

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF RURAL BROADCASTING IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the perception of the public on the role of rural broadcasting in sustainable development in Nigeria. The rationale behind the study is to find out place of rural broadcasting in sustainable development. Quantitative research method was adopted for the study and the questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The population of study was made up of adult male and female in Lapai Local government area of Niger State, Nigeria. The findings show that rural broadcasting plays a crucial role in communicating development messages to the people in the rural communities; findings further show that rural broadcastings provides information on health, education, government programmes, and agricultural related issues. However, the study reveals that rural broadcasting has not been fully embraced in Nigeria. This is attributed to a number of factors such as lack of a viable communication policy, media ownership and commercialism, non inclusion of the rural people in the conceptualisation and execution of development programmes, lack of establishment of community media systems by the government and corruption among government officials and development communication agents. The paper therefore concludes that rural broadcasting has not been given due attention in Nigeria. It therefore recommends among others, that the government and private sector should take urgent measures to solve the identified challenges.

Keywords: Rural broadcasting, development communication, perception, public, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Rural broadcasting is a powerful and effective medium for widespread education in rural areas. Rural broadcasting can be used to bring about positive attitudinal change among the rural areas. Rural broadcasting contributes toward the development of rural women by educating them about banking, child health and government policies among other issues. Thus, Iyer (2011) avers that rural communication imparts knowledge of new technologies to rural dwellers, helps them improve their earnings and increase development. Access to accurate and timely information by rural dwellers can result in enhanced economic and social development (Information Daily Staff Writer, 2007). The importance of rural broadcasting as a vehicle for bringing national development has been widely held among communication experts. This concern was given expression by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank report of 2004 recognising the importance of community media as tools for promotion of democratization and development (Buckley, 2005 cited in Ekeli and Enobakhare, 2012). Motivated by this realization, several countries began experimenting the effect of rural radio in mobilizing their people to embrace government policies and programmes geared towards development. Thus, countries like Mali, Senegal, South Africa, India, Ghana, Kenya etc have reaped tremendous benefits from establishing chains of community media in their respective countries.

However it is disheartening to note that rural or community broadcasting is yet to be firmly rooted in Nigeria. And this has resulted in the alienation of the rural people in regards to government intervention programmes in time past and the present dispensation. This is evidently seen in the failure of governments programmes like Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Poverty Alleviation Programme, War Against Indiscipline, and a host of other laudable programmes meant to uplift the lives of the rural dwellers.

Communication is central to the development of any society. Nwosu (1990) observes that development experiences in other part of the world have continued to point to the fact that communication is central to rural and national development and that its catalytic effect to the development of the other sectors of a nation's economy should not be neglected or underplayed. This underscores the strategic place communication plays in rural development. Nwosu's submission is true considering the fact that majority of Nigerian population reside in the rural areas where access to basic amenities is grossly in short supply. Hence majority of people are living in abject poverty and deprivation, and as a result they are completely cut off from government interventions programmes.

Development communication via the establishment of rural radio or television will ensure that the rural people are accorded recognition and thus participate in development programmes that concerns their welfare and well being. But is it unfortunate that rural broadcasting which suppose to be a vehicle to actualise this noble objective has not been accorded the much needed attention by the government. One major reason that is attributed to this issue is the lack of an articulate policy spells out by the government in regards to community broadcasting in the country. Konkwo (2012) throws more light on this when he says that the relegation to the background of rural broadcasting in Nigeria is attributed to bad government policies. Even though the government has expanded the signals of its networks across the country, most of these signals are only received in the

states capitals and some surrounding communities. Actual rural broadcasting is yet to take off in the country. The position of this study is that if rural broadcasting is given its rightful place, it will be an important instrument in bringing development to the rural people.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The broadcast media are powerful instruments that can be used to engender development, especially in developing countries, like Nigeria who's quest to enlist herself among one of the developed countries in the world. This becomes quite obvious considering the fact that majority of Nigerian population reside in the rural areas and they need to be mobilise to participate in government developmental programmes. Development communication is therefore imperative to ensure that people in the rural areas are adequately mobilised to participate in the process of development.

