Abstract

This paper examines the role of political parties and politicians in political mobilization in Zamfara state and the implications of the strategies used by political parties and politicians in political mobilization. The paper is essentially qualitative. Primary data and documentary sources were the major sources of data collection. Respondents of key Informants Interviews (KIIs) were purposively selected. Political mobilization was used as the framework of analysis to support the argument. The paper found that political parties and politicians play a vital role in political mobilization in Zamfara. The paper argued that political parties organized and aggregate public opinion, transmit public demands to the government and vice-versa, recruit political leaders in political mobilizations and socialization as well as provision of welfare services. The paper concluded that in spite of the ideal nature of political mobilization towards political participation, the roles of political parties and politicians in political mobilization in Zamfara elections were not really effective in political mobilization, thus, needs strong and sustainable political parties with the capacity to represent citizens and provide policy choices that demonstrate their ability to govern for public good. The paper recommends among others, that there is need for all parties to be re-engineered from mere institutions for acquiring political power to effective institution that are capable of structuring, mediating and reconciling social interest and conflicts.

Keywords: Democracy, Election, Political Parties, Politicians and Political Mobilization

Introduction

Political parties are central to all political activities in any democratic polity. Parties are important agencies which aggregate and articulate group interests within a political system. They control the institutions of governance in the state and ultimately when in government determine the formulation and implementations of public policies (Nnoli, 2003). Also parties are instruments of collective human actions and creatures of political elite – either politicians trying to control governments or government’s elite trying to control the masses. In a more organized and competitive political system parties are structured to affect the attitudes and behaviour of the population. It is very difficult in any society to think of democracy without functioning politicians, political parties and party systems (Adetula & Adeyi, 2013).

It is argued that political parties perform important functions in the helm of democratic states. Their functions still remain largely on the politicians and the type of party’s organization in the system, the party system as well as the electoral system (Nnoli, 2003). Perhaps, contesting and winning of elections seems to be the catalyst roles of political parties and politicians; however, they perform other functions which are equally essential to the smooth functioning of a democratic system. Among other issues, political parties organize and aggregate public opinion, transmit public demands to the government and vice-versa,
recruit political leaders, engage in overights in the implementation of public policy, political mobilizations and socialization as well as provision of welfare services (Anderson, 2001; Agbaje, 1999 and Kura, 2011).

Series of empirical studies have identified the role of political parties, elections, pressure groups and other elements in contributing to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. For example, Omotola (2007), Ogundiya (2011), Hague & Harrop (1987), among several others conducted empirical studies on the role of political parties in broadening and expanding democratic ethos in a given political system.

Other study (Okeh, 2016) examined the impacts of mass media such as radio, television, newspapers, and magazines etc. as strategies of political mobilization most especially the traditional methods of door to door campaigns in order to mobilize electorate during and before elections. But few, if any, discuss on the roles of politicians and political parties in political mobilization in Nigeria. The role of politicians and political mobilization is very strategic in contemporary Nigeria where sometimes the politicians use different strategies to induce and influence electorate to vote during elections (Adetula & Adeyi, 2013; Jinadu, 2013b).

The roles of politicians and political parties continue to be vital in political mobilization and drawing citizens to focus on issues that are important and as well in priming public opinion among many citizens to get engaged in the process of governance in Nigeria. In this regards, money becomes the driving force behind mass marketing of candidates and parties. This implies that, funds are very critical in the proper and effective functioning of democratic political process and politics. Without funds, it would be absolutely difficult for political parties to articulate their ideas and vision to the public and, without which the electorate could not make informed choices during elections. Political campaign and party mobilization in most states of the country are fraught with despicable levels of corruption, even when efforts have been made to reform laws regulating political mobilizations and party campaigns, their abuses remain very high.

In this regard, series of works have been written by various scholars such as Omotola (2006) on party politics, political participation, electoral politics etc, but much less discussed on the pattern of political mobilization and strategies adopted by politicians in political parties. It is, therefore, against this premise that this paper attempts to investigate the strategies employed by politicians and political parties in mobilizing the electorate and evaluate the implications of strategies employed in Zamfara State of Nigeria.

Theoretical Underpinning

There are various theories that explain political mobilization. They include such as Agenda setting theory, development theory, political process theory and political mobilization theory. This paper however, adopts political mobilization theory as a theoretical framework.

Historically, proponents of political mobilization theory include Dalton (1984), Olson (1965), Eisinger (1975) and Zald & McCarthy (1987). The theory is capable of explaining the strategies use by political leaders and groups to mobilize electorate for support during campaigns and elections in a given political system. Strandberg (2006) identified that the political mobilization theory recapitulates several optimistic visions regarding both social media and other method help in the ability to affect citizens’ political activity. The theory states that the social media and door to door political mobilization strategies have the potential to: inform, organize and engage those who are currently marginalized from the existing political system so that these groups w gradually become drawn into public life and civic communities.

The theory assumes that social media play a key role in facilitating the interactive relationship between citizens and political representatives. These communication platforms allow citizens to engage with their political leaders at local community, municipal, provincial and national levels. The level of reciprocal communication between representatives of political parties and social media users is still a matter for debate but despite the contestations various political entities variably utilize these platforms to
interact with and push information to citizens. It should be noted that this interactivity is the hallmark of social media. Interactivity involves user engagement with information and with other users. These online tools allow people to communicate, collaborate and openly share information, thereby bringing to the fore the power and agency of citizens to make political contributions.

Lusoli & Ward (2004) argued that the mobilization theory regards the radio, television, door to door campaigns and the social media as possessing the ability to inform, activate and engage citizens. The political online audience has grown considerably over time, largely due to the increased penetration of the medium, and also due to a shift of user preferences in seeking out political information. Scholars have found that the social media is increasingly becoming an important source of political information for young people, a group of citizen’s normally less politically active offline.

Political mobilization theory is useful for this paper in understanding the modus operandi of political forces in mobilizing popular support for their parties’ programmes and policies would therefore, be viewed from this theoretical consideration, especially the appropriateness of the political strategies adopted in achieving their political objectives by political parties and the politicians in Zamfara state. This is because political parties are institutions which are guided by rules, norms and procedures in their activities.

However, a counter argument questioning the optimism of the mobilization proponents has also been identified by some authors. Norris (2001) calls this the reinforcement theory. According to this line of thought, politics on the networking would fail to politically activate and engage citizens. Essentially, this argument rests on two central observations. Firstly, access to the technological resources required to connect to the internet are unevenly divided across the world, and even socioeconomically within specific countries. Secondly, it has also been argued that online politics would only attract citizens already motivated, interested and engaged in offline politics. All these affect the use of the internet for political mobilization. That is since it is not all the citizens that have access to social media the theory would not likely explain all the variables of political mobilization in the Zamfara state.

