

AN ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY JOURNALISM AND THE CHALLENGES OF
RURAL REPORTING IN NIGERIA

(A STUDY OF NDOKWA FM)

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POLYTECHNIC, AUCHI EDO STATE

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BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION,
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY AUCHI
POLYTECHNIC, AUCHI EDO STATE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF HIGHER
NATIONAL DIPLOMA (HND) IN MASS COMMUNICATION

NOVEMBER, 2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research project titled “**An Assessment Of Community Journalism And Challenges Of Rural Reporting In Nigeria; A Study Of Ndokwa Fm**” was written by me with the matric number ICT/2132060310 and that it is the record of my own research. To the best of my knowledge, it has been presented in any previous application for an academic award; all sourced of information have been acknowledge using references

Aghanenu Esther

Date

APPROVAL

This research project is approved on the student's declaration and its compliance with the requirement of the Department of Mass Communication, Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) Mass Communication.

Mr. Godwin Iwegbu Ukwaniamaka
(Project supervisor)

Date

Mr. Joseph Ikerodah
Head,
Department Of Mass Communication

Date

DEDICATION

The journey so far was not easy. It has been rough, there has been a lot of up's and downs throughout the journey, but strength of God; I was able to scale through.

Therefore, I gratefully acknowledge the Almighty God for his strength and provision throughout my studies.

First and foremost, my special thanks and profound gratitude goes to my dearest parent Mr. and Mrs. Chukwuka Aghanenu

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To God Almighty, who gave me strength, grace and Good success to him be all the glory forever

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Now to the endurer, the humbler benefactor, who pays the piper will surely dictate the tune, my mummy and dad. Mr and Mrs. Chukwuka Aghanenu you are the endure, you are the pillar to my success, you are mercifully different you made this happened! May you live long to dictate the tune and reap the fruit of your labour.

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ABSTRACT

Rural communities in Nigeria have largely been relegated to the periphery of the regular mainstream socio-economic and political development conversations. Their voices remain muted and their core political and socio-economic concerns largely excluded from the core resource planning and allocation. Radio station offers a platform for remedying this situation as it is widely regarded as the ideal media for developmental communication (Butner, 2003), particularly for rural populations. This study set out to examine the role of Community journalism and challenges of rural reporting in Nigeria. Ndokwa FM, a community radio station located in Ndokwa East, Delta state was selected for a case study with the purpose of demonstrating the role of community journalism in rural development of Ndokwa. This study was qualitative in orientation and data were as gathered through structured questionnaire, key informant interviews and direct observation in addition to consulting secondary data from various sources. The findings of this study are that Ndokwa FM is indeed being harnessed for the social, economic, cultural and political development of the inhabitants of Ndokwa in such areas as mobilization of resources and collective action, preservation and promotion of progressive facets of local culture, civic education, behavior modification, business and social networking, as well as promotion of fraternity and harmony in the community. Existing community media houses on their part should develop effective sustainability systems to enable them thrive. Such would include better community participation and support, volunteerism, partnership with devolved government units, and creative fundraising initiatives

.CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Community journalism is a staggering concept viewed from the perspective of its application in the Nigeria's context. Looking at the issue from the standpoint of community radio, historical development of broadcasting in Nigeria reveals that community/local/ rural radio was never taken into consideration as an integral part of it up till now, the situation has persisted, because nowhere in Nigeria is the phenomenon of community radio currently being felt. So far the location of broadcasting stations has remained in the same pattern established by successive Nigeria government in the concentration of infrastructure which favors the urban centre to the neglect of rural areas.

Until April 21, 2009, when a clarion call was made on the inevitability and desirability of community broadcasting in Nigeria through a one- day policy dialogue on the matter in Abuja by stakeholders, broadcasting in Nigeria was urban conceived and urban delivered in all its ramification. As opposed to other countries in Africa where community broadcasting has been embraced, Nigeria is just a toddler in rural broadcasting. Apart from some campus radio stations been run by some higher institutions in the country which have some nuances of community broadcasting, there is virtually nothing concrete on ground beyond rhetorics and policy framework. Ajijola quoted in Moemeka (2008,p.7) puts the number of community radio stations

in some countries in Africa as follows; Mali, 120, Senegal 44, Burkina Faso 27, Niger Republic 24, Republic of Benin 22 and Ghana 8. Furthermore, Quarmyne cited by Konkwo (2010, p.98) states that South Africa has 92 community radio stations while Mozambique boasts of 25.

In Ghana for instance, the role of community radio has been clearly stated in their 1995 legislation. According to Alumuku (2006, p.17) Ghana's legislation "stipulates that community broadcasting should be non- sectarian, non-partisan and not-for-profit but add that commercial advertising is permissible on community broadcasting stations for the purposes of sustainability ...". He added: the legislation points out that at least 70% of programmes on all community broadcasting stations should be in local languages and 80% of the programmes should be produced by the station itself. At least 20% of programmes should be of national interest, which could include relays of national broadcast news from the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC).

In Zambia, the National Broadcasting (Licensing) Regulations Act of 1993 from a legal back up for establishment of community radio. It is an independent authority with the powers to licence, regulate and allocate frequencies as an essential element to liberalization process (Alumuku, 2008).

Equally in South Africa, the promulgation of the Independence Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act of 1993 as pontificated by Alumuku (2008, p 17) "paved the way for the licensing of community radio stations and the government's white paper on broadcasting published in June 2001 outlined the government's first ever policy on community radio." While the blames of ex-communicating the rural populace in Nigeria through community broadcasting lies squarely on government, some experts believe that journalism educators and mass communication

researchers should also be held responsible for their negligence in promoting community broadcasting. Konkwo (2010) and Claussen (2008). While Konkwo (2010) specifically accused Africa Journalism educators for partly been responsible what he described as “cheerless situation” Claussen (2008) bemoaned the fact that journalism educators and mass communication researchers in Africa are almost ignoring community radio (which is) increasingly important worldwide.

