



Community Broadcasting and Rural Health Care Delivery in Nigeria: Finding the Nexus

Uwem Asuquo Akpan^{1*}, Ifeanyi Martins Nwokeocha², Uduot Iwok³, Daniel Calixtus Akarika⁴

¹Heritage Polytechnic, Eket

²Federal University Otuoke Bayelsa State

³University of Uyo

⁴Akwa Ibom State University

Corresponding Author: Uwem Asuquo Akpan; uwemakpan72@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Community, Broadcasting, Rural, Health Care Delivery and Nigeria

Received : 5 Februari

Revised : 23 Maret

Accepted: 23 April

©2025 Akpan,Nwokeocha, Iwok, Akarika: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This study explores the interconnectedness between community broadcasting and rural healthcare delivery in Nigeria. Despite advancements in healthcare infrastructure and technology, rural communities in Nigeria continue to face significant challenges in accessing adequate healthcare services. Community broadcasting, particularly through radio stations, has emerged as a promising medium for addressing these challenges by disseminating health information, promoting health education, and fostering community engagement. Drawing on existing literature and empirical data, this study examines the role of community broadcasting in enhancing rural healthcare delivery in Nigeria. It explores how community radio stations serve as a vital platform for disseminating essential health information, raising awareness about prevalent health issues, and promoting preventive measures among rural populations. It highlights the importance of culturally sensitive and locally relevant health communication strategies, effective partnerships between community broadcasters and healthcare stakeholders, and the use of innovative technologies to reach remote and underserved populations. By elucidating the nexus between community broadcasting and rural healthcare delivery in Nigeria, this study provides valuable insights for policymakers, healthcare providers, community broadcasters, and other stakeholders interested in enhancing healthcare access and outcomes in rural areas. It underscores the need for collaborative efforts to harness the potential of community broadcasting as a catalyst for improving health equity and wellbeing in Nigeria's rural communities

INTRODUCTION

Health is an important human resource. It is a recurring issue for individuals, communities, nations and international organizations. The World Health Organization (WHO) sees health as, "a complete state consisting of not only the absence of illness but the presence of something positive". (Keyes, 2005). The centrality of health to development and emancipation of living beings is unquestionable. Hence, the popular cliché "health is wealth". There is no doubt that countries of the world take health issues as one of the fundamental concerns of government. This is why health occupies a prominent place in the United Nations declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Health issues are complex, multifaceted and interdisciplinary. Based on this, it is necessary to carefully look at the aspect of communication that pertains to health matters – health communication, the media and strategies to use to influence individuals and community to enhance health. However, the health needs of the rural people requires proper attention for effective result. It should be noted that the urban areas are aware of certain health practices. And, much attention is paid to the urban population already resulting in an unequal delivery of health care programmes to the rural population. At various times, government policies and programmes to deal with the health needs of the people have always been either concentrated on or its implementation is channeled on urban cities and no noticeable impact on the rural areas.

Communication is central to the heart of any endeavour and in all spheres of human endeavours. Without communication one believes that it will be difficult to achieve any tangible result in an effort to achieve set goals and aspirations. Communication maintains and animates life. Effective communication today can be achieved through the mass media. The mass media plays an important role in informing, educating and enlightening audience members. The mass media therefore remains the key component of the global strategy for sustainable health development through adequate information and education on issues as drugs/herbs, vaccines, etc. (Nwosuet. al (2008, p.175).

Community broadcasting is no doubt a major contributor for effective rural health development. However, paper does not intend to carry out a statistical evaluation of the impact of public health policies on the rural population, rather (based on available facts) closer attention will be paid to the use of community broadcast media, which is closer to the rural people, in attending to their health needs. And, at the end should make some advocacy and recommendations for further research.

Statement of the Problem:

In Nigeria, rural communities often face significant challenges in accessing adequate healthcare services, resulting in disparities in health outcomes compared to urban areas. Community broadcasting, encompassing radio and other media platforms, has emerged as a potential tool for disseminating health information and promoting health-seeking behaviors among rural populations. However, the effectiveness and impact of community broadcasting on rural health care delivery remain inadequately understood. This research aims to explore the intersection between community broadcasting and rural health care delivery in Nigeria, with a focus on understanding the certain key issues such as:

Access to Health Information, Behavioral Change and Health Outcomes, Role of Community Broadcasting in Health Promotion, Challenges and Opportunities. By addressing these research questions, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the potential synergies between community broadcasting and rural health care delivery in Nigeria. Findings from this research can inform policy interventions, program development, and strategic partnerships aimed at leveraging community broadcasting as a means to enhance access to quality healthcare services and improve health outcomes in rural areas.