Methodology

Data for this paper is derived from both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The instrument used for data collection is face to face-to-face interviews. Data was sourced from other relevant archival materials. The population from which the sample was drawn is limited to those involved in politics especially the key politicians, political offices holders and party officials. To ensure the successful execution of this research, interviews were conducted. In this regards, the patterns of interview adopted was unstructured and face to face interview format. The purpose of adopting this method was not only because of its relevance as sources of filling the gap for the data to be used in this study, but to serve as a means gathering qualitative empirical information. While in the sampling techniques, the study adopted purposive sampling by targeting the key informants to gather the information needed for the purpose of this study. The population needed involved people from the three senatorial zones (Zamfara Central, Zamfara West and North Senatorial Zone) that holds the knowledge and or participated during and after elections in the area under study. A total number of twenty-five (25) people were purposively selected for interview across the three senatorial districts.

Discussion of Findings

Political Parties and Political Mobilization Zamfara State

According to McAllister (2011) political party shape the whole political process. Political parties recruit candidates to contest elections, organize platforms for the electorate to judge at the ballot box, and provide avenue for citizen’s involvement and input into politics. Again, in its electoral mobilization, political parties reach out to the electorates for support of their candidates and do facilitate political participation in a given political system (Diamond & Gunther, 2001). Mobilization as the role of political party has to do with social networks that mobilize electorates and
promote participation through rallies, campaigns and voting activities. However, the roles of political parties in political mobilization in Zamfara state were not different from other areas in Nigeria.

Furthermore, it was argued that mobilization of the citizens is an essential factor for the success of a given political system, and the idea of mobilization is essentially derived from the general idea of political participation. The essence of mobilization theory posits the fact that increased access to political information increases political participation within the cognitive and behavioural contexts. This promulgates the idea that increased awareness leads to more discussion and analysis which makes mobilization more effective (Diamond & Gunther, 2001).

However, according to Niven (2002) mobilization messages often fail to reach the intended audience but when the messages did reach the youth it would likely be ineffective. In this regards therefore, it is the roles of political parties to have rigorous voter’s identification to engage mass mobilization. It is important not only for the sake of allocating limited resources but also for the success of outreach tactics in reaching out audiences. In addition, the role of political parties in political mobilization is to mobilize voters. According to Adamu Ataye, (Interviews, 2017), political parties inform and energize their members; they send brochures, use media campaigns, knock on doors and as well call voters through phones (Adamu Ataye, Interviews, 2017).

To this effect, parties maintain elaborates network of state and local offices that could immediately be pressed into the services of a candidate once the party nomination is secured (Muhammed, Interview, 2017). For example, in Zamfara state all political parties has local and state offices for mobilizing electorates for political support.

However, despite other strategies of political mobilization, parties attached much influence to fund raising activities. This is largely because party activities are finance-intensive. In supporting candidates, parties mobilize resources to finance mobilization activities such as production of Posters, Billboards, Television and Radio Jingles (Musa, Interview, 2017). Again, political parties do not only perform the function of interest aggregation but also political participation through mobilization, recruitment and educating the electorates for the conduct of elections in a given political system.

Diamond, Kirk-Greene & Oyediran (1997) stressed that political parties remain as an essential instruments for political mobilization and in preferences, recruiting and socializing new candidates for office, organizing the electoral competition for power, crafting policy alternatives, setting the policy-making agenda, forming effective governments, and integrating groups and individuals into the democratic process. Corroborating with the above argument, Baba, Danjuma & Aminu (2016) argued that political parties perform crucial task in a polity which include candidate selection, recruitment and political mobilization among others. The last issue which is political mobilization is the major one in this study. Partisan mobilization around elections stand out as the most pronounced function of political parties (Baba et al, 2016).

Political Parties act as mobilizing agency through direct communications with voters, including traditional grassroots activities such as canvassing, leafleting and contacting voters, as well as holding party meetings and campaign rallies, and using national advertising or party political broadcasts (Adamu Ataye, Interviews, 2017). The news media serves this function through providing information about parties, candidates and policies that could help to crystallize voting choices, and the partisan press, in particular, has long been thought to help reinforce party support. For example, in the area of media mobilization of electorates for political support, the All Progressive Congress (APC) as a political party played it roles through the use of Zamfara state radio broadcast and programmes to canvass for their support. For example, Hanjin Jimina to propagates party manifestoes sponsored by the APC (Adamu Ataye, Interviews, 2017).

In these activities through positive messages the APC and Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) news media helped to increase party and candidate support among electorates, and the
propensity to turnout, or they also conveyed negative messages that function to depress participation. However, an interview with APC Secretary in Central constituency did not show much variation about the party’s attitude towards its functions on political mobilization, only that their strategy differs with that of the PDP, probably because they were in government (Muwadda Yaro, Interview, 2017). On the question of how the party mobilizes popular support for its policies and programmes, majority of the respondent stated that the very structure of the party in the constituency makes that possible and easy.

A respondent argued that, there are many wards in the constituency, and at each ward there are executive members of the party, comprised of the Chairman, Secretary, Organizer, the youth organizer and the Women organizer. Since the political wards form the bedrock of the party, special attention was given to how these executives function. The executive members at the wards coordinate with the constituency executives such that the interest of the grassroots people are articulated and integrated in the larger policy programme of the party in the constituency. And since the party is the most powerful or dominant party in the state, priority was given to the party youths in terms of job placements, scholarship and other opportunities. Typical to this was Dan Yarbawa and Ban-agrin in charge of environmental cleaning. These alone really helped the party to mobilize large support during the last elections in Zamfara state (Musa Tsafe, Interview, 2017).

However, most respondents (Adamu and Garba, 2017) argued that the issue of political party mobilization varies among the sub-national level in Nigeria. In a nascent democracy where the party system could not pursue the same national goals or programme, it is common to find variation in political mobilization. That is some messages disseminating from the parties could carry objectives and goals to be achieved which would determine the nature of support from the electorates (Garba Tsafe, Interview, 2017).

The role of political parties in the state has changed from their role of mass rallies (which depends mostly on motto of the party (as slogan Addinimmu Al'ummarmu), without campaigning on party manifestos and programs with political persuasions. For example, the role played by APC leaders in the recent state elections concerning “change mantra” of the President Buhari administration about ensuring equitable governance from the national to grassroots level (Lawal Gusau, Interview, 2017). However, what became evident in the last elections in Zamfara according to some respondent is that some party leaders had weak response towards their responsibility of serving as the leaders of the parties, also public education especially after elections period (Garba, Interviews, 2017). Again, the time constraint on creating awareness or mobilizing electorates from the side of opposition respondents lamented was another bane to effective role of parties in political mobilization in Zamfara.

