THEATRE AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL RE-ORIENTATION: THE EXAMPLE OF GLOBAL RIGHTS & YARAC VOTERS’ EDUCATION PROJECT IN PLATEAU STATE

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Theatre can be defined as a performance for the purpose of entertainment, information, education or communication. The performance can take place either in a building meant for theatrical performances, in the street or market square. “As much as theatre entertains, it also has the capacity to provoke thought or action about significant issues” (Illah, 4). However, Theorists argued that theatre has thrived in the hand of the bourgeois for such a long time. They used it as an instrument of oppression and coercion. This created a class in the society that fostered and aided the oppression of the masses placing theatre in the hands of the privileged few in the society. Be that as it may, dramatists like Arthur Miller began to project the tragic situation of the common man with his work, Tragedy and The Common Man. His theory was further developed by Augusto Boa! who removed theatre from enclosure of conventional stage craft to place it in the hands of the masses. Boat’s treatise is contained in his work, Theatre of the Oppressed. According to Ngugi Wa’ Thiongo, theatre is a weapon and it is the people who should use it. In specific respect to Africa he wrote: “If theatre is going to grow in Africa, it must be fairly based on the lives of the peasants and workers” (6)

Therefore, theatre has evolved over the years to become a communication tool for development. In what is known as Theatre for Development, theatre is part of the process of changing habits, attitudes, values and practices that may be, in some cases no longer relevant. It allows everybody to take part (participation) in an activity (problem) that concerns them (development).

It is in this context therefore, that this study seeks to explore how the theatre is used as a tool for social re-orientation with specific reference to the collaborative work carried out by Youth Adolescent Reflection and Action Centre (YARAC) and Global Rights in central Plateau town of Panyam on voters’ education. Panyam is a community in the central part of Plateau state that is largely indwelled by the Mwaghawul and a Fulani settlement outskirt of the town. The town is a political hub of central Plateau that has illustrious sons and daughters serving in various capacities from the Local Government to the Federal Government. With the various political bigwigs in this community belonging to various political parties, it bred division among the community along the lines of political interests. It also helps the politicians to rig during the election. The Global Rights/YARAC project sought to address the issue of the voters protecting their votes during election.

1. 1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study are as follows:

1. To study the concept of Theatre for Development (TfD) as employed in the re-orientation of the Plateau central people towards proper conduct during elections by Global Rights & YARAC.
2. To examine the process of intervention that ensures the success of the project.
3. To ascertain the factors identified and issues addressed in the Voters’ education project.
4. To examine the factors that guaranteed the success of the project.
5. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

As effective as Theatre for Development is, it has been a tool only in the hands of a few Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and University students, probably because they must offer the course as a pre-requisite to receiving a degree in Theatre Arts. However, there are issues that confront the use of this medium such as methodology, poor funding, low social consciousness and lack of effective monitoring and evaluation strategy for sustainability of any development achieved. The questions that we should seek the answers to here are firstly, why were the electorates denied their rights at the poll? Secondly, what is the effect of the stolen mandates on the community? And finally, how effective is TfD as development communication tool in Panyam? This work is to examine how the use of Theatre for Development raised the people’s consciousness and empowered them to take action against their political oppressors.

1. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The practice of theatre as a development communication has contributed to the field of theatre studies as well as being a useful means of raising people’s awareness about issues of concern. What remains to be explored exhaustively might be the extent to which this tool can be deplored in a complex critical situation. YARAC/Global Rights were confronted with this situation in Panyam and it helps to assess the efficacy of TfD in changing people’s behavioural pattern.

1. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As Theatre for Development gains relevance in Nigeria, more studies are required to document best practices. This work is one of such study that will be added to the scholastic endeavour in the area of Theatre for Development. The documentation of this best practice will contribute to the growing method of Theatre for Development in terms of methodology, processes, and other factors responsible for the success of the project under study. Significant issues affecting the practice of TfD will also be examined to decipher possible solutions that will help practitioners in this field.

Most forms of dramatic presentation over the ages have been in consonance with the ideals of construction expounded by Aristotle in the Poetics until Augusto Boal began to talk about Actor - spectators relationship which is basically about the integration between the two. As TfD employs this method, new lessons are emerging about the relationship between these two groups in the field of drama. More of the lessons learnt during the Global/YARAC projects will further help scholars to glean from the effect, impact and challenges associated with this method of acting. This may perhaps help in developing new theories of acting where amateurs are the cast and crew in communicating to their kinsmen what professionals were hitherto doing. Also, this study will examine the overall goal of the project and how it was achieved through this method. This hopefully will help other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) employing this strategy to successfully communicate their ideas.

1. DELIMITATION/ SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study covers Panyam in the central part of Plateau State. The findings are restricted to the concept, context and practice of Theatre for Development in Nigeria. Relevant scholastic materials related to TfD in Nigeria are reviewed. The special focus of this study is Theatre for Development and its relevance to social re-orientation using the example of the voters’ education orientation implemented in Panyam, Plateau State, Nigeria.

1. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the process of this study, the researcher encountered some challenges that restricted the outcome of this study. Some of these issues are; (1) Finances- due to the distant of the place of study, more visits to Panyam was not possible due to inadequate finances for transportation, lodging and other logistics. (2) Time- time became a serious factor that limited the findings because almost a generation has passed between the period this project was implemented and the time of this study. This reduced the number of people that could provide superfluous feedback on the project. (3) Upheaval in Plateau state- the persisted crisis on the plateau limited the visits of the researcher to the project community.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The conventional theatre practice which is a form of media is undemocratic as it does not allow for the participation of the audience. According to Boafo Kwame,

Communication patterns and processes in African societies are basically synchronic: patterns and processes in which a few people transmit information to the majority of the people who have minimal or no participation in information generation and dissemination. (1)

As conventional theatre serves as a medium of communication, the patterns and processes are often prepared and delivered to an audience that receives it without making any contribution to the product. Overtime, this method of communication has bred a passive audience that are mere consumers. The problem with this form of communication is that, with time, the percipient does not only lose the vision for change but loses the will also. Since communication involves information generation and dissemination, it is imperative that the audience participate actively in the process of what they consume. The outright passivity as earlier prescribed by Aristotle in his Poetics, is to instil fear and pity in the audience which will purge their emotion and make them sober to reflect about their own lives. While this may be good enough for the bourgeois theatre, it has its limitation if the complete channel of communication will be followed. There is need for feedback which the one way conventional theatre cannot offer. It was the need for this type of theatre imported from the West that led to the search for a theatre that serves the people. The aforementioned ‘finished’ theatre is perceived as an instrument of oppression and subjugation. It was this theatre that dominated the African society in the Colonial and Post Colonial era.

With the revolution brought by the work of Augusto Boal, a new form of theatre called ‘forum theatre’ was born. In his work, Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal brought to theatre Paulo Freire’s concept of theory and practice of revolutionary education as contained in his work

Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Augusto Boa! provides one of the most logical, coherent and complete critiques of the bourgeois theatre and its revolutionary practice. According to Boal, “what I believe is that we all should transform society and not abide by it, and not respect it completely.” (12)

Theatre for Development was first christened as “Forum Theatre” and for many years experimented in Latin America to help the oppressed air their opinion on issues that affect them. While the bourgeois theatre is the finished, well made theatre, the proletariat (oppressed classes) do not know yet what their world will be like, hence “Forum Theatre”. It is a forum for the people to look into issues that affect them, come to terms with the reality and proffer solution using theatre as an interface. All attempts by theatre practitioners were thereafter geared towards creating theatre for the people which eventually failed. According to Zakes Mda,

Creating theatre for the people failed. Practitioners trying to establish a truly African theatre have adopted various myths, legends, rituals and dances to present drama in the context of Western theatre. (9)

The import of this form of theatre is the juxtaposition of traditional materials in Western form to produce a theatre for the people. This is not so much different from the finished theatre Boal was advocating against. The reason for this was not far-fetched as the African scholars after the colonial experience were doing everything possible to create a theatre that is African in nature and represents the aspirations of the people. This continual search led to what is known today as Theatre for Development (TfD). In the opinion of Christopher Kamlongera,

It is not a cliche to say indigenous performances in Africa contain within them some functional elements. In most cases this takes the form of a didactic statement. Whist performers might engage in doing spectacular movements and dances, they might also carry with the performances special messages or lessons to some members of their audience. Some work in theatre for development is a direct result of recognising these characteristics in indigenous African performances. (10)

As restated by Kamlongera, it is evident that most theatre practitioners in Africa were seeking for a theatre for the masses though they could not find a better way to achieve this other than emphasising the lessons they want the people to learn into their performances in the community project aimed at providing development for the people.

