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# Media, Governance and Development in Nigeria:

Issues and Trends



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Media, Governance and  
Development in Nigeria:  
Issues and Trends

A Festschrift for  
Prof. Idowu Akanbi Sobowale, OON

Lai Oso, Dayo Soola and  
Umaru Pate

Dedicated to

PROF. IDOWU AKANBI SOBOWALE, OON

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## Preface

The collections in this publication are the products of the intellectual ideas by Mass Communication scholars across Nigeria and beyond. At a time when issues of globalisation and the mediating impact of the media as both catalyst and facilitator of an information-driven and knowledge-based post industrial society are fast assuming political and social relevance, it is imperative to adequately x-ray the inter-relationship between the media on the one hand, and governance and development on the other.

The selected essays offer different perspectives on the role of the mass media in governance and development with insights from the various theoretical and methodological trends in communication scholarship. The first edition of the Idowu Sobowale Conference provided the academic platform from which the book idea developed.

It is our hope that the views and issues raised by the contributors in these collections would further enrich the emerging discourse on the presumed role and place of the mass media in the Nigerian society and elsewhere.

## The Editors

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**Community Radio: The Missing Link In Nigeria's Development**

- ARIRIGUZH, Stella

**Introduction**

THE community radio is a potentially strong medium for Nigeria's national development. It is a powerful tool to be used to raise public awareness on health, education, governance, the environment and a wide range of local issues. Importantly, it raises and promotes peoples' participation in the development process. It also provides radio broadcast materials that are conventionally ignored or poorly served by the urban elitist mainstream broadcast stations. The urban based stations are profit motivated. Therefore, they air programmes that attract high ratings to attract advertisers and sponsors. The establishment of community radios in our country has been ignored and therefore its benefits have not been employed in the planning of national development strategies.

**What is Community Radio**

A community radio can be defined as a type of radio service that caters to the strict interests of a specific community. Its basic function is to develop and air programmes that appeal to this local audience. These programmes mirror the community's distinct culture, history, and experience. They therefore appeal to a narrow fraction of the populace. In a 2002 Katmandu, Nepal Workshop, the Association of Community Radios in South Asia defined a community radio as a:

"broadcast organization established to provide communication support for the social, economic and cultural development of a community within a geographical location, owned, and operated by the community on a non-profit basis."

It provides specific services that meet the community's needs in ways that other mass media do not. These other stations provide general programmes that do not necessarily address the challenges of a specific community. According to Girard (2002), the community radio plays "an essential role for those at the margins of society – a medium that lets them speak as well as hear". He is of the opinion that the community radios are the alternatives that will challenge the broadcast system dominated by the powerful commercial stations and their owners. Lyons (2001:26) sees the community radios as 'third sector' organizations because of their non-profit status, the involvement of volunteers and the major roles that they play in the running of the broadcast organization. Michael Delorme – President of the World Assembly of Community Radio Broadcasters – asserts that a community radio is "neither the expression of political power nor the expression of business, but the expression of the people..." Thus, a community radio vigorously involves itself in issues that concern its immediate community. It initiates a process where the members of the community come together to design, produce and air programmes. They use the radio to achieve their goals, whether this is for something as common as

clearing the paths to the farms or as complex. In order to pursue a social development agenda, the community uses radio.

### **The Present Broadcast Media in Nigeria**

The Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (n.d.) lists 67 radio stations. This excludes the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN). The FRCN has stations in the 36 states of Nigeria and in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This Commission also lists 47 television stations including the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). There are also 74 satellite, cable and re-transmission stations.

Like the FRCN, NTA has stations in the different states. Some states like, Lagos, have two NTA stations. FRCN and NTA are the largest radio and television networks in Nigeria and indeed Africa. The Federal Government of Nigeria owns both. The FRCN covers the whole nation. This network also has regional and state stations. The different states have radio stations covering their states. Some of their neighboring states can pick their signals. There are also the privately owned stations. Most of them are located in the urban areas. There is not a single community radio in Nigeria. This implies that the needs of the rural communities are largely ignored or neglected. Tuchman (1981) describes this as "the annihilation of the community and of the ordinary people." However, some of these communities can access the radio programmes from these urban stations.