Political parties are generally expected to contribute to political mobilization by providing such information that helps citizens form opinions but reverse was the case in the recent election as lamented by some respondents (Salisu Gusau Interviews, 2017). The reason why party is weak and undermine democratic norms is because of self-interest of the politicians (leaders). This is in line with the argument by Randall & Svansand (2002) that political parties and their officials usually have different roles when it comes to mobilizing popular support, especially during electioneering era.

Politicians and Political Mobilization in Zamfara State

Mobilization plays a central role in explaining participatory political behaviour. Verba, Schlozman & Brady (1995) argued that “having been asked” is the single most important determinant of participation. While political mobilization initially relied entirely on face to face contacts (with politicians for example), the advent of media transformed how politicians targeted voters. Individual politicians have incentives to build personal reputations that would distinguish them from their parties. Indeed, the combinations of electoral rules by the value of personal reputation, and demonstrate that open popularity. They could cultivate personal reputation through other
measures, such as celebrity status and charisma *(The Sky New, 2016).*

This means that with the introduction of popularity, which leads to the increase of personal reputation, personality appeals might be insufficient for Zamfara state politicians to differentiate among themselves. They do enhanced their personalistic appeal more (probably with clientelism), or their programmatic appeals, such as through policies and constituent projects (Umar Gusau, Interview, 2017).

However, it is clear that political mobilization in Zamfara was based on popularity of the candidates. Some respondents observed that politicians know that ideally when they want to follow normal procedure of mobilization they would not win election. They used resources within their capacity to win the minds of the electorates during elections to gather many votes. Similarly, poverty as argued by one of the respondent is another factor the makes it possible for the politicians to mobilize electorates mostly from the grassroots level in the state. Lack of people’s mandate makes the politicians to use all means in mobilizing the electorates during election. Politicians who are weak politically wants to win election by all means thus he must resort to unauthorized mobilization strategy such as financial enticement and incentives to the followers (Sani Gummi, Interview, 2017).

Similarly, Chabal & Daloz (2002) stressed that the foundations of political accountability in Africa are both collective and extra-institutional; they rest on the particularistic links between Big Men, or patrons, and their constituent communities. The mobilization and patronize system go the way they do because African voters must placate the demands of their existing or putative patron. Corroborating the above argument, due to multiple factors, ranging of ignorance, poverty, misinformation on the part of the electorate, parties (well endowed) generally capitalize on the predicament of the people by forging ‘patronage’ system. Taking into consideration the socio-economic situation of a large chuck of the population of Zamfara, where about 70% of population is estimated to be living in poverty they become susceptible to manipulation by political entrepreneurs who would capitalize on their vulnerability during elections (National Bureau of Statistic, 2012; Sani, Interviews, 2017). The patronage means that party politicians distribute incentives or special favours in exchange for electoral support. This is certainly a normal practice within political circles in Zamfara State. Witness to this was the distribution of clothes and feeding of less the privilege during festive period especially Ramadan period.

Probing this point further, respondents (Bashar and Garba Tsafe, 2017) argued that, because of the nature of the state (such as ignorance, poverty and lack of development), politicians relied on financial or material donations to individuals and groups during important occasions. During the tenure of former Governor Yarima, he devoted much of his time dealing with the constituents on this level; paying school fees to some needy children in the state, facilitating the burial of deceased persons, making donations on such festive religious occasions, such as *Eid Fitr*, *Eid Adha* (sharing of rappers and meat), sharing of umbrella, fertilizer to farmers at the grassroots and so forth. This also includes coming to the aid of any member of the constituency anytime such need arose. In fact, the researchers were a witness to most of these occurrences, and even some members of the community, usually distant relatives and friends of the localities paid him regular visit to ‘catch their daily bread’. It must be emphasized here that most of these kinds of relationships were forged for political patronage from electorates.

More evidently, a respondent (Garba Tsafe) indicated that the role of politicians in political mobilization was done based on resources or incentives. Salaries were paid to Imams and some Islamic scholars. Mosques and Islamic Schools, for example, during the administration of Yarima and Governor Abdullahzeez were constructed to motivate electorates for political support even though meant for charitable commitment. For example, mosque at *Zawiyia* and Islamic schools at *Rahmaniyya* in Gusau and some cited at Kaura Nnamuda respectively (Bashir Sani, Interview, 2017).

One could argue here that the political culture and the landscape of Zamfara politics make it
easy for such politicians and their interest to forge this kind of patron-client relationship, thereby achieving their political ends. A good number of residents of some of the deprived communities, found it difficult to mention the actual roles and functions of their local political representatives. This became evident during the interview sessions (Bashir Sani, Interviews, 2017).

On the whole, one could argue here that political parties and politicians in Zamfara were bred to be agents of political mobilization erosion and collapse, rather than strong agents for the construction and consolidation of democracy in the state. The structure of the political parties in Zamfara was such that internal democracy is almost absent then. The political parties were weak and unable to effectively carry out political mobilization, political education and discipline. This is because political mobilization is a continuous activity not until election periods. Offices of the political parties were locked and politicians are not usually around their various localities except during elections.

Strategies of Political Mobilization in Zamfara State

According to Dale & Strauss (2009), there are many mobilization strategies including, but not limited to;

i. face-to-face canvass,
ii. street signs,
iii. television,
iv. radio,
v. newspaper,
vi. leaflets,
vii. text messaging,
viii. direct mail,
ix. commercial phone calls,
x. email etc.

Others include traditional ways and financial inducement as identified by the respondents. Indeed, in this contemporary era, rapid technological innovations have led to a bubble in the use of news media as political parties and candidates step up their internet presence, and they increasingly rely on social networks and mobile phone technology to gain support.

To this effect, political parties to some extent influences role of politicians. In Zamfara State for example, there are no politicians that is not attached to political party, therefore political parties are central to his political activities. In other words, political parties are the bedrock of all politicians and determined all their political activities, while the politicians occupy a central position in political mobilization. They are seen to be the bedrock of political party. In fact, politicians and political parties are interwoven possessing almost the same features. However, the above identified strategies were used by both political parties and politicians in Zamfara State as indicated by respondents.

Traditional ways of Political Mobilization

Traditional sort of face -to-face political activism of modern communications is characterized by town -hall meetings, party rallies and personal candidate-voter contact, and the more passive and distant campaign conducted through national party leaders across the airwaves. Party web sites, especially internet linkages that facilitate more interactive and horizontal within parties, as well as internet discussion groups, and email, could be envisaged as a return to some of the older forms of political mobilization (Nwabueze, 2004).