Doing theatre for the people could not help in providing the theatre of the people. The search therefore was to arrive at a theatre where the audience will not only participate but they are enlightened about their problems and what action to take for solution. Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator who developed the theory of education that encourages the oppressed to recover their humanity and overcome their condition. However, there is a role the oppressed have to play to have this liberation. It was this work by Freire that Augusto Boal applied to the theatre and documented in his critique as Theatre of the Oppressed. In line with the work of Boal, Ross Kidd, Martin Byram, other adult educators and theatre practitioners like Christopher Kamlongera, Stephen Chifunyise and David Kerr concurred. Mda saw that;

Theatre can provide a method of implementing Paulo Freire’s idea of raising the critical awareness of the disadvantaged people in society so that they will be able to identify their problems as consequences of a particular social order. (10)

The most documented experimentation of the above assertion which developed into what is commonly known as Theatre for Development (TfD) in Africa began with the Laedza Batanani. It was founded in 1974 in the Bakalaka area of northern Botswana by a community leader and two educators. In the words of Kidd and Byram, the initiators of the project assumed that;

a major constraint on development was people’s apathy and indifference; what was needed was a means of ‘sparking’ people’s interest and involvement. This mobilizational, educational and collective action process required a new approach to non-formal education. The organizers rejected the existing approach of merely providing services and information; they felt this reinforced dependence and individualism rather than encouraging self-reliant collective action. (13)

With this assumption, the goal was to find a way of motivating people in development, and hence overcome the problem of indifference to government development efforts in the area. In the implementation of theatre for development, participation was the goal of the theatre and not just a method of theatre. The main goals were genuine community participation, critical awareness and collective action. The end result is conscientization of the participants to the reality of their fate in the development process that obviously excluded them. The process which can be liken to Brecht’s alienation effect helps them understand their predicament in a scenario where they can also offer useful solution within the socio-economic set-up they find themselves.

According to Crow and Etherton, the process of taking theatre to the people began when intellectuals which include dramatists and university students took prepared plays to tour with the people. An example was the Makerere University Travelling Theatre, which toured various rural communities. In most cases, the plays were not suitable as the contents dealt with situations that were not relevant to the people. The stage that followed was when plays were sponsored by international agencies such as Planned Parenthood Federation, UNESCO and governments who were eager to promote their social policies. The themes of the plays around this period include family planning, health education, hygiene, and many others with the sole aim of social changes. At the University of Ibadan, the Theatre Students also toured various communities with plays. It was later that the government of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida introduced the use of theatre into the programmes under the Mass Mobilization for Self Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). The objective was to “re-orient Nigerians to shun waste and vanity and to shed all pretences of affluence in their lifestyle, to propagate the need to eschew all vices in public life, including corruption, dishonesty, electoral and census malpractices, ethnic and religious bigotry”. (1) Though the stages did not follow chronologically, another stage however, was when emphasis was placed on art rather than social change. Theatre practitioners and intellectuals held workshops with communities where plays were created by community members and performed for entertainment purpose without any political objective or social vision. An example of such group was the Chikwakwa (grassroots) travelling theatre in Zambia. In the fourth stage, villagers were facilitated to make plays about the problems and proffer solutions. The attention was on the people’s participation at this stage in solving the community problems. Development and extension workers served as the actors and performers. They researched into the problems of the target community and devised a play to address the issue(s). This brought interaction between the performers and potential audience before plays were performed.

The audiences also complete some plays as the plots are deliberately left unfinished for the audience to complete them. It was what Boal referred to as the unfinished theatre of the proletariat. The plays were completed through discussions between the facilitators and the community members or by acting out the solutions or both. Folk media which include story-telling, songs, dances, etc were used to finish the plays in most cases.

In the study of Brian Crow and Michael Etherton, in which they focused on the problem of form and ideology, they opined that,

Popular theatre is a theatre through which intellectuals try to communicate with the people most disadvantaged in their society, either by presenting plays to them in which problems of society are articulated from the point of view of the people or by getting them to present plays to themselves which increasingly help them to analyse their society. (18) The whole process of Theatre for Development is a process of returning theatre from the minority elites to the original owners- the masses. It is the democratic process of allowing the people determine how they want to have what they need within the context of the social order and confines of the law. Theatre in such case then becomes the tool which no longer serves the oppressors’ or government’s purpose to subdue the people but as a means of liberation to allow people fight for what rightly belongs to them or better still for the people to determine their fate. As stated by Freire the people gain

... a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves, often take the initiative in acting to transform the society that has denied them this opportunity of participation. (9)

This argument is supported by Boal who feels that,

...the spectator delegates no power to the characters (or actors) either to act or think in his place. On the contrary he himself assumes the protagonist role, changes-in short, trains himself for real action. In this case, perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution (177).

From the above submission, it further reinstates the fact that the masses’ action can be determined by the roles they are given to play in the theatre. The more participation they enjoy therefore, the more expression they gain for the real action that would engender a revolution against the social injustice perpetuated by the ruling class. It is in this regard that in his book on Theatre for Development, Performing Life, Oga Abah submitted that,

This kind of theatre speaks to the people in their own language and idiom, and deals with issues of direct relevance to their own lives. It is a practice which builds the people’s artistic modes of expression (song, dance, etc) into the process of discussion and performances (3).

Hence the importance of theatre as a medium of articulating the problems of the poor and oppressed since the main organs of communication are outside their control and theatre allows for freedom of expression through their artistic means of expression. Therefore, Theatre for Development in this sense is seen as a crossbreed of the Western type of theatre and the traditional performative arts.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, the Sociological Method of research is employed. This is because the thesis is about a phenomenon of disenchantment towards electoral process, apolitical attitude, political manoeuvring and all the attendant electoral problems confronted by the people of Panyam before the intervention in the community by the theatre group. According to Sam Ukala, “this methodology involves a high degree of the researcher’s interaction with the society being studied.” (13) The researcher having lived in Plateau state and familiar with the political climate for almost a decade chose to use this methodology. Information was elicited through interview of people including assistant facilitators, community members and observers about the impact of the Theatre for Development project carried out by Youth Adolescent Reflection and Action Centre in conjunction with Global Rights. A special attention is dedicated to enquire the post implementation experience of the people in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the monitoring process, if any was carried out. The cross­sectional survey was stratified to cover the men, women, youth and the particular group of Fulani community who were said to be apolitical and never participates in any voting exercise in the community. With notes obtained through observation and having participated in every stage of the implementation of the project, the researcher brings his experience of the project to bear. Ukala posits that, “he would remember much longer important elements and processes of the event. ”(27) He further listed techniques for data collection under this method which include “Observation, participant-observation, interview, live recording on video or audio-tapes.” (13) The following techniques were used by the researcher to collect the data presented herein. (a) Participant Observation: the researcher was part of the team that carried out the preliminary investigation. This was an advantage to him since he had lived on the plateau for many years. He later became an assistant facilitator on the same project. All these imply that he had an indepth knowledge of the process and negotiations that eventually made the project a success. At various times he headed a team facilitating the workshop. (b) Interview: In the course of this work, the researcher interviewed some community people of Panyam, some of the facilitators. These interviews were added to the one conducted prior and during the project to arrive at certain positions in writing this work. Though the researcher had no access to the video recording since it had been lost by the funding NGO, he used materials from the notes taken during the implementation of the project. He explores the success factors of Global Rights/YARAC voters’ education project in a seemingly hopeless situation that revived the interest of a community in politics, uniting them and bringing about a fair electioneering in 2007 in the central Plateau.

CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP

1. The Concept of Theatre for Development

Theatre for Development (TfD) which is also known by other names such as popular theatre, propaganda theatre, case drama, developmental theatre, forum or sometimes, political theatre refers to a theatre developed as one way of helping the masses in the developing world to address issues peculiar to their environment and to see to their own improvement culturally, educationally, politically, economically and socially. TfD is a term used to describe the functional elements contained in the indigenous African performances. In most cases this takes the form of an educative statement. While performers might engage in doing spectacular movements and dances, they also carry within the performances special messages or lessons to the members of their audience.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Popular Theatre grew out of the popular education movement, with Paulo Freire of Brazil being one of the popular education’s best known proponents. Freire developed his Pedagogy of the Oppressed in a time of extreme political repression in Brazil. His liberatory literacy education involved not only reading the word, but also reading the world through the development of critical consciousness or conscientization. A critical consciousness allow people to question the nature of their historical and social situation - to read their world - with the goal of acting as subjects in the creation of a democratic society. Like Brecht, Freire too wanted human beings to take an active role in their lives. His popular education methods countered the dominant system of education - a system inherently oppressive and dehumanizing that he described it as a “banking model” - where students were passive recipients of the teacher’s knowledge. Popular education programmes with similar goals developed around the same time, and still continue, particularly in adult education and community development projects around the world.

Popular education is aimed at empowering traditionally excluded, marginalized, or subordinated sectors of the society. With the political intentions of collective social change toward a more equitable and democratic society through raised awareness and collaborative action, popular education practices explore the learners’ lived experiences in both their humanizing and oppressive dimensions. It draws on and validates learners’ knowledge in the production of new knowledge. Through critical dialogue, reflection, and problem posing, learners discuss the possibilities of transforming the oppressive elements of their experience culminating in collective social action. This involves the dynamic of reflection and action or “praxis”.

In the 1960s, inspired by Brecht’s theatrical techniques and Freire’s popular education approach, Augusto Boal, another Brazilian, developed a specific set of theatrical techniques he called the Theatre of the Oppressed. Like Brecht, his theatre challenged traditional theatrical conventions. For Boal, the commercial or professional theatre was an instrument of the ruling class, creating divisions in society by separating the actor from the spectator. In traditional theatre, the spectator is invited to identify and empathize with the characters in the drama, and the play provides, at its end, an Aristotelian sense of catharsis, leaving the spectator with a feeling of resolution, a fundamentally passive exercise. To create active audiences, Boal’s theatre not only breaks the “fourth wall” but also the division between actor and audience by transforming the spectator into a “spect-actor” by taking on the role of the protagonist. His techniques of Image Theatre, Simultaneous Dramaturgy, and Forum Theatre give the audience a part in the dramatic action, by discussing plans for change, directing the action, or trying out different, solutions through drama. For Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed was a weapon for oppressed people to use toward changing their social reality “a rehearsal of revolution” (155).

According to Kidd and Byram

Laedza Batanani is the most documented of TfD in Africa. It was founded in 1974 in the Bokalaka area of Northern Botswana by a community leader and two adult educators. Its basic goal was predicated upon: A major constraint on development was people’s apathy and indifference; what was needed was a means of ‘sparking’ people’s int erest and involvement. This mobilizational, educational and collective action process required a new approach to non-formal education. The organisers rejected the existing approach of merely providing services and information; they felt this re­enforced dependence and individualism rather than encouraging self-reliant collective action. (1)

After the Laedza Batanani experience in Bostwana, there have been many other projects carried out using this form of theatre. Popular projects include the Peasant farmers in Kamiriithu organized by Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Ngugi Wa Miri which led to the revolt against the white farmers. Here in Nigeria, the Samaru project led by the staffers and students of Drama of the Ahmadu Bello University are part of the earlier attempts to experiment with this theatre. Among all other functions, theatre for development lends itself to raising the awareness of the oppressed to rise up and challenge the oppressor. This process is defined as conscientization. The aim of raising consciousness is to change the perspectives in a ‘critical and positive direction.’ Also, TfD has become a medium which Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and development workers explore for rural development communication. These bodies also use this means of communication for assessing the method and level of the development process. The growing acceptance of this form of communication has been embraced by theatre practitioners as well as government. In Nigeria during the military regime of Ibrahim

Badamosi Babangida in the 80s, the government floated what was known as Mass Mobilization for Self Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). The objective was “to re-orient Nigerians to shun waste and vanity and to shed all pretences of affluence in their lifestyle, to propagate the need to eschew all vices in public life, including corruption, dishonesty, electoral and census malpractices, ethnic and religious bigotry.” (1) Though some scholars like Pru Lambert have not accepted it as a form of viable theatre.

Some ‘developmentalists’ are extension agents and officials on the one hand, who use theatre as an effective auxiliary educational tool, but tend to use the form as a vain search for solutions to complex problems of poverty and oppression (49)

However, the fact remains that other developmentalists employ the use of theatre as a dialectical tool for attaining critical analysis through the process of Paulo Freire conscientization. And this has produced some results with various experiences in the usage by the practitioners.

1. Theatre for Development as a Communication Tool

While the conventional theatre is widely acceptable as a communication medium to entertain, educate and provide information for the consumers, the communicative effect of theatre for development can only be appreciated in the context for which it was developed and it is being used. Oga Abah said,

Theatre is especially important as a medium of articulating problems by the poor. Theatre is especially important as a medium of articulation in the lives of the poor disempowered groups because the main organs of communication such as the radio, television media are outside their control (3)

This implies that TfD is one of the few, if not the only communication tool at the disposal of the masses with which they can conveniently express their views until the advent of technological revolution that brought about the social media. Theatre for development is a kind of theatre that allows the people to speak their own language, treat issues that concerns them directly and voice out their opinion as it affects their plight. Such experience helps in building the expression of the people artistically (song, dance, etc) into the process that leads to discussion and performance. Baofo opines that;

Communication pattern and process in African societies are basically synchronic: patterns and processes in which a few people transmit information to the majority of the people who have minimal or no participation in information generation and dissemination (1)

Hence, the need to redress this ‘banking method’ by bringing the people to decide their own destiny through a facilitative method that TfD provides. This will then help to change their perspective of the problem as well as the solutions to their problems.

