

# BROADCASTING MEDIA AS A MEANS OF REACHING RURAL COMMUNITY

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**Abstract:** The study gives review of the concepts of broadcast media, type of community media and their roles, the media and the rural community. The research reveals the work which are relevant and findings were explained in relation to research questions, that is language barrier which is being used in dissemination of information. Communication is central to all human activities. The claim that we cannot communicate receive scholarly applause. However, there are people who seem to be neglected when we began to discuss communication and information flow. Those in the urban cities are always better informed to the detriment of the ruralities. The study tends to ascertain whether the rural community is given more media coverage compare to urban centre as in the case of Paramount FM and Mawuko village in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The study however suggests that, there should be reduction in using English language in dissemination of information which will be communicated to the rural communities. Journalists should visit the rural community. The broadcasting media house should create more time for enough educative programmes.

**Keywords:** Broadcasting, Media, Rural Community

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The mass media industry is crucial for the dissemination of reliable information, knowledge, ideology, enlightenment, education and opinions in the society. The issue of broadcast media as a means of reaching the rural communities is a recurring one in media discourse because of its implication for both management practice and output. The broadcast media as a means of reaching the rural communities entails informing, enlightenment, entertaining, disseminating, educating and making them know what is happening within the village both exterior and interior in the society, the country and the world at large. In general, media refers to various means of communication for examples; television, radio and the newspaper are different types of media.

According to Goke Raufu (2003), mass media is the modern means of giving information to a large number of people, it includes radio and television as well as printed materials. They are basically used for information dissemination and entertainment in the society. While it would be difficult for the mass media to thrive without the society, it would be most unimaginable the level of isolation, myopicism and backwardness that human race would suffer without the mass media.

The mass media make use of the people in the society for the day to day running of its activities, for the people to make use of the news, the society especially government institution is as well serving as multiplier of resources of knowledge and information among other things. Most importantly the media partake in and enjoy a relationship involving partners in the development process. Such action could include the progress made in dealing with any activity infrastructure or social issue that will impact positively on majority of the people in the society. The people, the government and the media are the partners and stakeholders in the nation building as such they must work in tandem to ensure societal progress.

### *Mass media and the society relationship*

In general, the relationship between mass media and the society should reflect the following:

1. Information
2. Education
3. Entertainment
4. Enlightenment

Government media relationship should be that of:

1. Partner in the developmental process
2. Watch-dog and the dog in which the media watches over the activities of the government and relay to the people.
3. The link with a friend in which the media serves as the bridge between government and the governed.

#### ***Rural community media relationship***

Rather than maintaining within the rural community, the prevailing position of distance observer and feigning indifference to dying tradition and culture, the media should build and sustain in the rural community a relationship that projects the media as:

1. Active participant in the development of the community
2. The voice of the voiceless
3. Agent of mobilization
4. Projector of self help development.
5. Partner in culture, tradition preservation, maintenance and sustenance of culture
6. Educators of a unique kind who give attention to economic social political matters
7. Bridger of government community socio-political economic distance.

#### ***Functions of the media***

It is necessary to discuss the traditional function of the media. The traditional functions are:

1. Information
2. Education
3. Entertainment
4. Enlightenment

Other functions of the mass media which are also general and perhaps applicable to the society are;

1. Surveillance of the environment
2. Correlation and co-ordination of facts
3. Persuasion
4. Transmission of social heritage
5. Opinion moulding

However, in Nigeria, the role of the media goes beyond the question of dissemination of information. It is less about the dissemination of information and more about the consequences of such dissemination as the larger part of the country is inhabited by the poor dwellers. Commenting on this, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana pointed to the emancipative role of the media in taking people out from the shackles of poverty, illiteracy and oppression. He said to the true African men and women, their media are collective instrument of education, mobilizing and a collective weapon of fighting illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and the essential weapon to overthrow colonialism and imperialism to serve as liberation of African independence and unit.

Considering our areas of focus in this study, broadcasting media has been defined as radio and television. Music and cinema are instruments of societal advancement. It is not a value judgement and broadcasting should be used to unite the country. In a nutshell, broadcasting media as a means of reaching the rural community is vividly observed as a time statement considering persistence growth in the broadcasting and communication with the computer type.