However, the political mobilization strategies as argued by Senator Hassan Muhammad during the interview, usually centres on traditional methods which include newspaper, radio, television, door-to-door, religious gathering and leaflets among others. Politicians also adopted political advertising as a form of wooing their supporters (Hassan Muhammed, Interview, 2017). Political advertisement is done in return for supporting or opposing a candidate for election to the public office (The Sky News, 2016; Nasiru Yusuf, Interview, 2017).

Traditional ways of mobilization are often regarded as communication that is peculiar to typical African societies. For example, the folks, ritual festivity dancing and story tells songs among others. They refer to this mode of communication still used today by rural dwellers and as well even in the urban areas. According to Nwabueze (2004) those
traditional media forms include: folk theatre, travelling stories tellers, poets, talking drums, flute, traditional dancers, metal or wooden gongs, extra-mundane example spirits and gods etc.

In another development, Ekwelie & Okonkwo (1983) affirmed that these media have survived from the earliest of time and adjusted to exist into contemporary age. While to Aina (2003) emphasized that folk media forms include festival forums, music, folk tells songs, rituals, clothes and other constructs, architectural designs, market town criers, social gathering like funerals, wedding, theatre-drama, social institutions- like rallying points provided by the kings, village leaders and herbalist etc. However, the above traditional modes of communication were not exceptional in Zamfara State, as political mobilization was widely seen during naming ceremony or wedding as argued by respondents (Nairu, Interview, 2017) that politicians usually attend naming ceremony and weddings for political support accompanied by their supporters. The researcher in this regard is an eye witness to this scenario in Zamfara State.

Similarly, traditional forms of political mobilization are very effective in mobilizing the masses for political development largely because they are embedded with culture thereby making them more credible and reliable. Aina (2003) argued that traditional ways of mobilization which is also called folk media have free and prestige, they inject stability into Africa social system and the real media at the grassroots levels. This is quite visible in Zamfara State using hornets and cow horns by the traditional singers especially to those who are inclined with traditional titles (Interview, Nasiru, 2017). The respondent (Naisru) further argued that during social gathering especially traditional politicians’ normally sells their candidates either by shouting their names or spreading their posters.

Wilson (1987) argued that traditional political mobilization remains what essentially sustained the information needs of the rural dwellers that represent the highest percentage of national population of most countries in Africa. Zamfara State is not exception as respondent argued that rural areas remain the dominant factors when it comes to political mobilization. Therefore, most political mobilization is done during such social gathering in the rural areas (Interview, Hajia Kulu, 2017).

Again, in Zamfara State, it was observed that the traditional ways of mobilization are frequently visible during all sorts of gathering including worshipping places, as Malams used to campaign for their candidates. It was observed that during the weekly Friday’s preaching at Eid-ground such key issues were observed as Malam Dan-Asako and Dan-Gambo used to shout former Governor Yerima name and other politicians in attendance. Also the likes of Kabiru a traditional singer, who is aligned with PDP, was popularly known as the main actor in exploiting the manifestos of the party, politicians and their candidates while his counterpart Kabiru Birnin-Magaji of APC ushered the traditional ways of political ways of mobilization with Hasua traditional songs. Also popularly known as Rara notably who sing for Zannan Bungudu-member House of Representatives with “Ayi zanna azauna lafiya” (Interview, Bashir Bungudu, 2017). This was confirmed that this song has seriously assisted the manifestos of the candidates and thus, yields good result.

Social Media and Political Mobilization

During elections, those aspiring for political office engage in campaigns, and use various strategies to mobilize this contesting electorate for support. A respondent, Lawali Yabakako remarked that:

Massive use of political advertisement in television, radio, social media, posters, billboards, cars and aircraft paintings was done to mobilize and inform voters on various contenders for different public offices. Cognizant of the important role of the media in electoral processes, the contest saw gubernatorial candidate contenders deploy massive resources to sell their agenda and manifestos through news, political talk-
shows or advertisements in mass media. Radio in this context plays a very important role in political mobilization. For example, over 60% of its population in the state listens to radio because of its geographical distribution, cost effectiveness, portability and communal living pattern (Interview, 2017).

Corroborating the above, political parties and politicians sponsored programs to mobilize electorates for support. For example,

i. Farar Aniya Laya sponsored by Ibrahim Bakuye
ii. Jirgin Fito featuring Dallatu sponsored by Shettiman Rijiya
iii. Yaba Kyanta Tukuici sponsored by Senator Marafa

Majority of the respondents stressed that traditional media (such as Radio, Television and Newspaper) play important role as a communication tool in Zamfara, owing to low literacy levels and affordability. Another respondent supports this view arguing that, comparatively, radio was one of the most effective tools of political mobilization in Zamfara (Dan-Azumi, Interviews, 2017).

Corroborating this argument, a respondent (Ahmed Abdullahi) appraised that:

The traditional media methods really helped in political mobilization in the recent elections. Partisan-leaning newspapers (Zamfara Legacy Newspaper) and party campaigns were seen as playing a vital role in reinforcing support and getting out the vote. The more the people read about or listen to the campaign on the mass media, the more interested they became in the election and the more strongly they come to feel about their candidate. Media exposure gets out the vote at the same time that it solidifies preferences due to the method of the politician’s strategy (Interview, 2017).

Radio as Instrument of Mobilization

Statistics provided by National Bureau of Statistics (2012), indicate that 86.4% of Northerners consider radio to be their main source of information where political issues are discussed due to the local language (Hausa) used as medium of disseminating the information which the people could speak, hear and understand. With this in mind, it is clear that traditional media (radio) plays a central role in many political activities. This is because local radio speaks the language known by majority of the population.

Furthermore, listening to radio news is often cheap and affordable especially to rural people. Battery operated radio sets make users less dependent on electricity supply and the medium is portable. At present, radio has been installed in mobile phones and in cars which makes it portable and easily available to the listeners. Portability of the medium ensures that listeners incorporate the medium into their everyday work and other practices (Adeoye, 2010). This alone communicates widely to the electorate about the candidates vying for a
given political position in the state during elections (Hajiya Balaraba, Interview, 2017).

Similarly, Kombo (2014), in his proposal for a Nigerian community radio use argued that radio use is popular at the grassroots because the medium is affordable; has a low production cost; flexible; battery operated; requires partial attention; and its signals can reach remote areas. These inherent characteristics of radio lend credence to the concept of community radio such as Zamfara Radio station which often used local language for political persuasion.

Kombo (2014) further argues that community radio is a viable channel for rallying support among the rural populace for a number of causes; social, political, religious, health, cultural, etc. In this way, people in far flung communities become active participants in political discourse (Kombo, 2014; The Sky News, 2016).