However, rural broadcasting which is supposed to enhance and facilitate this process is nearly non-existent in Nigeria today. This results in a situation where majority of the country's mass media systems are concentrated in the urban centres, thus entrenching and widening the information gap between the urban centres and the rural areas. Since development communication thrives on participatory communication, how then can the urban based and elitist mass media achieve this, given the fact that the mass media have inherent limitations to induce attitudinal and behaviour change? The study therefore, seeks to ascertain public perception of the role of rural broadcasting in sustainable development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What role does rural broadcasting play in development?
2. To what extent is rural broadcasting embraced in Nigeria?
3. What are the constrains to effective use of rural broadcasting in sustainable development in Nigeria

CONCEPTUALISATION OF RURAL BROADCASTING

Rural areas generally refer to areas in a country that are not fully developed. They are areas in a nation where you still have high traditional lifestyles that cannot be found in the urban areas or centres. Udoaka (1998, p. 49), cited in Asemah, Anum and Edegoh (2013, p. 21) avers that when the word "rural" is mentioned in Africa, certain things are conjured in our minds. These images, according to Udoaka centre on acute un-development and poverty and they manifest themselves in the form of bad roads, lack of water supply, poor housing, poor sanitation and high rate of illiteracy. Udoaka further observes that the word brings to mind geographic locations in African, with populations of hungry, wretched looking people and stunted, kwashiorkor riddled children. It conjures the image of a people, who suffer in the farms, from morning to evening, but whose harvest is not commensurate with the efforts and time spent; it conjures the image of people who are starving, eating at best, once in a day after returning from the market.

Several scholars have conceptualised the concept of rural broadcasting in different ways. However, their explanation of the term when examined means the same thing. For instance, Myers (2000) cited in Ugande (2005) refers to rural broadcasting as a small-scale decentralised broadcasting initiatives which are easily accessed by local people actively encourage their participation in programming, and which include some elements of community ownership or membership. One fundamental component of rural broadcasting that Myers' definition identifies is access and participation. This definition of rural broadcasting sees the concept as a two-way process which entails the exchange of information, views and opinions from a variety of sources and the adoption of media for use by the communities. Under this arrangement, the rural people will participate in the conceptualisation and execution of programmes and policies that would lead to their development.

According to Asemah (2011), rural broadcasting connotes the dissemination and transmission of social development programmes to the rural people, so as to affect their behaviour positively. He went further to assert that it entails the use of community radio and television to carry out development programmes to the rural dwellers. To Iyimoga cited in Akene (1992), rural development is a call for a massive and multi-pronged efforts, which should not only seek to boost production, but also create and spread employment and root out the fundamental causes of poverty, illiteracy and diseases.

Rural broadcasting therefore, represents one of the best ways of reaching the rural people with development messages. The rationale behind rural broadcasting is to ensure that development oriented messages are communicated to the rural people. It is pertinent to note that development communication cannot be successfully carried out without the engagement of rural broadcasting. Rural broadcasting becomes an appropriate medium for reaching rural areas, which at the moment are still lacking behind in accessing events and activities via modern communication devices which tend to be urban orientated in programme content. The objectives of rural broadcasting according to Konkwo (2007) include the following:

- a. The sensitisation of the rural people towards appreciating themselves and their environment and how to improve them.
- b. Enlightening the rural people participate in their civic duties and to enable them to understand their right and obligation as citizens of the country.
- c. To empower the rural people with information to the advantage of the economic programmes and policies of government.
- d. To enlighten the rural people to appreciate the need for personal hygiene and general environmental sanitation.
- e. To enable the citizens to participate in the political decision-making process.
- f. To enable the rural man to understand his constitutional right and to be voted for.
- g. To enable the rural people to take rational, correct and judicious economic decisions based on the information they obtained from the broadcast media and other means of communication.
- h. To foster the education of the rural child through the production and transmission of appropriate educational programmes.

- i. To enable the rural farmer to appreciate the use of modern agricultural innovations and for more and improved yield.

AN OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Development communication means different things to different people. This is owing to the fact that the concept is viewed from different ideological disposition and orientation. Instead of dabbling into the unending polemics of definitions, this paper will rather focus on the “basic needs” approach which lays emphasis on the provision of basic necessities of man, since development is the major preoccupation of developing countries of which Nigeria is not an exception.