The mass media are technologically driven. Technology has changed the tide of news reporting in our society. Ate (2008, p. 73) confirms this assertion with particular emphasis on satellite: As the society becomes more complex by the day, media practitioners need to technologically position themselves in a vantage position to effectively perform their social responsibility function to members of the public. In those days, somebody could accept the definition of news as an account of what has happened. And for any event to be defined as new, it must be reported. But today, with the technology of satellite, the process of news gathering and dissemination has been re-shaped. People can watch events anywhere in the world as they are happening. He further argued that technology is an aspect of culture and that the nature of society depends largely on the type of technology it acquired.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Community journalism play a special role in giving a voice to rural and/or marginalized and poor communities and those without access to mainstream media, and often deliver content that is part of a development agenda. The financial sustainability of rural reporting is often a major challenge to community journalism. In Nigeria and indeed other third world countries, the people living in rural areas are neglected in terms of information dissemination and development

process. This has created attractions to urban areas. There is high rate of ignorance in the rural areas, beyond the poor physical development of such areas. The problem necessitating this study is therefore: what are the challenges of rural reporting in Nigeria

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this are to:

- i. Examine the role of community journalism in rural development.
- ii. Examine the effectiveness of these channels of communication.
- iii. Examine the attitude and perception of rural dwellers to community journalism.
- iv. Examine the challenges of rural reporting in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following questions were addressed in the study.

- i. What is the role of community journalism in rural development?
- ii. How effective are these channels of communication?
- iii. What are the attitude and perception of rural dwellers to community journalism?
- iv. What are the challenges of rural reporting in Nigeria?

Scope of the Study

1.5 The Scope of the Study

This research work is term to examine the community journalism and the challenges of rural reporting in Nigeria a study of Ndokwa West Local Government, Delta State in confided to Ndokwa Fm 94.81 time allocated to the researcher which is relatively short and financial setback and emanated from other academic work

1.6 Significance of the Study

There is no doubt about the fact that works like this will be beneficiary to some set of people and entity. Meanwhile, this work will benefit the following people, the rural dwellers, government and future researchers. The rural dwellers will see community journalism as an effective tool in their domain as a weapon in their struggle for good health status, enhanced working and living conditions, political and human rights etc. Government at all levels will see reasons for improving the wellbeing of rural in order to attain national development. Researchers who will be exploring on this or related Research will find the work interesting and as a reference point.

.1.7 Definition of Terms

Community:-community can be define as the condition of sharing or having certain attitude and interests in common or a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common

Journalism:- the is collection, preparation and distribution of newts and related commentary and feature materials through such print and electronic media as newspaper, magazine, book, blogs, webcast, podcast, social networking and social media sites, and e-mail as well as through radio, motion pictures

Community Journalism: - community journalism is locally-oriented, professional news coverage that typically focuses on city neighborhoods, individual suburbs or small towns, rather than metropolitan, state, national or world news. if it cover wider topic, community journalism concentrate on the effect they have on local reader

Rural: - rural area has open swath of land that has few homers or other building, and not very many people. In rural area population density is very low

Reporting: - this is the disseminating of information or given account of an event

Challenges of Rural Reporting:-it is no longer news that over 70 percent of the population of Nigeria lives in the rural areas. It is disheartening to note that this “silent majority” “ruralites” are either not reported at all by the mainstream media or under reported by them because of the urban centrality syndrome. We cannot be talking about development at the national level when the rural areas are not adequately reported. This gap can be bridged to a large extent by community journalism. The need for community journalisms therefore, arose axes a result of the deficiencies of the available mass media

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Amodu (2007) cited in Anaeto (2010: p. 4) in examining development, says that it is the process of positive socio-economic change in the quality and level of human existence which is aimed at raising the standard of living, the quality of life and human dignity. Focusing on social needs, self-reliance and people's participation, Inayatullah (2009) as cited by Jimoh (2008: p. 105) defines development as the ability of man to have greater control over his environment and increased realization of its human values, its political destiny and self discipline. Here, he emphasizes human indices as better management and control of the environment, including the need for good political system of governance which is acceptable to all. This is the realm of sustainable development. That is, developing without destroying the environment. Inayatullah also emphasized the endogenous path to development through the participatory approach. This will help in sustaining the values of the people.

Participation by the people for development programs and policies is a major impetus for development. Similarly, in a precise but all encompassing definition of development, the duo of Melkote and Steeves (2001:45) simply define development as "the process by which societal conditioning are improved." Development is also understood on the basis of a renewed thinking on sustainable development "as the increasing capacity of man to manipulate his environment to

his betterment.” (Jimoh, 2005: p.1) All efforts both physical and social including policies and programs geared towards a better life for the people excluding politics and political activities will be seen as development oriented. Better life is seen in line with Sears’ (1977:p. 124) conceptualization of development as:

The questions to ask about a country’s development are therefore; what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result „development“ even if per capita income doubled.

Clearly, Sears’s contention is that social indices of reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality are better yardsticks for measuring the development status of a nation. Reason being that high economic indices do not translate to better life and sometimes may worsen it as the state of inequality may increase. In the same vein, Young (1993) cited in Lanahun in Soola (2002: p. 75) avers that: “development implies a change for the better: the ordering of society and social and economic processes in such a way as to lead to the eradication of gross poverty, ill-health, and illiteracy and to rising standards of living and increased material comforts for all.”

