

**COMMUNICATING DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN
ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.**

**B.O., SANUSI (PhD)
sanusib@run.edu.ng
Department of Mass Communication
Redeemer's University Ede, Osun State**

**&
EJERE, UCHE SAMUEL
Samueluche119@gmail.com
+2349064566501
Department of Mass Communication
Redeemer's University Ede, Osun State**

**&
POPOOLA, EUNICE ADEPEJU
Pejupoola74@gmail.com
+2348038087037
Department of Mass Communication
Redeemer's University Ede, Osun State**

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the role of the mass media in advancing development in rural communities. Rural communities are faced with so many challenges which ranges from infrastructural facilities to social amenities. Rural communities are ravaged with poverty and lack of basic social amenities. Communication is a vehicle that which we can drive development faster that will bring rapid and development in rural communities. Participatory communication and modernization theories was used to explain how the mass media can advance development. This study concluded that the government and relevant stakeholders can and should adopt the mass media as a tool in advancing development in rural communities.

Keywords; Mass Media, Rural Community, Development and Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the act of communicating or exchanging information. Communication is the interchange of meaning between people using a shared set of signs, symbols, or behaviors. (Harter et al 2012) Communication is a process as an action. It entails a succession of actions that are exchanged throughout time. When considered as a process, communication is an activity that is dynamic, ongoing, always changing, continuous, not static, not at rest, and is a process since it lacks a set order of events. As a result of the

ongoing meaning exchange and sharing that occurs, it leads to a shared understanding of the message. Therefore, communication involves the act of communicating or transferring meaning through the interchange of facts, insights, knowledge, messages, ideas, experiences, sentiments, and emotions between and among people.

The main tenet of development communication is that it is important to utilize strategic communication interventions to bring about social transformation. The use of communication to advance social development is referred to as "development communication". The fulfillment of fundamental needs, social transformation, and progress are some of its main goals. The philosophy of development communication, which today serves as the foundation for all development communication, was developed by J.F. Jamias using three key concepts: purposeful, value-laden, and pragmatic.

Quebral (2001) defined development communication as the art and science of human communication related to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one of dynamic socio-economic growth that promotes greater equality and the larger unfolding of individual potentials. Jamias' idea was expanded by Nora Quebral, a pioneer in development communication in Asia. Promoting horizontal communication, participation from all facets of society, and empowerment are the main objectives of communication for development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of the study is to determine how communication can be employed as a tool to advance development. And also, how the mass media (radio, television newspapers magazine and also the new media) can be used as instrument or vehicles to advance or advocate development in rural community in Nigeria. Specifically, the main objectives of this study include the following;

1. To understand the roles of communication in relations to development
2. To find out how the mass media can aid or advocate development in rural community

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study largely provides an answer to the following questions:

1. What functions does communication serve in the development process?
2. How can mass media aid or advocate development in rural community?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Because it offers a solution to the issue of Nigeria's development projects' lack of sustainability, this study makes an important contribution to knowledge. Additionally, it will inform the government and all pertinent parties about the matters and problems that affect rural communities and provide a long-term solution to underdevelopment in those communities. It is important to highlight that this study will offer some pertinent details on the ways in which the mass media can influence development in rural communities. The study's conclusions can be used as a resource by the government, NGOs, media professionals and owners, and international organizations.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS COMMUNICATION

Communication is commonly thought to take place through social interactions. There is frequently a sender (source) and a recipient in communication. It requires the interchange of signals between the interlocutors. These signals might take the form of gestural, pictorial, verbal, or graphic indications. Deciphering codes that are expressed through the voice, body, or eyes is the essence of communication. No matter how it is done, there is always a process involved in which a meaning intent is started and transmitted to the interlocutor (receiver). According to Daniel (2016), communication is complete once the sender has received feedback (source), at which time the receiver initiates a new cycle of meaning exchange in response to the signal.

As stated by Giffin & Patten in 1976, communication is the process of creating and attributing meaning. Members of the group must engage and share ideas. Communication is defined as "the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of imparting information to people" in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2004). It is reasonable to assume that the act of exchanging information and messages between individuals and over geographical distances is referred to as communication. The Online Business Dictionary characterizes communication as a two-way activity in a similar spirit. Participants need to develop a shared understanding in addition to simply taking in and processing information, news, ideas, and emotions. Daniel (2013) asserts that they also need to develop and communicate the messages' underlying purpose. It is also believed that communication can link individuals or locations. A corporation cannot function without communication across levels, departments, and employees, hence it is considered as a crucial management function (Online Business Dictionary, 2010; Okenimpkpe, 2010).