Agba (2002, p. 268), cited in Bariku (2007) opines that development communication emerged as an attempt by developing countries, especially Africa, to channel communication towards development ends. Corroborating Agba’s view, Udoakah (1996) avers that development communication is a “remonstrance” against western domination of the world information system; it has become a new philosophy of the use of modern media of mass communication in the developing countries. He further opines that development communication is designed to satisfy the needs of developing countries. He also went further to say that it is an effort to make news and information from an Africa perspective so as to solve Africa’s problem. Africa as a developing continent has been plunged into myriads of developmental challenges since the disarticulation of their economy by the British imperialist through colonialism. After the end of colonialism, the continent has been struggling to regain its natural resources. This has left the country in a deplorable condition where poverty, hunger and underdevelopment still persist in an alarming rate.

To Wilson (1997), development communication is relating media practice to the needs of development through news, features, cartoons, deliberate campaigns like mass literacy, health, public health, public enlightenment, electoral processes, agriculture, rural banking, national security and other rural or national development goals. This view situates development communication within the purview of the needs and aspirations of the rural people. It is in this light that Opubor (1985), cited in Santas (2013) notes that rural development in relations to Africa will be inadequate if it does not accommodate the rural development orientation. In his words:

..... any rural development in Africa that does not take into account fundamental change for the better, in the lifestyle of the peasant farmer, the fisherman, the petty trader, the herdsman, or the labourer, is grossly inadequate. This perspective implies that development plans and programmes must be designed to have their greatest beneficial impact in the rural areas, that they must involve labour intensive projects, that they must provide a capacity for the neglected majority of Africans to continue to better their lives largely through their own efforts.

Opubor’s submission succinctly captures the essence of development communication within the context of African countries. At the heart of development communication is the betterment of lives of the rural people. It is in this light that rural broadcasting becomes relevant in communicating the needs and aspirations of the rural people to the government. Through

this means, the government will come to terms with the plight of the rural people and fashion ways to alleviate their sufferings. In a nutshell, development communication consists of information about government plans and efforts to improve the standard of living of the populace; appeals to the citizens to adopt new ideas and ways of doing things; news of struggle for a better living and news of achievements to spur or inspire citizens for co-operation (Udoakah, 1998).

DEVELOPMENT AS A CONCEPT

Development as a concept is broad and therefore, does not subject itself to a single definition. It indeed covers a wide range of human endeavours. According to Asemah (2010), cited in Asemah, Edegoh and Anum (2013, p. 21), development is a process of change in attitude, social structure and general acceleration of economic growth, through reduction of poverty and inequality. Asemah (2011), cited in Asemah, Edegoh and Anum (2013, p. 21) notes that development in human society is a many sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well being. The achievement of any of these aspects is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole. Development involves the creation of opportunities for the realisation of human potentials. Human beings have certain basic requirements, which must be satisfied so that they can properly function in the society. Among these are enough food, employment and the elimination of the kinds of inequality, which lead to poverty.

Asemah (2010), cited in Asemah, Edegoh and Anum (2013, p. 21) sees development as a gradual process of bringing about positive attitudinal change in the people. It is a continuous process of improving their living conditions, through positive change. The essence of development according to Asemah is the development of people with change in their attitude, leading to change of habit. This means that just changing things without concurrent change of habit or attitude is not a healthy development. Development is seen as a changing process of knowledge, attitude and practices. Keghku (2005, p. 53) says that development generally implies change.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on development media theory. The development media theory, according to Okunna (1999) emerged in the 1980s to fill the gap which had become more noticeable between the developed and developing countries. She notes that as the gap widened, it became obvious that the four normative theories postulated by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956), could not be applicable to the needs and aspirations of the developing countries even though the mass media in these countries were operating according to some of the principles of these normative theories. The major thrust of development media theory is that the mass media have a significant role to play in facilitating the process of development in developing countries. The theory assumes that the mass media and communication can positively influence development process (Anaeto and Anaeto, 2010).

Corroborating Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto's submission, MacQuail (2005, p. 490), opines that the mass media are enjoined, under this theory to accept and carry out positive development task in line with nationally established policy; give priority in news and information to link with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally or politically and

that journalists and media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.