For the purpose of this study however, Paramount FM (FM 94.5) Abeokuta, Ogun State which has its office and broadcast studio along Kobape/Siun/Sagamu express is being used. The radio station is a branch of Radio Nigeria in Abeokuta with an independent management staff. Their objectives are efficient and effective transmission of information

and connection of citizen with government. Also, an encouragement of economic activities in Abeokuta and Ogun State in general.

The radio station is established by Radio Nigeria during the tenure of President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2004. Since then, the operation of the station has started with immediate effect and the radio station within the little years has recorded a great achievement in broadcasting effectiveness.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In a traditional African Society, communities undertake various forms of developmental projects, these projects include village hall, construction of access roads to farm – settlements, neighbouring villages and towns, and other traditional projects. Added to this aforementioned projects are the provision of good drinking water, building of modern school, cottage hospitals, and health centres, post offices and even modern markets and electrification project. More often the execution of such projects depend on effective leadership of the town and village heads (chiefs) and available resources of the community, and their level of awareness.

However, in the present circumstances, communities are beginning to be exposed to different influences of development. Government projects are not found at every nook and crannies in different rural communities. This is to say that our government have regarded these hardworking ruralities as isolated or totally forgotten, especially as the government faces austere or harsh economic realities.

Although, electricity supply does not exist in Mawuko community, the well-to-do individuals in this community make use of electric generating plants for their television sets, while others make use of chargeable motor batteries to that effect. To this community, television ownership is not confined to literate class, as illiterate but well-to-do villagers own television as luxury goods. Therefore, the community has exceeded the UNESCO's, mark of 2 television receivers per 50 inhabitants.

In the usual village life, children and adults visit the homes of television owners to watch the latest in the days program. This helps them to relax their nerves after the days farming activities and other jobs. To those who cannot go to the homes of the well-to-do individuals or that of their relatives that have the television sets, the story of each day comes to them on second hand basis. To them, the much desired satisfaction and influence is not there.

On the other hand, the radio transistor is relatively low in cost, appears in various sizes and broadcasts in the language understood by the community. Radio transistor is found in 1 of every 5 inhabitants of Mawuko community. Therefore, the radio has become to a great number of Mawuko people, a household property and companion. Companion in the sense that while the rice farmer does his tilling and planting, he has a transistor radio by his side providing him with information, jokes and important government announcements. He is also doing that in expectation that one of his relatives or friends could send a request programme to him through the Paramount FM programme "Oro ton lo" or "Eto re la be ofin" a Yoruba programme and other numerous entertainment programmes that farmers do not want to miss, therefore he carries along the transistor radio to the farm.

### *Research questions*

1. Are the Radio messages more effective in rural development for the rural dwellers?
2. Are the audience of radio larger than those of television rural communities?
3. Are the radio and television stations directing their programmes towards rural development?
4. What is the attitude of rural dwellers to people towards radio and TV programming?
5. What is the level of the ruralities involvement in radio and television programme?

### *Definition of Rural Community and Rural Community Problem*

Rural community according to Ainnenken (1970) is nothing but a setting constituted by residents of rural areas especially the poor in many Urban slums like Ajegunle and Maroko in Lagos and the army of illegal immigrants in Urban capitals of the first world considered victims of official neglects and poor living standards. In Nigeria, it is widely believed that seventy five percent of the population resides in rural areas while two-third of this percentage is engaged in agriculture.

Also, Olawoye (1985) said the rural society in Nigeria consist of communities whose population has agricultural production as the primary source of income. This rural community as cited by Tunde Oyefeitimi always has these conditions as problems.

- a. Many rural dwellers live in isolated settlement on rivers in the Creeks and forest belts where the clearing of sufficient land for cultivation poses a major problem. Others live in harsh environment in arid lands, mountain areas, areas of low quality soil where shifting cultivation is practical and on areas where drought and erosion pose farming difficulties.
- b. The residents have a small share of economic infrastructure serviced, domestic water and electricity, waste disposal which later leads to integration of able bodied youth to the urban centre where they sometimes drift into crimes or exploited by the ruling elite.
- c. These communities are plagued with unemployment, underemployment diseases, illiteracy, malnutrition are inequalities.
- d. The residents have a strong sense of community which could be harnessed and channeled to productive purpose.
- e. They have general apathy to government and dishonest of politicians often mobilized them as thugs or at best voters during elections.

