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**Radio as a Tool for Rural Development in Nigeria:  
Prospects and Challenges**

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**Abstract**

*This study set out to examine the place of radio in rural development in Nigeria. The rationale behind the study is to find out the prospects and challenges of using radio as a tool for rural development in Nigeria. Communication generally, has a very crucial role to play in bringing about positive attitudinal change. The first requirement for the development of an information society that enables the effective use of the radio is wide spread access to the radio set and radio programmes. Radio plays a very significant role in the development of the rural and urban areas of any society. Several*

*problems are however associated with the use of radio as tool for rural development in Nigeria; some of which are: communication related problems, message related problems, illiteracy, the use of English Language by the electronic media, multiplicity of language in Nigeria, lack of audience feedback, ownership problem, dearth of qualified personnel, urban-centred development journalism and dearth of community based or vernacular radio/telecommunication. The paper concludes that radio is an important tool for entertaining, informing and educating the society, but that there are certain factors that hinder the effective use of radio for rural development. It therefore recommends, among, others, that radio stations in Nigeria should endeavour to use local dialects, especially when the radio programme is aimed at the rural dwellers and that there is the need to establish community radio stations that will be closer to rural dwellers.*

**Key Words:** Radio, Rural Communication, Rural Community and Development

### **Introduction**

Information is central to all forms of human activity no matter the field, be it medicine, agriculture, tourism or engineering. There is the need for exchange of information to ensure completion of tasks. Inefficiency will be the results, where this exchange of information is slow or there is a break down. For this reason, information is regarded as a vital resource that needs to be properly developed, because it has boomerang effect on society. Consequently, a society that has poor communication and information infrastructure perpetually lags behind others that have efficient information infrastructure (Moemeka, 1985).

Rural radio helps to achieve development in the rural areas, as issues of development are aired to audience in the form of various programmes and individuals are exposed to happenings in and around their society, through listening to these programmes. Communication serves as the basic element of interaction and information sharing in life. Communication creates pool of ideas, strengthens the feeling of togetherness, through the exchange of messages and translates through thoughts, into actions.

Radio communication educates citizens on new issues inherent in the society. For example, issues on politics, business, current affairs, etc, are aired to create awareness. Radio serves as an agent of social mobilisation, people are moved to delivering a certain goal, based on their awareness of their rights

and responsibility to the society. Thus, this paper examines the place of radio in rural development.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

The study is anchored on development media theory. The development media theory was formulated by McQuail in 1987. This theory seeks to explain the normative behaviours of the press in countries that are conventionally classified together as developing countries.

The theory owes its origin to the UNESCO's MacBride Commission set up in 1979. This theory is opposed to dependency and foreign domination and to arbitrary authoritarianism. It accepts economic development and nation building as overriding objectives. Press freedom should be opened to restriction according to economic priorities and the development needs of the society. In the interest of development ends, the state has the ultimate control (Ndolo, 2005).

The theory holds that the media have a role to play in facilitating the process of development in the developing countries. According to the development media theory, the media are to be used to serve the general good of the nation. The media are seen as agents of development and social change in any community thus, the theory says that the media should be used to complement government's efforts by carrying out programmes that will lead to positive behavioural change among the people. The development media theory according to Okunna (1999), accepts that economic development and nation building should take precedence over some freedom of the press and of individuals. In addition, the theory advocates that the mass media should assist the government in the task of nation building and that government should control the media as well as journalist to achieve this goal. Summarily, the fundamental tenets of the theory as identified by McQuail (1987) are:

- media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy;
- freedom of the press should be opened to restriction according to economic priorities and development needs of the society;
- media should give priority in news and information to link with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally or politically;

- in the interest of development ends, the state has the right to intervene in or restrict media operations and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified; and
- journalists and other media workers have responsibilities, as well as, freedoms in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.

The theory is relevant to the study because it lays emphasis on using the media to develop the society. This implies that the media have the capacity to positively affect the society. Thus, the media need to be employed to bring about social, political and economic development in the society.

### **Understanding the Term ‘Rural’**

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) 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 underdevelopment 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.