The theory is relevant to the study in the sense that it lays emphasis on using the media for development purposes; thus, community media should be employed for rural broadcasting in Nigeria so as to bring about the development of rural areas.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

It is widely recognised among communication scholars that broadcasting is a powerful and effective medium for widespread education in rural and urban centres. The ability of broadcasting to achieve this feat lies in the fact that availability, accessibility and affordability factors which formally narrowed the reach of the media or restricted them to urban areas, are no longer constituting hindrance at least with regards to radio (Nwabueze, 2007).

Acknowledging the potency of broadcasting with specific reference to radio broadcasting, Moemeka (2000) asserts that in developing countries, the greater parts of the people live in remote areas and are frequently isolated by illiteracy and lack of transport, but effective communication with rural people and their participation in the life of their country are essential for developing societies. Radio broadcasting, when skillfully used, has proved to be the effective medium of communication with these populations.

Studies have shown that the broadcast media have been extensively used to communicate development programmes to the rural people. According to Soola (2003, p. 22) on a global scale, but particularly in developing countries, radio as a medium of mass communication has been man's most potent communication innovation since the development of the printing press. Its monumental success in rural development projects in several developing countries is a loud testimony of its potentials. Radio has been used, with varying degree of success to promote rural development in India, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, and other developing countries of Africa.

However, the concern of many development communication experts is that most developing nations, especially Nigeria, are yet to fully explore the benefits of broadcasting in regards to rural development. Explaining why rural broadcasting is yet to be fully implemented in Nigeria, Okonwo again (2007) attributes it to the "Trusteeship Model" whereby the governments had held broadcasting in "trust" for the people. According to him, based on this arrangement, the governments determine the programme content of what is to be produce. And as a result of this, majority of the rural folks are completely cut off from programme conceptualisation and execution. This has further led to the problem of broadcast content tilted towards been elitist and urban based. As noted by Udoaka (1998, p. 52):

The rural interest cannot be anything other than what gives the rural residents hope, a sense of belonging and what they can identify with. Thus, the reports about actions to better their living would be of interest to the rural people. It would be of interest to them to read about their own efforts to improve their lots, the problems they encounter daily, their ingenuities in tackling problems and facts in the different facets of life. It would be of interest to the rural people to

learn about struggles for the citing of certain community projects in their villages or clans and the spread of social amenities in their local government areas, as well as, patterns of political support in their communities. Stories on accounts of community funds and reports of any embezzlement would also appeal to them. So, would it be of interest to them to read about robbery incidents in their village. A lot of these happen and are not reported in the media.

Udoaka's assertion aptly captures the relevant of rural broadcasting in sustainable development of the rural areas. This shows that rural broadcasting has a role to play in development. Thus, the role of communication in rural development is that of providing access to information from the urban areas where modern ideas would be diffused to the rural sectors. Thus, there is the need to report the activities of the villages so that there will be an increased knowledge and understanding of the events taking place in the rural areas. This explains why Udoaka, 1998, p. 59) says that increased knowledge and understanding of the rural condition through media reports will lead to action. It will lead to a decision as to whether rural conditions should be considered as problems of the different areas they exist or as a social problem, which needs measures of a general kind. Udoaka (1998, p.:54) notes that every country has its national goals. One of such goals is always the welfare of its citizens and this has its root in human rights. Thus, reporting the rural areas serves as a barometer for gauging achievements in the area of citizens welfare, since it is there that the majority of the population is found. Media reports of the rural areas will confer a social problem status on the rural condition through their analysis of the effects of the continuation of the rural condition on society and educate the social mind to see it as constituting a problem. Salter (2011) puts the role of community broadcasting, particularly in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria in a better perspective when she said:

Community broadcasting is designed to fulfill social and cultural needs, by allowing members of the audience to participate in decisions about programming and, in the case of radio, in the ownership of stations; it serves local communities, reflecting the diversity of their views and needs, and provides access to volunteer participants. It is public broadcasting, but it is not operated by a government or a government agency.

This goes further to show how important community broadcasting is. Alumuku (2005, p.18) avers that the essence of having and locating community radio and by extension television, in a given community, is because they "respond to the needs of the local people, contributing to their development within progressive perspective in favour of social change". In essence therefore, the idea behind community broadcasting is participation that is when the people participate and contribute in issues that affect their lives, they will come up with the solution to the problem, and work towards executing such decisions more than when such solutions were forced upon them. In light of this, the opportunities provided by community broadcast stations in conflict situations are numerous. Based on the foregoing, it can be said that rural broadcasting is important for the following reasons: to inform rural dwellers, to educate rural, to promote peace, promoting dialogue and reconciliation, to combat crime and corruption to promote peace through active participation of women, to stimulate economic development.