These additional human indices of good health, improved literacy levels to eradication of poverty, unemployment and inequality constitute this study’s understanding of development. Indeed even the millennium development goals of eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improvement of maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and

other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing global partnership (Millennium Development Goals Report 2004) are rooted in these indicators of development. Oso and Adebayo (1990: p. VIII) assert that “within the context of promoting development, and in this instance rural development, information dissemination assumes a specific role, that of mediating to promote development.” The media are to play a major and direct role as magic multiplier of both the diffusion process and the resultant development benefits.

In the struggle for national development, according to Moemeka (1990: p. 72),

The uneducated and impoverished rural majority cannot be left out without devastating consequences. In the effort to enlist their contribution, the mass media cannot be ignored, and in the attempt to use these media of mass communication to liberate, enlighten and educate rural people for development, the strategy should be one which gives priority to the aims of not mere information distribution and transmission but of participation, expression and communication.

Communication plays a vital role in development. This assertion was made by Harrison (p. 4), “the spread of the mass media has been among the most powerful forces for social change in developing as well as in developed countries. The media have broadened narrow horizons, accelerated the pace of transformation and created a climatic readiness for development.” In Africa, mass media contents are generally dominated by political and other non-development oriented reports. Barton (1979) found that the content of the press was largely on political matters with little attention paid to the development needs of Africa. He argued that this may be due to the fact that the press of Africa was founded on the basis of nationalism and politics.

Newspaper and Rural Development

Based on this understanding of development, some nations are developed while others are not. The high level of poverty, unemployment, poor health conditions, inequality between the haves and have-nots in Nigeria are clear indicators that Nigeria is an under-developed nation. The rural people of the country are worse off by these yardsticks. The result is that poverty, hunger, diseases etc are much more pronounced in the rural areas than those of the urban centers. Anaughe & Okwudiafor (1987: p. 9) see rural development as “being concerned with any method used in raising the quality of life of the low income population living in rural areas on a self-sustaining basis through a fundamental transformation of the rural mode of production.”

For rural development to be achieved, the press has a role to play. This can come in the form of passing information about a nations development opportunities for change, method and means of achieving possible change (Schramm, 1964).The need for rural mobilization as a countervailing force for development calls for formation, at the grassroots, of strong organization capable of articulating and protecting the interests of the local (rural) populace. Such grassroots voice has the capacity not only to draw attention to it but also to force the central authorities to enter into a negotiated relationship with the rural communities. Melkote (1991:201) as cited in Soola (2003: p. 15) cited Uploff and Esman as underscoring the imperatives of rural local organization, stating that,

Those cases in which there were more organizations reaching down to the local level, accountable to the local people, and involved with rural development functions have accomplished rural development objectives more successfully with respect to the available resource base than have those with less rural organization.

The need for a cautious application of the media is informed by its potential both to serve as a catalyst and to act as a drag in the wheel of development and progress. The mass media according to Fair and Shah (1997: p. 25), rather than being purveyors of progress and a means of overcoming development, can in fact, just be one more cause of underdevelopment in that they may serve not only to reinforce but also to perpetuate existing power relations and structures of inequality. The general use of print media in development is to provide information, to sensitize, reach and stabilize groups of rural people. Compared to other media, print has the advantage of being relatively cheap, as well as better to memorize because of the fact that written words or pictures stick better in mind. This medium is comparatively low-priced and available for a wide range of people. The newspaper which is classified under the print media has enduring characteristics which neither the radio nor television has. The newspaper, according to Moemeka (1990: p. 63).

Can be read and re-read at convenience thus allowing for fuller and better understanding of message contents. It can be stored away for future use, thus, making for the presentation of materials that are considered important for future reference. They are also capable of carrying literacy and non-formal education materials and of serving as reading materials for new literates,, thus ensuring that illiterates do not only learn to read but also read to learn.

Newspaper publication started in Nigeria in 1859 and today, there are quite a number of government and privately -owned newspapers in the country varying in frequency and time of publication as well as circulation rate, target audience and achievements. One of the primary functions of the newspaper is to objectively report news situation or events in all fields of human endeavor. Usually, management of the print media assesses the newsworthiness of events and based on the philosophy and interests of the organization, takes the decision on how best to

present or showcase news events to achieve maximum effect. According to Hoslti (1969: p. 53), it also serves the purpose of describing trends in communication, analyzing techniques for persuasion, and relating known attributes of the audience to messages produced for them

Bittner (2005:22) opines that newspapers are a major force in forming public opinion and affecting national and international efforts toward economic progress and global understanding.

Williams (1978: p. 471-472) states that,

With the power of publicity, promotion and with knowledge of existing conditions, the newspaper is in a better position than any other organization in the community to acquaint the general public with its needs and possibilities and to show how these needs may be met.

Agee (1979: p. 201) saw the need for simplicity when he suggested that “if newspapers are to fulfill their role of communication to the mass of the population they cannot indulge in writing styles and terminology so involved that many readers cannot comprehend.” Effective communication with the rural population would be impossible “unless the communicator enters into cultural context of the people and understands at first hand their economic and social peculiarities.” Moemeka (1990: p. 67). According to Akeju (1988), among other information needed by rural dwellers is information for increased productivity and income growth, information for social participation and political involvement. For effective rural development, according to Fakunle (1992:

p. 5-6) the rural dwellers therefore need to be provided with information on the following:

Health Service

Rural dwellers need information on first aid treatment and rural health education. Rural dwellers need to be educated and provided with information on how to improve the quality, value and nutritional balance of their food. They need to be enlightened on how diseases could be prevented and what to do when there is an epidemic.

Agricultural Activities

Farming is a major occupation of rural dwellers. Farmers in the rural areas need information and enlightenment on how they could complement the traditional farming system with the modern practice.

