

BROADCASTING AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper analytically examines how Development Communication can be used in broadcasting to further development. As the background of this analysis is the media Agenda-setting and social responsibility theories for the broadcasting media in Nigeria.

Nigeria's vibrant broadcasting landscape parades over 41 FRCN FM stations, 5 Short Wave (SW) channels, over 36 Medium Wave (defunct) (MW) channels/ stations, over 36 states Radio & TV stations, over 36 National Television stations that include and/or inclusive of community Television stations, over 36 Independent Radio & TV stations and a host of New social media online broadcasting channels or stations. All these channels or stations must be abreast of new techniques for Development Communication (DevCom) programming philosophies, and production styles in the issue-based area of addressing education, environment, health, transportation, poverty, sanitation, security, crime and criminal tendencies etc.

It should be noted that the Maxwell Mccombian and Donald Shaw's Agent setting theory in 1972, regardless of its much discussed limitations, is to a large extent relevant to the Nigerian societies, that depend to a large extent on radio in particular, television and the new social media for its education, information, entertainment and cultural promotions. Yes, most broadcasters have been creating synergies for our rural and urban development before, but they were doing all these without the knowledge of the powers of Development communication.

The paper concludes by recommending broadcast programmers departure from politically based broadcasting programmes to broadcasting that emphasizes issues of development communication that can fast-track holistic development from the grassroot to the areas of education, transformation, health, environment and so on.

Keywords: Development communication, Broadcasting as A tool, broadcasting in Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria is in dire need of progress and development in the areas of Agriculture, environment, health, education, transportation just to mention but a few.

The media in general, and broadcasting in our case, can be used as catalysts for the development.

But before now, the approach by most media and mass communication is the sporadic needle approach that arrogate to the programmers and broadcasters the octopodian knowledge of giving the people or pumping down the throats of the harpless listeners and viewers what programmers feel the people want or need.

This is hinged on the magic-bullet or Hypodermic Needle/Theory that assume that listeners and/or viewers are captive zombies that must imbibe all media messages as the gospel truth without the capacity to reject whatever message is bombed or injected into their systems.

This may not be absolutely true no matter the level our illiteracy or degradation. Development Communication paradigms for packaging programmes give specific guidelines for how programmes should be conceptualized, packaged from the beginning to the end or from the manufacturing points to the consumer.

What they consider to be what the people need or want may not be. The result of this professional/intellectual arrogance of the non-initiates of Dev Com programmes is non-researched based programmes that may ultimately not benefit the listener and viewers, or not even owned by the listeners and viewers.

Statement of the problem

In the face of programmers giving the people or forcing down the throats or ears or eyes of the listeners or viewers what they perceive is what the people need or want is the serious problem of what the people really want or need. It is the gleaning out of what people really need or want in this paper that is the focus of this analytical study.

Objective of this study

The objective of this analytical study that digs deep into secondary materials is to find out the real utility meaning of Development Communication with a view of gleaning out the huge potentials for its effective utilization on radio, television and new social media – and by extension the general utilization for progress and development of the country from local to state and federal levels.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study is to know what Development Communication is and how it can be used to catalyse development in Nigeria at the local, state and federal levels using the different broadcasting formats and platforms of broadcasting to actualize same.

Methodology

The materials in this paper were gathered from the researcher's experience in radio and television broadcasting in Nigeria that span over decades with other secondary sources or materials obtained from radio/television in-house-publications, magazines, articles, journals, library/programmes, news, official statistics etc.

It is the decoding of the conglomerations of these materials that form the basis of our recommendations for the huge potentials of Development Communication which the Unseco study affirms. The viability of its utilization is not only in media generally, but in broadcasting in Nigeria to confirm the media as the real 4th Estate in the realm in democracy and good governance for progress and development of any country in the world.