Rural areas are such areas that lack the necessary infrastructure to make a meaningful living. They lack infrastructure like good roads, electricity, portable water, good market, banking institutions, good schools, health centres, etc. Those in the rural areas need to go to urban areas whenever they need such infrastructures. For example, people in the rural areas normally go to the towns and cities whenever they need healthcare services. This explains why Anaeto and Anaeto (2010, p. 12) argue that what is seen in the rural areas in Africa is the picture of poverty, unemployment, hunger, non-availability of infrastructure, illiteracy, lack of basic social amenities, like portable water, good roads and hospitals, etc. In the same vein, Aderanti (1982), cited in Asemah (2011) notes that living conditions in the rural areas are relatively poor. Colgate (2009), cited in Nwabueze (2010) defines a rural community as an area where people’s living condition is very poor. Rural

community as noted by Colgate, cited in Nwabueze (2010) is better defined by looking at its characteristics, which include high level of illiteracy, low productivity, cultural homogeneity, one way of communication and absence of infrastructure, among others.

From the foregoing therefore, the rural areas are the villages and the communities that are outside the cities, towns and state capitals in a country. Contrary to what is obtainable in the urban areas; closeness of the people to the natural environment, greater social homogeneity, smallness of the communal aggregates, predominance of agricultural occupations and relative sparse population are what are discernible in the rural areas. Rural dwellers as disadvantaged people, whose houses seldom have running water and electricity, who live in extreme survival crises during rains, sun, wind, storms, harmattan, blizzards and drought, who possess no good roads, no portable water, are acutely isolated.

### **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), development is a process of change in attitude, social structure and general acceleration of economic growth, through reduction of poverty and inequality. Asemah (2011) 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) 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. It is in this context that the writer looks at

development. Keghku (2005, p. 53) says that development generally implies change.

### **Rural Development as a Concept**

Rural development is a concept that is used to describe a strategy that is designed to improve the economic and social life of the people in the rural areas. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sees rural development as a process of socio-economic change, involving the transformation of agrarian society, in order to reach a common set of development goals, based on the capacities and the needs of the people (Owo, in Nwosu, 2007, p. 305). To Anibueze, in Nwosu, Aliede and Nsude (2005, p. 36), rural development is a strategy that is designed to improve the economic and social conditions of a specific group of people, that is, the rural people. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest, among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. Rural development in general, is used to denote the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighbourhoods, countryside and remote villages. These communities can be exemplified with a low ratio of inhabitants to open space.

As earlier noted, rural areas are such areas in a country that lack necessary social amenities and infrastructures which are necessary for good living. Thus, there is the need for advancement and growth in these rural areas. The process of bringing about this advancement and growth in the rural areas is what is referred to as rural development. Anaeto and Anaeto (2008, p. 1) observe thus:

Rural development is a subset and an important part of national development. The idea and concern for rural development stems from the fact that majority of the people in the developing countries reside in rural areas. And the fact that development of the nation cannot be achieved without the development of the rural areas. Even the developing countries have recently come to realise that unless the rural areas are well-developed, hardly would any meaningful development occur in these countries.

The above assertion implies that rural development is part of national development, because when rural communities are not fully developed, the objectives of national development cannot be achieved. No country can boast

of development when its rural communities have not been positively affected. This perhaps explains why Moemeka (1985, p. 9) explains that rural community education entails all activities like social, economic, educational, political and cultural, which touch on the lives of rural communities, knowledge of which is essential to purposeful living and progress. Onabajo, cited in Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) say that rural development entails interventions aimed at improved productivity, increased employment/incomes for the target groups, as well as, minimum acceptable levels of food, shelter, education, health and housing. Rural development according to Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) is a subset and an important part of national development. The idea and concern for rural development stems from the fact that majority of the people in the countries reside in the rural areas. Rural development efforts attempt to bring about self reliance in the rural communities in a country. New practices, ideas, innovations and methods, are introduced and when the rural dwellers accept these practices, it leads to economic gains.