Oso (2002: 155-156) accuses these big urban media of overbearing coverage of the big cities, political news, the government and its officials (as the major newsmakers). He adds that their contents mainly appeal to the urban dwellers, but are irrelevant to those living in the rural areas. Ake (1985:31) observes that Nigeria is constituted in such a way that it reflects a narrow range of interests mainly that of the Nigerian bourgeoisie and metropolitan capital...the apparatus of the state express the power and interests of labour in a limited way; that of the peasant and subsistence farmer, not at all.

### **Models of Community Radios**

There are two basic models of community radios. They are:

- ***The Service Model***

This stresses the offering of services to the immediate and neighbouring communities. The emphasis is on what the station can do for the communities. The station prefers to produce and present high quality contents. Professionals are hired to ensure this.

- ***The Participatory Model***

This lays emphasis on the active involvement and participation of the community in the ownership and management of the station. The community is engaged in the production and presentation of the programmes. The objective is to get the people who would listen to the programmes to produce and host them exactly as they like. They are not necessarily professionals. Programmes are deliberately tailored to suit that area. Listeners have access to many local contents that ordinarily would not have been possible.

### **The Need For Community Radios In Nigeria**

Nigeria is a country of mostly rural dwellers. Some of these rural dwellers do not have access to electricity. Even where such a service exists, the supply is erratic. The Obasanjo regime introduced the Global Satellite Mobile (GSM) mode of telecommunication. Yet a large number of Nigerians cannot use it because of its high cost. There are still thousands of communities where no signals can be picked. There are other places where the topography has constrained the development of telephony. Teledensity is still low.

However, most Nigerians have radio sets and use same to listen to news and other happenings within and outside the country. They also access educational and entertainment programmes. Radio sets are the most portable of all mass media channels, the most widespread, the most economic and most available. Radio can reach even the most remote areas, overcome geographical and language barriers because messages can be transmitted in the local languages of the listeners. Where there is no direct power supply, radios can run on batteries that cost as low as twenty naira. It has more potentials of reaching the widest number of people in the country. In the rural areas, it is the only available mass media. Community radios are low cost mass media channels for their listeners to contribute their ideas to the development efforts of their individual communities first and by extension to the nation. These listeners suggest ways to develop, reconstruct and emphasize priorities.

Effective communication is a two-way process. The use of local communicators from the local communities to produce contents for the local communities would provide rich feedback for communication and development planners. Thus the need for community radios are for them to develop and air programmes that respond to the development needs of their communities and offer community service requirements as established by the communities themselves. The thrust is to develop communication as a two-way process. However, the channel of transmission is owned and controlled by local efforts. The communities define and go for what they want.

Historically, radio has always provided a fast, inexpensive channel to reach the government and for the government to reach the people. Both the poor and rich can hear radio programmes. It has the potential to contribute to development and can be used in the development process. The failure of most governments in tapping the rich resources from the communities' market place of ideas is due to their inability to create a mechanism for the people living there to speak out on issues of concern to them. The government can get its orders, policies and directives understood more quickly and meaningfully by the major segments of the communities or at least their leaders when there is a free flow of information between it and the communities.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society. The establishment of community radios would reflect this pluralism and arrest the present unbalanced media culture where the loud voices of a few privileged individuals tend to drown the aspirations and concerns of other groups in Nigeria. Accepting to decentralize broadcasting by the creation of community radios would mean giving part of this power to the communities, especially those who for decades have been excluded from public administration and participation.



Communication is the bedrock of human existence and an effective tool in influencing human behaviour. Radio reinforces desired behaviour by creating awareness and cultural interaction through the transmission of ideas and knowledge. Community radios can be used to initiate and sustain social change because radio is a tool of education. The need for community radios in Nigeria is to influence national development as the government and the governed engage in a two-way communication. The resulting feedbacks are used to develop programmes that aid in national development. To hasten development, the Federal government should create the enabling environment to establish community radios. It is apparent that no meaningful development may occur in the rural areas without a believable and dependable means from which the ruralites may obtain information and through which they can contribute their ideas to the national development initiatives. The extent to which Nigeria attaches importance to the establishment of community radios may define the speed at which the nation may develop.