Political programmes

With the current political dispensation which put emphasis on the grassroots' participation, the rural dwellers need to be enlightened and integrated into the political process. The significance of every stage of the political process need to be explained to the rural dwellers with the role they are expected to play in order to install a purposeful and responsive government.

Infrastructural development

One of the major problems in the rural communities is insufficient funds to execute projects for communal purposes. The rural dwellers need information on how they can pull their money together to fund individual or community projects.

Community Journalism

Community journalism or civic journalism is a new area of focus for mass communicators all over the world. Because of the strength of the rural press to mobilize people to participate in the art and science of governance at the grass root level where majority of the people live especially

in Africa, community journalism is endorsed by many as a soothing balm for advocacy and developmental journalism.

Kurpius (1999, p.3) outlines some of the major benefits of civic journalism. These are “increased diversity, greater depth and context of the news coverage, and a stronger understanding of the various communities that make a particular viewing area.”

Moemeka (1981), Myers (2000), Kurpius (1999) and other experts highlighted the relevance of community media in different spheres of human endeavor. For example, community journalism according to experts encourages journalists and news managers to find ways to capture citizen priorities, concerns and perspectives on different issues of importance to many different communities. As part of the process of creating connections to citizens, news managers are now finding ways to hear and understand the greatest diversity of voices and communities in their viewing and listening areas. Practicing community journalism helps both news content and source diversity by encouraging a discussion of citizen views and issues using a wide range of community perspectives.

The best reason for practicing community journalism is to create a stronger community understanding by news organizations and the journalists who work in these newsrooms. Inherent in this increased understanding is an ongoing conversation between journalists, citizens and public officials on issues facing their communities. The result of this conversation is larger file of community sources for stories and an increase in story ideas from various communities. These connections and the resulting coverage can help strengthen the value of your news product for citizens in your market (Kurpius, 1999).

Historically, the late stages, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe played crucial roles in the establishment of community newspapers in Nigeria. The duo established provincial newspapers which marked the beginning of the recognition of the role of community journalism and national development. The newspaper established by these leading nationalists, sociologically brought into limelight the cultural artifacts and ideo-facts of rural people in print journalism. They painted the sorry picture of abject poverty and backwardness in rural areas and that drew the attention of the government to the plight of rural dwellers. These papers informed the rural dwellers of great things or issues within their domains and those in cities. Through vernacular newspapers, village dwellers were wooed and mobilized to participate in developmental programmes of their communities, thus engendering social change. (Ate, 2008).

The establishment of the rural newspapers fine-tuned the world view of the down trodden and brought them closer to decision making process at the central level. The community newspapers established at the time in questions serve as a springboard for the establishment of radio and television stations in the 60s and 70s. It is important to point out that the localization of radio and TV in Nigeria took a cue from community newspapers. Today, both TV and radio do broadcast to the people in their predominant local dialects. (Duyile, 2005).

Community media has the powers to evolve social change that could lead to rural transformation in different areas. Even though there are some few of community newspapers in Nigeria today, these papers are too insignificant to take care of the large and heterogeneous audience at the grass root level.

Community Radio

Community radio broadcasting is designed and structured by the local, rural community to meet its expression and enlightenment needs. (Konkwo, 2010). Megwa (2011) added that community radio has demystified Radio as Community dwellers take pride in it and consider it as their own. Alumuku (2006, p.27) contends that “community radio is emerging as one of the best forms of local community communication.” Such a grass root communication approach according to Traber (1986) can become an agent for change in religious, socio-economic development, and in the struggle for human rights.

Alumuku (2006 pp 33-34) identifies two aspects of community radio. These are geographic community radio and community of interest radio. He argued that geographically defined communities are “those communities which exist in a specific locality and which construct meaning from a common language and symbols and therefore share an identity by virtue of these.”

Conversely, communities of interest as reasoned by him are not defined by where people live geographically but “rather by what they are interested in. Their interest could be music or local language or their involvement in adult education at various levels.”

As promising as community radio is, it is just trying to find its feet on Nigerian media firmament. The Nigerian Community Radio Coalition (NCRC) on April 21, 2009 urged the Federal Government to empower Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to speed up the process of issuance of community radio license to prospective broadcasters. Community radio broadcasting in Nigeria is dwarfed by unprecedented challenges ranging from policy misdirection, lack of legislative backing, official red

It is important to note that many years after the Federal Government embarked on a policy reform process which involved the review of the 1990 National Mass Communication Policy and design a National Radio Policy, it is yet to conclude this process as the final documents have not been released to the public.

Similarly, the Broadcasting Reform Law Bill introduced to the National Assembly by the executive branch of government is yet to see the light of the day. While the regulatory body, the NBC, has made provision for community broadcasting with its regulatory framework, it is still disturbing to note the agencies lethargic attitudes towards the licensing process.

While community radio in Nigeria is still at the gestation period, it is necessary for stakeholders in the industry to integrate community radio with new media technologies for effective and efficient result

New Media Technologies

The term new media according to Musa (2009, p. 13) “encompasses the emergence of digital, computerized or networked information and communication technologies in the later part of the 20th century.” Technology as reasoned by Rogers (1995) is an important aspect in the diffusion of an innovation. This innovation according to him is best communicated using the new media in order to reach the widest audience in the shortest frame. Joshi cited by Musa (2009) argued that modern communication must serve as a means to societal development.

Rice (1984) defined the new media as communication technologies that enable or facilitate user-to-user interactivity between user and information. Flew (2002) contended that as a result of the evolution of new media technologies, globalization occurs.

