Development Communication in Action

Building Understanding and Creating Participation

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Chapter 8

Development and Mass Communication:
Effective Use of the Mass Media in Rural (or Inner-City) Development

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> An efficient use of mass media for economic and social development implies that they should be as local as possible. Their programs should originate no further than necessary from their audiences; the programs should be prepared by persons who understand the culture to which they are speaking, and means should be available for the audience to report back to the media Schramm (1964

To mobilize, for development, the vast illiterate masses of the rural areas of developing countries, extensive change in knowledge and attitudes are needed. Earlier attempts at achieving these fundamental objectives through the face-to-face method of communication proved ineffective. The mass media which were introduced as alternative also produced very little effect primarily because of how they were used – mainly to meet government expectation rather than to involve the people and elicit positive participation in development activities. This chapter proposes decentralized media activity policy **which creates opportunity** for access to mass media infrastructures and physical participation in media activities for the rural masses. The chapter is also applicable to the sub-urban slums (the cornubations) of developing societies, and the inner-cities of the developed societies. These segments suffer from most of the problems that affect rural communities – poverty, hunger, illiteracy, dearth of social amenities, poor sanitation, disease, poor health and fatalism. In addition, slums and the inner-cities suffer from a very devastating psychological problem. Being near to, and constantly seeing, affluence (to which they have no access) around them, make them feel the *naked* impact of socio-economic deprivation.

The UNESCO declared in 1967 that there was convincing evidence from projects in many parts of the world that the mass media can be

effectively applied to the development of resources to meet basic economic, social, political, education and cultural needs of nations. Since then, many governments in the developing world intensified their efforts at utilizing the mass media in their efforts to transform their societies. These efforts were, of course, centered around the use of the radio, which was then the only known medium of mass communication in the rural areas of these developing societies. In South America - Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica and Brazil - among others, intensified their use of Radio schools for the purposes of rural education and development. In Asia, the story was about the same. India, Afghanistan, Thailand, Indonesia and Korea, focussed on the use of Instructional Radio and Radio Farm Forums. Africa, too, was not left out. Cameroun, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, among others, utilized the Open Broadcast system, as well as the Instructional Radio and the Radio Farm Forum (McAnany, 1973: 15-21)

However, as pointed out in 1974 by the World Bank, these efforts at using the mass media in development did not positively affect the lives of the people in the developing countries to any appreciable degree. Referring specifically to the Education Sector, the World Bank (1974: 4) had this to say:

> In spite of the considerable efforts made by the developing
> countries about half of their citizens – children and adults
> alike – are without a minimum level of education, and
> prospects for the next decade are not promising....

As with education, so it was with health, agriculture, sanitation, transportation and so on. Benefits derived from the mass media efforts were very insignificant; and even so, the little benefits that accrued went to citizens who were already well-off in comparison to the 85-90% of the population who lived in abject poverty and who, therefore, needed the development benefits most.

Two basic reasons can be given for the very limited success of the mass media in development activities in the developing societies. The first is the weakness of one of the inherent characteristics of the mass media – their one-way nature. "Technologies of discourse tend to a transmission approach to communication.... thus reducing 'receivers' to somewhat static individuals and psychological dispositions which are to be mobilized by 'hard-edged' messages." (Tulloch & Lupton: 1997, p.80). Unless there is an intermediary at the reception end, such

messages tend to be ignored or forgotten, because in the main, they are either not understood or are irrelevant. This is why Dervin (1992, p. 67) recommends the constructionist approaches to communication which seek to situation self-constructing, agentive individuals in the context of the 'culture, history and institutions that define much of the world within which the individual lives'.

The second reason lies in the way the media were used. In Africa, the approach to mass media use was (and has continued to be) based on a perspective which McQuail (1983: 94) has called the Development Media theory. This theoretical perspective requires that the mass media become companions in development with the government, and therefore should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy. However, the perspective also supports restricting the mass media in the interest of economic priority, and upholds the right of the government to intervene in media operations in the interest of development. The government can do this through censorship, subsidy and direct control. The theory did not, however, specify how to determine true interest, and who should determine it.

This approach to media use in development, which also obtained in most of the other developing societies, sees the mass media only as the long arm of the government, and holds that their main function is that of obtaining the people's support for, and compliance with, the aims and objectives of the usual five-year national development plans. It is a transmission-based (information), rather than an exchange of ideas-based (communication) strategy. Its tendencies are strongly in favor of media centralization and strong government control. This is precisely what most governments in the developing world would want the mass media to be and to do; and to a very large extent, it describes the structure of mass media involvement in Africa's efforts to develop her societies and to improve the living conditions of her rural populations since the late 1960s.

The strong emphasis given to utilizing the media operational structure supported by the above theoretical perspective appear s also to derive support from another misleading popular opinion. There is a general feeling among media professionals and government officials that **access** and **participation,** which are unquestionably the prerequisites for understanding of novel ideas and for attitude and behavior change, can be achieved in centralized government-controlled mass media. Results of past activities have not, however, proved them right. Because of high illiteracy rates, scarcity of communication hardware, the poverty of the people and other factors such as scattered, low-density population and

difficult terrains, centralized mass media operations have had very limited impact, and have left a very large proportion of Africa's rural population virtually cut-off from national communication networks. For this proportion of the population, the "right to communicate" (Harms & Richstad, 1977; Fisher & Harms, 1983) is virtually not exercised beyond the narrow confines of the local community; even the right to information is heavily limited. The situation in other developing societies of the world is not significantly different.