### **The Need for Rural Communication**

The concept of rural communication refers to the communication of news about rural areas. It consists of gathering newsworthy information about rural areas, packaging them in any form of journalistic writing and presenting them through a mass medium, most especially community media. Rural areas as earlier noted, are those areas that are totally based in the countryside. Such rural dwellers need information about the happenings in the society, so as to make them have a better living. Anibueze, in Nwosu, Aliede and Nsude (2005, p .38) avers that there is high rate of ignorance in the rural areas, beyond the poor physical development of such areas. The rural dwellers, Anibueze avers, “need to be empowered with knowledge of the fundamentals of population and development. This is because, the rural person becomes a nuisance when he or she does not have access to information; that is, basic information like modern family needs, nutrition, women rights, child rights, etc.

Communication will play a very significant role in helping the rural dwellers to live a worthwhile life. Thus, Nwuneli, Onuora, cited in Asemah (2011) argues that the rural dwellers need accurate information that will enable them to live and appreciate the activities of the government of the day. Nwuneli avers that since the rural dwellers are involved in the task of feeding the nation, they need information on several issues, including information on

loan opportunities offered by the government and how to dispose off their farm proceeds. The rural dwellers need information about health care, weather, family planning, agriculture, etc. Nwuneli concludes his argument by saying that when the rural dwellers do not get the necessary information, in a well-coordinated fashion, they lose confidence in the government and the society at large.

The basic role of rural news reporting in any society is to foster development at grass roots level. By reporting news about the rural areas, development needs in these areas are made known to government, policy makers, change agents and stakeholders in the society (Nwabueze, 2010).

### **The Place of Radio in Rural Development**

Since the dawn of civilisation about two and half million years ago, every society's growth, survival and continuity depends on among other things, a system of communication, through which people exchange ideals, feeling; an economic system for the production of goods and services, a health system to counteract disease and ensure human reproduction; a sociopolitical system to maintain control and order and a defence system to protect their territories against external aggression (Ugboaja, 1985).

Ndolo (2006) observes that the partial success of modern mass media application for development projects, especially in the rural areas have resulted in various calls by communication scholars for rural development agents in the field, for a greater utilisation of indigenous communication channels for rural development. According to Moge kwu (1990), the importance of rural radio in the introduction and sustenance of change in rural communities is undeniable, yet, successive Nigerian leaders have continued to utilise the Western mass media as the panacea for rural development, thus, there is a pressing need to improve and create more rural stations and create programmes that will meet the needs of the rural dwellers, thereby, bringing about national development. Radio can be used to mobilise the people at the grass root level for community development and national consciousness. No serious mass-oriented development programme, especially in rural communities in Africa ever succeeds without the active involvement of the people within the traditional system.

Rural radio programme serves as a source of cultural, political, health and other educational and enlightenment programmes for the masses, leading them towards self-actualisation and national development. It is in this light

that Okam (1981) submits that much of the failure that attends government mass-oriented programmes are traceable to the fact that policy makers at the national level fail to utilise this powerful and credible medium.

Radio can be used as a source of entertainment through arts and cultural festivals, musicals and dramatic performance, by local singing groups, masquerades and other music and drama groups. Radio is a medium of communication through which the individuals share the world around them and beyond their immediate environment. Radio in a country should influence social and, especially the political fabric. The social objective of using radio to mobilise people in Nigeria entails the area of education, information and entertainment. It is essential to provide through radio a kind of general education for people, irrespective of their educational background. This would be by a combination of formal and informal form of education.

Electronic media generally, according to Asemah (2011), provide the public with information. Electronic media serve as watchdog and do not abuse power. For education, there is thrill of learning from the source material. Radio as an electronic media, is expected to play the role of improving and changing social, cultural, political and technological thinking, which will, in the long run, have positive results on the process of rural development. This sensitive role expected to be played by radio is not far from the fact that it shows special qualities in disseminating information. Radio is so powerful that it brings political, economic and social news to any community or group of communities faster than other medium. Nwuneli, cited in Asemah (2011) in his own contribution on the role of radio, says, it has brought stimulus into the house, brings about competitions within families, thereby, grooming people who will contribute positively to the process of development. This fact agrees with the idea of Wigwe (1988) because of the emphasis on grassroots development. Salama (1978) notes that radio serves as an opinion leader in its news commentary and editorial. It mirrors the society in programmes like drama that present issues relevant to society in action which creates easy understanding and learning. It informs and educates the listeners in its discussion and documentary programmes. It entertains in its light programmes like musicals, sports comedy and dances. It also seeks to improve the society in its special occupational programmes geared towards agricultural business and other related areas.