Basically, TfD is hybridization from both the western type of dialogue drama and the traditional performative arts. This communication tool avails itself through professionals to bringing the masses to an understanding of the issues facing them and proffering solutions within the context of the people themselves. The process of information gathering and facilitating people to doing theatre will suffice here. Basically, projects using TfD are either sponsored by the Government or an NGO, through a theatre group, an institution of higher learning offering drama as a course or through another NGO working among the masses. Usually, the area(s) of concern is identified and after the necessary mobilization, the team of facilitators move into the community to research into the community problems or the areas of the people’s needs. Edet Essien opined that;

The society has contributed immensely to theatre practice by providing the resource base or material, while the end product of theatre aims at re-shaping, re-creating and reforming the very society the ingredients were derived (1)

It is the people that provides the indepth information about the prevailing problems as well as come up with possible solutions that can be applied to alter their fate positively. Various methods can be used to gather information such as Focused Group Discussion, flooding method, Participatory Learning Appraisal, oral or written interview, and so on. The important thing is to make it comfortable enough to give information that will assist the facilitators to know their plight and provide platform for mutual cooperation as regards the project implementation. This must be done after the permission has been sought from the gate keepers such as the community head, traditional rulers, etc. This stage is directly followed by prioritizing the problems of the community to know the major issues that need urgent attention. This process helps to give focus to the project and as well reduce the burden of attempting to address all the issues at stake in the community.

Sequel to this is workshop where stakeholders in the community are gathered together to discuss the issues discovered to be problems. This stage is known as problem analysis. This discussion often leads to a storyline that provides the improvisation which will be acted by the volunteers among the community. Once the details of the improvisation are ready, there will be casting which could be made voluntary or the facilitators’ discretion is used. Then begins the rehearsal that may be interrupted by the people since it is their story, they have the right to say how it must be told. This is followed by what Boal calls “...a new awareness of selfhood (9).”

Freire also saw people learn when their own lives were the subject of their learning; Boal even identified that audiences sat up when he put on stage their neighbours, the Brazilian people, their own reality. This rehearsal is more than ordinary rehearsal to them; it begins to form a picture of who they are just like Al-Hakim portrayed his major character in the Fate of a Cockroach. This rehearsal becomes a rehearsal for life as can be seen in the Kamiriithu experience, the people revolted against their oppressors when they saw their lives portrayed on the stage. After the rehearsal comes the final production. This is usually done in the open square (theatre-in-the-round) where everybody can see and appreciate the story. Little props are used and the language is the people’s language with their songs, dance, music, etc. Once the performance begins, anything can happen, from the interruption from the audience to revolts by the people. Though modern TfD projects do not encourage revolting against the authority of the land but efforts are made through the play to make the people uncomfortable enough with their situation to desire a change.

After the final performance then a post-performance discussion is organized to diagnose the issues addressed in the production. During this period, views of the audience are sought as to the issues raised and possible solutions outside of the drama kits are entertained. This forum gives more opportunity to people to air their views. The final stage is the follow up visits used as a monitoring and evaluation strategy for the project implemented. According to Ahura Tar,

If community theatre projects are to be meaningful then they must not end with the workshop. Follow-up activities must be worked out by the theatre practitioners to see that what is stated leads to action for change. This requires the theatre workers to keep up the pressure and enthusiasm in the affected villages so that the villagers do not lapse into inaction once more. (20)

1. Theatre for Development and Social Interventions

Theatre for Development like other forms of theatre practice draws its material from the people who are mostly the masses at the receiving end of the antics of the dominance group. Since society is the basis for social relationship. These social relationships raise issues that theatre seeks to intervene to either resolve or change people’s perspectives about them by raising their consciousness. Issues like voters’ education, poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender inequality, and many more are some of the issues that have been addressed. We shall take a look at some of these projects carried out across Africa. As Edet posits, "the society has contributed immensely to theatre practice by providing the resource base or material...” (1).

Ultimately, the people own this theatre and provide the material with which it is formed and practiced. Steven Daniel in another place agrees with this when he said

Popular theatre addresses the issue of participation, dialogue and critical consciousness among a community. It finds its Dose primarily in the idea that theatre involves the creation and recreation of ideas to meet specific challenges in a social environment. It upholds the individual as a credible being into the society and the potential to participate in the social transformation process. (34)

1. Theatre for Development in Nawagene, Mozambique

In November and December 1996, the United Nations Development Programmes sponsored a project for re-integration of the war torn Mozambique. In Nawagene, people have refused to return to their country after the war and settled in this community because they had no trust for one another. They lived in fear and disunity. In the report titled: Theatre for Development: a Dynamic Tool for Change by Helen Scott- Danter, a man said to the team “before the war there was unity and trust between us but the war destroyed that and we still have not built it up.” (1) Helen has this to say,

The concerns that most people raised in Nawagene during the social survey were to do with their lack of local services (need for clean water, more accessible health centre, etc) whereas the issues which surfaced during the theatre presentation and which were discussed and acted out were to do with social relationships and the social causes inhibiting development. Ideally, those working with the community should stay in the area throughout the process, involving the local community in all stages, including the play-making. This also ensures more effective follow-up. (1)

This group created a play with community workers near Milange, on the border with Malawi, a country which had received more than a million refugees from Mozambique during the war. The area is now economically completely dependent on Malawi. It was particularly interesting to see how the theatre tools were adapted. Instead of one image, there was an image for each chapter of the community's history: from the war to present problems of border police stealing produce (at the end of which a man from the audience commented the war is not

over) and the short initiation ceremony for girls compared to the two-

month long one of the past.

The play generated heated discussions, with one woman mentioning incest as a reason many women wanted to leave home. The drama created the forum for this taboo subject to be mentioned. Even though the subject was not pursued, it gave an opportunity for women to acknowledge it and to learn that they are not alone.

Instead of replaying the play, three spectators chose to improvise different aspects of domestic life in the past showing the mutual respect among family members which contrasted with the disharmony which was evident in the play. Afterwards, a village woman said: “But we don't want to return to the past; we just want respect, unity and patience within the home.” These were the qualities, it was agreed, what they needed within the community as a prerequisite to meeting their economic needs.

1. Poverty and Rural Development: The Gbetrome, Badagry

Experience.

This project was carried out in Gbetrome in Badagry West Local Government Area of Lagos State in December, 2008 with the purpose of identifying and analysing rural and urban problems which will lead to mobilization of the target audience towards achieving political, economic, cultural and social empowerment. According to Komolafe Ayodele, “Theatre was used to involve people in the discovery, analyses and putting together the rural picture.” (2)

On conducting the preliminary research, the following issues were discovered. Lack of unity, bad leadership communal dispute, ignorance of the people, lack of electricity, illiteracy, no water supply, impact of local government not felt, unemployment, laziness on the part of the people, poor health facilities, youth rural-urban migration, bad parenting among others.

After seven days of rehearsals, the group was ready for the final performance only to find out that the secondary school they were to use had not been secured for such event. Even with the permission from the Local Government Authority, the guard denied them the usage of the venue saying that the community had two kings and none of them could lay claim on the venue. Komolafe in his conclusion submitted that,

It is one thing to theorise and talk about the efficacy, indices of Theatre for Development in the classrooms; it is another thing entirely when you get to the communities to carry out a TfD project with them. For sincere and purposeful development to occur, we must involve the people in the ‘whispers’ and the ‘loud talks’ because what we are deciding is their lives, what we are re-modelling is their psyche, their belief-system (14).

The experiences differ based on the community, issues to be addressed and other variables. The Gbetrome project has shown that the success of TfD is not devoid of challenges which may prevent development as conceived by the facilitators.

1. Theatre for Development: Fighting the Spread of

HIV/AIDS in Defence Force in Zambia

In Zambia, TFD is a major tool for investigating and disseminating information and organizing people in matters of development and has in the last four years been part of the campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is located in government ministries, many NGOs and over 400 theatre groups participate on either full time or part time basis. The project was carried out among the project targeted defence personnel of all ranks and their families with funding from The Department of Defence HIV/AIDS Prevention Program and GEO-CENTERS of American Army with the objectives of (a) Improving HIV/AIDS skills of uniformed services personnel, (b) strengthening HIV/AIDS/STI behaviour change communication efforts targeted at uniformed service personnel (c) strengthening diagnostic management of STIs at military clinics and (d) Increasing the quality and utilization of voluntary counselling and testing (VCT ) services.