What Piotrow, et al (1997, p. 17) found in their study of family planning is true of all other development programs. They remarked that the biggest obstacle to the effective use of communication was thinking about communication in too narrow a manner. The intended effect was usually limited to making the receiver aware of some point of view, new product or a course of action. Neither the social process of communication nor the influence of communication on behavior received enough consideration. Attention was given to the production of materials rather than to their content; to technical quality rather than to how different audience members would interpret the meaning of the content within their particular social context.

### Developing Society Structure
The structure of society in the developing world is a three level hierarchical pyramid composed of: -

- An urban segment that is controlled by a very small elite at the pinnacle. This elite population is generally well educated and comparatively better-off economically. It is made up of top government officials, highly paid employees of the private sector of the economy, industrialists, business-men and white-collar employees in general.

- A sub-urban segment that is inhabited by semi- and barely educated as well as restless illiterate citizens forced out of their rural environments by the harsh realities of economic deprivations, but unable to break into the urban elite circles because of poor education and lack of skilled knowledge. This population is generally underfed, poorly housed, unemployed and/or unemployable, and live under frightfully insanitary conditions.

- A rural segment that is by far the largest in population and land area. It is inhabited by the majority of the people. In Nigeria, for example, this segment accounts for about 80% of the population; in Niger, the percentage is as high as 95%. This rural population is usually bound by tradition, very poor and lacks most modern social amenities. There are very few, if any, motorable roads, medical facilities or factories; the schools are poorly equipped and staffed, and the majority of the people are too poor to send their children to school. The people live their lives mainly on subsistence agriculture.

It is to be noted that the structure of society described above is almost completely reversed in developed societies. Instead of the rich being the inhabitants of the urban segment of the population as in the developing societies, they live in the sub-urban segment. And while the rural segment contains the largest proportion of the population in developing societies, it does not, in the developed societies.

The implication of the type of structure of society that obtains in the developing world is that, in the main, these societies are basically rural. In such essentially rural communities, where illiteracy is very high, the difference between the standard of living of the very few who 'have' and the very many who 'have not' are strikingly conspicuous, modern social and economic amenities are the exception rather than the rule, and where modern communication facilities are near zero, the use of impersonal media of mass communication for human, socio-economic, political and cultural development demands much more than is apparently obvious. It demands access for, and participation of, the rural majority. The lack of positive impact of the mass media in rural communities when used without sufficient access for, and the active participation of, the rural population is depicted in the following page.
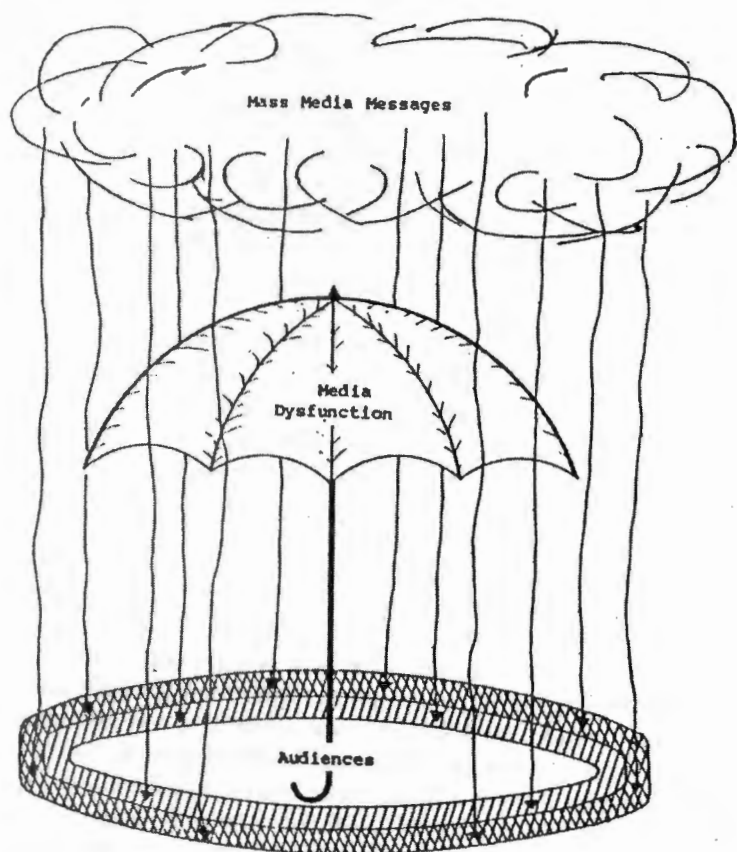
The Rural Population   □   The Non-participatory Audience

Sub-Urban population   ▨   Pseudo-participatory Audience

The Urban Population   ▨   Active Participatory Audience

* By courtesy of Frank O. Ugboajah, 'Traditional-Urban Media Model:
Stock-taking for African Development', *International Journal of
Mass Communication Studies*, XVIII, 2, 1972.