### **The Community Radio**

Community radios exist to service the needs of the communities. The community can be a group of people living in an identifiable physical location, for example, the residents of Canaanland, Ota, and Ogun State. It can also be a number of people that have similar characteristics. They do not necessarily live in the same geographical location, for example, the community of Pentecostal Christians. However, recent changes in the media landscape caused by convergence and digitization have re-defined the 'community' thus creating new complexities in the contemporary environment. Thus, an audience may be disparate and globally spread.

### **The Principles of Community Radio**

There are principles that guide the operation of community radios. These are:

- **Access and Participation**

Members of the community have the right and opportunity to take part in the ownership, control and management of the station. The members of the community representing various community interests share in the management of the station.

**Examples:** Radio Lumbini in India is owned by a co-operative group. In Cambodia, the Women's Media Centre owns and operates a 10-kilowatt station in Phnom Penh. The Madanpokhara village owns the Madanpokhara Radio in Tansen-Palpa district of Nepal. Local volunteers who felt that their local people wanted to listen to programmes that would help them to improve and empower them formed the Naledi Community Radio in Matwaberg Free State, South Africa.

They can also produce contents. In other words, the members of the community make or contribute to what is aired.

- **Volunteerism**

The presenters and producers usually offer free services and may not be professionals at the work. Wikipedia reports that a 2002 Report

found that 2000 Australians regularly volunteer \$145 million of unpaid labour at their community radio stations. Similarly, the community radio stations in Philippines are completely run by volunteers.

- **Diversity**

Community radios provide different types of programmes for the community members. These members may be those united by ethnicity, language, religion, educational affiliation or way of life. Thailand has over 3000 community radio stations. India offered 6000 licenses to non-profit bodies to establish community radio stations. The programmes they offer range from local music, news to political education.

- **Independence**

The government does not fund community radios. This does not mean that community radio stations do not interact with it or its numerous agencies. However, these interactions are open and transparent to ensure non-partisanship. The stations operate within legally defined boundaries. Example: India imposed stringent conditions on fund raising. The stations depend on the communities that own them for financial sustenance. The KPFA-FM is the community-supported station broadcasting to Berkeley in the United States of America. Similarly, KNON 89.3 FM is a non-profit, listener-supported radio station in Dallas. It derives income mainly from on-air pledge drives, underwriting or sponsorships by local small businesses.

Some of the stations may also raise money on their own. Sweden did not allow community radio stations to run commercials until 1993. In the United Kingdom, they are not permitted to raise more than 50% of their operating costs from advertisers or sponsors.

Some radio stations are owned by the NGOs and these bodies keep them running. The Lavo Del Minero Radio (Voice of the Miners) is run and financed by the Miners' Trade Union in Bolivia.

Nevertheless, community radios can benefit from grants, donations and from charitable organizations. In Bankilare, Niger Republic, a rural radio station was established with the help of the UNDP.

- **Localism**

Community radios target specific communities united by geography or interest. Geographical communities are defined by their physical locations. Example: the Canaanland Community in Ota, Ogun State. The communities of interest are united by concerns like gender, religion, age and style of life. The station is based in and explicitly committed to its community. It provides what the other commercial and public broadcasters do not. It addresses issues of crucial interest like poverty, social exclusion and community development.



## **The Roles of Community Radios**

The specific roles a community radio is to play in any community are:

- ***Cultural Empowerment***

Community radios strengthen local culture by building on the common cultural background of their host community by portraying the peoples' common background, articulating their local cultural and political agenda. Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2002:57) believe that these three combine to initiate cultural empowerment and cultural citizenship. They add that these create a community public sphere that is in contest with the mainstream public sphere.

- ***Encourage Dialogue***

Community radios encourage dialogue between the members of the local community. Dialogue breeds understanding and builds community identity. Communal identity leads to participation and fellowship among the community residents. Duke (1986:32) says the function of community broadcasting is to enable "...a community and its many sub-committees to talk with itself, to get to know itself and to empower itself". In the words of Fraser (1994:110), participation is enacted through the medium of talk.