In essence therefore, radio can be employed to pass across vital information about latest techniques in agriculture, trends in agricultural extension services,

etc, to the generality of rural dwellers. Radio has been used to promote and support the cause for nature holding and to this end, Moemeka (1985) remarks that a local broadcast media like radio, if well managed, fully operated, will provide a continuous flow of educational information on all aspects that affect the lives of rural communities and also arouse their awareness with a view to changing what is detrimental to their lives. Thus, radio can be effectively used to promote health related issues. Radio educates, informs and enlightens the public of which the rural populace are included. Wigwe (1988, p .115) while writing on development communication says:

The key role assigned to radio is to inform, educate, enlighten and entertain. The rural mobilisation and development process therefore, demands from the media the responsibility of making attainable enlightenment and aspiration of the rural populace. Towards this end, the mass media support service, should therefore promote dialogue between the designers of rural development process and programmes. They will mirror to each group in a relentless manner, the programmes that have been implemented, how it has been accepted, its short coming, areas of improvement and the reactions of the beneficiaries.

All these coupled with the medium's appeal to both the literate and illiterate audiences make radio the most fertile medium. Radio is the most effective medium of information at the grassroot level in Nigeria. It has assumed this powerful dimension because of many factors like, natural disposition, coverage area and cost. From the view point of Tafida (1986), cited in Asemah (2011), broadcasting (radio) is so powerful; it brings political, economic and social news to any community or any group of communities. Wigwe (1988) believes that radio broadcasting has credible role to play in disseminating information to the masses at the grassroots level for development purpose. Information in this sense involves the social, political and economic aspects. Another contributor, Adaba (1987), cited in Asemah (2011) argues further that there is an essential communication role for radio broadcasting at the local level. Within an over-all national system, there is a clear need for radio broadcast to be used to motivate and mobilise the people at the grassroots, so that they can participate actively in the development of their own society. This fact agrees with the idea of Wigwe (1988) because of the emphasis on grassroots development.

Iyimoga (1987) asserts that communication's role in authentic rural development is that of providing access to information from the urban areas where modern ideas would be diffused to rural sectors and motivating and mobilising the rural populace to accept and react favourably to those new ideas. According to Asemah (2011), of the mass media generally available to Africans, radio is the most widespread and accessible. And because of its special qualities, radio can be a major force in bringing about development, that is, to any quantitative and qualitative improvements in the lives of the people. It is carried out in isolation from the direct involvement of extension services and is literally opened in the sense that programmes are directed at unorganised audience. The advantage of this strategy is that, since radio is widely diffused and readily accessible, even in peripheral areas, it can reach large audiences at a low cost. And because it reaches more rural people in third world than any other medium, its potential to bring about increase in knowledge and provide motivation for shifts in practices is considerable.

Radio just like television is a tool that can be used to bring about positive attitudinal change in the audience. Radio helps to achieve development, both in the rural and urban areas, as issues of development are aired to the audience in the form of various programmes and individuals are exposed to happenings in and around their society, through listening to programmes.

Radio can be employed to pass vital information about the right attitude, behaviour, knowledge, techniques and skills, which are expected from the members of the public. Radio has been found to be one of the most effective media of transforming a hither-to, under-developed society to a developed polity. Ojebode (2003) concurs when he says that with few years of its emergences, radio has metamorphosed from being an object of private concern, to a political and development instrument in the hands of governments and NGOs. The information dispersing and the enlightenment role of radio is the commonest of its functions. This disseminating function according to Asemah (2011), covers information to people's alertness to health, agriculture, education, economy, politics, etc. In this case, lectures, news, entertainment, drama, discussions etc, can be used. Radio stations in Nigeria often relay special programmes that promote rural development. More so, radio has the capacity to mobilise support for government programmes. Thus, the government at various levels - local, state and national, have used both radio and television to mobilise support for its programmes.