Figure 8.1 Mass Media Dysfunction.

The diagram shows clearly which segment of the society benefits from mass media information and which does not. The umbrella – standing for illiteracy, cultural gap, physical distance, poverty, frustration and other development constraints which the mass media do not seem to take notice of – covers the largest portion of the diagram which represents the large rural population – the non-participatory audience – and so keeps it out of the mainstream of mass media information. Any notion of development in such communities that does not take into account the conditions of this impoverished majority – the peasant farmer, the fisherman, the herdsman, the petty trader, the unskilled laborer, and the illiterate villager with ten children all of whom are also illiterate, would be grossly lopsided. In an apparent warning about the dangers of urban and elite-only-oriented development efforts in Nigeria where about 80% of the people are very poor and live in rural environments, a Minister of Education stressed the pointed that –

> To build a nation properly, we need to train and educate our youths in the right direction. But regardless of the magnitude and efficiency of our formal education system the foundation of the new nation would not be well and truly laid unless the parents of our youths are themselves well-informed and are appreciative of the blessings of true nationhood (Eke, 1972).

This warning clearly calls attention to the need for governments to focus appropriate and sufficient attention on the development needs of the rural population which makes up the largest proportion of the total population of developing societies. For this population, communication is not just an exchange of ideas and opinions; it is also a question of relationships and knowledge acquisition; and it has to be concerned with relevant content, suitable style of presentation, timing, rapport, access, participation and a happy balance between modern and traditional systems. In most of the developed world, communication may well be directed towards information exchange – making news about the social, economic and political situations available to the public with a view to keeping the people abreast of prevailing circumstances. In the developing world, communication has a greater role to play. Its principal function is not merely to inform, but to educate with a view to raising the aspirations of the people in the right direction, generating among them the willingness to work in order to improve on their conditions, motivating them to action and guiding and directing their activities to successful ends. .

Rationale

The rationale for the use of the mass media in rural (and inner- city) development efforts is basically the need to reach the entire targeted population with development news, information and messages. Underlying this rationale is the need to foster the physical and mental development of the individual, and therefore, of the community; to encourage intelligent co-existence among individuals and among communities, and to advance national development through improving individual circumstances. The task involves inducing, nurturing and facilitating the necessary knowledge to enhance the achievement of development objectives. This task is for mass media communication to help create and maintain an enabling atmosphere in which tradition-conscious (and poverty-stricken) individuals can take part in discussing positive development objectives and utilize the ensuing conclusions effectively.

Earlier attempts to achieve these fundamental requirements for rural transformation through the face-to-face methods by using Extension Services agents, Public Enlightenment Officers and Literacy teachers, were so ineffective that they did not even begin to scratch the surface of the problems of rural underdevelopment. Such face-to-face attempts were fraught with many problems among which were: poor training of agents, shortage of extension agents, too large a population to cater for and scarcity of funds.

The shift to the use of the mass media methods was therefore seen as a wise decision. Even with the strict vertical feed-forward nature of the operation buttressed by the tenets of Development Media theory (McQuail, 1983), the mass media approach enabled literacy barriers to be crossed and distances to be eliminated; and it made the services of the few well-trained personnel around available to the entire nation. Where access and participation were taken into account, the mass media approach also ensured motivation and general mobilization, and helped to create awareness among, and began to enlist the sympathy and empathy of, the urban literate and elite population. Furthermore, the use of the mass media helped to reduce the occurrence of one of the less talked-about pitfalls in rural development efforts – the inability of many experts, government officials and extension agents to operate successfully at the project level. The need to write down materials for broadcast, for example, provided the opportunity to assess such materials in relation to the target audiences before they were broadcast.

As earlier implied, the success of the mass media approach to rural development greatly hinges on the ability and willingness to create for the rural population, access to the media, and to induce the people's physical participation in the communication process and involvement in the development efforts. This view finds expression in, not Development Media theory, but Democratic-Participant Media theory (McQuail, 1994, 1983). The central point of this theoretical perspective lies in the needs, interests and aspirations of grassroot populations. It emphasizes the need to provide opportunities for the people to exercise their right to communicate which involves the exercise of the right to relevant information, the right to answer back and to discuss, and the right to use the means of communication for interaction in small group settings. This perspective stresses the need for the mass media to exist primarily for their audiences and not for media and other professionals or for the government. And it recognizes the necessity for groups, organizations and local communities to have their own media.

A good many of the governments in the developing world feel they do not yet have the means to provide the necessary infrastructure to implement the demands of this theoretical perspective. Of those who believe they have the means, many are not politically disposed to granting so much media autonomy to the rural population. Basically, therefore, **access and participation**, which are widely recognized as the cornerstone for rural mobilization and motivation towards development, still largely remain high-class commmodities in the communication market-place of developing societies. Though positive confidence in the mass media as potentially effective tools for rural transformation is high everywhere, establishment of enhancing media policy, and the adoption of the appropriate operational strategy to effectively tap the potentials of these mass media have been limited, not only because of insufficient economic resources, but also because of lack of political will.