METHOD

This study adopted the quantitative research method, using questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. The population of the study is made up of adult male and female in Lapai local government area of Niger State. The sample size is two hundred and fifty (250). The simple random sampling was used to select 250 respondents from the population. The simple

random sampling was used because it gives every respondent in the research population an equal opportunity of being selected. The demographic data of the respondents was analysed with the simple percentage.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The questionnaire was administered to two hundred and fifty (250) respondents only. Out of the two hundred and fifty (250) copies of questionnaire distributed, only two hundred and forty three (243) copies were returned and found usable for data analysis. The results were interpreted based on the responses given by the respondents and the research questions.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1: Age Category of Respondents

| Age grade | Number of Respondents |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 18 – 25 | 120 (49.3%) |
| 26 – 35 | 95 (39.0%) |
| 36 – 45 | 15 (6.1%) |
| 46 – above | 13 (5.3%) |
| Total | 243 (100%) |

The above table indicates that out of the total number of 243 respondents, 120 respondents representing 49.3% were within the ages of 18 – 25, 95 respondents representing 39.0% were within the ages of 26 – 35, 15 respondents representing 6.1% were within the ages of 36 – 45, and 13 respondents representing 5.1% were within the ages of 46 – above. This therefore shows that majority of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 18 – 25 and as such they are mature enough to provide good judgment or responses to the questions posed in the study.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

| Sex | Number of Respondents |
|--------|-----------------------|
| Male | 100 (41.1%) |
| Female | 143 (58.8%) |
| Total | 243 (100%) |

The above table shows the distribution of the respondents according to their gender. Out of the 243 respondents, 100 which represent 41.1% were male, while the remaining 143 respondents which represent 58.4% were females. This therefore indicates that the female respondents were more than the male respondents.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

| Marital Status | Number of Respondents |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Single | 193 (97.4%) |
| Married | 50 (20.5%) |
| Total | 243 (100%) |

The table above indicates that out of the total number of 243 respondents, 193 representing 97.4% were single, 50 representing 20.5% are married. This shows that majority of the respondents are single.

Table 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

| Level of education | Number of Respondents |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Undergraduate | 110 (45.2%) |
| Degree/HND | 65 (26.7%) |
| MSC./ M.A | 63 (25.9%) |
| Ph.D | 5 (2.0%) |
| Total | 243 (100%) |

The table above shows the percentage distribution of respondents according to their level of education. Out of the 243 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 110 respondents which represents 45.2% were undergraduate students, 65 representing (26.7%) were degree/HND holders, 63 representing (25.9%) were M.Sc / MA holders while 5 representing (2.0%) respondents were Ph.D holders. The data generated shows the highest respondents stem from undergraduates students. Thus, from the table above, we can however infer that the questionnaire was being appraised by respondents at different educational levels that were highly educated.

Table 5: Occupation of Respondents

| Occupation | Number of Respondents |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Civil servant | 80 (32.9%) |
| Self employed | 28 (11.5%) |
| Undergraduate students | 135 (55.5%) |
| Others | Nil (0) |
| Total | 243 (100%) |

The table above shows that out of the total number of 243 respondents, 80 respondents representing 32.9% were civil servants, 28 respondents representing 11.5% were self employed, 135 respondents representing 55.5% were undergraduate students while nil representing 0% ticked others. The percentages in the table show that undergraduate students were in the majority of those who completed the questionnaire. The answers provided can therefore be considered accurate giving the fact that the respondents are students and lecturers of mass communication and who are conversant with the subject matter of this study.

Research Question 1: What role does rural broadcasting play in development of rural areas?