Arulogun and Adesiyani (n.d) notes that successful governments in Nigeria have used the media to console people and reassure them of their support in times of fire disaster, religious crisis, flood and other catastrophic events. During the crises in plateau state, the government relied heavily on the mass media in holding together the people; not only in terms of crisis, but also for the continuous peaceful coexistence of the different ethnic groups. Both private and public television and radio stations have introduced programmes, relayed jingles that lay emphasis on the need for peaceful coexistence.

### **Problems Associated with Using Radio for Rural Development in Nigeria**

There are so many factors that hinder development communication in Nigeria. This informs why most social development programmes in Nigeria often fail. Among the problems are:

- i. **Communication Related Problems:** The communicator plays a very significant role in the process of communication. The communicator is the man or woman who disseminates the information. The communicator has a big task to play in order to affect the people positively with his social development messages. If in the process of communication, the communicator is weak or bad, it will negatively affect the whole communication process.
- ii. **Message Related Problems:** The message is the actual physical product of the communicator. The message is the contents, the feelings, notions, ideas, etc, which we pass across to the people, so as to affect them. In communicating social development programmes, the communicator has to use the right codes, symbols, languages, etc. Thus, Nwosu (1990) says that one of such problems is the use of correct codes and symbols for communicating messages. This has to do with correct language, diction or right choice of words. What is called for here is correct use of whatever language you are using to communicate to your audience. The message must also appeal to the people's interest and value, before it can get their attention. The people, especially those in the rural areas are easily influenced when communicated messages are in line with their pre-existing attitudes. The message must reflect the culture, belief, attitudes, etc, of the people. The message according to Nwosu, must have some utilitarian values before it can catch people's attention, arouse their interests and possibly, move them to action. The message must also have attention getting devices such as

bold heading, carefully selected typography, boxes and illustrations in order to be effective. However, many communicators in Nigeria do not yet seem to realise the import of good message presentation or are not putting into adequate practice what they know on this issue. The general trend is that, most communicators know what to say but, they do not know how to say it well. Any message that does not contain any substance will not be effective, even if it is well written, spoken or presented.

- iii. **Illiteracy:** Many Nigerians still cannot read and write, especially those in the rural areas. Illiteracy can serve as a hindrance to social development. Such people are functionally illiterate and constitute a major obstacle to effective flow of information or media communicated messages. The illiterates cannot be reached through newspapers and magazines even when they are produced in their local languages.
- iv. **The Use of English Language by the Electronic Media:** Most development communication messages are still carried out in English language, even when they are aimed at the rural dwellers. Despite the fact that radio and television sets are made available to Nigerians, research has shown that there are still by far, more English language programmes in Nigerian radio and television stations than local language programmes. Virtually all the broadcast programmes in our stations are produced in English language. This implies that the rural dwellers are not taken into consideration thus, the message will not have any effect on them.
- v. **Multiplicity of Language in Nigeria:** There are so many languages in Nigeria and there is always a kind of confusion on which one to use to communicate development messages that will touch on every ethnic group. The problem of multiplicity of languages in Nigeria is largely responsible for the inefficient system of communication in Nigeria. Nwosu (1990) notes that there seems not to be an absolute agreement on the actual number of languages in Nigeria. While Frank Ugboaja says we have 178 Nigeria languages, William Hatcher says that we have 250 languages in Nigeria. Nwosu maintains that mediated message still go to literate Nigerians who can read and write English or any of the local languages while the

majority of Nigerians who are illiterate and live in rural areas are still cut off from the flow of mass mediated information.