Objectives of the Study:

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To Assess the Reach and Impact of Community Broadcasting on Rural Health Information Dissemination;
- To Investigate the Relationship Between Exposure to Community Broadcasting Health Messages and Health-Seeking Behaviors;
- To Explore the Roles and Contributions of Community Broadcasting in Rural Health Promotion;
- To Identify Challenges and Opportunities for Enhancing the Nexus Between Community Broadcasting and Rural Health Care Delivery;
- To Provide Recommendations for Policy and Practice;

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community Broadcasting: What it is

It is imperative to understand that community as a concept, like others, has no single definition. Importantly, however, is the fact that community connotes a territory. This could be geographical, political, economic or professional. It consists of people who share common interests, values characteristics and goals. Since we have both urban and rural communities, emphasis here is more on the rural communities who are worst affected by information drought and poverty. The rural communities in Nigeria and other Third world countries, according to Chile (2005, p. 2) possess the following features:

- Poor and un-motorable roads
- Inadequate or non-existent of portable water supply.
- Poorly equipped and poorly staffed schools.
- Low commercial activities.
- Subsistent peasant agriculture.
- Absence of telecommunication facilities.
- Out-of-stock syndrome in the existing health facilities.
- Prevalence of poor channels of communication (newspaper magazines, radio and television).

The broadcast media operating for community interest whether urban or rural do so not for profit motives but to provide social services to community people. In this regard, the African Charter on Broadcasting defines community radio as: "The broadcasting which is for, by and about the community; whose

ownership and management is representative of the people and which is non-profit”.

Also, adding to the view of the African Charter on Broadcasting, Opubor(2006) declares:

Community radio is when it encourages citizens to participate and defend their interests, when it reflects the majority's tastes and makes good humor and hope its main purpose, when it genuinely informs, when it helps solve the thousand problems of everyday life, when all ideas are debated in its programs and opinions are respected, when cultural diversity is encouraged over commercial homogeneity, when women are major players in communication and not just a petty voice or publicity gimmick, when no dictatorship of any kind – not even the musical dictatorship of the major recording studios – is accepted, and when everyone's words flow without discrimination or censorship.

Community broadcast media refers to the broadcast media which are independent and civil-society-based and that operates for the social objectives rather than for private financial profit (Buckley et al, 2008). This kind of broadcasting is designed to fulfill social and cultural needs by allowing members of the audience to participate in decisions about programming and, in the case of radio, in the ownership of stations. It serves local communities, reflecting the diversity of their views and needs, and provides access to volunteer participants. Community broadcasting, the Canadian Encyclopedia further notes, is public broadcasting, but it is not operated by a government or government agency. A community broadcast station may be run by organizations based in community, local non – governmental organizations, workers organizations, educational institutions, religious or cultural organizations or associations comprised one or more for their forms of civil society organization. Community broadcast stations do not exist to compete with commercial stations but rather they do to complement them.

Community broadcasting or journalism came on board particularly in Nigeria and other Third World countries as a means of fighting poverty and enhancing sustainable national development. The discovery that communication if well applied could be a fundamental instrument for the development of developing countries led to the introduction of community broadcasting in Third World countries by the United Nations. The belief was that no nation can develop where its people at the grassroots are neglected. African leaders before the 1940s had a myopic and misleading perception about what development really was. Their development policies turned out to be urban centered. To them, providing potable water and other social amenities for the urban dwellers was development.

The rural areas that produced food for the survival of the urbanites and the entire nation attracted little or no attention. They remained out of the development plans of most African leaders. A research sponsored by the United Nations aimed at finding out the problems behind the under development of Africa identified lack of communication. This was the genesis for communication for national development. The belief was that through communication the ruralites could be mobilized in support of government development programmes. The ruralites could, by this, be mobilized for development. It was

much latter that, African leaders themselves realized that for poverty to be eliminated in their land, community people must be adequately informed. Community broadcasting therefore, became a strategy of fighting poverty and ensuring that community people were mobilized for development cause. They recognized in their poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSTs) that “tacking poverty requires a comprehensive approach because poverty is more than just a lack of income but that poor people also suffer from a lack of opportunity, security and voice in decisions that affect their lives”.