However, in spite of the importance of the radio as a strategy of political mobilization, it could also be used for negative politics by reporting bad news for political opponents mostly when the dominant party controls the state media as the case of Zamfara state in the recent elections. Most of the adverts appeal to people's base emotions, and they sometimes contain false or misleading information. This is because exposure to messages in the media is a determinant to a large extent of awareness. For example, the false allegations made by the former Governor Yarima against Ali Gusau trying to sneak in fake ballot papers during the 2011 general elections in the state but it was confirmed not true by the same media station (Nasiru Yusuf, Interviews, 2017).

Moreover, it was indicated that the electorates were exposed to many different advertisements during election campaigns. These advertisements were used to support, demand or respond to attacks from political opponents. These adverts were meant to influence opinion. Some adverts praised a candidate and some paint them positively extolling their virtues thus making particular candidates likable. Also others painted the opposing candidate in a negative ways focusing on their shortcomings aimed at influencing the masses against them.

Similarly, a respondent lamented that negative publicity led to distrust of the electoral process and pessimism about the value of an individual’s own voice. This was one of the reasons why the then ruling Party in Nigeria (PDP) lost elections in Zamfara state due to wrong perception about candidates of the party (Senator Hassan Muhammad, Interview, 2017). However, one could say here that news media, from the angle of critics, do not really motivate most of the electorates compared to other techniques like financial inducement, donations and gifts during the campaigning.

Probing this further, mobilization thesis is centred on the argument that the new media reinforces rather than transforms existing power relationships and patterns of political participation (Davis, 2005). Davis (2005) further argues that the new media is dominated by those who are young, well educated, affluent, and powerful. The mass media facilitates the civic engagement of people who are already informed and motivated, but does not change the involvement level of people who are disenfranchised (Davis, 2005).

According to this thesis, the news media is less likely to mobilize the disengaged and more likely to reinforce established political actors who can take greater advantage of using political information on the network, deepening the digital divide between the information haves and have-nots.

In another dimension, respondents indicated that, gifts and donations were the major strategies used for mobilizing the electorate. Political parties and politicians generate goodwill and win the support of the electorates during election campaigns by offering electorate gifts and other items especially the poor, example, wrappers, T-shirts, key-holders, umbrellas, diaries, litter bins, calendars etc. During campaign contesting candidates appear in the public during special occasions like launching of funds for community projects, charitable organizations, naming and wedding ceremony, women organizations etc, and pledge financial and/or material assistance (Ahmad Hussani, Interview, 2017).
Financial Inducement as a Tool of Mobilization

It was indicated that as part of mobilizing strategies of political parties and politicians, a Senator representing Zamfara central, Alhaji Kabiru Marafa donated food items and cash worth ₦94.3 million to his constituency during Ramadan fast (Interviews, 2017). The beneficiaries of the donations were orphans, physically challenged, widows and Islamic scholars drawn across the four local government areas of the constituency. However, these donations were more beneficial to the APC supporters, Jumah Mosque, preaching centers and association for political supports (The Sky News, 2016).

In addition, as part of the mobilizing strategies for political support, the then Governor Yari distributed 130 cars and 192 motorcycles to residents and APC party supporters of Maradun Local Government Area at campaign rally, the party Chairman said several programs like state zakat endowment and feeding of students at the emirates which prove to the citizens as a political support in the recent election. For example, ₦75 million was used to feed students annually; ₦420 million for rehabilitation of schools though was not accounted for at the end of the project; the 157 bags of fertilizers to farmers among others which the governor used as a platform for campaigns for political mobilization for APC (PM News, 2016).

However, it could be argued from the above that during that period PDP as a party suffered political defeat in Zamfara partly due to these huge mobilizing strategies of the then ruling (APC) in inducing and engaging electorates during rallies and campaign in the state during the 2015 general elections even though the failure is not only as a result of the mobilizing strategies of the APC but also as a result of the internal party crises within PDP which serves as a source of strength for APC to win the minds of the electorates during elections in the state (The Sky News, 2016).

In addition, a respondent argued that in the recent political campaign politicians spend huge funds to publicize on television, radio, newspapers and other publicity material such as posters, fliers, pamphlets, billboards, banners, wall paintings and writings, t-shirts and caps emblazoned with a candidate’s image and party colours in the name of gathering support for votes during elections. For example, Alhaji Ibrahim Ruwan Doruwa spent huge amount of money to ensure his son wins the ticket at both primaries and House of Representative representing Gusau/Tsafe federal constituency (Nasiru Yusuf, Interview, 2017).

Publicity materials were designed to appeal to different segments of the voter population depending on their ethnicity, income levels, education or age. For instance, t-shirts, banners, caps and posters are effective in giving candidates an unrivalled visibility among low income earners while large advertisement billboards are preferred in middle income neighbourhoods in urban areas of the state (Norris, 2001).

Similarly, a respondent observed that making comparative assessment of both Yarima and Yari administrations in Zamfara concerning material used in political mobilization of citizens, it was not difficult to come to the realization that they both tried and succeeded in making the people the centre of their policies and programmes, at least to some extent due to their popularity (Umar, Interviews, 2017). However, it should be noted here that, despite their (political parties and politicians) efforts trying to make the citizens more alert and involved in political processes, a vacuum that seems to have been created in the Zamfara electorates that feels the state has an obligation in their general welfare by expecting some political entities or government to support them since they are also part of the people. That is not to suggest that the state has no such obligation in the welfare of its citizens, but when some unscrupulous politicians begin give out such largesse (donations and gifts) they seem to reinforce the roles played by politicians as the saviours of the common people. This strategy is very common among politicians to travel around the state with other political leaders to cover specially staged events such as donations to the needy, street walks or visits to respected elderly statesmen for political supports.
Related to the above, a respondent mentioned also that money plays an important role in political mobilization in the state. Finance was recognized as an important factor in determining how the people of Zamfara patronize particular political activities (Adamu Tahir, Interview, 2017). It is an established fact that finance is known to be an important factor in determining the success of any political organization especially political participation and electioneering in general. But in this case it was evident that the extent to which money is used in political mobilization in recent time in the state is assuming alarming proportion. In what has become known as ‘moneycracy’ in Nigerian politics, the use of money to mobilize and influence people’s opinion has become a cancer in the body politics which Zamfara is no exception (Adamu Tahir, Interview, 2017).

However, because of deep-rooted nature of the phenomenon in Zamfara state, which prevails at all levels of party competition, even within parties, respondents (Adamu Tashir and Abudullahi) did not see anything wrong with taking money and other material goods from politicians since it was their legitimate share of the ‘common cake’. Some key politicians (Yarima and Yahaya Abdulkareem) used to say ‘when they give you money take it, it is yours and do not vote them into power’.