Choice of Media

One basic issue to tackle when a decision to use the media of mass communication, the right way, for rural development purposes has been made, is that of identifying and choosing the "right" medium or media. This issue is very important because on it depends whether or not the target rural audiences are, in the first instance, reached with development messages. On it, too, depends whether or not the rural individuals concerned will make the initial effort of granting their attention. Choice of medium or media also affects what people learn and

how quickly and well they can learn. Therefore, making the 'right' choice is seen as a very important issue which has strong implications for the success of the mass media in rural development efforts.

However, the multi-farious nature of the tasks involved in rural development - literacy, health, agriculture, work-skills, self-help and community development, etc - points to the necessity for a multi-media approach. This is because some media are better suited to certain activities than others. In an integrated approach to rural development, therefore, the concern should be, not merely determining the right medium or media to use, but rather ascertaining which of the existing media of mass communication is best suited for what assignment and at what level of the development activity. To be able to do this properly, the characteristics of each medium, as well as its ownership and utilization patterns in each country or each community have to be taken into account.

The three most popular mass media in the developing countries are the Print (Newspapers), the Radio and the Television. They are all available in most developing societies, but the extent of their availability, accessibility and utilization differs greatly from country to country, and in each country it differs between the urban and the rural areas. For example, the Europa World Yearbook (Vol.1, 1992) gives the following statistics:

Brazil with a population of 153 million (1991) has 288 daily newspapers with very low circulation because of distribution difficulties. She has no national newspaper. She has 2,789 radio stations (all but 10% of which are in cities), and 59 million radio receivers. She has 235 television stations, more than half of which is in State capitals, and 36 million receivers.

Cameroon with a population of 12 million (1989) has 29 daily newspapers hampered by high production costs, limited readership and low advertising revenue. All the newspapers are city-based. She has twelve radio stations (three National, eight Provincial and one Local) with about 2 million receivers. She has 32 television transmitters and about 250,000 receivers.

Egypt with a population of 53 million (1990) has 17 daily newspapers hampered by high illiteracy rate. All the papers

are located either in Cairo or Alexandria.   She has 16 million
radio receivers and a little over four million television receivers.
Thailand with a population of 56 million (1990) has 20 daily newspapers (twelve in Thai Language, two in English and six in Chinese). She has four main radio stations and about 9 million receivers. She also has six main television stations with about six million receivers.

What may not be very evident in the statistics above is the very strong impact of socio-economic factors on media systems and their role in society. The extent to which each of the three media obtains in each of the countries mentioned above is determined by level of education, and economic strength, both of the government and of individual citizens. The use to which each of these media can be put in the task of rural transformation, therefore, cannot but be affected by these factors: availability, utilization and accessibility.

    In addition to properly familiarizing oneself with the inherent characteristics of each medium, one has to determine how available, how usable and how accessible each of them is to the different socio-economic groups in each country in order to ensure appropriate and fruitful utilization.

    Television: Because of its audio and visual qualities, the television has very significant advantages over both the radio and the newspaper in the field of development education. Not only can the communicator or the animator be seen and heard while using the medium, but also his/her demonstrations and examples can be followed to advantage. Therefore, the television can be a very effective medium for rural development. However, when one considers the situation of television in developing countries - how available the television is in the rural communities, how accessible it is to the rural population and the use to which the television is put generally by its urban-elite managers - the temptation is high to rule out its use in activities directed at the emancipation and development of the rural segment of the population. The poverty of the rural citizens (they cannot afford the high cost of television sets) and the lack of electricity in almost all rural communities further compounds television's apparent handicaps in the task of rural development. The often-repeated

argument is that, because it is not available in the rural areas, its use in rural development campaign is questionable.

To hold such a view, however, is an indication of a very narrow understanding of the nature of rural development. It is based on a premise which seems to see rural underdevelopment as a problem that concerns only the rural areas and the illiterate and semi-literate masses that inhabit them. But the truth is that rural underdevelopment is a national problem affecting practically every facet of national life, and therefore, it concerns both the urban and the rural areas, both the educated and the uneducated, both the rich and the poor. The dependence, illiteracy, poverty and poor health and sanitation of the rural population are not problems only for the rural population; they are problems for the urban populations also. Such problems, no doubt, are a drag on national progress as well as on individual progress and community development. They seriously affect the comfort and happiness of the elite and the educated. In addition, much of the cost of rural development is generally borne, directly or indirectly, by the urban educated elite.

In order to accomplish a successful rural development program, therefore, the nation as a whole must be mobilized. In such a development endeavor, the willingness of the rural population to submit themselves and to participate is hardly much more important than the sympathy, understanding and support of the literate and urban population. The television, because of its characteristics and its extensive use by the urban and the educated masses, is an invaluable medium for eliciting from this generally well-educated and economically well-off segment of the total population this sympathy, this understanding and this support, both moral and financial, which are required to reassure development agents and rural audiences, and to physically see the development programs through to successful end.