Community broadcasting is, therefore, to provide a voice for the ruralites who are voiceless to enable them participate in affairs concerning their state. This is also to ensure faster development of rural areas. Opubor (2006), therefore, concludes thus: “The purpose of community radio is to build community life. Building a community is more than building an individual or a few families. It is building on what holds people together; across different families, religions, sexes, economic situation situations, and political persuasions”. Section 9, subsection 9.1 of the NBC Code spells out how a community broadcast service shall be funded from three principal sources. These are:

- Resources of the community raised through levies, contribution and membership fees.
- Donations, gifts or grants.
- Local spot announcements

In terms of its operation, members of the community are to decide how it can operate. It is a bad practice for a community broadcaster to abdicate its editorial and scheduling responsibilities to any other party.

Why Community Broadcasting in Nigeria?

Nigeria’s current structure of government demands rural broadcasting. To score the point home, there are three tiers of government. These are federal, state and local governments. The federal and state governments have public and commercial (private) stations. Nigerians at these levels do not lack information; they are well informed. This is due to the fact that broadcast stations are concentrated in the urban areas focusing basically on the interests of the elites. The third tier of government which is aimed at bringing government nearer to the ruralites for a holistic development are neglected. People here are neglected in the current structure of broadcast ownership, operations, and distribution. Broadcasting in Nigeria currently is undemocratic; it is not yet decentralized since people at the local level are marginalized. There are many rural areas in Nigeria that are hardly covered by broadcast signals emanating from either public or commercial stations in the country. The local audience, on this note, are passive as they can only hear about what is happening in their environment through friends or relations who stay in urban cities, who are exposed to many media. These people are incapacitated in taking informed decision.

The size of Nigeria is another motive that calls for the establishment of community broadcasting. Opubor (2006) acknowledging this factor notes that the available media channels in the country do not provide effective coverage of the entire landmass. The situation has completely marginalized some communities especially those that are far from their state capitals or who are the border areas

where signals from their state broadcast stations cannot reach them. People living in such areas rely heavily on foreign broadcast stations particularly VOA, BBC, RFI and others. Some rely on Radio Nigeria Kaduna.

Incidentally, these stations do not produce programmes having community dwellers at their heart. The ruralites, on this note, are alienated from their immediate environment. Establishing community broadcasting can not only act as the voice of the rural areas but it can also act as a bridge between them and the other parts of the world. Nigeria is a multi-linguistic country with a population of over 150 million. English language by the broadcast media is not condemned particularly for national programmes, its usage for rural programmes is not acceptable. This is because the language is associated with literacy; only literate people speak and understand it. Incidentally majority of the ruralites are completely excluded from such broadcast programmes produced in this lingua-franca. The adoption of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba is inadequate. In the Northern Nigeria where it is claimed Hausa dominates, it is not everybody that speaks it. Many languages like TIV, Nupe, Jukun, Eggon, Birom, Tanhare, Anhas, Idoma, Alago, Etilo, Mada, Maigili and many others exist. The same situation is applicable to the Southern and Western Nigeria where Igbo and Yoruba are said to be the dominants respectively. Naturally, these tribes will feel more recognized and belonged if programmes are produced particularly for them and in their dialects which is what only community radio can do.

Community broadcasting, particularly radio, Alumuku (2007), on the basis of an extensive survey in selected African countries, declares: "is an instrument in the hand of communities seeking their own solution to problems which for centuries have held them captive and rendered them incapacitated? It is an instrument which renews hope for the democratization process bellowing across Africa".

Functions of Community Broadcasting

Here, Alumuku cited in Gbaden (2013, p.59) appreciates the role which communication plays in solving community problems such as poverty and social exclusion, empowerment of the marginalized rural groups and catalyzing development efforts of the underprivileged; problems which he consider as those of society, goes ahead to categories the functions of community radio in individual African countries as:

- Serving community needs.
- Powerful tool for democratization
- Promoting conflict resolution.
- Promoting democracy.
- Enhancing girl child education
- Promoting crime and corruption
- Combating crime and corruption.
- Promoting human rights and good governance.