- vi. **Lack of Audience Feedback:** Feedback is very important in communication process. Little or no audience feedback can also hinder the social development programmes. Feedback according to Asemah (2009) is the reaction to the message sent to the receiver. The way the receivers (target audience) understand the message can affect their reactions or responses. Feedback, whether positive or negative, is necessary for effective two-dimensional or multi-dimensional communication process. It is important for the communicator to find out through feedbacks how his messages are perceived, good? bad?, etc. If the feedback is negative, he (communicator) will be able to make necessary adjustments that will improve and sustain his communication effort. The audience-members can also help by participating more in the communication process through feedback mechanism. Feedback is important because it enables the communicator to know whether the audiences actually understand the message and whether they are willing to practise what they have been told.
- vii. **Ownership Problem:** One of the sickening features of the media in the third world is the fact that very large chunks of mass media are owned by government. For this reason, most media houses are seen and treated as an extension of civil service and operations are structured along civil service codes and conducts. The mass media therefore are caught in the web of bureaucratic bottlenecks, which has hindered meaningful development. Stressing the danger associated with undue governmental and institutional control, Akinyele (2003) argues that there is the tendency to always want to please the power that be or fingers that feed the media practitioner to the detriment of development ideals. There is the popular saying that “he who plays the piper dictates the tune”. Most media houses in Nigeria are owned by the government and in many cases, they end up being the mouthpiece of the government, which is for communicating government's various activities to the populace. This according to Nwosu does not make for balanced, extensive and fair communication. The privately owned media are not also left out of this problem of undue interference. Both the print and broadcast media suffer from the problem of undue influence, interference or

control by their owners. Thus, it behoves on the professional communicators in Nigeria to try hard to overcome this negative impact of undue ownership control of communication.

- viii. **Dearth of Qualified Personnel:** One of the problems facing development communication has to do with the quality of personnel. Most of those in the business of development communication are not really experts in various aspects of development studies. Most are at best experts only on core communication courses, without basic knowledge in other social science courses like rural sociology, economics and other related development studies, which promote sustainable human development.
- ix. **Urban- Centred Development Journalism:** A corollary to the above is that, because of the nature of their training, they are exposed to their foreign related mass communication. Most of the reports of development journalist are urban-based. Most development journalists focus mainly on the activities of urban setting. This is not unconnected with the fact that there is larger concentration of media practitioners in urban areas like Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan, etc.
- x. **Dearth of Community Based or Vernacular Radio/Telecommunication:** Another problem of development communication has to do with the fact that most of the language of communication is English or foreign language, instead of vernacular language. According to Olukotun (2001), vernacular media offer one clear way of bridging the gap between the urban and the rural, in that they publish in the local language and so naturally to the illiterate, rural and urban indigenes to which they are targeted. In the absence of community radio or newspaper that ought to transmit or report information in local language, it logically follows that the benefit as stated above will remain a mirage.

### **Conclusion**

Radio is an important tool for entertaining, informing and educating the society. Electronic media generally provide the public with information. Radio as an electronic medium can be used to play the role of improving and changing social, cultural, political and technological thinking, which will in the long run, have positive results on the process of rural building. Due to

the fact that radio can be used to educate, inform and socialise the society, rural radio becomes a medium that can contribute to the development of rural community. This is based on the fact that rural dwellers appear to be left out on developmental issues as a result of the level of illiteracy in the rural community. Radio is easily accessible and affordable, easily understood and accepted. It does not demand any complexity in broadcasting or listening. It can be used or listened to anytime and anywhere. The unique nature of radio is such that, it appears to be one medium of mass communication that the rural dwellers can easily identify with. Thus, this brings about the need for the establishment of numerous radio stations in our various rural communities in Nigeria. How can this be achieved, given the nature of cultural diversity in Nigeria? More so, illiteracy is still a big question in the Nigerian society. How can rural radio be made acceptable and comprehensive despite the alarming rate of illiteracy in the rural areas? Lastly, with the persistent economic crisis thriving in the rural areas, how can rural dwellers use radio to benefit and how can radio meet or provide their needs? These are questions that government, media organisation scholars and all stakeholders need to consider as they consider radio developmental programmes/projects in rural communities.

### **Recommendations**

Radio is a medium that can be used to mobilise the rural dwellers and even urban dwellers for development purposes if effectively used. The paper therefore recommends that:

- Radio messages should be designed in line with the pre-existing attitudes of the rural dwellers. That is, the people's culture, belief, etc, should be taken into consideration when designing radio programmes.
- Radio stations in Nigeria should endeavour to use local dialects, especially when the radio programme is aimed at the rural dwellers. The people will pick more interest in programmes when local languages are used.
- It is important for government and the public to know that effective communication with rural dwellers will increase their active participation in the life of citizens in the country. To this end, it is recommended that radio stations should be well funded to produce

programmes that would serve the purpose of educating and informing the public on issues relevant to them.

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