- ***Broadcasting Democracy***

Community radio stations ease broadcasting democracy through the provision of channels to individuals or groups who do not have access to the mainstream channels. Through the community radios, these people can disseminate their ideas, operations and messages to a wider and larger audience. Their message themes may include local issues, health, politics and community announcements. The present elitist radio stations leave many questions unanswered. Some have become government megaphones, parroting whatever the government in power want the people to know. The consequence is that there is a credibility gap in broadcasting.

- ***Community Service***

This is the active support for indigenous communities. Hours of contents are produced for the community audience and at times by the community itself. This creates room for what Omotayo (2002:37) calls participatory democracy. Individuals, their communities, Non Governmental Bodies (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) identify what they need and not what they are told that they need and become involved in improving their social, economic, cultural and political conditions. They integrate their community activities to contribute to the national progress. Community radios are the mainstream media for their communities.

## **Communication and Development**

Development is associated with increases in skill, capacity, greater freedom, creativity, and responsibility and material well-being. It connotes increases in the

quantity of goods and quality of services available to man; nature of relationships existing among the different groups in the society; the institutional or legal framework that defines human behaviour or the ability to creatively use what nature offers to sustain and prolong life. Olewé (1995) sees development as growth or planned change. Ogai (2003:15) believes that development involves a widely participatory process of directed social change intended to bring about social and material advancement, greater equality, freedom and other related qualities for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control of their environment. The overall objective is the improvement of man in the society.

Odunlami (2005:85) writes that communication is a crucial index of any development process and implies the act of sharing information; news and views; ideas and feelings; sentiments and anxieties between two or more individuals or groups of people. This may be interpreted to mean that unless there is a sharing of ideas to create a commonality of meaning, development is not in view. Mass communication is the sharing of meaning using the mass media channels.

The essence of communication in development is that those who are vested with political authority must get or give information to those they are governing. The governed must also give or get information from them. Adeseye and Ibagere (1999: 101) say that this two-way flow of information is necessary for formulating policies by those in powers as well as for the people to understand the nature of these policies to accept or reject them. They stress that the administration of any society through politics is a function of communication that facilitates the operation of the political system.

Communication and development cannot be separated. Communication ensures development and development creates further reasons to communicate. Development communication uses communication processes and the media to bring about desired political and socioeconomic improvements. Uwakwe (2003:58) sees it as the integration of the media in the modernization process. For him, it is the deliberate, systematic and planned use of the media to create a better society where the people are integrated, accepted and benefited. The recipients of the media messages are to act on the messages by taking action. Oboh (2008:1) remarks that:

there is a symbiotic link between communication and development. The society creates among other institutions, a national media system, that in turn provides the information network for the growth and sustenance of the society. Fundamentally, the mass media institutions provide information daily to aid the steady development of the citizens as well as other socio-economic and political organizations that operate within the country.

The basic aim of communication is to serve the society by providing its publics with information that help in their political, economic and socio-cultural development. Childs (1965:67) points out that the press is a product and a producer of mass opinion. It is a product of editorial commentators, producers and reporters. It is a producer of public opinion because it has been used and will continue to be used to influence and direct public opinion. Indeed the mass media do process and disseminate pictures and information that their consumers may think about, believe or disbelieve. What they think of influence their attitudes. These in turn shape their behaviour. NTA (1981:253) believes that

communication can be a revolutionary weapon: an instrument of power, a commercial product or a means of education to liberate or oppress the growth of the individual or drill people into uniformity. The mass media can spread messages that make the citizens think of national development. Schramm (1964) confirms that the messages that the mass media spread can widen their horizons; build up empathy; focus attention on problems and the goals of development; and raise their personal and national aspirations.