Conclusively, from all indication, there is need for community broadcasting particularly radio in Nigeria and other African countries. This is not far from the quest for sustainable national development. A nation cannot attain development where its communities that cultivate land and provide food for

mass consumption are neglected or marginalized. It is not only undemocratic but is inhuman and clearly depicts the unwillingness of such a country to welcome democracy. Apparently in support of community broadcasting in Nigeria, Schramm (1979) in Yarhere (2003, p.128) states:

...As much as possible, the local area will serve as the focal point of the development strategy; local activity and decision-making will play a major role in development planning; Vertical communication will be neglected in favor of two-way, not one-way, communication.

Hindrances to Community Broadcasting in Nigeria

Why is it difficult for Nigeria, like other countries to develop community broadcasting? In response to this development, Pate (2006) identifies a number of factors. These are:

1. The absence of appropriate policy, legal regulatory and administrative framework crucial to drive the process. The unfriendly existing legal environment does not encourage the emergence of community broadcasting in country.
2. There is suspicion and fear surrounding the practicability of community broadcasting in Nigeria. In a fragile but complex environment where there are many differences religiously, politically, linguistically, and so on, it is feared that the system cannot be workable as it may end up fuelling conflicts along these differences.
3. Delay on the part of government has been identified as another militating force against the coming on board of community broadcasting in Nigeria. Inability to approve several policies such as the National Mass Communication policy and that of Community Radio which have since been drafted and presented to government years ago is a big challenge to community broadcasting in Nigeria.
4. The forces of commercialism have been identified as another stumbling block to the emergence of community broadcasting in the country. It is alleged that commercial forces are apprehensive of the competition they will face of commercial stations come on board. As a result of this, it alleged, they intensify their lobby at appropriate quarters in government against community broadcasting.
5. Other problems are high cost involved in setting up community broadcasting.
 - Lack of appropriate technology
 - Lack of human resources
 - Lack of electricity supply in the country and
 - Lack of sustainability of the system generally.

Conclusively, community broadcasting is very important as part of the democratization process. This is very important if the country is serious about its quest for development. This implies that the task of ensuring the community broadcasting is realized is a collective one. The challenges identified here are not beyond solution particularly with seriousness on the part of government.

Community Defined

It is imperative to understand that community as a definition. However, the fact is that community connotes a territory. This could be geographical political economic, etc. it consist of people who share common interest, values characteristics and goals (Gbaden, 2013, p. 54). However, according to Race in Omeje (2004) a community could be defined as: "A functionally related aggregate of people who live at a particular time, share a common culture, and arrange in a social structure, and exhibit awareness of their uniqueness as a separate entity or a group". And since we have both urban and rural communities emphasis here is made on the rural communities who are mostly or even the worst affected by lack of information, poverty, diseases and even lack of the needed health care facilities, etc.

Rural Community: An Overview

Rural has to do with life in remote geographical area. It is often characterized by less population densities, because normally, relatively small number of people are scattered over very large areas. (Ike in Nwosu, Soolaand Nwodu, 2008, p.84).

The rural people lack the economic and political power to endure that the needed services are provided, have poor standard of living. Rural areas are associated of with poor health dirty environment, indecent housing, poor water supply and strong traditional. It is generally accepted that a community with a population less than 20,000 inhabitants is a rural community.

According to Ubaniet al (2013) defines rural as an area where the population is low due to rural urban drift which is the direct consequence of the absence of essential physical infrastructures which in turn influence the standard of living of those in the area. However Abah in Ubaniet al (2013) opines that rural are areas of depression, degradation and de privation where children with distended tummies and spindly legs are a common sight and both these children, their siblings and their parent are often oblivious of a better milieu.

Features of Rural Communities

- Rural areas do not have large scale industries that can offer employment opportunities to both skilled and members of the society;
- There is no good pipe borne water in the rural areas; as the area is synonymous with stream water where it exist;
- They lack good means of communication such as telephone and postal services;
- There is the problem of inadequate means of transportation;
- Rural areas are characterized by lack of social amenities;
- Most rural areas do not have standard schools for learning;
- Rural areas are noted for homogeneity in their population.

(Obi (1997) in Ubaniet al (2013, pp.16-18)

Health Care Delivery: An Overview

Giving people the chance to benefit from programs and practices that will improve their health is the focus of health care delivery. It involves more than just giving sick people medicine; it also involves teaching them preventive measures that will keep them healthy. Immunization, vaccination, health

education, diagnosis, testing, prescriptions, and treatment are all included in health care.