Language is the most fundamental form of human-to-human communication. We use it to communicate our thoughts, emotions, knowledge, and objectives. According to Awoniyi (1982), anarchy would result if there was no communication. He continues by stating that without communication, human existence and civilization as we know it today would not endure.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The strategies and planned actions utilized to better the affairs of the community can be referred to as "community development." The basic objective of community development is to enhance the quality of life for local citizens. To achieve this, community development workers frequently use a variety of platforms to ensure that their initiatives reach as many people as possible and that everyone in the community can benefit from the development work being done on their behalf (Olaniyi, 2020).

Combining the terms "community" with "development" designates a collection of individuals who share a shared identity and whose interactions are essential to the community's development. Following are concepts from Cavaye (2006;1) that define community development: For community development to occur, members of the community must band together to address their problems collectively and hold one another accountable.

1. To improve their economic, social, cultural, and environmental circumstances, a group of people in a community decide to engage in a process of social action known as community development.

2. Options are widened by the community development process. It promotes a society in which people can reach their full potential and have happy lives.

3. To enhance the economic, social, and cultural circumstances in their communities, residents work together with governmental organizations as part of the community development process. Communities may advance the nation because they are fully included into society life. In order to capitalize on the community's advantages and take advantage of its possibilities and difficulties, a community must have the commitment, resources, and abilities to do so.

4. Finding and exploiting local resources and possibilities, as well as encouraging sustainable economic and employment activities, are the main goals of community economic development.

In its purest form, community development refers to all methods, measures, or coordinated efforts used locally to promote social and economic improvement. In essence, it strengthens communities' capacity to decide more effectively as a group how to use resources like labor, infrastructure, and expertise. Communities are frequently built by individuals from outside the community who bring resources in without considering the community itself. The goal of participatory rural community development is to learn about local residents' hopes, ideas, and viewpoints. This concept is also known as the felt-need idea. Listening is essential since the community's members have the greatest potential for future value.

RURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development, according to Nwobi (2007), is the process of improving rural communities' moral, social, political, and economic capabilities in order to increase their independence through the provision of suitable infrastructure, such as piped water, electricity, good roads, and small-scale industries, increase their political consciousness and participation, and foster their moral and social well-being, which will foster tolerance, good discipline, and justice.

Okoye (1997) and Filani (2000) define rural development as the process of raising the standard of living for millions of people who reside in rural areas. By expanding social services and economic possibilities, rural development can improve the well-being and security of rural populations..

Lele (1992), who also coined the term "rural development," defined it as "the improvement of the population living in the rural areas on a self-sustaining basis, through transforming the socio-spatial structures of their productive activities," a notion that was also used in filani (2000).

Three crucial components of rural development are covered by the aforementioned definitions. Which are:

a. In order to gradually strike a balance between welfare and the valuable services accessible to rural subsistence populations, resource mobilization and allocation are necessary to raise the standard of living for the subsistence population.

b. mass participation, which calls for the allocation of resources and the real delivery of productive services to low-income areas and classes.

c. Institutions must be set up at the local, regional, and national levels in order to gather enough additional financial and human resources for the sustainable development of the subsistence sector as well as the development of the necessary skills and implementation capacity...

As a result, modernizing and completely changing the socioeconomic environment of rural areas should be part of rural development. In a society that seeks to improve the majority of the population socially and materially by providing them more control over their surroundings, it should be a broadly inclusive process of intentional change.

Cavaye (2000) supports the following assertion in agreement with our assertion: Community members participate in the process of rural community development. Locals can do this through enhancing the underlying ability of their community to adapt to change, as well as by generating more infrastructure, income, and jobs. Benefits of community development in the real world, such as infrastructure and employment, result from locals changing perspectives, making innovative use of available resources, employing their current skills, enhancing networks, and rethinking problems. Community development helps a community work more effectively as a whole while also improving the condition within the community. Rural community development helps communities build their physical, financial, human, social, and environmental capitals. Participating in their community helps people build social capital by causing them to reevaluate problems and expand their networks of contacts. By picking up new skills, they increase their human capital. They build up material and financial resources while generating new economic opportunities. They have the power to improve their environment.

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Different definitions of development communication have been offered by communication scholars. According to Okunna (2002), development The act of communicating a message about development to people is known as communication. It also requires the employment of communication strategies and tactics to report, promote, and support development at all levels of society, particularly in rural areas. According to Okunna (2002), development that is people-focused is the art and science of human communication applied to the swift transformation of a nation and its citizens such that they can comprehend it.