The summary of the whole essence of Development Communication from what we can glean from different scholars is the fact that it is creating an enlightenment environment for development change, transmission from poverty to riches. Wilbur Scramm (1964), Jan Servaes (2002), Abah N (2020), Shaibu (2021) as well as using communication to facilitate development providing enlightenment, information, entertainment and cultural promotion about challenges in any society with a pointer towards clamor for change. Akinfefe (2008) reported in Shaibu (2013), Ashley, B (2003), Vineel, K (2011) just to mention but a few.

All these are what the radio, television and the new social media have been doing consciously and unconsciously over the years in their different programmes and news either in the partial transmissions or full transmissions of 24 hours in a day multiply by 48 hours of thirty minutes per programme, or 96 hours of 15 minutes per programme interludes, exhortations, bridge music advertisement and hypes.

Development Communication

In an interactive interview with Desmond Okocha PhD (2021), "Development Communication in a nutshell is communication with the core or principal objective of facilitating or engineering or stimulating social development or change within a social ecosystem."

He further postulated that unlike other forms of communication, it recognizes the existence and importance of stakeholders and policy makers in the process in any tangible or remarkable development exercise. Development Communication is weaponizing the development process through the promotion of information exchange.

Desmond (2021) noted from there that Development Communication is anchored/or premised on 3 main ideas:

1. Purposeful (objective)
2. Value laden (social transformation)

3. Pragmatic (systematic, process)

Other scholars have termed development as emancipation communication aimed at combating injustice and oppression.

The origin of Development Communication as a concept is attributed to Nora Cruz – Quebral PhD, in her lecture at the London School of Economics in Dec. 2011, in which she noted that the word was first articulated on 10th Dec. 1971 at the University of Philippines in a work titled ‘in search of breakthroughs in Agricultural development’.

In addition to this is the World Bank definition that sees Development Communication as:

The integration of strategic communication in development project based on the clear understanding of indigenous realities.

The practice of DevCom or Development Communication began in the 1940’s, but widespread application came after World War 2.

It got recognition in academic discipline in the 1950’s and there are 6 academics schools in the field of DevCom.

1. Brettinhood School
2. Latin America School
3. Indian School
4. African School
5. Los Banos School
6. Participatory School

Radio and Television professionals can draw inspirations from these schools by adopting either the World Bank’s “Dev Com” while Unicef Is “Communication For Development.” Or C4D The difference seems to be a matter of semantics.

Dev Com sprang spray up in Africa at post-independence starting in the late 1960’s.

Review and Literature

Earlier works of the researcher published in 2005 and reviewed/revised in 2021 in Radio world: The Sound Alternatives indicated the sundry use to which radio broadcasting was out for Development Communication under the sub-title Radio as A catalyst for Development’ as follows:

Radio as a grass root medium can be used as a mass mobilization weapon for change in a given society. With its mandate for education, entertainment, information and cultural promotion, the masses of our land can be exposed to new ideas that break rigid mindsets for the mass of our people to embrace development or Development Communication.

All media have their inherent limitations. Sign media, drum signals, gun shots, print film, television, video tape, programmed instructions, and so on have one form of limitation or the other. Radio is cheap, everywhere and has cross-cultural appeal; TV is expensive and the infrastructural outlay is highly demanding on the purse of lean budgets of individual owners or governments; Newspaper has its restructured audience as you have to be literate to read any Newspaper; a comparative evaluation of all these forms of media puts radio as eminently most qualified to pursue most third world or developing countries developmental challenges. Graff (1991:8) captures this essence pointedly when he said: "Radio seemed to be the answer to development needs. It could be of great benefit over time, it was relatively cheap, it was effective and it had the advantage of being a local medium: Shaibu ((2013) experience that span decades in broadcasting corroborates this.

There is a universal application of radio for the agenda for development. Radio, over the years, in all cultures of the world, has been used for mass mobilization of people in different areas of human endeavour. Radio has been used to set in motion diverse synergies of development in the areas of agriculture, health, education community development, scientific innovation, cultural promotion and socio-political and economic enlightenment. The often-cited examples are as shown as quoted in Shaibu (2005).