Since HIV/AIDS is a social problem that disempowers the affected or infected. Disempowerment takes many forms that include isolation, discrimination in jobs and relationships, inability to be in control of one’s own life. Disempowerment induces a sense of hopelessness. According to Dickson Mwansa;

In the defence units, disempowerment manifested itself in reported cases of suicide due to fear of being exposed among all ranks, large numbers of widows who could not fend for themselves and resorted to sex work within the camps and bases. There were over seven cases reported of officers of the rank of Captain up to Colonel and Warrant Officers who committed suicide in the event of being discovered with HIV. (4)

In such case as this, power begins when one gains the confidence and ability to analyse own social, and economic situation, articulate challenges, propose possible action for prevention of spread of HIV/AIDS, declare one’s own status and create communion with others in making some change.

The research was carried out using Participatory Learning Appraisal which helped to bring the issues to the fore as various means such as social causes, occupational causes and economic causes were discovered to be responsible for the social menace among the military. The process of TfD was followed and the performance was carried out with major achievements. Among which as stated by Mwansa are that,

TFD cannot cure those already infected but it can help remove stigma from infection and create an atmosphere in which the infected and affected can begin to feel free to associate with others. If located among and utilized by the people affected, TFD can give people a voice and hope of living a bit longer. TFD exposes attitudes and practices; it can act as a deterrent on those who may want to involve themselves in risky behaviours. When what existed in the private domain becomes open or public knowledge the chances of the behaviour change are increased. (4)

1. **Theatre as a Tool for Social Re-orientation**

We shall begin this discussion by citing Ananda Breed’s view on Theatre as tool for Social Re-orientation,

While TFD is used as an information gathering and development implementation tool, it also works as a methodology for team building, cultural identification, and conflict resolution. Theatre creates an open space to play the roles of self and others, thus communities are given the opportunity to question and challenge social hierarchies, gender roles, and discrimination. (1)

The underlying aim of every TfD project is to engender a form of social re-orientation or behavioural change as the case may be. This calls

for critical examination as to whether the objective is achieved or not. Though this might be difficult to assess as there may be no measuring standard for knowing the changes in behaviour due to people’s

awareness being raised. This makes it relatively difficult to determine how effective a TfD workshop is in its function as a process of empowerment.

The above statement implies that the process of behavioural change is more important to the theatre for development practitioner. His main aim is to raise the consciousness of the people through theatre. As it is with the mind, it’s so elastic that once it is stretched, it cannot return to its former state of ignorance. Once the people are

conscientized, their perspective change in a ‘critical and positive’ direction. In Popular Theatre, Alfonso Gamucio posits that this form of theatre

has developed in contexts where drama is used as a tool for communicating in a more direct and inter-personal way with the underprivileged sectors of society, to bring them the notion that only by means of their own participation

can their live change and society become more democratic.

(30)

This democratic process gradually leads to the ownership and control of the means of production which in turn helps the art to “disturb, shake and move the society towards self and critical thinking.”(31) Under the

South African experience voter education sensitization carried out shortly after the apartheid, Alfonso quoted Nadine Gordimer as saying, “perhaps the most original means of a voter education has been the creation of six travelling theatre troupes of black actors who have devised and acted a play.” (52) The continuous success of projects in TfD increases with varied experiences and paying attention to details such as group dynamics, cultural effects, economic and social life of the environment of project implementation.

**CHAPTER THREE Utilizing Music and Popular Theatre for Civic and Voters’ Education**

1. **Political Situation in Panyam**

Panyam is a community in Mangu local government area, central part of Plateau State. The town is very strategic to the state for many reasons such as the popular water fall in a nearby Kerang, mineral resources found in the area, plenty agricultural products. It has a population of about 203,514 people in a land area of 1,587.5 square meters. The community has produced prominent sons and daughters occupying strategic offices both at the state and national levels. Panyam is not just a hub of plateau politics but the pulse of plateau politics. The political situation in the area before the project was implemented reveals what is obtainable in an average Nigerian communal life distorted by political upheaval. The community comprises of the indigenes and Fulanis. While the indigenes lived in relatively sparse houses both modern and ancient in design. These structures have yards at an interval of about ten houses. Though this may not be planned in the design but it is built in such way that the people can relax in those yards and have a drink at any hour of the day. The major occupation in the community is farming. There are few Government offices like schools, community clinic and maternity. Some Non-governmental organisations such as CRUDAN have offices and lodging places in the community.

Unemployment rate is high in the community thereby making the presence of many young people visible in the working hours of the day. Few of these young people are engaged in agricultural endeavours for a living. Many of these youths are said to be informants for their political godfathers hence they are engaged in some forms as secret agents to spy out the activities of the opponents and their supporters. They live such a communal life according to the history of the community but gradual political differences began to separate them so much so that brothers from the same family can be at loggerhead with each other simply because they belong to different parties. Traces of their communal life can still be seen in their ways of greetings and socializing. They willingly offer their drink of pito to any of their buddies at the local joint. The Fulanis live far away from the community in huts because of their nomadic live and the non acceptance of their way of live by the community. They were excluded from the community activities and major decisions. Few things like the economic and commercial activities bring the indigenes and the Fulanis together. The Fulanis sell their cows to the people or through them while they buy other food stuff from the farmers in the market. Beyond that, there relationship is not so cordial. They are excluded from the community’s activities and social life. These segregations along political or ethnic lines over the years have brought disunity and tensions among the community people. They cannot be said to be living together happily. To say that is obviously a deception that cannot last for too long. The aftermath of this sore relationship is part of the remote causes of the crisis that hindered the researcher from having access to the Fulani community during this study.

Issues raised during the preliminary research: The preliminary research gathered by YARAC revealed that the voters’ apathy in the community was not so much different from other communities in the country. The issue of poverty also came to the fore as people were deeply involved in drinking the local brew drink ‘pito’ as early as 7am and they play draught game, music or while away time while the few young men that have farms make way to their farmlands. Godfatherism is another issue that was discovered. The effect of that linked with poverty was so high that some young graduates in the community neither had jobs nor involved in farming but served as informant to their godfathers who were either an Ambassador of the country or a federal minister resident in Abuja. Godfatherism polarised the community so much that children of the same parents with different godfathers perceived themselves as enemies. Naturally this led to electoral violence each time there was election in the area because there were conflicting agenda among the electorates as well as among the aspirants. In a settlement near the community is the abode of the nomadic Fulanis who have been disenfranchised by the community except for the electoral polling station offered by the government which most of their women confessed not to participate in during the voting process. Other issues include disunity, political differences, exclusions, and ethnicity, indigene and settlers rights. Basically, the political scenario of Panyam was not balanced. The process of elimination of issues to arrive at voters’ education was not very difficult as the project is sponsored and has as its objective the education of the Panyam community on how to protect their voting right. The implication of this is that every issue raised has to be related to the proper use of the voters’ rights in addressing the community problems. Most sponsored community development projects are pre-defined thereby giving little or no room to implementing partners to focus on different issues. However, the advantage of preliminary research is to ascertain the link between issues raised by the community and the subject of concern in theatre for development. Ultimately, implementation must revolve round the area of concern by the sponsors.

1. **Global Rights/YARAC Voters’ Education**

Though two Non-Governmental Organizations were involved in this project, they had distinctive roles; the funding for the project was provided by Global Rights with its Headquarter in Washington DC but monitored by Global Rights Nigeria office while YARAC was the implementing partner. The theatre for development approach was used and the process duly followed. This suffices that the report of the project be critically examined for the purpose of this study. The project was carried out in March 2006.