Development communication can be defined as applying communication principles to the development objectives of a society (Asadu, 2009). It is also known as communication for social change, communication for development, and development journalism. Communication and development have a symbolic relationship, according to Oboh (2008). One of the institutions that society creates is a national media system that provides an information network for the upkeep and expansion of society. In essence, the institution of mass media disseminates information every day to promote the continual growth of the public as well as other socio-economic and political parties that operate within the country. Developmental communication is crucial for informing and shaping the behavior of the information receiver. People who participate in planned activities are encouraged to do so by effective development communication, which also alters their attitudes and behaviors and gives them the tools to focus on interactions between various stakeholders in order to solve a problem. Community involvement is essential to the success of any endeavor. If there is no support from the community, a project may never get off the ground or may be abandoned after completion. Construction delays, financial losses, and legal lawsuits could

all come from failure to involve the community in development projects (Maina, Biwott, and Ombaka 2020).

According to Paterson (2011), development communication refers to coordinated attempts to employ media and communications techniques to enhance social and economic conditions. The word "development communication," which is sometimes used synonymously with "development journalism," is both a simple idea to describe and a hotly debated topic. Because everyone is aware that communication, in the journalistic sense, refers to the dissemination of information to large audiences, and because the words "communication" and "development" are used together, It should be clear that we are discussing communication that strives to help and enhance the development process.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The "participatory communication theory" and the "modernization theory" are the foundations of this work.

Participatory Communication Theory: The term "participatory development communication" is frequently used to emphasize the value of two-way communication processes and to set them apart from one-way communication tactics that concentrate on spreading messages, exchanging information, or persuading people to change their behavior. It prefers to place an emphasis on problem analysis and the quest for answers, favor horizontal tactics that encourage discourse, and employ bottom-up strategies to improve decision makers' understanding (Srampickal, 2006).

Participatory communication theory, according to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), is a dialogue-based strategy that encourages the sharing of knowledge, opinions, and ideas in order to empower numerous stakeholders. It requires more than just exchanging knowledge and experiences; it also entails research and the development of new knowledge aimed at overcoming difficult situations. Participatory communication is typically associated with community-driven development, but it can be used at any level of decision-making (local, national, or global) regardless of the diversity of the people involved.

Modernisation theory: A group of social scientists, including Walt Rostow, Daniel Lerner, and Seymour Martin Lipset, proposed modernization theory in the 1950s and 1960s. According to the hypothesis, every society advances through a number of stages before becoming contemporary. A rural, agrarian economy, a high birth rate, low literacy rates, and a heavy emphasis on tradition are characteristics of the traditional period. A low birthrate, high literacy rates, an urban, industrial economy, and a strong emphasis on individualism and secularism are all traits of the modern stage.

An economic theory called modernisation has its roots in capitalism. The proponents of the modernization thesis believed that for the rest of the world to advance, their societies required to model themselves after the western model of modernity (Nkwede and Samuel, 2014). Modernists held that rural regions' intrinsic issues, such as illiteracy, the traditional agrarian structure, the traditional mindset of the rural people, the low division of labor, a lack of infrastructure and communication, a lack of ambition, etc., were the primary reasons of rural areas' underdevelopment. The process of transition and significant transformation that a traditional civilization (rural areas) must go through in order to become modern is referred to as "modernization" (Huntington, 1971). The degree to which the standard of living of rural residents improves in terms of the quality of existing infrastructure and contemporary facilities/equipment is a key indicator of the development of rural societies.

Here are some of the key features of modernization theory:

- **Economic growth:** According to modernization theory, economic expansion is essential for progress. A nation's economy will advance as it increases, making it more contemporary.
- **Industrialization:** Modernization is said to need industrialization as a required first step. A nation will industrialize as it becomes more urbanized and has a more educated populace.
- **Education:** Another crucial component of modernization is considered to be education. A nation's population will be better prepared to engage in the contemporary economy as it grows more educated.
- **Political change:** According to modernization theory, nations will advance toward greater democracy as they do so. This is so because modernity is seen to be the source of the rise of individualism and secularism, two concepts that are essential for democracy.

THE MASS MEDIA'S PART IN PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITY

The term "mass media" refers to any forms of communication that are employed to inform the general public of a country and a society about events occurring in both their immediate and broader environments. The spread of knowledge is the primary objective linked with the use of mass media. Therefore, those that utilize these technologies do so in order to enlighten others on all that is happening in the world, both positively and negatively. By reading a newspaper or watching the news, for instance, a person would be able to understand not only what is occurring in the globe around him but also what is happening in his own community (Aras, 2018).

Professionals in community development commonly utilize social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, to not only publicize their work but also to solicit financing and support for the many initiatives they are involved in (Hoffman et al., 2018). Given the reach associated with mass media use and the level of support and awareness that community development practitioners are able to generate through the use of mass media, it can be said with a great deal of clarity and certainty that mass media has a crucial role to play in advancing community development work.