#### ***Types of Community Media and Their Role***

There are five (5) different types of community media, although there is lot of mass media mechanism that work in some area which may not work in another. Therefore, it is necessary to classify and allocate specifically the type of media that could be used in community media process and actualization.

The five types of community media are as follows

- i. Radio
- ii. Print media
- iii. Audio-visual
- iv. Audio tape
- v. Traditional media

**Radio:** Radio is probably the most popular community media in various part of the world. Its popularity has come from its portability and ability to transcend literacy barrier. Battery powered radio set are easily accessible to many rural community dwellers, its signal can be received in many dispensed and scattered community from a single location at no extra cost. Developments in technology have made it easier to achieve participatory programme production and presentation. Lastly it hasbeen made useful in rural radio forum.

**Print Media:** This is a type of community media which falls under publication of newspaper in various forms which are useful, especially in literacy classes and mobilization for development through organized reading club and meetings. Print media can also help to concentrate public attention on a subject or goal and help to set the development agenda. The major problem of the print media as a type of community media is the poor literacy rate in many third world societies. To enhance their effectiveness, they have to be published in indigenous language and probably made part of literacy class poster and printing on cloths (T-shirts) and face caps also quite popular in creating awareness about some development campaign.

**Audio-Visual:** This is also refers to as video which is the commonest and cheapest audio-visual medium for community media. The increasing availability of video cassette players and television has increased access to video mostly as a medium of entertainment. Its reach is however highly low, especially where television broadcasting is not readily available. It is attractive to impact knowledge and skills which also makes it highly credible among the non-literate audience. Its popularity for recording also recommends it. It also lends itself to being integrated with traditional media like theater, music and other cultural performance of popular artistes during the period bu the one that is no more in vogue is the mobile cinema. It is however still being used in Nigeria for evangelical purposes by many Pentecostal churches.

**Audio-Tape:** This is suitable for group and individual listening. Similar to the video-tape, it can promote discussion and debate and also facilitate understanding and group decision making. Its potential in promoting awareness and subsequent collective action was enhanced following its use before the Iranian revolution by the Ayatollah Khomeini. Pre-recorded programmes could be distributed for broadcast on community audio power system (CATS) using powerful loudspeakers hoisted on tall poles building.

According to Lovie report (2000) this practice has become very popular in many farming villages in Asia and that it has been adopted to teach villagers various courses such as pest management, nutrition and family planning.

**Traditional Media:** Many communities have traditional performances drama, music, stories which are part of the community communication system. They are part of the oral traditional (oral media) media and they can be easily incorporated into the modern media to multiply their reach and possible effectiveness. Some of their benefits are:

- i. They can be used to educate and sensitize the people on development issues.
- ii. They can be highly participatory.

They easily attract attention and promote emotional involvements.

In conclusion, care must be taken in using any of these traditional media, not to allow their entertainment content to overshadow their education and informational value for this are the real challenges that proper education and training must be addressed.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Theoretical principles serve as benchmark that drives the success of any media in a society in which that media operates.

### ***The Agenda Setting Theory***

One of the most important roles of the media in any society is agenda setting. The agenda setting theory is relevant to the Nigerian communication scene. This theory has been demonstrated in Nigeria on several occasions. The agenda setting function was instrumental in aborting the third term agenda of former president Olusegun Obasanjo.

The media give adequate coverage to issues making its headline catchy in newspaper and making regular top stories on broadcasting news. Programming in the electronic media heightened its importance in the public agenda and influenced the senate to vote against the proposed third term agenda..

Akpabio (ibid) observe that it is not only high rating that skilful manipulation of the media can throw up. It can improve tremendously patronage and profitability in the business sector, career advancement of individuals and goodwill as well as favourable image of individuals and organization so projected in the media.

### ***Strengths of the Agenda Setting Theory***

1. It focuses attention on audience with the media
2. It empirically demonstrates links between media exposure, audience motivation to seek orientation
3. Seeks audience perception of public issues
4. It integrates a number of similar ideas including priming, story positioning and story vividness.

Gleckeer (2000) agrees that the media influence public opinion on topics in the news; he adds that the role of the media is to cover simply what public concern already exists and concludes that this is a flip side of the theory. He further posits that the agenda setting theory is testable.