As McLuhan (1964:5) has pointed out, "all forms of wealth result from the movement of information". The mass media spread information. Habte (1983:100) sees them more as intermediaries between policy decision makers and the public. According to him, they mobilize the masses to accept new ideas and modern techniques without creating cultural and ethnic tensions; psychological frustration or anxieties. Information movement is linked to national development. What is national development? The McBride Report (1980:204) defines it as "all aspects of development linked to improvement of the quality of life; facilitating and increasing participation by the people in the decision making process, and adoption of labour intensive and appropriate technologies, the equitable distribution of national income...." Ogai (2003:24) shares the opinion that national development is the gradual manifestation of positive changes in the economic, social, cultural, industrial, administrative and political life of a country. Development embraces all aspects of social behaviour. The United Nations Copenhagen Summit of 1965 advises that development is the eradication of poverty, creation of productive jobs and enhancement of the social fabric.

Communication can be initiated to facilitate development and wealth creation. De Silva and Siriwardene (1977:14) call this structured communication. They add that it fosters genuine dialogue and the distinction between the source and the receiver ceases to be useful or even possible. Unfortunately, the McBride Report observes that most downward communication are aimed at persuading the audience of the benefits of development and the sacrifice they need to make to get it. By inference, they are expected to be docile. From history, we know that any docile nation is an underdeveloped nation. National development depends on the participation of the citizens. Citizens' participation can be secured through the free flow of shared ideas, facts and data. Ezeokoli (1989:196) shares the view that "real development in Nigeria has usually come from the impulses of the people themselves. This is most evident in the rural areas which have hardly been penetrated by government, but where the will of the people makes the difference between stagnation and progress".

Communication facilitates development. Lerner (1958:56) is convinced that the communication system is both an index as well as an agent of change in the social system. Rao (1966) is convinced that mass communication is important to smoothen the process of development.

### **National Development and the Community Radio**

Can the establishment of community radios influence our national development? Can the strengths of radio be channelled to make members of the communities take responsibility for the socioeconomic, political and cultural developments of our country? Can the community radios create better societies where the members benefit, feel integrated and accepted?



### ***How Community Radios can influence Nigeria's Development***

Communication eases development by giving a voice to the people; by fostering support for new policies or reforms; protecting the interests and rights of the citizens; and mobilizing the peoples' participation in issues that affect the growth and development of the nation. The people need information and knowledge to successfully respond to the new opportunities or challenges in their environment. The community radios are to be part of the social engineering tools to communicate these effectively. They are to point out issues that are of importance to their listeners and tell how they can benefit from them through participation. Development programmes are more successful when they are participatory in design and implementation. Broadcasting is a public sphere enterprise because the airwaves belong to the people and must be used to benefit the people. The relationship between broadcasting and national development hinges on broadcast' ability to link the various actors and factors together. It also makes representations on air on behalf of specific communities. This confirms Vuuren's (2001: 77-90) (2002: 94-108) assertion that the value of community broadcasting is located less in their broadcast function but more in their community development function.

The success of community radios in enhancing national development is attached to what Moemeka (1990: 56) describes as their ability and willingness to create for the rural population access to the media and to induce the peoples' participation in the communication process and involvement in the development efforts. Development is participatory. The communities' ability to access the media is by extension their ability to take part in public affairs. Communication is a major tool in influencing the behaviour of others. Communication for development cuts across the different sectors in the country and is more successful when the government and the media work in unity to achieve established beneficial goals.

Community radios are important tools for national development because they will know, serve and give expressions to the aspirations of the particular needs of specific areas. Small-scale community based projects often achieve what the elephantine-sized government initiated ones fail to achieve because the people actively participate. Marshall (1982) found out that decentralization is more easily achieved by using local institutions that are not created by the government. The people have come to realize that development does not come through blueprints but through learning from examples (Korten, 1980; Morris 1981) and their own effectiveness in achieving development goals (Esman and Uphoff, 1984).