In a related development, a respondent argued that much money was involved, mostly from agent of a party. The politicians came and give them their ‘share’, before they vote during the general elections (Nasiru, Interview, 2017).

Corroborating this, Bratton (2008:5) argued that:

> It seems reasonable to assume that, in seeking to control voter behavior, politicians would focus their efforts on the most vulnerable elements in society. One would therefore expect a disproportionate concentration of bribery and violence on poor and uneducated people. The poor are likely to be victimized by vote buying because their limited means makes them susceptible to material inducements, including offers of basic commodities or modest amounts of money.

Although, Norris (2004) advised that message is more important than money, and suggests that “the key to winning any race is to come up with an affirmative message that outdistances the opponent’s message” but because poverty has become a household phenomenon, some electorates usually see electioneering period as payback time by the seemingly elusive political office holders, who in the estimation of the former, have abysmally failed on their initial campaign promises coded in nice messages. Thus, ‘getting my own share of the national cake’, ‘my dividend of democracy can only be gotten now’, ‘we go show them this time’ or ‘they think we are fools’ become common phrases on the lips of the electorate (Omilusi, 2016).

The Use of Religion in Mobilization

Most studies have employed multi wave campaign panel surveys, experimental methods, and content analysis of the mass media and party platforms (Norris, 2004). Parties and politicians use all means to stimulate turnout and motivate supporters to go to the polls. Of significant mention is the socio-economic status of the electorate which, in most cases, makes them susceptible to the machinations of these political gladiators and thus, influences their choice of candidate or political party during election. Obafemi (2014) drives home this point more poignantly:

> Various factors affect the choice of platform the common vote for; such include religion, gender, psychological factors and socio-economic status (poverty). But in the Nigerian context, poverty is the most overriding factor. This is made evident during the election periods, when parties go head to head in the electoral arena... The party with the most assurance of such benefits in the now, later and future wins the race of loyalty from the poor. Such assurance include evidence of them being incorporated into the
future spoil sharing system, hence loyalty is symbiotic in the Nigerian system (Obafemi, 2014:12).

Corroborating with the above assertion, Omilusi (2016) argued from sociological approach that in most societies where cultural values influences elections, voters often prefer to vote for a candidate of the same religious background irrespective of his or her manifestoes. Religious politics has often been a negative force in Nigeria aimed at gaining power through the manipulation of sectarian sentiments (IDEA, 2001). Thus, religious leaders in Nigeria study parties’ manifestos and advise their members to vote for a particular party.

It was indicated that politicians invoke and use religion in political mobilization, especially in Zamfara where electoral constituencies coincide with religious and ethnic boundaries. Some voters vote for candidates not because of the content of the manifestos but because of the religious sect the candidate belongs. Political party could be described to belong to a particular section judging from the ethnic and religious background of the founders and leaders of such a party (Lancia, 2007 cited in Iseghohime, 2009). Usukuma (2014), contends that most Nigerian politicians need to assimilate today’s reality in Nigeria that politics is more about emotions than intellect.

Related to the above argument, a respondent (Abdullahi) argued that it should be noted that religion that a candidate seeking for political office practices determines the kind of support she/he gets, and from which quarters such support comes from. At least it contributes to the candidate’s success in an election. This issue has taken a national trend whereby political parties are becoming more and more conscious of their chances of winning an election when the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity) are represented. Though this is more evident in Nigeria in general but not applicable to Zamfara State since it is only one religion that exists but however, some are extremists who assumed that other are liberal Muslims (Hassan Muhammad, Interview, 2017).

Factors that affect Political Mobilization

This section discusses the factors that influence political mobilization in Zamfara within the period under investigation. In doing so, reference was made to data from fieldwork and some literature reviewed. Kura (2011:270) stressed that political parties are seen as inevitable in establishing the necessary link(s) between the state, civil society and democratic consolidation. They are the gatekeepers and the measuring political barometer for indicating the degree and effectiveness of the practice of democracy. Being the heart of democracy, they make and/or mar a stable political system.

Momoh (2013) was of the view that mainstream rhetoric in Nigeria and popular discourses of the polity is often centred on the claim that Nigeria is “deepening and consolidating its democracy”. The evidence on the ground, however, contradicts this claim. It is perhaps most appropriate to liken the relationship between political parties and the sustenance of democratic rule in a particular society to that which exists between the umbilical cord and the fetus (Yagboyaju, 2012). Political parties and politicians are at the heart of examining the health of any form of democracy. Orji (2013), for example, maintains that ‘to talk, today, about mobilization, is to talk about a system of competitive political parties. Their roles and activities are critical in any assessment of democratic practice (Momoh, 2013).

Political parties had the mandate to produce the right calibre of people to govern (Momoh, 2013). Competitive party and electoral politics is expected to deepen the democratic transition, which the country embarked upon since 1999 (Jinadu, 2013b). Though, there has been successful transition and switching of power from one ruling party to the opposition party but the system is still marred with electoral violence, corruption and inability to deliver on the electioneering campaign promises which has led to massive underdevelopment of every sector in Nigeria today.
The below are drivers or factors that affect political mobilization from the perspectives of the respondents and corroborated by researcher's findings during the fieldwork.

Respondents (Hassan Muhammad, Nasiru Yusuf and Dayyabu Rijiya) perceived factors that affect political mobilization in Zamfara state

- Personalization of politics and lack of institutionalization in the party.
- Godfathers syndrome.
- Monetized politics.
- Lack of internal democracy among the existing political parties.
- Conflict and violence between other political parties.
- Cultural and religious issues (e.g. male dominated politics).
- Lack of accountability and transparency in the sourcing and spending of party funds.

Lack of Internal Democracy

According to Ukaeje (2011) internal party democracy means a democratic process which involves accountability and transparency in all party affairs most especially in selecting party leaders, flag bearers, executive and other party officials in a political party. Internal democracy thus connotes political parties giving full expression and unfettered access to their members to participate in the decision making process. It also means running the affairs of the party transparently, in accordance with agreed rules, and in a manner that is fair and just (Kari & Uchenna, 2001).

Among the most elementary yet significant aspect of political development in a democracy are the concentration of party congresses and the conduct of transparent and successful party primaries to elect leaders and candidates (i.e. flag - bearer) respectively.

In addition, the objectives which party regulation seeks to achieve, including the lingering question of internal party democracy, namely, the push and pull of struggles to get political parties to respect their own rules and act in line with democratic principles in the conduct of their internal affairs, all remains central to the wider consolidation of democracy in Nigeria (Ibeanu, 2013). The character and tendencies exhibited by political parties has implications for democratic sustenance in the country (Pogoson, 2013). The existence of vibrant political parties is a sine qua non for democratic consolidation in any polity (Dode, 2010).