Megwa (2011) believes that hybridised media – Community Radio and Information Communication Technology can lead to poverty reduction. In a study he conducted in South Africa on community radio, community conversation with stakeholders, face-to-face interviews with management and workers of community radio; focused group interview and observational study were used as data collection methods. It was conceptually established that technology can be good or bad depending on the usage.

The importance of technology in the mass media cannot be underestimated. Rupert Murdoch cited by Ikiebe (2011, p.4) establishes this fact:

To find something comparable, you have to go back 500 years to the printing press, the birthplace of the media. Technology is shifting power away from the editors, the publishers and the media elite. Now it's the people who are taking control.

The people are taking control. Community media is about the people and the new media also empower the people to take their communication destinies into their hands. That takes us into the concept of media convergence. Media convergence as a change force according to Ikiebe (2011, p. 4) is “producing borderless world, and is posing new regulatory, ethical, cultural, social and geo-political challenges.” Media convergence produced converged journalists in the digital age. Dominick (2009) explained that the convergence reporter is one who can write stories for a print or a website, shoot and post photos online, and a video as well. The concept presupposes the convergence of the print journalist and video journalist to produce the 21st century version of the news correspondence. This feat cannot be possible without the use of digital and cell phones, video cameras and high speed internet access. Convergence media is about technology.

Socio-technological Development Journalism

What seems to be a pragmatic solution to the mentioned descriptive and normative views is offered by the so-called socio-technological development journalism. The approach strictly adheres to the needs of the population and supports the (normative) perception that the people concerned should participate in the development projects. The tasks of journalism, from this view, include motivating the audience to actively cooperate and on the other hand, defending the interests of those concerned. Interaction of population and journalists is required so that the audience will be involved in the decision making process. To achieve this journalists must be capable of distinguishing the crucial points and of comprehensibly pointing up every social process for the recipients as complex as it may be. Assistance for interpretation has to be provided for decision making. Also, journalists have to be committed to finding solutions while it is equally important to show success stories achieved by single citizens, which can serve as role models for the society.

Since development is considered as solution to social problems in general, development journalism is no longer exclusively limited to rural areas. Development news should refer to the needs of people, which may vary from region to region but generally include primary needs such as food, housing, and employment, while secondary needs as transportation, energy sources and electricity and tertiary needs such as cultural diversity, recognition and dignity are also involved.

Mass communication theory holds that one of the preconditions for the development journalism is the availability of a potential audience (Odhiambo 1991, p.18). The other preconditions are the development of symbolic language technology and evolution of freedom of expression. Peters (2010) succinctly summarizes that media development is sacrosanct to development journalism; as a result, it will encompass a wide range of work which can be generally defined as actions in support of:

- a) A system of media regulation and administration that ensures freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity.
- b) Strengthening media capacity to inform people on issues that shape their lives.
- c) Plurality and diversity of media, transparent and equal market conditions and full transparency of ownership.
- d) media as a platform for democratic discourse within a climate of respect for journalism that represents professional independence and diversity of views and interests in society.
- e) Professional capacity building and supporting institutions for advocacy and development of media freedom, independence, pluralism and diversity.
- f) Professional training and skills development and for the media sector as a whole to be both monitored and supported by professional associations and civil society organizations.
- g) infrastructural capacity that is sufficient to support independent and pluralistic media so that the media sector is characterized by high or rising levels of public access; efficient use of technology to gather and distribute news information (GFMO World Conference, 2007).

The theory of development sees the press as an instrument of social justice and a tool for achieving beneficial social changes. In other words, the media should carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy.

However, in reality, things have not worked out in line with this theory. In Nigeria, there has been pressure on journalists to ally themselves with the political forces, but in doing so they have lost their independence. In this way, journalists can be severely hampered from reporting fully,

fairly and independently; hence, we cannot be certain that development does get advanced in such situation.

Pitfalls in Development Journalism

The pitfalls in development approach can be viewed in different perspectives. In the actual facts, the press becomes far less critical and eventually is forced to give up its “watchdog” role in society. As it continually panders to the government, the press loses its critical edge and becomes nothing more than another government mouthpiece. When this happens, it paves the way for a virulent underground or alternative press with a strong antigovernment approach. This happens most via an opposition party establishing an opposition medium to criticize the government. As the press tries to promote the government and the common good, it can start to lose sight of the individual and the individual’s human rights. If critically examined, it would be discovered that development journalism can be equated with one in which the government exercises tight control and prevents freedom of expression, all in the name of noble ends.

Challenges of Development Journalism

Odugberi and Norri have said development journalism often faces obstacles in the form of low professional journalistic standards, a lack of financial resources, work technical skills, fragmented legal frameworks and an undemocratic political system. Also, there is risk of patronage – the media may not be able to break free from its political constraints and may operate according to clientelism or be captured by private interests.

Nigeria journalism is today being faced with numerous challenges which impede development journalism. Some of these challenges are:

(1) The digital age has made it difficult to define the role of the professional journalist vis- à-vis the citizen journalists (the receiver who is at the same time the producer of news). If professional journalists tailor their duty towards development journalism in the growing pervasiveness of digital technology, online journalism is a threat that lives in the subliminal of the pressmen. This threat brings the fear of losing their jobs.

(2) Again, the global challenges such as climate change, cultural and resource conflict among others are paramount to elites. Therefore, the media are under pressure to cover such reports because they depend on the patronage of the elite for economic survival.

(3) Ownership pattern is a pertinent issue. Business moguls who are publishers are not interested in development journalism because they have created a class fashioned after global trend for them. As such, editors and reporters stick to the mission and vision of the publishers to retain their job.

(4) Lack of modern equipment to reach those who lack the wherewithal to contact the mass media and make news is a serious problem. The Marxist ideologists have submitted that he who owns the means of production also controls the media.