1. Poona Rural project in India = Use of Radio for Community Development

2. Colombia “Sutratenza” & “ACPO” = Use of Radio for Non-formal education tagged "Accion cultural Popular"
3. Post-World War 2 = opened up the third world in particular to information explosion that enlightens on the common problems of the world.
4. Pre-Liberian War (LRCN) (Liberia Rural Communication Network). = Use of radio for general rural development
5. Zimbabwe: Radio Documentations on cultural Associations such as “Kudyara Mbeu Yedzidzo” promotes Neighbourhood home library and Follow story telling groups. =Use of radio to stimulate other Groups
6. Hadley Cantril's effects-research study on the Invasion from Mar's conducted after American population panicked when a radio play was broadcast. Use of radio for immediate reaction to an action
7. P. Golden's study on media role in National development in the Promotion of summer of 1974. = Use of radio in the democratic ideals amongst others
8. Application of media to the educational process in countries such as Niger, American the Ivory Coast and El Salvador. = Use of radio/media in increasing learning.
9. Nigeria spread of immunization messages or child survival. = Use of radio for child survival.
10. Ghana's APAM FM experiment in cross cultural education = Use of radio for fishermen's cooperative education amongst others.
11. The large-scale sociological radio study in 1940 by Paul F. Lazarsfeld. =Use of radio in exercise varying functions in influencing processes.

It should be noted that in line with scrams assertion:development in communication is brought by the economic, social and political evolution which is part of the national growth. Our radio history can be seen to follow these patterns of our development.

1. Colonial Rule-Yielded colonial broadcasting. These gave birth to Empire broadcasting and BBC Relays Stations and Rediffusion Stations.
2. Independence - Gave birth to NBS (Nigerian Broadcasting Service) that transformed into NBC (Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation).
3. Military Unitary Rule-Gave birth to FRCN (Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria) as well as State and Independent Stations with a regulatory body NBC (Nigerian or National Broadcasting Commission) to control operations. Since the only permanent thing in life is change, as we continue to evolve into further heights in politics, economics and other social sectors, further developments are envisaged. Graff's (1991:10) assertion that: Communication media and their structures were a sine-qua non for national development is relevant to this study as well as our own broadcasting experiences and foci over the years. For example, when there was need for use of radio for basic education at the primary literacy and early secondary schools in our society, we had a packaged programme titled "Federal Schools Broadcast". Here all forms of programmes were experimented with, to teach all student through the radio medium. The researcher was not only a beneficiary but was part and parcel of the production of these programmes on radio in the early seventies.

The programme then was so popular that it became part and parcel of the school curricula as students breach lectures to listen to these programmes in their different classes and locations across the length and breadth of our country. Later the programmes became part of the practical curricula for all subjects. It is wished that this approach can be given a retrial especially now that all the infrastructure for formal education and non-formal education have crumbled to the chagrin of all education lovers and planners! From the positive fruits of this educational endeavour through the use of radio, it can be seen that radio aids the learning process. Television, too does the same!

When new things are learnt, new ideas of doing things are gathered or harnessed or propelled into diverse actions for a synergy of development to be let loose in our society – this is the whole essence of development Communication.

As posited by Alphons Silbermann (1991:50)in the developing countries, where on the one hand there is a high percentage of illiteracy, on the other hand the cost of living is such that a cheap transistor radio is the means of even the relatively poor masses. Barbara Skerath put this in another wayradio

because of its many advantages, is still the preferred instrument of communication with scattered and far-flung populations. We cannot but recommend that the radio is the only medium in the world today within the means of the masses. Television follows with its elitist focus but later developments that toe the part of community tv broadcasting is aping radio grassroots media approach.

They are all the weapon for effective grass-root mobilization now. It's no wonder then that for now radio remains the major means of global dissemination of mass mobilization messages. This is corroborated in the PhD Research of the Shaibu (1997) that sees radio as an effective popular and cheap mass mobilization medium. Here again and in line with Alphons Silbermann, radio:

Has been able to confuse entire population group through its statements; has been able to pre-empt political changes; has been able to take on functions such as education, mass dissemination of culture within the framework of its establishment as a socio-cultural institution. Last but not the least, it has both positively and negatively served propaganda and advertising."