The television can also be used for the sub-urban population. It is available, though sparsely, in this population which very badly needs mobilization, motivation, literacy education, work skills, a change in attitude and self-confidence in order to raise the level and standard of their living condition. In addition to the limited number of sets usually available to this segment of the total population, viewing centers could be built in a supplementary effort to increase access and participation possibilities. Such centers do not only increase access; they also provide opportunities for the people to come together to view programs, and in

the process discuss not only content and message intentions of the programs, but also other community issues related to development.

Print (the Newspaper): The print media have an enduring characteristic which neither the radio nor the television has. The newspaper can be read and re-read at convenience, thus allowing for fuller and better understanding of message contents. It can be stored away for future use, thus making for the preservation of materials that are considered important for future reference. Because of this, the printed word would appear to be best suited for mass education and mobilization of illiterate and semiliterate populations which are generally slow to learn. Furthermore, newspapers are in regular supply and do contain current and varied information on cultural, social, economic and political, as well as rural development activities. They are also capable of carrying literacy and non-formal education materials and of serving as reading materials for new literates, thus ensuring that the rural population does not only learn to read but also reads to learn.

In spite of these qualities, very strong arguments have been adduced against the use of the newspaper in rural education for development. The strongest opposition is based on the fact that the newspaper is a literate medium. The argument is that people who are mostly illiterate, cannot directly make use of a literate medium. The rural population aptly fits this description. In addition, there are the problems of cost and of distribution, as well as the urban-elite orientation of the content of newspapers. All these seem to add up to making the newspaper an apparently inappropriate medium for rural development efforts.

Strong as these points of argument may appear to be, however, they are, once again, based on a narrow perspective on rural development. The proponents of these arguments against the newspaper have failed to take a holistic view of the problems of rural underdevelopment and the possible solutions to them. As already pointed out, rural underdevelopment is not an exclusively rural problem; it is a national problem that affects, directly or indirectly, all segments of the total population. The reasons given above about the use of the television vis-a-vis the urban elite population also apply in the case of the newspaper. Therefore, the arguments adduced against its use in a mainly illiterate population are not sufficient to disqualify it as a viable medium for use in rural development activities. No doubt, the newspaper is an appropriate medium for eliciting the sympathy, understanding and moral and financial support of the urban population and of government functionaries for rural development.

The newspaper can also be a potent medium for mobilization and education in the sub-urban segment of the total population. A few people among these sub-urban population can read intelligibly enough to be able to interpret intelligently. They and a few 'information conscious' illiterates do buy newspapers. These newspapers are usually read and interpreted in groups by literate friends and neighbors. This is the two-step flow hypothesis (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) in action. Those who read the newspapers are usually those that are trusted and respected within the group. And the reading is usually followed by discussions and questions and answers – all of which generates understanding of issues and commitment to group decisions. What is particularly development orienting about this practice of "You buy, I read for the group" which was in vogue in the late 1930s and early 1940s, is that it engenders reassurance and acceptance of new ideas.

For the illiterate population of the rural areas, the newspaper as we know it to day, is almost out of the question. What is needed is the Rural Press (Hein & Kanyagonya, 1979) dedicated to the production of rural mimeos and/or newspapers basically for the rural population. Such mimeos and/or newspapers, produced by the rural people themselves with the help of the few literates among them and under expert guidance are suitable for many rural development activities. They are invaluable for literacy campaigns, because they provide reading materials which are generally in short supply. Therefore, not only do they promote literacy campaigns, but they also help sustain literacy for they serve as cheap and readily available reading materials for new literates. Rural mimeos and newspapers are also useful in non-formal education activities. They highlight the problems of the rural areas as they affect the rural population, and in relation to the nation; and they discuss possible solutions in the language and tone with which the people are comfortable. The materials they carry are usually appropriate for the solution of problems affecting the community because they are almost always based on sufficient understanding of local situations as reflected in detailed discussions and decisions. They are cheap to produce and do not suffer distribution problems because they are produced in the community and distributed in the community.

Support for Rural Press (in Africa) came principally from the African Literacy Society (AFROLIT) which commissioned seminars and workshops to teach both the production and journalistic techniques of rural newspapers in many African countries including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Mali, Ivory Coast, Togo, Senegal, Sierra Leone and

Liberia. These rural press seminars and workshops, most of which were conducted by this author in collaboration with Keith Kanyogonya (Uganda) and Francis Kasoma (Zambia), introduced the rural populations in these countries to the use of the printed word in fostering discussions on, and finding solutions to, rural development problems. The rural press in these countries did help build up the self-confidence of the rural adult population by involving them in contributing to the content of their rural newspapers, and in reading and discussing these contents when published, thus making them part of the communication process and of the development efforts of their communities and of their nations.

Radio: The radio is the one medium of mass communication which all experts would seem to agree is the most appropriate for rural emancipation programs. Even the UNESCO lends credence to this special position accorded the radio in rural development activities. As far back as 1965, it noted that—

> In developing countries, the greater part of the people live on the land, are frequently isolated by illiteracy and lack of transport. [But] effective communication with rural people and their active participation in the life of their country are essential for developing societies. Radio broadcasting, when skillfully used, has proved to be the most effective medium of communication with these far-flung populations

The reasons for this confidence in the radio are many. Radio beats literacy barriers; one does not need to know how to read and write before one can learn from the medium. Radio is also individualistic, and so has that personal touch which lends support to attitude and behavior change. On the other hand, the radio is a populist medium, thus it enhances the chances of getting development messages across to a very wide segment of the population. More importantly, the radio is the only medium of mass communication with which the rural population is very familiar. Because it is cheap to obtain, it is widely owned in rural communities.