(5) The need to beat deadlines is also a major constraint to development journalism. Journalists' natural competition to have their by-lines perpetually often robs the poor masses of the chances of making news. Since mass media are the elite means of communication, journalists scout for news considered to be prominent in their favor. "Prominence" in this sense connotes maintaining the status quo, which is, of the western style, maintaining the interest of the elites. Hence, a means must be devised to reverse this ugly trend so that developmental issues and issues of ordinary masses can be of importance.

(6) Commercialization of news hampers development journalism. News of less importance filters into the public for consumption as a result of news commercialization whereas other developmental issues are left unattended to. It is high time journalists digressed from cash and carry journalism in order to serve both the rich and poor alike if the word “mass” has to be meaningful, else media will continue to promote the gap between the haves and the have-nots. McQuail (2005) rightly quoted Picard, (2004) that the primary content of the media today is commercialized news designed to appeal to broad audience, to entertain, to be cost effective and whose attention can be sold to advertisers. The result is that stories that may offend elite minorities are ignored in favor of those more acceptable and entertaining to a larger member of readers. Stories that are costly to cover are downplayed or ignored; such stories that create financial risks are ignored and the effect leads to homogenization of media content in coverage of media issues (McQuail 2005, p. 125).

(7) Total dependence on the press releases which characterizes the present day journalism in Nigeria is not good for this part of the world. The implication is that ordinary citizens will be absolutely out of news. Of course, news releases are tailored to further the interests of the public figure that issued it. So, instead of our media becoming involved, they should be apprehensive.

(8) Apathy to reading and research by journalists covering development issues is a critical challenge. Past are the days when journalists were contemporaries of novelists. Hardly do we read features these days with phrases or memorable quotes of multiple authors to illustrate a point. Journalists no longer read widely to dig up buried issues that are considered less important but sacrosanct to national development.

(9) The plurality of the Nigerian media is a reflection of the diversity of Nigerian society: regional, cultural, ethnic, religious, political and ideological. As Kano Communiqué captures it; this is a major source of subjectivity in the Nigeria journalism practice and it affects the practice of development journalism.

Meeting the Needs

If development journalism will be relevant to the setting(s) in which it is conceived necessary variables must be harmonized to ensure it achieves development purpose. Soola (2003, p. 165) identifies training, working conditions/conditions of service for journalists and the socio-political and economic climate as necessities which demand serious attention before meaningful result can be guaranteed. Training of journalists who will in turn carry the message of development is crucial but this aspect has been neglected. Only few journalists are exposed to the language of science, technology and economics because training in higher institutions is restricted to mass communication related arms and theories; only few who read independently will equip and update themselves in other fields of life. Meanwhile, society complexities must be understood before development journalism can take place.

Only a handful of media houses pay attention to the working conditions of their staff despite the fact that remuneration is poor. Some graduates receive N10,000 monthly in so many local media houses. Journalists who are supposed to cover development news are not interested in going to the interior parts of the country because of the cost implications coupled with the fact that they may not get financial gift from those in the rural settlement to augment their pocket. Development will continue to elude this country if journalists do not take into consideration the 80% of rural dwellers who form the bulk of the population.

In reality, the existing media of communication will serve us the needed mechanism to facilitate development. Harmonization of both modern and indigenous channels of communication at the appropriate level will properly achieve desired results. Employing television to create awareness in demonstration, using print media to circulate the development plan in reference and for people to possess first hand information for themselves at convenience will achieve a huge success. The capability of radio wider reach to mobilize both at vertical and horizontal level plus the use of village square, market unions and associations, opinion and traditional rulers to convey development messages will go a longer way to put Nigerian nation on the development track. Since development journalism is a product of the consequence of disillusionment created by the dependency syndrome arising from western dominance of the international flow of information which led to the emergence of New International Informational and Communication Order, development journalists should depart from the old paradigm of news gathering and dissemination in western style to achieve the development calling in news reportage.

2.1 Theoretical Framework.

This study is built on Development Media theory on the grounds that community media, if well positioned, could facilitate remarkable development in the society.

Development Media Theory

Development media theory was put forward as a means of paying for the imbalance in development and information flow of the third world countries and a solution to the technological problems facing them. The third world countries are beset by problems that make development of mass communication system difficult (Daramola, 2003).

In order to deal with peculiar developmental challenges facing third world countries, this theory was put in place with emphasis on the right to communicate and the need to use communication to galvanize social change. The tenets of Development Media Theory as enunciated by McQuail (2000) are:

- i. Media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with naturally established policy.
 - ii. Freedom of the media should be open to economic priorities and development needs of the society.
 - iii. Media should give priority in the content to the national culture and language.
- iv. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.
- iv. In the interest of development, the state has a right to intervene or restrict media operation.

Folarin (1998, p.31) argues that development media theory seeks “to explain the normative behavior of the press in countries that are conventionally classified as “developing countries” or “third world countries”.

He pontificates that there were (and are still) peculiar circumstances or characteristics of developing countries that make the application of other normative theories difficult. These according to him include:

1. Absence or inadequate supply of requisite communication infrastructure;
2. Relative limited supply of requisite professional skills;

3. Relative lack of cultural production resources;
4. Relatively limited availability of media-literate audience;

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The survey research is employed because this will help the researcher to sets out the plan of action for a research project and in the process helps the researcher to develop their research question(s), methodologies and the implementation procedure that includes data collection and analysis for the effective conduct of the research project.

The survey method will help in ensuring adequate representation of the study. The questionnaire will be used to elicit the investigation and the questions that the research is seeking to answer.