The indicators of national development are political stability, education, sociocultural changes, economic growth and administrative mechanisms. These indicators find expression in the traditional functions of radio: educating, informing, entertaining and being the society's watchdog. Community radios can make significant impact to national development by:

- ***Creating Political Stability***

The community radios will strengthen grass root democracy by allowing long neglected people to have a say in the decisions that shape their lives and affect their collective destiny. The dividends of democracy will be more evident in their lives. Olutokun (2000:32)

points out that the current wave of democratization re-affirms the importance of the media as a highway for the civil society to delegitimise autocracies, foster transition projects, consolidate and sustain democracies. If stability is to be guaranteed at the national level, the foundation of a rational government must be firmed up first at the local levels. Habte (1983:100) shares the opinion that the critical task of the mass media is to establish a sound and stable political framework in an agreeable social environment. This environment in turn will promote the expansion of the other sectors in national development.

Aiyar (1979: 4) adds that the government follows the direction of public opinion. He advises the media to be the voice of the masses: functioning to remind the authorities of their duties to the society. Momoh (2000:65) is convinced that the press is the direct medium for identifying, determining and sustaining a national interest and keeping it alive. Nigerians can maintain political stability by sustaining democratic processes.

The impact of propaganda would be less as the citizens would not be mis-guided or mis-informed. Since members of the community participate in the operations of their community radio stations, they can counteract the moves of the propagandists with the truth. The stations will become the vanguards of the people; the custodian of the people as messages designed to manipulate their minds from anonymous sources are ignored.

Community radios will probe into the more sensitive areas of public issues to make governance more transparent and credible. Local authorities and officials can be regularly interviewed on their activities. Therefore, they have the capability of making the government more responsible and transparent. Pool (1963:253) adds another role for the mass media channels to assume. He writes that they can contribute to the unity of the newly developing nations by focusing attention on salient problems and facilitating discussion and debates at the national level on such.

- **Education**

Community radios systematically instruct their audience on new knowledge and skills to build up their capacities. As Oso (2002:9) notes, the mass media are the great teachers and mobilizers for change. Education helps to develop the mental and physical capabilities of the recipients. An underdeveloped work force is a drain on the society and can only make minimal contribution to national development. Until man is functionally educated, the society suffers

Specifically, community radios offer their volunteers on-the-job training on how to be better broadcasters, programme producers and studio operators. The stations also provide on going training for members of other communities who wish to establish their own stations. The Bush Radio in South Africa established itself as the key trainer of

broadcasters in that region. It also trains other trainers in the hope that these new-trained workers from these other radio stations would in turn train others. In this way, a pool of skilled personnel is grown. The trained can engage in gainful employment to earn some income to look after themselves and their families. This reduces the pressure on the government for employment. A trained workforce is an asset to the nation.

When community radios are effectively combined with modern information and communication technologies (ICTs), they can be used to bridge the digital divide between the urban and the rural areas through teaching technological knowledge for further development, encouraging e-learning and developing telecentres. Community radio stations can be used to train the locals about modern technology, including the use of the Internet. These actions will offer the societies innovative tools to fight illiteracy.

The Universities of the Air can also use radio in formal educational training. Course modules are prepared and taught on air. The Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu and the Enugu State University Business School University of the air use radio stations to teach their citizens.

- ***Sociocultural Changes***

The emergence of any new media of communication in a given community naturally triggers off changes in that particular community. Community radios will trigger off social changes by promoting a higher level of sensitivity and social mobilization through the spoken word. The traditional man is averse to innovations. The ability of the community radios to cover and discuss public issues creates a social awareness among their audience and offers a platform to discuss local ideas and culture. Community radios persuade against discrimination, injustice, superstition but campaign for improved farming methods, friendly use of the environment and elimination of social ills and illusions.

This means that counter-productive customs and social patterns that are inconsistent with modern progress are campaigned against. Those that will enhance development are crusaded for. This means that community radios will run campaigns for desirable changes. Some programmes may specifically be aimed at women empowerment. Similarly too community radios will have impact on the culturally dispossessed and the marginalized. Part of the expected benefits that would arise from these sociocultural changes will build up the community's socialization process, solidarity, social inclusion and the people's right to be heard and not just informed.