Radio is everywhere! If you are not literate enough to read newspapers, you can listen to the radio. If you are not rich enough to own television or generators, in case of NEPA failure, you can listen to the radio. Radio has a leading influence that cuts across tribal; religious, ideological, national and international compartmentalization. Radio talks to the rich and the poor, to the young and old, to the urban and rural audience, etc. Radio is mobile. You can listen to it in the comfort of your homes, in the car, in the bus, on the farms, while following or grazing cattle like the Fulanis, on the beach, alone or in groups.

Radio has immediacy. It beats the barriers of time, space and geography to talk to as many people at the same time just as the event is happening! All these and many more that makes radio ubiquitous especially in the developing world, has made radio especially suited as a means of political communication, education, mind bending, mobilization, orientation as well as creating and strengthening national cohesion.

Radio development programmes are packaged, transferred or activated from the radio communication to a large diverse audience consisting of many recipients. When the radio communicators such as Producers, Presenters, Reporters, produce or present their programmes, the audience or listener receives the programmes, decodes the programmes and interprets the messages of these programmes.

It should be noted here that how well these programmes are produced in the different programme formats of either talks, documentaries, magazines, features, etc. will determine how well the programmes are decoded by the listeners. Of note however, is the fact that because radio listeners are victims of the subjectivities of space, time, style of thinking, language, value orientations, attitudes towards man, nature, activities, colour, forms and many other phenomena of the material and symbolic surroundings as posited by Gerhard Maletzke, the radio communicator should be enlightened enough to know all these for the programmes to be received and accepted for proper decoding and absorption.

The radio communicator is face to face with different dichotomies. This according to Gerhard Maletzke includes the dichotomies; "Between rich and poor, highly educated and illiterates, city dwellers and rural masses, secularized and tradition - oriented people".

The radio communicator therefore should empty himself of the alienations of the subjectivities of the accident of his birth, religion, cultural affiliation, metropolitan connection, official speaking and thinking, regional languages and behaviours, highly Westernized and Arabianized inclinations and brace up with the realities of embracing his communication audience or listeners. It is with this in mind that we join other giants of the broadcast profession in calling for a whole new breed of broadcasters that are free from Western and Arabian indoctrinations, religious bigotry and tribal sentiments. There has to be an exorcism of broadcasters' colonial and neo-colonial mentalities.

Gerhard Maletzke advice to communicators or the relations between communicators, programmes and audience in broadcasting is of high relevance here also:

Moreover, they should be aware that it is insufficient and incorrect to see the broad population as a uniform "mass". Almost all societies today are to a high degree pluralistic and complex in all sorts of respects and dimensions"

This is to avoid non-empirical and value loathed generations that are results of laziness in our broadcasting systems. These generations have rendered most of our programmes and presentations stale, archaic, irrelevant, non-topical and watery. For us to be relevant, we should come out of our assumption of seeing our listeners as placid passive listeners who must receive the radio message willy-nilly and completely. There should be a conscious effort by broadcasters to know their audience properly through empirical research and not through false claims or bloated assumptions that are products of intellectual laziness that pervades the broadcasting terrain all over our land. The whole essence or significance of an empirical research is in for the Development Communication radio communicator to know his audience or target groups so that a particular programme relevance and rating can be known. This is not a wasted effort. Money should always be made available in the Radio Research and Documentation Unit for experts in the social sciences or Research Units to conduct an empirical research once in a while. This falls under the paradigm of programme effectiveness studies so as to come out of our present posture of blind broadcasting.

The bane of present radio practice is a bloated staff and management who knows little or nothing about implications in broadcasting. There are leaders also who are catapulted into position of radio management on emotions and politics. They hold onto their unearned positions dogmatically and solely for political reasons. According to Gerhard Maletzke these type of leaders are those who: "Think and act politically, sometimes understanding little or nothing about broadcasting". These makes the process of Development Communication impossible.