3.2 Population of the study

The area of the study is in Kwale Community in Ndokwa West, Delta State this was elected to study the place of community journalism and challenges of rural reporting in Nigeria; with specific focus on Ndokwa fm 94.81 based in Ndokwa Delta State this made survey method an attractive option. This afforded the researcher the opportunity to study the variables in their natural settings; employing a combination of observation, interviews, and document reviews without manipulating the study variable

3.3 Sample size

Since the population of the study comprises of 170,060 people in the community according to national population commission (2006), its becomes too large for researcher to cover the entire population, as such the simple size of the study shall be determines using taro Yamane formula. The formula for taro Yamane is give.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(0.05)^2}$$

3.4 Sampling procedure

The sample of the study was selected randomly among the citizen in kwale community out of 170,060 citizen leaving in kwale community 400 people were selected using taro Yamane

Where:-

n=sample size

N=population size

E=tolerance error

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{170,060}{1 + 170,060 \times (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{170,060}{1 + 425.15}$$

$$n = 400$$

3.5 Validity of the Research:-

The instrument of research which is the interview is valid because we got to interview personnel in Ndokwa Fm organization in which answer for the research was provided. It is instrument valid because it was aimed at meeting the objective of the researcher

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument:-

The questionnaire and interview was pretested to determine the time required to complete the survey whether the respondent understood the question and whether the question elicited the information for which they were designed

3.7 Method Data Collection

In this case study multiple sources of data collection were employed so as to ensure that the data collected is sufficiently rich. Also, multiple sources of data help to address concerns about validity, reliability and generalizability of the study's findings. In this study, data was collected from multiple sources, thus; secondary sources in form of documents and findings of previous similar studies as well as information that was relevant to the subject and location of the study, also primary source in form of fieldwork through interviews (key informants, select listeners, and local opinion leaders), focus group discussions and direct observation.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire of four hundred and fifty (450) was used to capture data relevant to the study's objectives and research questions, four hundred were retrieved. Two basic sources the objectives of this study and to broaden our knowledge, data ought to be collected, analysed and appraised. The primary method as well as the secondary method of data collection was used for this research. The data were collected from respondents with the aid of questionnaire.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This study set out with the following specific objectives:

- i. Examine the role of community journalism in rural development.
- ii. Examine the effectiveness of these channels of communication.
- iii. Examine the attitude and perception of rural dwellers to community journalism.
- iv. Examine the challenges of rural reporting in Nigeria.

After visiting Ndokwa FM principal catchment area and talking to a cross-section of the target audience as well as interviewing and giving out questionnaire to a number of key informants in the community broadcasting arena,

The coding has been carried out and response grouped into three categories with table for easy analysis

Table 1.RESPONSES BY AGE

| AGE | NO OF RESPONSE | PERCENTAGE |
|-------|----------------|------------|
| 20-30 | 230 | 57.5% |
| 35-50 | 170 | 42.5% |
| TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

Table 2 shows that 20-30 years are 106 respondents which constitute 73.1% while 35-50 respondent which constitute 26.9% of the sample

TABLE 2: SEX DISTRIBUTIONS

| SEX | NO OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|-------------------|------------|
| MALE | 230 | 37.5% |
| FEMALE | 170 | 42.5% |
| TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

Table 3 shows that 56 respondent which represent 38.7% are male while 89 respondent constitute 61.3% are females

TABLE 3: ANALYZING EDUCATIONAL STATE OF RESPONDENT

| OPTION | NO OF RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|------------------|------------|
| BSC | 160 | 40% |
| HND | 80 | 20% |
| OND | 100 | 25% |
| NONE | 60 | 15% |
| TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

TABLE 3: shows that 160 respondent which represent 40% are Bsc, 80 respondent which represent 20% HNCD holders, 100 respondent which represent 25% are ONCD holcderxs,60% of respondents which represent 15% are uneducated

TABLE 4: ANALYSIS OF MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENT

| OPTION | NO OF REXSPONCDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|----------|--------------------|------------|
| SINGLE | 320 | 80% |
| MARRIED | 80 | 20% |
| DIVORCED | | |
| TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

Table 4 shows that 320 respondents which represent 80% are single, 80 respondent which represent 20% are married

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY JOURNALISM IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT?

TABLE 4: Has the Establishment of Ndokwa Fm Play an Important Role in Life of the People

| S/N | VARIABLE | NO RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|----------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 250 | 62.5% |
| 2 | NO | 150 | 37.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

Table 4 shows that 102 respondent which constitute 70.3% said yes while respondent representing 29.1 says No

Table 5: Do you get information about recent happening from the fm

| XS/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|------|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 130 | 32.5% |
| 2 | NO | 270 | 67.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 130 respondent which constitute 32.5% said yes while 270 respondents representing 67.5% said No

TABLE 6: has Ndokwa fm being able to affect behavioral change on its people

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|-------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 290 | 72.5% |
| 2 | NO | 110 | 27.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

Table 6 shows that 35 respondents which constitute 24.1% said yes which respondent representing 75.9% says No

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: HOW EFFECTIVE IS THIS CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION?

Table 7: do you understand ukwani language very well

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 300 | 75% |
| 2 | NO | 100 | 25% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

Table 7 shows that 115 respondents representing 79.3% of the sample said yes while 30 respondent representing 20.7% answered No

TABLE 8: does Ndokwa fm bring Varsity of programs

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 350 | 87.5% |
| 2 | NO | 50 | 12.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 350 respondent which constitute 87.5% said yes while 50 respondents representing 12.5% said No

TABLE 9: Do You Listen To Those Programs

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 250 | 62.5% |
| 2 | NO | 150 | 37.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 250 respondent which constitute 62.5% said yes while 150 respondents representing 37.5% said No

.RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE THE ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION OF RURAL DWELLERS TO COMMUNITY JOURNALISM?