Modernization is social transformation. Effective development changes unproductive cultural ideas. The change must start with the individual. Sociocultural changes will lead to the fulfilment of individual mental, emotional and physical well being. Adebayo (1990) notes that any self-

reliant process of development inevitably results in the transformation of the people. He adds that the people brings this about by changing their culture, attitudes to work, habits, social systems, concepts of skills, savings and investment. Milton and Norman (1984) points out those local organizations are effective in achieving development goals. The ethnic groups and different communities in Nigeria will have their own radio stations to reflect their communal beliefs, opinions and aspirations. In other words, the community radios will reflect the rich cultures of Nigeria

UNESCO has been in partnership with some local communities and NGOs to establish some community radios with the aim of addressing crucial social issues like poverty and social segregation at the community level; to empower marginalized rural groups, catalyze the democratic process and development initiatives. It helped in the establishment of Tambuli Community Radio in the Philippines.

- ***Economic Growth***

Economic growth is the profitable system of creating wealth through the production, distribution and exchange of goods and services. National development advances national prosperity. Community radios promote economic growth in two ways. First, they point out investment opportunities. Second, they make their listeners to see the need to collaborate to improve their means of production for their own well-being. The result of working together is that internal consensus is generated to get the work done more cheaply.

Community radios provide the avenue for communication among the development actors by providing what Nwosu (1990: 18) refers to as a communication environment for all stakeholders in national development. They enhance communication processes that facilitate dialogue for peace and conflict resolution and enable subsequent economic progress. Forde et al (2002: 56-57) share the opinion that community radios provide the bridge to enable dialogue among the different sections of the community by building on their local backgrounds, articulating their cultural and political agenda. Bushworks is a community radio in South Africa that empowers its listeners to talk with each other and take decisions that affect each other's lives. This station believes that by so doing, they "affirm their own dignity and identity and promote social responsibility and critical thinking."

Critical thinking breaks the vicious cycle of poverty perpetuated by low levels of productivity, underdevelopment and poor use of national resources. Conversely, it builds up the virtuous cycle of prosperity of high levels of productivity, developed human capital and full utilization of national resources. The drive for free market liberalism as advanced by the foreign Western countries and donors have led to many countries including Nigeria 'leapfrogging' from rurality to modernism without going through the necessary developmental stages. This means that community radios can be used to stimulate economic



growth and expansion by spreading innovative information and ideas for existing and new businesses.

- **Administrative**

This refers to the managerial frameworks that define how men can behave and relate with others in the society as they seek to gain individual or collective access to the things that hold value to them. The administrative framework refers to the legal and social institutions that define the relationship between two or more individuals; the individual and the state; and their rights and obligations to each other. They include the systems of justice, religion, education, family and government. Other sectors like health, agriculture, housing and good leadership sustain the physical existence and mental balance of the people.

The legal system administers justice. Lawbreakers are punished. The Police are equipped to apprehend lawbreakers, protect the lives of the citizens, and maintain law and order. Religion allows people the freedom to follow their articles of faith, but this does not mean that they can violate those who do proselyte with them. Academic institutions and skills acquisition centers provide formal and informal training in knowledge and skill acquisition. The family provides emotional and physical support for the members and ensures that new individuals are socialized into the mores of the society. The government provides a form of administration that ensures the harmonious operations and peaceful co-existence of all these other structures. It also provides the necessities such as healthcare, education and other infrastructures that make for decent living.

The rights of the citizens include their ability to access information and the right to air contrary opinions with responsibility. They also have the freedom to peacefully assemble.

We can therefore say that community radios can and do influence national development positively. They bring the people of the communities' together to make the decision to participate effectively in desirable changes by improving the flow of communication

### **What the Nigerian Government Should do now**

The beneficial effects of establishing community radios on our national development would never materialize if the government does not do anything. Therefore, it is recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria take the following actions:

- **Make A New National Communication Policy**

The government should draw up a new national policy that should include the role of the community radios in our national development. The Nigerian Broadcasting Commission decision of 2005 to launch community broadcasting "as part of a desire to promote democracy, empower the



citizenry while encouraging developmental broadcasting" should be revived. The Commission should not be satisfied with the appointment of a Ministerial Committee, but must insist on the enactment of a national policy for the establishment of the community radios.