The near-total confidence in radio's capacities does not, however, mean that the radio has no weak points. For example, it is an audio-only medium. The absence of visual characteristics is a significant handicap. One cannot effectively teach reading and writing or technical skills efficiently through the radio. To be successful, there has to be an agent at the reception end to provide the missing links. It was precisely

because of this fact that the Radio Farm Forums of Canada, India and Ghana, as well as the Radio Schools of Colombia and the Radio Study Groups of Tanzania (McAnany, 1972) were organized. To be effective in education and communication as opposed to mere information, the radio, in rural development, needs an intermediary between it and its target audiences. There also has to be organizational structure to foster active participation and discussions (Moemeka, 1981:93). Allied to this issue of organized listening and discussion is the issue of *access* to radio stations and participation in program production and presentation (Moemeka, 1978). It is strongly argued that the effectiveness of the radio when people have access to stations and physically participate in program activities is by far greater, especially in rural communities, than it is when the audiences just "sit and listen" to programs planned and produced for them by distant 'experts'.

What is required, therefore, is adopting a radio strategy which places emphasis on building low-cost radio stations in rural communities, and delegates power to local broadcasters; stresses the production of development programs within the communities in which the messages will be broadcast, and under conditions in which the local people will take part fully in the production and presentation of the messages. This is what has been called the Local Radio Strategy (Moemeka, 1981: 80). This strategy eliminates the weaknesses of each of the five strategies identified by McAnany (1973), while at the same time, it makes full use of their strengths to great advantage. It also eliminates the do-it-alone approach usually adopted by the different government and voluntary agency development agents working in the rural areas; and it ensures that the general nature of message contents that is almost inevitable when broadcasting is directed at a nationally heterogenous audiences, gives way to more community-oriented content specifically tailored to community needs and aspirations. ".....the more general we make our communication, the more we run the risk that people will slip through the education (communication) net...." (Tulloch & Lupton: 1997, p. 81)

Local Radio Strategy brings both the hardware and software of radio very close to the people, ensuring that radio functions in the context of the local audiences, and that the people take part, not only in message reception, but also in message construction, production and presentation. This approach to the use of the radio in rural and local community development makes radio broadcasting part of the daily lives of the people instead of merely being an adjunct which centralized radio broadcasting strategy would seem to advocate.

Interpersonal Channels

In rural development activities, the media of mass communication can hardly operate successfully alone. They need the support of interpersonal channels of communication. In rural Africa, for example, no communication policy can succeed unless it takes into account the five basic principles (Moemeka, 1998, 1984) that underlie the tradtional system of interaction - Supremacy of the Community, Utility of the Individual, Sanctity of Authority, Respect for Old-age and Religion as a Way of Life. These principles infuse relevance and context into communication within rural communities. Therefore, whatever media are used, and whatever strategy is employed in rural development activities, the very important role of interpersonal communication in rural communities should not be taken lightly. Any communication strategy which completely ignores the traditional media cannot successfully win and retain the people's attention for long. Any communication message which ignores the values that underlie the context in which the people communicate, cannot produce the attitude and behavior changes necessary for rural development. As research has shown, not only are two media better than one medium for effective communication, but also a combination of the mass media and interpersonal communication is better than using either alone. (See Table 8.1)

Closely related to Interpersonal Communication is traditional media. Research has also shown that rural communities, especially those that most need rural development messages, still rely heavily on traditional media channels for information and messages. These media are what the rural population has relied upon for years, and the people have very strong confidence in them. The implication for rural development communicators, therefore, is to ensure that such media are not ignored. It would seem logical to expect that only media strategies which utilize these traditional media in collecting materials to be included in mass media programs, and in disseminating further, interpreting and consolidating mass media messages would prove effective in rural development. The findings of a survey to determine which of seven media (traditional and modern) - Social Forums, Town-Crier, Village Market, Village School, Newspaper, Radio and Television - the rural population in Bendel State of Nigeria depended upon in their response to three development projects - Operation Feed the Nation, Local Government Reforms and Universal Primary Education - show clearly the superiority of traditional media (See Table 8.2). Even though more than 80% of the respondents said that they first heard of the development

projects on radio, 15% through the traditional media and five percent from the newspaper, reactions to the projects were almost exclusively influenced by discussions and decisions that took place through the face-to-face contact provided by the traditional media.

Table 8.1:
Main Characteristics of Mass Media, Interpersonal Communication and the two channels in combination.