### ***The Social Responsibility Theory***

The social responsibility theory was a product of trend that emanated from the re-emergence though, in another form, of the most dreaded authoritarian philosophy of the media. It was realized that media ownership and management was starting to involve huge amount of money and that availability of multiplicity of small media unit representing different political viewpoints was fast going into oblivion. Although, there was no political leader and in fact they rigorously protected the media, as brought by libertarianism, put so much power in the hold of media owners and managers to the

extent that the media was refracting from being a market place of idea. Social Responsibility Theory fulfills its obligation of sewing the public.

The social responsibility theory is an outgrowth of the libertarian theory. However, social responsibility goes beyond objective reporting to interpretative reporting. Hutchins Commission documented these essentials.

- a. The media should be accountable to the public
- b. It is the duty of the media (print and electronic) to provide a truthful comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a content that gives them meaning.
- c. The media should serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism
- d. The media should serve as presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study would make use of survey method in surveying public opinion (rural dwellers and staff of selected broadcast media-radio) about the broadcast media as a means of reaching the rural community. The instrument of data collection or survey method to be used is questionnaire and personal interview in which the interview is to supplement the questionnaire.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis give consideration since the conclusion and recommendation concerned are derived from data presentation and analysis. A total of 100 questionnaire were distributed and so were returned. This showed a return rate of 80% the finding of the study will be discussed from the research question and other questions in the questionnaire.

**Table 1. Returned questionnaire**

No of Questionnaire	frequency	percentage %
Distributed/returned	80	80%
Not returned	20	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table reflect that 100 questionnaire were distributed, 80 were returned while 20 were not returned due to the busy work schedule of a past of the sample

**Table 2. Age distributed of respondents**

Age	frequency	percentage
20-25years	10	12.5
26-30years	15	18.75
31-35years	20	25
36-40years	30	27.5
41 and above	10	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Educational qualification of respondent**

Qualification	frequency	percentage
WAEC/NECO	25	6.25
OND/NCE	20	25
HND/B.Sc	45	56
Others	10	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>



### Broadcasting media is a means of reaching rural dweller?

Options	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	50	50
Agree	25	43.75
Strongly Disagree	5	6.25
Disagree	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above show that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed to the question and only 43.75% agreed to the question and only 6.25% disagree to that opinion.

## 5. RESEARCH QUESTION

1. Are the Radio messages more effective in rural (Mawuko) community development for the rural dwellers?
2. Are the audience for radio larger than those of television in rural community especially Mawuko?
3. Do the inhabitants of Mawuko have more radio set them they have television sets?
4. Are the radio and television stations directing their programmes towards rural development?
5. What is the attitude of rural dwellers (Mawuko people) towards the radio and television programmes?
6. What is the level of ruralities involvement in radio and television programming?
7. What significant change(s) has been recorded by the Mawuko community as a result of their exposure to radio band television?

With a careful consideration and the effect of language barrier in communication most especially in rural areas when information are to be disseminated, it was discovered from the respondents that it is a barrier as it affects effective communication.

On the issue of rural community, it was noted from the respondents that the broadcast media can help in securing rural community audience as the most of the respondents respond positively. Broadcasting media can positively enhance rural participation as shown by the respondents in that regard and this could be achieved through related programme. Also in this research work, it was revealed that the type of relationship that exist between broadcast media and rural community shows there is a cordial relationship regards to the respondents sampled.

Finally, broadcast media coverage can help in improving rural community with the aid of government support as most of the respondents stated during this research work.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In view of these findings, it is safe to conclude that majority of the rural dwellers regard broadcast media as a means of reaching the rural community that gives a long way in improving the standard of information dissemination of the rural community.

Another observation is the positive correlation the broadcast media and the rural community by going the research using Paramount FM, and the volume sources information disseminating to the rural community by Paramount FM 94.5 since their establishment are with great positive percentage when reviewed.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

The following are the recommended course of action as a result of this research work.

There should be better opening and appropriate channels for programme that will aid utilization of native wisdom where applicable in the resolution of issues affecting the country and rural community, economic and socio-political crisis.

The broadcasting media should create more time for enough economic and business educating programmes which must or be presented in our native languages.

There should be reduction in English language in dissemination of information, so that all information disseminated will be communicated to the rural dwellers without a need for translation.

Journalists should start trying to visit the rural community from time to time to extract news and information about issues affecting their environment.

Government should try to make available facilities that will aid broadcasting such as constant power supply and creation of Information Centre to the poor that cannot afford to acquire television and radio set that will enable them to listen to information and other social, educative and political programmes.

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