**Concept of Empowerment**

Paulo Freirian theory of conscientization whose central focus is empowerment of marginalized groups informs Theatre for Development. Freire posited that the poor are poor because they have no voice and have absorbed a culture of silence. This culture of silence is reinforced by banking education in which learners are treated as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge.(20) Freire argued that the marginalized could gain back the lost voice through dialogue and what he called problem posing education in which the roles of the educators and educatees are exchangeable (21).

Electoral irregularities such as stolen mandates, money bag politics which includes bribery and corruption disempowers the electorates. This is so because their vote is their power and anything that denies them the right to exercise it either by coercion or lobbying invariably disempowers them. Ultimately, this makes the voters subservient to the elected officers. The process of empowerment then comes when the electorates’ consciousness are raised to know their rights and protect their mandates during election. This defines the framework for the project embarked upon by YARAC. It is against this standard the success can be judged.

1. **Problem Identification**

The project under study is funded by Global Rights and so the aim was stated from outset properly defined as “utilizing music and popular theatre for civic and voters’ education”. This implies that the causes of the political crisis in this community must be streamlined to the general theme.

1. **Data Collection**

The basic information required by the facilitators to mobilize the masses towards the required goal cannot be assumed but properly investigated since it is all about the people’s feelings, environment and future. For Ruth Sankey, research,

Being a participatory fact-finding process, special skills must be applied in systematically eliciting information from as many members of the community as possible. (42)

The process of doing Theatre for Development requires that the facilitator commits to researching the community’s problem thereby defining the issues that requires the most urgent attention. Among the many issues discovered in Panyam community are voters apathy; gender inequality; poverty; godfatherism; electoral violence; conflicting agenda; disunity and community intrigues.

1. **Data Analysis**

The pieces of information collected from the community are filtered to get the key findings. The analysis of the findings gives idea of the nature of the problem, immediate causes, the root causes, and the most basic reason for the problem. The effects of the problem are also discussed and possible solutions proffer. After discussion with the stakeholders: youth, the elders, women and community leaders, the following issues were identified as the stronghold. They are Poverty, godfatherism, electoral violence and community intrigues. A look at these issues will suffice to show how it disempowers the people.

**Poverty**

The growing poverty rate in Nigeria which does not exclude Panyam community is alarming. This makes it possible for politicians to hire young people as political thugs. According to a report published by the National Bureau of Statistics, the number of poor Nigerians skyrocketed from 68 million people in 2004 to 112 million people in 2010 (Teliat, 2). This reflects the stage on which the politicians are playing to the gallery. They spend so much money buying the people’s mandate and in turn steal the public funds meant for the development of the people. In that way, politics has become a big business of sort. In Panyam, the numbers of young graduates who reside in the community without jobs but only serving as informants to their political godfathers are alarming. And this is made possible due to the unemployment rate that further increases the poverty rate in the community.

**Godfatherism**

Though godfatherism has been described as the bane of Nigerian politics but never has it been seen as a factor that could deprive young people of their future or rob people of their peaceful co-existence as it is reflected in Panyam. This factor caused so much disunity among kinsmen that some vow not to have anything to do with their relatives. It even posed a challenge to the implementation of the project as the NGOs were perceived as agents of certain political interests in the community. According to Animasaun Gbemisola (12), Godfatherism is the act of a political bigwig becoming generous to gain the favour of the people, (a) To gain status, (b) Seek favour, (c) Share a benefit, (d) Provide a common good. As mutual as the goals may seem, the godfather only uses the people for his selfish ambition and exploits them. According to Saul Alinsky quoting Whitehead, “the enjoyment of power is fatal to the subtleties of life. Ruling classes degenerate by reason of their lazy indulgence in obvious gratifications.” (20)

**Electoral Violence**

The cases of reported violence during election among this community is said to be motivated by the politicians. This violence comes in various forms and stages. According to Chika Charles Aniekwe;

any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities, including pre, during and post election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes.(2)

Again, this shows the helpless state the masses of Panyam found themselves because they fight, injure and clash with their kinsmen yet the politicians whose children are not resident in the community are carting away their votes while this violence takes place.

**Community Intrigues**

The cultural differences, religious diversity and deliberate ostracizing of the Fulani community from the previous community projects was another factor to consider since the civic/voters’ education project was meant to be communal in nature.

1. **Story/Scenarios Development**

The process of story development is helping the people tell their stories as it affects them. This helps bring the means of production of theatre to them. As Boal belief that,

... all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that the people themselves may utilize them (13).

The drama was titled ‘Bana Sai Mun Yi!’ meaning, ‘This Time, We Must Make It!’ and it was chosen by the participants themselves. This shows that they participated in the process of the story development. It has 10 scenes which the people themselves narrated as a representation of their story.

1. **The Storyline**

After several deliberations and changing of story lines through workshops, the participants agreed on some basic issues to be captured in the drama and those issues were aptly captured in the story. The scene opens with two young men Abashi and Koko pasting posters of politician contesting for the chairmanship position. In scene two, Nanaren and Patrick were seen discussing the appearance of the same old politicians seen over and over again in the community. “Can you imagine Chief Datok is running for the chairmanship position again?” Patrick said to Nanren.

Nanren: “And what exactly do you want him to be doing? Clearing his farmland or playing for Chelsea? They are the politicians and we are the electorates, shikena.”

Patrick: “No! I will not take that; we must fight it this time around. Are they the only one in this community?”

Nanren: “I am on my way to the farm; when you are done answering your questions meet me up”

What followed was the appearance of Emmanuella and Amos from a Non-governmental organisation sensitizing the community members with megaphone of the need to vote wisely stating that both men and women can be useful in the offices. Some market women stopped the advocates to enquire if they are campaigning for their parties. The question almost led to a fight as Madam Memuna accused Rinret of attempting to bribe her party members sent from the headquarters but the advocates quickly cleared the air of any suspicion that they are not members of any party but only advocating for the right person to be voted into the office. Emmanuella told them the power of women. “You are market women managing your homes to see to it they eat regularly. You feed your family, care for your husband and children and still remember the market day. Don’t you think you will do better as a Chairperson? If the men can lead, then you too can lead. All the women in this community needs is unity and you will defeat the men flat.” “But how can a woman be chairman” asked Madam Memuna. “Don’t mind the men, who define every word as if it is their name, when a woman becomes the person in office we call her the chairperson.” explained Emmanuella. Another scene opens with the women in meeting. As their president was speaking, Chief Datok, a regular face in politics came in with his entourage. All the women welcome him with a song and dance. The president gives him an opportunity to say his mind. Chief Datok pleads for their vote and gives a bag full of currency to the women. The women leader appreciates his kind gesture and promise they will look into his request. Soon as Chief Datok walks out of the meeting a fight almost ensues as to how to share the money. Just then Rinret stands up to educate them that the money should be taken and a candidate should be raised from among the women to contest. This will mean they are voting for the woman no matter the parties they belong. After much deliberation they agree. Another scene opens with the men in meeting. The same politician walks in with a bag of money to plead with men to vote him. They celebrate him and collect the money. He walks away smiling at their folly. The men continue discussing but they soon disagree in the meeting which split them while the men leader carried the bag of money to his house for safe keeping. The town crier opens another scene inviting the community members for a meeting at the village square. Soon the people arrive for the meeting. The Chief welcomes them and explain to them the need for unity in the land. He called fifty women to help the village square with a broomstick each. They attempted but could not so he collects the broomstick, tie them together and gave one of them to sweep the place which became easy to do. With that image he employs them to be united in their vision of electing a new leader. They rejoice and dance out of the scene. On the Election Day, people are seeing on the queue to vote for their candidate. As people cast their vote, it becomes obvious that Madam Nanko wins the election, the thugs of Chief Datok, his personal guards and the electoral officers want to steal the ballot box but the women prevents them supported by the Policemen and Policewomen on duty. As the people insist that all votes must be counted at the venue, the electoral officers comply and Madam Nanko is declared winner of the election. The media cover all the electoral process and interview Madam Nanko, Chief Datok, the community Chief and the electorates.