	Mass Media Channel	Interpersonal Channel	Mass Media and Interpers Channels
	One-way	Two-way	Two-way
Time to reach large audience	Rapid	Slow	Rapid
Accuracy in large audience	High	Low	High
Overcoming Selective Exposure and Selective Perception	Low	High	High
Feedback	Little	Much	Much
Ability to answer local needs of the audience	Low	High	High
Most likely main effect	Increased Knowledge	Attitude Change	Increased Knowledge and Attitude Change

Adapted from E.M. Rogers, et al. "Radio Forums: A Strategy for Rural Development". In Radio For Education and Development: Case Studies, Vol.II, p. 363. World Bank, 1977 (Working Paper No. 266)

Table 8.2: Development Information Dissemination: Media Performance in Motivation to Action.

Media	Influence (*by Development Project*)			
	Operation Feed The Nation	Local Government Reforms	Universal Primary Education	Total
Social Forums	15 (14.4%)	34 (32.6%)	17 (16.3%)	66 (21.2%)
Town-Crier	10 (9.6%)	20 (19.3%)	15 (14.4%)	45 (14.4%)
Newspaper	2 (1.9%	--	3 (2.9%)	5 (1.6%)
Radio	8 (7.7%	4 (3.8%)	7 (6.7%)	19 (6.1%)
Local Market	34 (32.7%)	14 (13.5%)	20 (19.3%)	68 (21.8%)
Television	----	-----	-----	---
Local School	35 (33.7%)	32 (30.8%)	42 (40.4%)	109 (34.9%)
Total	104 (100%)	104 (100%)	104 (100%)	104 (100%)

Source: Andrew A. Moemeka, Local Radio: Community Education for Development, p. 46. Ahmadu Bello University Press, Zaria,1981.

Guideline to Media Use

This chapter clearly supports the use of all three popular media of mass communication - radio, television and newspaper- in the efforts to transform rural communities. But such use must not bypass the traditional media already in use in the communities or ignore the values on which the people's communication system is based. When such community-bound traditional media and communication system are taken into **account in utilizing the radio, the television and the** newspaper for rural development purposes, the effectiveness of the three mass media is greatly enhanced.

The contention here is that all three popular media are very important and necessary for the successful implementation of rural development goals and objectives. Each of the media has the potential for playing specific role or roles that are imperative in rural development. One or the other of these media provides a channel for direct teaching/instruction, the production of magazine programs (a mixed-grill of materials - talks, short stories, riddles, music, questions and answers, jokes and humor,

and discussions), drama, features, playlets, documentaries and announcements. A suggestion as to which of these programs is most likely to be most effective on which medium and at what level of the development endeavor is given in a Media Activity Schedule shown on the following pages.

Development communication activity is segmented into three levels or stages - Mobilization (directed at creating positive awareness and public attitude change), Implementation (aimed at creating a conducive atmosphere for the people to willingly participate and contribute to the development efforts) and Consolidation (when attempts should be made to sustain the people's confidence in order to protect the gains made, and to create an enabling climate for positive initiative that is necessary to keep the development efforts growing from strength to strength). An example of the type of activities considered important under each stage is given. Also given are examples of the type of media activities considered most likely to be effective, and through which medium. For the Print Media (Newspaper) the schedule contains two suggested structure of media activity – one for the elite and urban population using conventional newspaper, the other for the rural population using the rural press.

Media Activity Schedule
The Television
A. MOBILIZATION STAGE
- Creation of awareness
- General mobilization of the nation/community
- Motivation of policy-makers, the influential and educated members of the society/community
- Motivation of the educated to participate in literacy work in particular and development activities in general.

Types of Program:

- Talks and Features
- Plays – dramatic forms and playlets
- Discussion
- Documentaries
- Spot Announcements/Jingles
- Question and Answer sessions
- Interviews – News, Vox-pop, Forum, etc.

B. IMPLEMENTATION STAGE
- Demonstrations – What is being done, how and where
- Field Reports
- Appeals/statements from community leaders
- Literacy teaching
- Non-formal education – Techniques and skills
- General news and information.

Types of Program
- Media demonstrations with visual aids
- Documentaries (and Features)
  - Magazine
  - Discussion
  - Educational (Literacy & Non-formal)
  - Interviews – Spot, General Information, Personality
  - Jingles
  - Question and Answer sessions

C. CONSOLIDATION STATE
- Reports of completed projects and ongoing activities
- Literacy
- Non-formal Education
- Information (New practices and procedures)
- Skills acquisition
- Projections to the future
- Success celebrations and prize-giving

Types of Program:
- General Information
- Magazine
- Demonstrations
- Discussions, Talks and Features
- Interviews - Personality, Forum, News Conferences
- Documentaries
- Reports

The Radio
A. MOBILIZATION STAGE
- National Awareness Campaign
- Mobilization of the general public

–   Mobilization of the rural population
Motivation of policy-makers and the elite in society

Types of Program:
Jingles/Spot Announcements
Drama and Playlets
Talks and Features
Short Stories
Question and Answer sessions
Speeches from political/community leaders

B. IMPLEMENTATION STAGE
- Creation of avenues and opportunities for participation
- Supporting Teachers and Extension Agents
- Analyses of previous practices
- Raising positive aspirations and expectations
- Literacy and Non-formal Education
- Information on Location of materials and agents

access and support services

Types of Program:
News and Information
Educational programs
Short Stories and anecdotes
Discussions
Interviews - Spot, General Information
Question and Answer
Drama and Playlets
Jingles and Spot announcements