The result today is the mediocre blind broadcasting that misinforms, disinforms and equates propaganda with propagation of ideas. These are blind practitioners who impart knowledge that they themselves are ignorant of. They cannot know the basis of rooting research in development communication programmes.

The result is the non-educated educating the educated; the less informed informing the informed; the half-baked in entertainment entertaining the experts in the arts of entertainment. The result is the present tuning off to BBC, Voice of America, CNN and lately to serious Independent Broadcasting Stations by the over enthusiastic and educated listeners of our land. As long as these experts of blind broadcasting are in the limelight, the focus on effective research for better programming will not be seen and the equation of mediocrity with professionalism will continue unhindered. And the desired change which is the anticipation of any serious broadcasting outfit will not be realized in all the areas of Development Communication.

When we talk of radio/tv for development, we have to know the ramification of the development we are talking about. Most broadcasters today do not even know the definition of development neither do they know what constitutes development. To these, any postulation about using radio or tv for development is a postulation in futility.

"Development" according to an Indian Media Expert occurs primarily at the local level..." Here the aim is to get people to stand on their own feet and to be self-sufficient. If we buy this idea of development therefore, then the question is how can we use the radio to create an awareness for a synergy of development in our rural communities? This will have to take us to another vital realms of broadcasting - rural broadcasting. This has been sporadically experimented within some Nigerian societies without

a well-defined focus. Here broadcasting is localized into narrow-casting, so as to bring the rural folks together to contribute their own quota towards their community development. In the view of media expert, David King cited in Graft (1991:73) by Barbara Skerath:

"Locally focused development broadcasting...has the potential to effect change by motivating or mobilizing people to act..."

The only way to get about doing this is the human-interest approach as postulated by Barbara Skerath. "Go to the people, live among them, learn from them, love them, serve them, plan with them, start with what they know and build on what they have" (Chinese Slogan)

When this approach is adopted, the radio/tv communicator can confidently use the radio/tv as powerful tools in the task of rural development, as well as Development Communication is effective mass mobilization medium for the promotion of social change in our local, state and federal settings.

The challenges to the radio communicator are many and diverse. To be able to meet up with these challenges, there has to be a marriage of talent and intellect. Gone are the days when broadcasters are born.

They have, for now, to be born and made with their talents as well as intellects! Listeners are no longer interested in listening to sense or nonsense. For radio communicators to keep their listeners or make them stay tuned, programmes have to be capsuled in high standards; programmes and presentations have to be varied and better prepared, broadcast have to be attractive, neat, stereophonic and the total essence of radio communication has to be listener-oriented. The culmination of all these is the goal of radio communication of the future, which according to Graff (1991:157) is that:

"The radio of the future help to bring democracy close to ordinary people by letting them have their say" via different paradigms of Development Communication.

This, by implication and application, can only be possible if communicators are qualified; exposed to training and retraining; ever willing to learn new trends in communication; must display a sensitivity to research and understand the listeners' interest; must learn to listen to listeners; must be courageous to call a spade a spade; must not allow the emotional subjective socio-political and economic jargon of their age pollute their own objective language and coverage for development.

In summary, one cannot but agree with Graff (1991:158) that: "Just as the Doctor has in mind the health and well-being of patients, so the journalist has in mind, the public's dignity and their yearnings for truth as the principle of his work" as well as their movement from one spot of stagnation to another point of progress and development.

Conclusion, Recommendation

We can, through research, air and plan radio tv programmes in just a few areas where we can have Development Communication programmes in:

- Development Communication programmes that creates awareness on simple hygiene, cleanliness, and environmental sanitation.
- Development Communication programmes on mass literacy.
- Development Communication programmes on integrated rural developments.
- Development Communication programmes on cultural and tribal Association.
- Development Communication programmes Agriculture
- Development Communication programmes on communicable diseases.
- Development Communication programmes on environment
- Development communication programmes on health
- Development communication programmes rooted in corresponding synergized challenge areas.
- Etc.

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