1. **Rehearsals/Performance**

Rehearsals commenced soon after they had a tentative ‘final’ cast list of about thirty actors and actresses, in addition to the dance troupe. They worked with amateurs, some of whom had never before been involved even in school drama creation, while others had never been to school! This agrees with what Steven Daniel said that,

It holds the individual as a credible being into the society and the potential to participate in the social transformation process. (34)

The scenario kept changing and improving until the last day when they had the final performance. At the same time also, the characterization was becoming more and more developed. This is the experience Boal refers to when he said, “the people’s theatre is not a finished spectacle. It is a rehearsal theatre because it is open to continuous changes, interpretation and re-interpretation.” (14)

Below are the details of the project and performance.

Project Location: Panyam- Plateau Central, Plateau State.

Project Theme: Utilizing Music and Popular Theatre for Civic and

Voter Education

Project Objective: Educating People on how to Protect their Mandate.

Venue: LEA Primary School, Panyam.

Rehearsals were rigorous, painstaking and meticulous. However, the group, comprising of the YARAC Team, the entire cast of Panyam actors participating in the drama, resumed with vigour, and the process at last stabilized. The result was the grand performance on Friday 18th March 2006, at which Global Rights and her distinguished guests were present, as well as other NGOs, both local and international, community members and guests from the Local Government. The atmosphere was relaxed and filled with expectations from the audience as the host community watch their community members perform in the theatre-in- the round. Laughter, sigh and other expressions were made either corroborating each action or cheering the actors. The audience were literarily mentioning the names of people they think the characters portrayed. This added a whole lot of excitement to the performance. The play lasted for about 4o minutes and there was a round of applause after the performance. The entire drama, as it appeared in the final performance, was a product of the joint creative input of the participants and the team from YARAC, with the former taking the lead. This is the kind of communal experience TfD advocates.

According to the Director of YARAC, Dr Tor Iorapu,

The synthetic product of these extra rehearsals is what we would describe as, perhaps, the most quintessential scene in the whole drama - the broom scene, where the women realize that a single broom stick cannot sweep an inch, but when all the sticks are put together, the broom sweeps clean and easy! And all the women sing and dance happily, as only one of them, armed with the bunch of broomsticks, sweeps clean and easy, where the whole of them, each using a broomstick, had failed to sweep an inch! Very symbolic and apt to our objective. And entirely a creation of the people’s efforts. We were not only impressed, but also actually inspired further by this masterly creative additive to the whole concept.

Indeed, “Bana Sai Mun Yi” was truly the people’s drama. They did not only participate in its creation, they owned it! Ownership is a major objective of this concept of theatre for there cannot be reasonable development without the ownership and control of the means of production by the people in need of such development.

CHAPTER FOUR Post-Performance of Bana Sai Mun Yi!

1. Post-Performance Discussions

After the performance, critical discussions were held by participants and the implementation team. These discussions served in no small measure as a means of educating the people on how to exercise their rights and protect their mandate. For instance, participants, prior to the project, did not realize that they could actually collect the money brought by corrupt politicians, and use it for community projects, instead of sharing it and voting for the man; during the rehearsals and discussions that came with it, they realized that the people could actually take the money, use it for the common good of all, then go ahead and vote for their own candidate. Many other examples abound. Again, the rigorous and meticulous rehearsal process exposed the local participants to the methods of creating drama for communal education. By being part of the exercise, they have acquired skills, which, if given the proper encouragement, can be put to independent use in the future. Without mincing words, the exercise helped to build capacity in Panyam.

Moreso, the prominent role played by women in the drama, alongside that played by men, demonstrated the value of gender equity in developmental issues and processes. If given equal opportunity, without prejudice of any kind, women could champion causes that will

lead to transparency, fair play and the entrenchment of true democracy. The gender issue was squarely addressed in the drama. This, in no small measure taught them how to cooperate and work together for the communal benefit of the larger community. The audience were wrapped in the excitement that Dauda, the youth leader said he felt the election had actually been conducted for real. According to him, “our community can never remain the same since we have known what our problem is.” The Chief appreciated the team of actors for presenting the piece and promised to remain as neutral as possible to allow the contestants have a level playing ground. Madam Kasham is the community women leader who said in the local dialect that she “looks forward to the day what I saw in the drama will happen but I am optimistic that the Election will be peaceful since we now know what to do with the money they bring to us.” The young people express surprise as to how their future were mortgaged by the politicians because of the peanuts they are given as kaye aiki. They complain about unemployment and inadequate fund for them to go to school. One of the assistant facilitator, Austin Mangs encouraged them to be united so they can fight their common enemy and take hold of their future.

1. **Outputs/Outcomes**

Starting from the advocacy visits to Panyam, through the audition process and the rehearsals, culminating in the final performance, a number of notable outputs and outcomes were naturally recorded. These include the following.

* Following the project familiarization visits, the community leadership of Panyam was sensitized as to the need for voter education in their community.
* In the process of rehearsal, critical discussions were held by participants and the implementation team. These discussions served in no small measure as a means of educating the people on how to exercise their rights and protect their mandate. For instance, participants, prior to the project, did not realize that they could actually collect the money brought by corrupt politicians, and use it for community projects, instead of sharing it and voting for the man; during the rehearsals and discussions that came with it, they realized that the people could actually take the money, use it for the common good of all, then go ahead and vote for their own candidate.
* Again, the rigorous and meticulous rehearsal process exposed the local participants to the methods of creating drama for communal education. By being part of the exercise, they have acquired skills, which, if given the proper encouragement, can be put to independent use in the future. Without mincing words, the exercise helped to build capacity in Panyam.
* Moreso, the prominent role played by women in the drama, alongside that played by men, demonstrated the value of gender equity in developmental issues and processes. If given equal opportunity, without prejudice of any kind, women could champion causes that will lead to transparency, fair play and the entrenchment of true democracy. The gender issue was squarely addressed in the drama.
* Still on the women issue, it was the team of actors and actresses who prepared the food that guests and community members ate at the occasion. What YARAC did was ask them for a budget, which they prepared and submitted, then, money was made available to them well in advance of the performance, to enable them get all that would be required. Then, on the night before the performance, they all gathered

at their leaders’ house and, amidst singing and great funfair, went about cooking the meal that served the entire community and her guests. This, in no small measure taught them how to cooperate and work together for the communal benefit of the larger community. Teamwork, which was demonstrated in the drama, was actualized by the women and men at the kitchen, where tribe, religion or any other form of differentiation did not matter. They all worked as one, much as in the broom scene, singing and laughing freely with one another.

The unfolding drama itself had several lessons and outcomes in its main frame.

* For one thing, the Broom Scene revealed that when a community unites, it is easily possible to achieve their aims and realize their goals. Thus, the women, who found it impossible to sweep using a broomstick each, realized that the bunch of broomsticks could do the job better and easier. If they come together, it will be easier for them to achieve their objectives.
* Also, the women’s meetings, the enthusiasm showcased by women in the drama, and the candidature and ultimate victory of Madam Lolo, have combined to score a high point

in the issue of encouraging and promoting active women participation in politics.