C. CONSOLIDATION STAGE
- Reports of Activities
- Propagation and Exhortation
- Motivation and Sustenance of efforts
- Dissemination of results of projects and activities
- Reinforcement of public support and efforts
- Building up confidence and encouraging initiatives

Types of Program:
Drama and Playlets
Interviews - Personality, Forum
Discussions
Magazine
Documentaries
Jingles
Question and Answer
News and Information

The Print Media (Newspaper)
A. MOBILIZATION STAGE
- Awareness creation - Elite and Literate population
- Mobilization of policy-makers and businessmen
- Mobilization of general urban and sub-urban populations
- Propagation of the benefits of rural development
- Exhortation to civic responsibility and patriotism

Types of Material:
News and Information
Analyses of Social and Economic issues
Features articles
Analyses of rural situation vis-a-vis the nation
Editorials and Commentaries
Box announcements and Special Features

B1. IMPLEMENTATION STAGE (Urban/Sub-urban)
- Budget allocations
- Moral and Financial Support
- Infrastructural facilities
- Literacy (Writing, Reading and Numeracy)
- Non-formal Education (Skills and Techniques guidance)

Types of Material: (Conventional Newspaper)
Government statements and announcements
Statements of support from political leaders
Statements from Community leaders as well as from
Industrial and Business leaders
Editorials and Commentaries
News Analyses
Educational Supplements

Features
News and Information

B2. IMPLEMENTATION STAGE (Rural Population)
- Direction and Guidance
- Exhortations and Moral Support
- Sustenance of enthusiasm
- Literacy reading/writing materials
- Dissemination of project news and information
- Non-formal Educatio

Types of Material (Rural/Local Newspaper)
News and Information
Reports of projects (progress and results)
Support messages from community leaders
Advice and Guidance from Extension Agents
Literacy and Non-formal education Supplements
Short Stories
Views and Opinions

Graphic representations and Tit-bits.

C. CONSOLIDATION STAGE
- Sustenance of gains made
- Building up of Self-help spirit
- Propagating benefits of Rural Dvelopment
- Encouraging commitment to Rural Development
- Inducing higher aspirations and extolling achievements
- Literacy and Non-formal education

Types of Material
(a). Conventional Newspaper
    Editorials and Commentaries
    News Analyses
    Features
    Interviews – Personality, Vox-Pop, etc.
    Government Statements
    Statement s from political and community leaders
    News and Information
    Educational Supplements

(b) Rural Newspaper
      Statements from community leaders
      Government statements/Announcements
      Reports of projects and community activities
      News and Information
      Views and Opinions from the people
      Literacy and Non-formal education supplements
      Interviews – Personality, Vox-Pop, etc
      Short stories/ Success stories.

The success of this Activity Schedule depends very much on how well the mass media programs are integrated with, not only the interpersonal communication system in general, but also the traditional and folk media systems in particular. The ratio of each system and each approach in the integration will normally depend on the sociocultural, economic and environmental conditions of each community. The variety and extent of these programs which the mass media are expected to carry out in rural development tasks point to the need for coordination between the authorities and the media, cooperation between the media and the different agents for rural emancipation, and a dynamic interaction among all three on the one hand and between them and the target rural audiences on the other.

Furthermore, it is very necessary to point out here that whatever medium is employed and whatever the type of program used, a very clear distinction should be made between talking at, and to, the people, and talking **with** the people. The former is mere information whose success in rural mobilization, motivation and education is very doubtful. The latter is communication, which involves discussion and exchange of ideas between the source and the receiver and which is the key to understanding, and therefore, to education. While dumping of news, facts and figures (information) on the uneducated and impoverished rural population creates a dominance/submission atmosphere to which rural audiences are usually not willing to submit, discussions and exchange of ideas (communication) create rapport, build up and/or restores confidence, engender an atmosphere of trust, respect and goodwill – all of which enhances commitment to group decisions and acceptance of new ideas.

The success of any human activity, especially those directed at development, is dependent upon four major over-arching "ingredients".

Knowing what to do
Knowing how to do them
Having the will and determination to do them
Having the resources to do them.

These ingredients facilitate acceptance and commitment which are basic requirements in the task of development and emancipation. For these necessary "ingredients" to obtain in the right proportion especially in rural development, the communicator must learn about the people, determine their problems and their views about themselves and about the nation, and be conversant with their ways of life. Without meeting these conditions, effective communication with the rural population would be impossible. For unless the communicator enters into the sociocultural context of the people and understands, at first hand, their economic, social and political peculiarities, he/she would not win their confidence, and therefore, would not get their cooperation in the task of rural development.

In the struggle for national development in the developing societies, the uneducated and impoverished rural majority cannot be left out without devastating consequences. In the effort to enlist their cooperation and positive contribution, the mass media cannot be ignored to advantage; and in the attempt to use these media of mass communication to help liberate, enlighten and educate the rural people for development, the strategy should be one which gives explicit priority to the aims of, not mere information, distribution and transmission, but of Participation, Expression and Communication (Moemeka, 1981: 102).

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