Table 6: Response on the role of rural broadcasting in rural development?

| S/N | ITEMS | SA | A | UD | D | SD | X | DECISION |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----------|
| 1. | Rural broadcasting enhance the participation of the rural people in the development process | 137 | 100 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 4.6 | Accepted |
| 2. | Rural broadcasting provides voice to the teaming population in rural communities to be heard on issues that concerns them | 169 | 68 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 4.9 | Accepted |
| 3. | Rural broadcasting enable development messages to be broadcast in the local languages of the rural people | 163 | 71 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 4.6 | Accepted |
| 4. | Rural broadcasting enhances political emancipation by creating a platform for debate, exchange of ideas, reaction to planned projects | 104 | 110 | 5 | 10 | 14 | 4.1 | Accepted |
| 5. | Rural broadcasting enables the rural farmer to be exposed to modern ways of agricultural innovations and practice | 80 | 142 | 2 | 11 | 8 | 4.1 | Accepted |
| 6 | Rural broadcasting enables rural folks to be empowered with information to make informed decision on political, economic, and social issues | 89 | 122 | 3 | 14 | 15 | 4.0 | Accepted |

The table above shows the mean score of the information gathered on the role rural broadcasting plays in rural development in Nigeria. Five items sought the views of the respondents on the above research question. All of the five items in the research question were accepted. Item 6 translated into 8.6, item 7 translated into 4.9, item 8 translated into 4.6, item 9 translated into 4.1 while item 10 translated into 4.0. Thus, items 6 to 10 show that rural broadcasting has a strategic role to play in rural development. The implication, therefore, is that rural broadcasting is an integral part of rural development.

Research Question 2: To what extent is rural broadcasting embraced in Nigeria?

Table 7: Responses on the Extent to which Rural Broadcasting is embraced in Nigeria.

| Question | Frequency | Percentages |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Very Great Extent | 10 | 4% |
| Great Extent | 44 | 18% |
| Not at all | 5 | 2% |
| Low Extent | 108 | 45% |
| Very Low Extent | 76 | 31% |
| Total | 243 | 100% |

The result of the analysis show that the extent to which rural broadcasting is embraced in Nigeria is very low. This is evident in the highest number of the respondents that ticked low extent and very low extent (45% and 31%) .

Research Question 3: What are the constrains to effective use of rural broadcasting in rural development in Nigeria?

TABLE 8: Response on the constraints to the effective use of rural Broadcasting in rural development in Nigeria.

| S/N | ITEMS | SA | A | UD | D | SD | X | DECISION |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----|----------|
| 1 | Lack of articulate communication policies on the implementation of community media in Nigeria impedes rural broadcasting | 101 | 117 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 4.1 | Accepted |
| 2 | The non inclusion of the rural people in the conceptualisation and execution of development programmes by development agents | 116 | 105 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 4.2 | Accepted |
| 3 | The preference of modern based mass media over community media systems by the government has impeded rural broadcasting | 118 | 120 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4.4 | Accepted |
| 4 | Media ownership and commercialisation has negatively affected the take off of community media system in Nigeria | 119 | 104 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 4.3 | Accepted |
| 5 | Corruption in government circles is a major barrier to the effective use of rural broadcasting for rural development in Nigeria | 99 | 105 | 7 | 18 | 14 | 4.0 | Accepted |

The table above shows the mean score of the information obtained on the constrains to the effective use of rural broadcasting in Nigeria. Five items sought the views of the respondents on the above research question. All of the five items in the research question were accepted as factors that have hinder the effective use of community or rural broadcasting in Nigeria. Item 23 translated into 4.1, item 24 translated into 4.2, item 25 translated into 4.4, item 26 translated into 4.3 while item 27 translated into 4.0. Thus, the above table indicates that all the items serve as impediments for the effective use of rural broadcasting in development communication in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research question one sought to find out whether rural broadcasting plays any role in development communication. Five items were presented for this question. Based on the findings of the researchers, it is discovered that all the items were accepted by the respondents. This is evident in the acceptance of the five items, which sought to know the role rural broadcasting plays in development communication. Particularly, items, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 provided answers to the posed question. The result shows that rural broadcasting enhances the participation of rural people in the development process, it provides a platform where the voice of the teaming population in rural communities would be heard on issues that concern them, it enables development messages to be broadcast in the local languages of the rural people, it enhances political emancipation by creating a platform for debate, exchange of ideas, reaction to planned projects, rural broadcasting enable the rural farmer to be expose to modern ways of agricultural innovations and practice, and it also enable rural folks to be empowered with information to make informed decision on political, economic, and social issues.