Therefore, the formation of role models for the public to follow and copy is a key function of the mainstream media. But for such models to be effective, they need to operate in a way that advances the hopes and aims of society as a whole. An effective communication strategy in this area would significantly aid in bringing about change in the countryside. The incorporation of the participants into the corporate structure of the wider society, The urban elite must be made aware of the plight of rural people, and the less privileged must be shown what life is like for the urban elite in order to increase their appreciation of the rewards of hard work and inspire the less privileged to work harder and improve themselves. The elite and decision-makers should be pushed by the media to develop the communication strategies required to persuade the rural population to change and accept new values that will improve their well-being. Persuading individuals to adopt the norms and values that have been formed and are beneficial to achieving such models, and to copy such models, is another important method that the mass can promote change and progress. The benefits of implementing the new norms must be made clear to the populace. Instead

of using propaganda that might cause the individuals who are the targets of such messages about change to react negatively, such persuasion of the populace should be carried out in the most subtle of ways.

Therefore, it is necessary to adopt the most effective method of communication. One of the best methods for the media to influence and guide the rural man toward elements of growth and change is through the creation of norms.. It has been argued that the mass media ought to exist and perform its corporate role as a social norm-creating tool. As a result, they ought to be intimately linked to the advancement of principles throughout society at large (Adeniran: 17). This could be the most significant step toward rural development if properly carried out. Here, communication's integrative function assumes a key role. The mass media should establish these values in a way that is agreeable to all, with the goal of uniting all social classes in the community. This is done to make sure that each person in the community understands the challenges that affect everyone in the same way. Without integrative goals, establishing standards would only lead to divisions and more social system fragmentation within the society. Thus, mass communication's style in the change functions is the production of a fictional, yet real world that is acceptable to all, as Richard Hoggart remarks in a society with well-defined class distinctions (Hoggart 1970: 150).

Therefore, the mass media are crucial to rural development. Due to its prominent place in development communication, this is. In fact, it is practically difficult to change without communication since people must first be persuaded of the benefits of the change. varied media have varied effects on how norms and values are created. Additionally, they influence society's members in a variety of ways. In Nigeria and throughout Africa, radio and television are two forms of media that are regarded as powerful. They might be used successfully to encourage rural development. It would be absurd to assume that communication for development would be possible without running across certain obstacles. There are problems that need to be fixed if there is to be any measurable achievement in this area.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There have been theories about how the media affects development. There is a link between development and the media. Rural community development has to do with urbanizing the rural community., bringing advancement, leadership and using communication as a vehicle in driving these developments in bringing quick or rapid and lasting development to rural communities and community dwellers

Therefore, it is advised that in order to promote quick and speedy growth in rural communities, the government, stakeholders, and community developers should embrace the mass media. The 21st century tool to drive growth in order to improve the lifestyles and general well-being of rural residents and the community at large has been viewed as the mass media, including electronic media, print media, and social media

REFERENCES

- Asadu, C. A (2009). *Anatomy of Communication for development*. Port Harcourt. University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Cavaye, J (2006), understanding community development. *Cavaye community development* 1, 1-19
- Daniel, I.O. (2011). *Introductory Phonetics and phonology of English*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Daniel, I.O.A. (2013). Communication as socio-cultural meaning exchange. The example of Richard Wright's Black Boy. *International Journal of Applied Linguistic and English Literature*, 2,5:173-177
- Filani, M.O. (2000). —Nigeria: The need to modify center-down development planning. In W. A. Stehr and D.R.P. Taylor (Ed.) *Development from above or below*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Giffin, K. & B. R. Patten. (1976). *Basic Readings in Interpersonal Communication: Theory and application*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Huntington, S. P. (1971). The change to change: Modernization, development, and politics. *Comparative Politics* 3(3), 283-322.
- Maina, B. M., Biwon, C. and Ombaka B. (2020). Participatory communication strategies used in the implementation of public water projects in Murang' a County: Case study of Northern Collector Tunnel, Kenyan. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 9(5), 1-12.
- Moemeka, Andrew A., 1989, "Perspectives on Development Communication" *Africa Media Review* Vol. 3. No. 3 Nairobi: African Council for Communication Education.
- Oboh, G. E (2008). The Nigerian Mass Media and National Conflict: the imperative for democratic development. *Mass Media in Nigeria Democracy*, Ibadan: Stirling- Harden Publishers
- Okunna, C.S (2002). A quick look for development. In C. Okunna (E.d), *Teaching Mass Communication: a multidimensional approach*. Enugu: New Generation Books
- Okenimkpe, M.N.(2010). *Communication for Business*. Lagos. National Open University of Nigeria
- Nwobi, T.U. (2006). Cooperatives and rural financing. In E.E. Umebali (Eds.) *Readings in cooperative economics and management*. Lagos: Computer Egde Publishers.
- Tutfte, T. and Mefalopulos, P. (2009). *Participatory communication: A practical guide* (Vol 170). World Bank Publications.