Similarly, Ikelegbe (2013) averred that a political party is a critical, formal, institutional, organizational and mobilization player in the political process particularly in relation to power, democracy, governance, governments and economy. The nature of political parties and the nature of party politics have consequences for the nature of governance (democratic consolidation), integration, stability and security. The performance of political parties in terms of articulation, aggregation, representation and organization are critical to political accountability, communication, democratic consolidation and political stability (Ikelegbe, 2013). Well-functioning political parties are essential for the success of electoral democracy and overall political development of Nigeria (Adetula & Adeyi, 2013). The performance of political parties in terms of articulation, aggregation, representation and organization are critical to political accountability, communication, democratic consolidation and political stability.

Well-functioning political parties are essential for the success of electoral democracy and overall political development of Nigeria (Adetula & Adeyi, 2013). Political parties not only matter on electioneering but also ensure political education, recruitment and mobilization (Kromolafe, 2010 and Yaqup, 1992).

However, Nigeria’s political parties (Zamfara not exception) have been plagued by suspensions and expulsions of party members, cross carpeting particularly prior to elections and deep divisions and factions that have manifested sometimes in violent conflicts (Ikelegbe, 2013). For example, the internal party crisis experienced within the period under investigation really affects the harmony and cohesion of various political parties in the state such as the crises in PDP (Senator Hassan, Interview, 2017).

Again, intra-party violent conflicts have been particularly heightened during election periods because of the imposition of favoured and dubious consensus and the swapping of nominated candidates by party chieftains. The absence of equalitarian platforms and the
subversion of the will of ordinary party members and delegates in party primaries, have grieved several party leaders and members and underlined numerous defections and cross carpeting.

Before now most of the existing political parties in Zamfara do not practice internal democracy because their leaders hardly emerge democratically, hence the rising culture of political violence and assassinations especially in some sections of the state. Party leaderships have lacked popular bases and legitimacy and insensitivity. The political parties became vehicles for de-democratisation. They not only undermined and prejudiced the highly flawed party primaries but they also determined its outcome. Ever since, internal party democracy and the selection of candidates have become a highly vexed issue in Zamfara state (Lawal Gummi, Interviews, 2017).

Party primaries among virtually all political parties in Zamfara are usually pre-determined with party Godfathers having the final say in the selection of both party leaders and candidates (Luka, 2016; Abdullahi Interviews, 2017). Indeed, there was lack of internal democracy and poor governance systems in the political parties as indicated by non-inclusive system of participation and decision making, lack of opportunities from broad input, absence of well define structures, rules and processes, denial of individuals and group rights, and weak mechanism for redressing grievances.

The recent party activities in some part of Zamfara are cases in point. Indeed, political Godfathers are always unwilling to allow internal party democracy, a circumstance that leads to frequent conflicts and constrains the development of parties as popular organizations. The consequence of this squabble within the party however, leads to internal party crisis and frequent decamping of aggrieved politicians to other political parties where their aspiration can be accommodated.

Similarly, parties in Zamfara have neither risen above religious considerations nor exhibited internal democracy in their structure, organization and practice of politics. Rather, they have not only been riddled with internal crisis but also turned out to be vehicles of corruption in material and ethical terms in the country; turning politics into a vocation not designed for the public interest but for primitive accumulation and the collection of rents (Jinadu, 2013; Bala Garba Interview, 2017).

Conflict and Violence between other Political Parties

Perhaps the most damming record of political parties on clean politics is the persistence of violence in Nigerian political system (Ibeanu 2013). Apart from election conducted by the colonial government and the military, others particularly the 1964, 1983, 2003, 2007, 2011 and even the last conducted elections of 2015 were plagued by violence and crises (Luka, 2016).

Elections in Nigeria (Zamfara not exception) since the inception of democratic era have been plagued with irregularities and violence. These elections usually plagued by incidents of violence that included theft and snatching of election materials, killings, arson, abductions, assaults, intimidation, destruction of properties and election materials, and chaos; more specifically incidents of electoral violence have included assault of electoral officials and voters, hijack and seizure of election materials, attacks on security officials and violent clashes between rural things and sympathizers of political parties. The consequences of heinous acts of political parties and politicians in inciting violence not only affect democratic consolidation but also influence political participation as well as mobilization of electorates during and after election (Hajiya Maradun, Interview, 2017).

The major parties in Nigeria are to varying degrees involved in their formation, mobilizations, primaries and general elections. Some parties have loyal armed groups that are fairly known in some states and communities that are deployed to protect their interests (Ikelegbe, 2013). Individual cult groups and armed guards hire out their service to party leaders, who arm and pay them for specific violent roles during primaries and elections. One of the violent methods engaged by these chieftains is assassinations.
motivated assassinations have been a major feature of the struggles for power and resources within and between political parties. Other forms of violence are violent attack on the properties, campaign and party offices and supporters of opponents (Ikelegbe, 2013).

In addition, election has always been fiercely contested under party politics that is intemperate and violent in nature. Politicians explore all strategies—both conventional and unconventional means to outwit one another in electoral contests. Yet, as observed by Olurode (2014), what seems to be prompting this desperate desire to participate in the electoral process is not preoccupation with the wellbeing of the public but the motivation tends to be self-centeredness the perception that power should be grabbed for personal material fulfillment.

**Godfatherism Syndrome**

Godfatherism has been described as an ideology which is constructed on the belief of those certain individual possesses considerable means to unilaterally determine who get party ticket to run for an election and who win in an electoral contest (Ogundiya, 2009). God fatherism has become a dominant feature of the party system in Nigeria today. Ayoade (2008) states that godfather is a benign political accretion of the position of either political notables or dreaded political rascals who are recalcitrant to the deterrence of the legal regime.

To Ayoade (2008), Godfather is not philanthropy; it is often marked by dubious and undemocratic acts such as violence, bribery and corruption all for the sake of perpetuating the wishes of the Godfather. There is a symbolic relationship between the Godfather and the Godson (patron-client relationship). The Godfather invests reciprocate by reimbursing the Godson in kind and keeping absolute loyalty to the Godfather in all respects, including decision making whilst in public office. The key goal of all Godfathers is rule by proxy or rule through protégés (Ojo & Lawal, 2013).

Godfather politics typically ensures that results are declared even when there is no evidence that voting actually took place. It typically plays electoral politics with or without respect for the established rules of conduct governing the process, and does not display any sense of moral restraint in its appreciation of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in a democratic political order. It is not surprising therefore that constitution elections results, whether at the intra – party level or at the level of general elections are always disputed by those who are declared losers. The implication of this act usually reflected in the quest for democratic stability and political participation due to the level of discouragement among electorate in a given polity. The hijack of political parties by Godfathers has virtually chocked up the party system as channel for the aggregation of local or constituency interest (Omusilu, 2014). For example, the role of godfather and godson by some key politicians like Alhaji Ibrahim Ruwan-Dioruwa in Maru-Bungudu and Gusau Tsafe federal constituency in terms of candidates’ selections and winning elections in the area.