This is not a surprise because as information agents, the mass media should be able to keep people informed about development projects, programmes or issues that are either on-going or need the attention in their communities (Nwabueze, 2005). This submission is further endorsed by Daramola (2001) who says that communication through the mass media has a fundamental role to play in rural development. They contribute to the freedom of expression and the plurality of information, to engage and empower communities and to underpin sustainable development and good governance (UNESCO Portal, 2008 cited in Harne, 2013.)

The second research question sought to find out the extent to which rural broadcasting is embraced in Nigeria. Findings revealed that community or rural broadcasting is not fully embraced in Nigeria. This is evident in items in table 7 where majority of the respondents agreed that the extent is low and very low. The findings of this study proved that rural broadcasting is yet to be fully implemented in Nigeria. This finding further confirms Konkwo (2012) position, that the inability of Nigerian government to evolve an articulate policy for the take off of rural broadcasting in the country has made the rural people to be alienated from government development programmes and policies. And this in turn creates a situation where perpetual ignorance has become the lot of the rural dwellers in regards to government programmes.

Question three sought to find out the factors that hinder the effective use of rural broadcasting in rural development in Nigeria. Findings show that several factors impede the effective implementation of rural broadcasting in Nigeria. These factors include: ownership and commercialisation of the mass media, poor and lack of communication policies on rural broadcasting, the monster of corruption, non participation of the rural people in the conceptualisation and execution of development programmes and the preference of urban based mass media in communicating development programmes to the rural areas rather than community radio or television.

This finding is in consonance with the discovery of media experts who expressed their dismay for the non establishment of community broadcast stations in Nigeria. Lamenting on this, (Kasoma, 1995; Oso, 2002; Soola, 2003, Salawu, 2003), cited in Enobakhare (2012) says the African continent and Nigeria in particular has not invested appreciably in the establishment of community broadcast system in their respective countries. They then further state that only few countries like South Africa, Zambia, Mali, Ghana etc were able to establish community broadcast stations in their countries. Closely related to the lack of establishment of community media is the issue of media ownership question, where the majority of broadcast stations in the country are owned and controlled by the government. This is coupled with the fact that majority of these stations are urban based and located in the major cities of the countries like Abuja, Lagos, Kano, Enugu, and Port- Harcourt etc. It is in this light that Akeledolu-Ale (1993) argues that:

Development efforts in the rural areas of Nigeria have been preoccupied with the promotion of an urban-based strategy of building a modern sector aimed at stimulating economic growth. While significant achievement may have been recorded in this direction, the consequence has been the neglect of the rural areas and its potentials, with the attendant effect of worsening rural poverty.

It is widely held that rural based media systems will enhance development communication more than the urban mass media open broadcast approach. Good communication policies are therefore crucial to effect this noble objective. If the Nigerian government does not take serious steps to come up with a viable framework that would ensure the establishment of community broadcast media in the nation, development communication in rural communities will continue to suffer.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is clear that rural broadcasting occupies a central place in rural development. This is owing to the fact that broadcasting facilitates the dissemination of information on a variety of issues that concern the rural people. However, the study discovered that rural or community broadcasting has not been given due attention by the government. This is attributed to several factors like ownership and commercialization of the mass media, lack of adequate communication policy, corruption in government circles, and the non inclusion of the rural dwellers in the conceptualization and execution of development programmes by development agents. It is high time for both states and federal government to show commitment in changing this situation so that the rural dwellers can be reached with development messages. Equally important to note is that government's efforts at reaching the rural folks with development programmes failed due to the neglect of rural broadcasting in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made;

- a. Federal and state government needs to evolve a viable communication framework that would ensure a practical implementation of rural broadcasting in the country.
- b. Federal and state government should stop paying lip service to the issue of corruption. The monster of corruption must be tacked, especially among government policy makers and development agents. To this end, stiff punishment should be given to anyone who is involved in corrupt activities.
- c. Government and the private sector should establish viable community broadcast stations in the rural areas.
- d. Government at all levels and the private sector should provide adequate infrastructural facilities in the rural areas to enable the full take off of community media.
- e. Development agents should employ the use of traditional means of communication with the modern mass media in communicating development programmes to the rural dwellers.
- f. The input of the rural people should also be sought whenever development programmes are being conceived by development experts.

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