TABLE 10: HAVE YOU LEARNT ANYTHING FROM NDOKWA FM

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 250 | 62.5% |
| 2 | NO | 150 | 37.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

Table 10 show that 250 respondent which constitute 62.5% said yes while 150 respondents representing 37.5% said No

Table 11: do you rely of the fm for your information

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 370 | 92.5% |
| 2 | NO | 30 | 7.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 370 respondent which constitute 92.5% said yes while 30 respondents representing 7.5% said No

TABLE 12: do you think this indigenous fm is a good one

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 370 | 92.5% |
| 2 | NO | 30 | 7.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 370 respondent which constitute 92.5% said yes while 30 respondents representing 7.5% said No

Table 13 HAS NDOKWA FM BEEN ABLE TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE THROUGH THEIR PROGRAMME

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 290 | 72.5% |
| 2 | NO | 110 | 27.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 290 respondent which constitute 72.5% said yes while 110 respondents representing 27.5% said No

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF RURAL REPORTING IN NIGERIA?

Table 14: can you get the radio frequency else where

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 10 | 2.5% |
| 2 | NO | 390 | 97.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

Table 14 show that 10 respondents which constitute 2.5% said yes while 390% respondent representing 97.5% said No

TABLE 15 has the government done anything to improve adequate information in the rural area

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 100 | 25% |
| 2 | NO | 300 | 75% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 100 respondent which constitute 25% said yes while 300 respondents representing 75% said No

TABLE 16 DO WE HAVE GOVERNMENT STATION IN THIS COMMUNITY

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONCENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 50 | 12.5% |

| | | | |
|---|-------|-----|-------|
| 2 | NO | 350 | 87.5% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 50 respondent which constitute 12.5% said yes while 350 respondents representing 87.5% said No

Table 17 has financing been a problem in terms of reportage

| S/N | VARIABLE | RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|----------|------------|------------|
| 1 | YES | 300 | 75% |
| 2 | NO | 100 | 25% |
| | TOTAL | 400 | 100% |

The above show that 300 respondent which constitute 75% said yes while 100 respondents representing 25% said No

DISCUSSION OF FINDING:

The finding of this study led to a wide range of conclusion. firstly, this has shown that the people of Ndokwa in delta state see the establishment of Ndokwa fm as a good thing that has happen to them, a lot of people are excited to get program information in their own dialect and this has actually make the people feel relevance. again this research equally shows that most people don't have access to developmental programs a lot of people in the rural area have little or no knowledge about information on developmental issues, basically they depend on public option leader for such information this is because the local fm lack support and finance to sponsor such program making them to focus on local content, the government neglect this local station only pay attention to urban station that is why political activities are mostly reported in urban station, government and celebrities patronage the urban station in terms of advert messages in other to increase their audience base

According to Mrs Brama one of the Ndokwa fm staff state that the issues the rural community journalist are facing is that some media houses are interested in news that will increase traffic to their online news. They just focus on urban news -crime, sports, politic, entertainment e.t.c and

do little to cover in rural area that is why you get little or no information coming from the rural area. This finding also shows that the media in most cases are being faced with financial issues this is because the media house don't have money to run the establishment and this affect allowance made available to journalist for doing their job, transport allowance is always absent so journalist find it difficult to be shuttling from cities to rural areas

Again it was discover not only in Ndokwa community but also other community don't have any government own media the government focus more on urban centers where they felt money will be generated faster by neglecting the rural community a lot of people in the rural depend on opinion leader for information because the media station are not able to bring this information to them

In terms of cultural responsiveness the fm has been able to bring up programs that has help the people to feel their cultural again to some respondent they use to listen to old song which help them to bring old memories back and again according to them, they are some things we do wrongly before but with this fm those things we have stop doing them the problem we are having is that we find it hard to get information from governmental board a lot of people don't even know the name of their governor because they hardly get information from those angles

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was carried out to ascertain the extent of selected newspaper⁶⁶ reportage of rural development, realizing the implications which rural developments have for national development. The study determined the reportage of rural development issues in Nigeria within a period of two years (2009 and 2011). The study investigated the extent of social responsibility displayed by selected newspapers in reporting the issues. The newspapers selected for the study is Afemai newspaper. It was discovered that agricultural development stories and infrastructural development stories were the most reported by the selected newspapers. Cultural stories accounted for the least coverage by the selected newspapers. It was also observed that all the selected newspapers made use of the straight news format most often than the other journalistic genres. By way of general placement of stories, the newspapers gave less prominence to rural development stories by placing the majority of the stories on inside pages. The selected newspapers placed insignificant premium on rural issues as evident in the inadequate placement of stories on front pages and paucity of in-depth and interpretative analysis of issues. Also, the selected newspapers devoted a considerable percentage of their overall rural development oriented stories to agricultural development and infrastructural development.

CONCLUSION

The Nigerian press as an institution or organ is expected to report all or every sector of the Nigerian economy with sufficient attention on each sector. This becomes necessary because each sector of the economy is of equal importance to the development of the Nigerian society. As observed in the study, it would be necessary for the Nigerian press to give equal attention to all sectors of rural development.

RECOMMENDATION

Congruent to the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Community newspapers should be established for the primary aim of canvassing and monitoring development policies and projects including focusing attention on the development needs of the rural people.
2. Every newspaper house should create development desk just as there exist foreign, sports, business desks, among others. With this, there will be increased coverage of development activities.
3. Correspondents should be employed from amongst the rural people. They should be trained and made to cover their areas.

Furthermore, the press should adequately utilize its developmental function for the positive change and development of the rural sector.

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