviour in you?

In Zaki/Biam, Katsina/Ala and Ugba, most of the focus groups interviewed were of the opinion that home videos have effected so many changes in them. According to Luther Madugu "Home Video has taught him to love his wife more, without any reservation". The interpretation of the above analysis shows that a colossal number of respondents have been positively influenced by home videos/films messages. This might be another means of assuaging the worsening situation of crime in the society. The situation might have been worse than what it is now, but some might have been affected by the selected or similar home videos that change their lives. This is clear indication that home video/film is a great influence on people's lives as postulated in literature reviewed by different scholars.

Conclusion

The participatory video approach gives room for interaction among the members of the affected society to watch and assess their role in solving their teething problem by themselves. Through the presentation of the home video *This Election* before the targeted audience of Sankera zone, the people were able to understand more the major causes of their problems. Consequently, they know exactly what could be done to salvage the crimes going on in the zone due to the clash of interest by the politicians and bandits.

From the forgoing it is understood that the continued killings in Sankera area is caused by the greediness of political gladiators who want to perpetually be in control of the political structures in the area and other factors. To this end, they bought arms for the youths to rig the elections for them and their preferred candidates. Thereafter they couldn't get good jobs for such youths who are in possession of arms. In the event of no job and being idle, such youths formed armed groups and started training youths to handle guns and commit all kinds of atrocities. The researcher hopes that the model story in the home video can prick the youth's conscience to lay down arms and embrace peace as projected in the home video *This Election*. If this is done, the area will know peace as before.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study wish to recommend the following measures to help curtail the rising wave of criminal activities in Sankera geopolitical zone and by extension Nigeria at large. These are:

1. A deliberate attempt is made by the local governments in the area through the Cultural unit to establish home video/film centres in major towns and villages within the zone for showing of home videos/films with crime management approaches and related matters.
2. Nigerian audience should be sensitized by NGOs and Federal Government through Theatre for Development (TfD)/Participatory Video Approach (PVA) on the need to watch home videos with positive messages in order to change their lives for a better society.

3. The political gladiators should look forward to a common interest of the people rather than championing their diverse interests that are contradictory and are anti-people in nature, in order to ensure a crime-free- society.
4. The unknown gunmen in Sankera and beyond should imitate the characters in the home video, *This Election* and make peace among themselves and stop being used in the hands of politicians to cause destruction of lives and properties.
5. The local governments in the zone should, through the unit of Arts and Culture in collaboration with NGOs, sponsor films/home videos on crime management approaches and send them on line and deliberately engage volunteers to transfer them to people from the zone using other social media apparatus.
6. The offenders of crime should be made to face the full wrath of the law, by apprehending, prosecuting and punishing the offenders accordingly.

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Filmography

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List of Interviewees

Sample List of Interviewees in Zaki/Biam

S/N	Names	Sex	Location	Date of Interview
1.	TerdooAondoakura	M	Zaki/Biam	16/01/2024
2.	OrkundushimaTerungwa	M	Zaki/Biam	16/01/2024
3.	Sunday Ikechukwu	M	Zaki/Biam	16/01/2024
4.	Nicolas Imande	M	Zaki/Biam	16/01/2024
5.	Blessing Shilumun	F	Zaki/Biam	16/01/2024

Sample List of Interviewees in Kastsin/Ala

6.	TerungwaShiliga	M	Katsina/Ala	19/01/2024
7.	NgodooAshimen	F	Katsina/Ala	19/01/2024
8.	Terna Gum	M	Katsina/Ala	19/01/2024
9.	TersooTorny	M	Katsina/Ala	19/01/2024
10.	EunieceMsoo	F	Katsina/Ala	19/01/2024

Sample List of Interviewees in Ugba

11.	BendenageIgba	M	Ugba	22/01/2024
12.	Joy Shawon	F	Ugba	22/01/2024
13.	Christopher Gor	M	Ugba	22/01/2024
14.	MichealKwaghpila	M	Ugba	22/01/2024
15.	Mary Gba-Aondo	F	Ugba	22/01/2024