* The last scene, in which the people reject the move by the Electoral Officers to take the ballot box away before counting, insisting that all votes must be counted and results announced at the polling venue, taught the people that they can protect and defend their mandate, by insisting, and ensuring that the right thing be done at the right time. It is interesting and significant to note that this action was spearheaded by a woman.
* The role of the Chief in making the Electoral Officers do the right thing by counting the votes in everybody’s presence shows the role traditional rulers should play in helping to protect their people’s mandate.
* Also, the role played by the policeman and woman at the polling unit exemplifies the role to be played by security operatives during elections.
* The media, which was also seen visibly recording actions and interviews, represents a vibrant media as is obtained in a

true democracy. The media was seen to be free and fair, interviewing the community members as well as the corrupt politician who lost in his bid to have the election rigged, as usual, in his favour. It connotes balanced reporting, a basic tenet of a free media.

The tone of the experience having been set by the warmth and ease with which the traditional leadership accepted the project, the process of auditioning of the enthusiastic men and women was conducted. Because YARAC was determined to see that the process and its end product was ‘owned’ entirely by the people, and in the spirit of equal opportunity to all, they gave all who showed interest a chance by putting their various skills and talents to test in an audition exercise that took four days. Apart from numerous others who chose not to take part in the exercise, fifty-one people in all turned up on the first and second days of auditioning, in addition to the dance troupe, which had ten dancers and four drummers. At the end of the audition, thirty (30) actors and actresses were finally selected, majority of whom were women, and with some of them earmarked for multiple roles. Together with the group of dancers and drummers there were thus forty-four participants in all from the community.

Using the guide scenario they formulated at YARAC, they auditioned the people, variously trying individuals and groups to enable them select the actors and actresses best suited to each role. Even as they were auditioning, they were already creating, from the people’s improvised gestures and speeches, new scenarios, while at the same time establishing the characterization for the various roles in the drama.

1. **Critical Evaluation and Follow up of Panyam Civic/ Voters’ Education Project.**

A survey carried out by this researcher revealed that the project’s objective was accomplished. This can be judged by the successful conduct of the elections that followed the project in year 2007. Though the project was carried out in 2006, about a year after, the general elections were conducted into various offices. The people were full of excitement that the process was violence free unlike past elections. There was a better understanding of their common problem, according to one of the people interviewed.

Another important achievement to note is that people could be empowered beyond the set objective. This was seen in the fact that the project brought about peace among the various factions in the community. Mancha Dauda said that “as far I as I can recall, the 2007 elections were the most successful and most peaceful election we ever had in this community.” The project’s objective was civic/voters’ education but peaceful co-existence became a sub-theme that further empowers the people. The drama performance pointed out the importance of unity with a perfect representation of a bunch of broom that cannot be easily broken. This is in line with what David Kerr said that “members of a particular society may be suffering in the hands of the same subjugator and may still live in fear, mistrust and jealousy of each other.” (176)

Also, a new understanding enveloped the people as they had light, a new light as regards ‘kayan aiki’ (reward for work done) which used to serve as an inducement to make them vote for the ‘highest bidder’ among the aspirants. The process made them realize that the money the politicians share belong to the people and they can collect it, use it for the common good of all and still vote for the candidate of their choice.

While the project can claim to have addressed the issue of poverty in Panyam is because TfD gears towards librating the minds of the people, raising their consciousness and bringing them a new perspective of what they are confronted with and how to change the situation. In the words of Abah, “TfD can lay claim to engendering development, not in its statistical listing of physical structures erected in villages, but in the liberation of potentials in individuals to understand and be able to change structures in enhancement of the quality of their lives.”(4)

1. **Challenges Confronting TfD Practitioners.**
2. **Lack of Proper Networking**

The study reveals that there is no proper networking among NGOs employing theatre as a development tool. This was discovered when the researcher learnt that some Community Based Organisation (CBO), youth groups, women groups, Faith Based Organisations were not very

willing to collaborate with the implementing agency and the funding

agencies. Though no particular reason was advanced for this but obviously the desire to have control over their members cannot be ruled out. The Fulani community interviewed believed they might not be accepted into the community.

1. **Sustainability**

Sustainability has been an issue in TfD and this is so because the budget for monitoring and evaluation is always limited and often times, there are no plans to train the Community Based Organisations to continue the work. And since some of these projects are social issues, other issues keep manifesting as the society changes.

1. **Funding**

Funding becomes an issue when the implementing agency is limited to a particular objective and cannot even act until the funding partner has mobilized them. This project under study was meant to last for two weeks but was shortened due to inadequate funds.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

1. **Summary**

At the beginning of the study, The researcher set out to investigate the effectiveness of Theatre for Development as a tool for social re­orientation using the example of Global Rights/YARAC project on civic/voters’ education among the people of Panyam in Mangu Local Government of Plateau State. In chapter One, the topic of study was introduced with a general introduction to the study. The objective was stated as the x-raying of the factors that guaranteed the success of the project implemented in Panyam. The problem of the study was given: as an attempt to unearth the factors that enabled the politicians to continue perpetuating the corruptions they engaged in during elections. The study is limited to the concept, context and practice of TfD in Nigeria. Although references were made to other TfD projects in Africa but the studies focused mainly on TfD in Nigeria. The theoretical framework was set with references to theorists and practitioners like Augusto Boal who adapted the work of Paulo Freire and many others. The research methodology employed was Sociological Method which enabled the researcher investigate the topic through the report of the project and interview of the participants as well as the facilitators of the project.

The study revealed the dynamism in the use of theatre in every situation. The crisis had caused serious disintegration in the community understudy but with the right approach of eliciting information through observation and interview. Various interests were identified. It is important for practitioners to recognize how personal or group interests can influence the information given by community members in the process of data collection. This was evident in the refusal of some people to volunteer information when the facilitators were seen with people known with another political party.

The process also helped to show how various groups can be conscientized at various stages of the process of doing theatre with the people. This is seen in the apt understanding some graduates in the community exhibited in the course of workshop and focus group discussions. Yet, some others became enlightened in the process of rehearsals. The effectiveness of TfD is not in the method as much as it is in the willingness of the practitioners to learn, unlearn and re-learn the strategy for success in the process of doing theatre with the people. This requires a great dynamism when working with people.

Moreover, keeping the ultimate objective in view is so important so as to avoid the minor issues generated alongside working towards the main goal. While it is important to deal with serendipitous issues, it is paramount to work towards the main goal. It is also important to address issues that could hinder effective cooperation among the stakeholders. It must be done to ensure lasting relationship rather than a make along relationship.

Another important issue practitioners must address is the issue of ownership, control and sustainability which will help people retain whatever positive result must have been achieved.

1. **Conclusion**

Theatre for Development has become a veritable tool in the hand of NGOs, development workers and sometimes the government in Africa for stimulating behavioural change that leads to development. This implies that the practitioners are confronted with myriad of issues since most governments in Africa are democratic. Though the limitation of funding might pose a challenge to a project but the interest in development of the people must supersede the funding challenge. This is so important because most funded projects are misconceived by the people and they often lack sustainability. The limitations of projects such as TfD practitioners implement are determined by the funding partner and their objectives. These often raise the people’s hope which may either be dashed due to lack of sustainability or other impending paramount issues attached to the major one addressed. But the fact remains that

TfD has served so many developmental purposes and will continue to be an effective tool for conscientization.

1. **Recommendations**

It is highly recommended that a funding body for TfD projects be established for government, individuals, companies and NGOs to contribute finance to enable sustainability of any project embarked upon. This will reduce the burden on donor agencies since funds are donated to the pool for development projects. Also, a deliberate plan must be made to include CBOs in the training on the use of TfD for continuity of community based projects. This will go a long way to help sustainability. Finally, there should be a network arrangement among the implementing agencies, community based organisations and similar bodies for information sharing and continuity as well.

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