The preferences expressed by the party typically turns out to be personal interests of the Godfather. The sustainability of the control of the political inched by the Godfather cannot be left to the uncertainty of being subjected to the preferences of the voter in a free and fair election. The desperation has typically led to the explicit crude criminalization of the electoral process (Abutudu, 2013). Therefore, because Godfathers have significant influence on the internal workings of political parties, they are deliberately involved in the stability or otherwise of these parties. In other words, because they are the modulators and epicenter of political in-fighting and struggle for power and pre-requisites of office, they are one causative factor in understanding political Nomadism (Momoh, 2013).

In another development, respondents identified also lack of transparency and accountability in the party concerning finance and disbarment of funds during and after election in the state. Such activities among political parties usually leads to poor political mobilization because when individual interests override the interest of group or party certainly there would be corruption as a result of lack of
transparency and accountability (Ahmed Hussani, Interview, 2017).

To this end, the political mobilization that the researchers observed in this study, therefore, shows a worrying trend in the domestic politics of the state which the representatives of the political parties interviewed acknowledged their existence. Candidates aspiring for political office and political parties, therefore, have a Herculean task of mobilizing the people based on informed policy issues that they intend achieving for the constituency, rather than on material largesse.

What pertains in Zamfara state was, in fact, not far different from the above discussed behaviour. But what is a significantly different lie within the material substance of their expectations. It is not necessarily bad for a people to make political demands on improving the lot of themselves, but when such demands and expectations are directed towards what might be seen as narrow personal gains and responsibilities, such as the payment of wards’ school fees, payment of dowry, and other material requests and/or expectations, all by the political representative, it creates a cancer in the body politic which has the potential of eroding the fundamental quest for social contract, at least in terms of democracy.

However, in Zamfara, for example, local factors are mobilized to influence the choice of the electorate, but which to a larger extent, is constituency/community-specific. Besides the normative expectations of institutions political parties and politicians focused on such local, and perhaps, cultural factors in their mobilization strategies. For example, what people cherish most are their interpersonal relationships. That is how they relate to each other and how others relate to them. Recognizing how important these social relationships are, political entities rather formalize such relationships by creating avenues for group patronage as a mobilization strategy.

**Summary of Findings**

The study found that political parties during the time of investigation actually reach out to electorates for supporting candidates and facilitates other political participation for example, production of posters, billboards, television and radio jingles in the state.

The study also found that those political parties in Zamfara in their mobilization techniques like rallies, campaigns and voting awareness is not quite different from other states in Nigeria. Political party in Zamfara performs other crucial roles in political mobilization which include: direct communication with voters like canvassing, leafleting and contacting voters during election for political support. For example, the APC used Hanjin Jimina to propagate their manifestos to the public during campaigns and rallies.

The study found that personality of an individual politician in the state determines the level of political mobilization. Politician used incentives and personal reputations to gathered political support from the electorates. For example, the distribution of food items and cloths during festivity like Ramadan period. Poverty also determines the nature of political mobilization. Weak politicians used illegal ways of mobilization through financial inducement and special favour in exchange for political support to capture the interests of the electorates in Zamfara state. The findings show that poverty, lack of people mandates are the major problems of political mobilization in Zamfara.

It is clear that political parties and politicians play a vital role in political mobilization. It was indicated that politicians use incentives and other financial inducement to lure the electorate for political support during elections. It is clear that part of the reason for weak mobilization of people into politics in Zamfara State is lack of people mandate which some informants said is the attribute of weak politicians, politicians that want to win by either hook or crook method. Besides, it was evident that poverty is the major issue that is affecting political participation in Nigeria, most of the youths are jobless as a result the politician can entice them with little gift and mobilize for political support.

The study also found that in spite of the ideal nature of political mobilization towards political participation, thus, the role of the political parties and politicians in political
mobilization in Zamfara elections were anti-democratic both in character and in functions.

The study found that political parties among other strategies of political mobilization globally, the ones often used in Zamfara state were radio, local newspapers, leaflets, phone calls, religious gathering, door-to-door and television for political mobilization. Specifically, both political parties and politicians used various program to mobilized for political support their candidates like (i) Farar Aniya Laya sponsored by Ibrahim Bakauye (ii) Jirgin Fito featuring Dallatu sponsored by Shettiman Rijiya (iii) Yaba Kyauta Tukuici sponsored by Senator Marafa (iv) Halin Mutum Jarinsa sponsored by Ruwan Doruwa.

Those politicians used donations as strategies for political support. For example, it was reported that wrappers, T-shirts, Key-holders, umbrella diaries and calendars were shared to electorates during rallies and campaigns in Zamfara within the period of the study.

The study found that the major challenges facing political mobilization in Zamfara state are Godfatherism syndrome, Monetized politics Lack of internal democracy in the state, Lack of accountability and transparency in the sourcing and spending of party funds.

On the whole, the study found that political mobilization is a continuous process but in the case of Zamfara State, political mobilization manifest mostly during campaigns and elections. This is largely because of lack of political ideology among various political parties in the state. For example, it was evidence that political party’s offices at both state and local governments’ level are usually locked and politicians are rarely seen until during period of campaigns and elections. This is because the notion is that political parties were formed mainly to contest and win elections.

**Conclusion**

The political parties and other institutions including politicians being formal institutions rather adopt strategies that are detrimental to the formation of appropriate political culture. Thus such strategies, even though criticized publicly by the same or other political parties and their representatives, become the medium for political mobilization and patronage which in turn shapes political behaviour and expectations of the electorates in a given polity.

One could say that political mobilization process in Nigeria is not without serious underpinning institutional problems when one considers this very issue of mobilization and patronage systems. The electoral successes of the country especially since the 1990s has been as shining example of nascent democracy in the various states, but this observation could be seen as true when ‘free and fair’ elections are the yardstick for such arguments. But as to whether the people are really ‘free’ in the choices of their representatives, and the elections being ‘fair’ based on the mobilization strategies being adopted by political entities is quite doubtful.

Besides, the blatant flouting of institutionalized party rules and regulations by party officials is quite common, even at the highest levels. Allegations of party members and politicians dolling out monies to for political support was quite rampant in the state. These were attempts to buy the votes of electorates in order to win elections. Indeed, the essence of dolling out material largesse to individuals or groups in local communities in an attempt to influence their voting behaviour would therefore not be seen as against any rules.

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