The community radios are to be assigned the specific responsibility of getting the rural populations to participate in national issues, especially those involving them. These special radio stations are to facilitate communication between the government and the citizens in the search for equitable and sustainable development. Their programmes are to be designed to involve participation from their listeners. Programmes should cover core areas like agriculture, the environment, population, gender relations, health, governance, economic investment and health.

- ***Pass New Laws***

The government must pass the enabling legislation to establish community radio broadcasting. Community radios must be recognized as distinct and different from the state owned public broadcasters and the commercial private media. The government must pass new laws allowing the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to license community radios. At present NBC licenses only federal, state and privately owned radio and television stations. The owners of these proposed community radios may be Community-Based-Organizations, Non Government Organizations, educational institutions and any other not-for-profit body as may be determined by the government. This will stop the community radio stations from being victims of local monopolies, financial and ideological struggles. Their programmes are to be created by the local people.

Community radios must promote and protect the communities' communication rights as crucial in the free flow of information and ideas to keep our democracy functional. Community radios are to be seen as initiators of social changes by facilitating the participation of the people in the democratic processes.

- ***Financial Responsibilities***

The community radios must be financially independent of the federal and state governments. However, any level of government that wants to use its services must pay for such. This will allow these stations to earn some income to keep its operations going. Community based corporate bodies may also sponsor some of the programmes. Every transaction must be very transparent. The owners of the community radio stations must assume the financial responsibility to keep their stations running.

- ***Station Management***

The management of the individual station should be community based. The different interest groups in the community are to be identified. Each group must send a representative to be one of the directors of the Board of the station. The work of the Board is to plan, implement, and co-ordinate and evaluates the work of the station. It must also establish the broad objectives

for communication and action to take on opportunities emanating from the communication process.

### **Conclusion**

Community radios can be used to accelerate national development. Because they disseminate information, they create the enablement for individual citizens and communities to understand what are expected from them and for them to know their rights and assume their responsibilities. Many of the national problems we have are assumed to be caused by poor or inadequate communication. The messages from the community radios can be used to teach their listeners how to control high birth rates, have longer life expectancies, develop better communication skills, eat well and reduce unemployment. Above all, they tell Nigerians how to be better citizens who are willing and eager to move their countries forward economically, socially, culturally and politically. All these are possible because the messages from the community radios will influence the attitude of the community members who in turn will change to develop Nigeria.

The Nigerian government should provide an enabling environment for the creation of community radios now by developing a Community Radio Policy Guideline. The policy should make it possible for any registered Non Government Organization, Community-Based Organization or school to establish community radios and use same for mobilizing support for community projects, air their views on issues important to them, protest against those that they do not agree with as well as offer alternatives. The basic role of the community radios is to channel ideas, information and feedback to individuals, communities and government and vice versa. Until these three parties agree that communication is the mutual sharing of information, ideas and messages of value, there would be poor understanding of what it would take to develop the nation. Since community radios encourage participation, literally every person with access to a radio set and functional ears could contribute ideas that may lead to national development: that is transforming the socio-political, cultural and economic life of the country.

The nation stands to gain a lot by establishing community radios. These channels would bridge the gap between the governed and the governors through the provision of effective feedbacks. At the individual level, there would be increase in knowledge, skills, capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-reliance and material well-being. At the societal level, increases in capacity would reduce unemployment, regulate relationships among citizens as well as determine relationships with other nations. Thus, the community radios would supply the missing links in national development. Nigeria would thus witness rapid national advancement.

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At a time when issues of globalisation and the mediating impact of the media as both catalyst and facilitator of an information-driven and knowledge-based post industrial society are fast assuming political and social relevance, it is imperative to adequately x-ray the inter-relationship between the media on the one hand, and governance and development on the other. This collection of essays offers different perspectives on the role of the mass media in these two important areas governance and development. This should not surprise the reader, considering the current social conditions and preoccupation of Nigerians after years of military rule. Drawing insights from the various theoretical and methodological traditions in mass communication scholarship, the essays offer fresh perspectives on developments in the Nigerian media industry. Most of the essays recognise the symbiotic relationship between the media and the Nigerian state and society. The book as a whole offers a comprehensive and accessible collection to students and researchers of media and communication studies.

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