In this context, "health care delivery" refers to public health care. In essence, the government creates health policies (plans and programs) that allow people to receive healthcare services for little or no cost. It can take many different forms, but this paper focuses on health education.

Health is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the observance of a disease of infirmity," according to the World Health Organization (1993: p. 5). In order to provide health care delivery in both structural and physical dimensions, some service, effort, or method must be used. Therefore, the act of assembling and preparing the message and the process of channelizing it—that is, delivering it to the resort's healthcare users through easily accessible mass media channels—are both embodied in the mass interaction in health care delivery. Messages from a wide range of health conditions are more common under health care delivery. According to one of World Health Organization's publication (WHO Undated), health issues to which Nigeria involved include: Leprosy, Tuberculosis, Breastfeeding Poliomyelitis, Diabetes, HIV/AIDS, Heart attack and Mental Health. Others also includes anthrax, meningitis malnutrition, cancer, birds or avian flu, and sickle cell anaemia.

Health and Health Related Problems of the Rural People

The multifarious nature of the health links it to almost every aspect of life. There are innumerable problems within health care delivery system, which affect the whole population. However a look at the health problem of the rural population tends to make it more vulnerable. It shows some to be socially related as well as environmentally related. This certainly shows that finding solution to the health and health-related problems of the rural people will involve economic, environmental and social efforts. Here, are some of the general and specific health problems of the rural people:

- *High Mortality and low Average Life Expectancy, due to lack of Health Services:*

Even where public health services are available, it is underused. Naseem et al (1996, p.1) believe that issues like difficulties associated with transportation and communication, high rate of illiteracy, traditional conservatism, resistance to ideas from outside, deep rooted traditions and customs, including the resistance that health workers should not administer Polio Vaccine on their children and wards, saying that the vaccine was capable of transferring HIV to them.

- *Uneven Distribution of Health Services, and Shortage of Physicians, Nurses and Trained health Personnels in Rural Area:*

Dirth of qualified and competent health personnels in the rural areas is traceable to the rural urban migration asmost trained and qualified health personnel would rather go to the urban areas and practice than stay in the rural areas.

- *Endemic Disease Prevalent in various Place:*

Most rural areas have peculiar health problems associated with the climate condition as well as non-availability of some social infrastructure in such places. For instance, the long dry season experienced in most parts of Northern Nigeria makes the people living there susceptible to a diseases like Celebro-Spinal Meningitis. Also, in areas where there is poor supply of healthy or safe water, the people might suffer from Cuinea worm, as is the case at Abakaliki area of South East Nigeria.

- *Poverty Associated with Poor Housing, Unsatisfactory Environmental Sanitation, Polluted Water and Food:*

These predispose the rural people to malnutrition. As well as infectious diseases like malaria, cholera, tuberculosis and the likes.

- *Long Standing Political Squabbles Rooted in Corruption, Greed and Self-centredness in all Level of Government, but especially in Local Council Areas, further Aggravate the existing Difficulties Encountered:*

Typical example here is in some local government councils in Nigeria, where political leaders live in the cities and only visit the council and they govern when there is federal allocation. Sad but true evidences have shown that these political leaders share what belongs to the people among themselves and with the administrators. How on earth would such people think of meeting the developmental needs of their people? Zimbabwe experience and other African countries are examples. Where we have sit tight Presidents of many years, the people are going through hardship.

- *Poor Environmental Sanitation and Personal Hygiene also Largely Contribute to Public Health Challenges of the Rural People:*

The remote lifestyles of the people unfortunately affect their mindset so that they even see living in decent environment as reserved for the rich and the enlightened. This reduces their interest in keeping to basic sanitary habit and maintaining personal hygiene. The rural people urinate and defecate indiscriminately; some rarely sweep their homes surroundings. Most of them do not have controlled waste and refuse disposal methods. All these result in contacting and spread of diseases like measles, cholera and diarrhea.

- *Malnutrition:*

Though malnutrition has earlier been seen as an off shoot of poverty, it is important to mention that it is a major health problem to vulnerable groups like children, pregnant women, lactating mothers and the aged. Basically it reduces their resistance to disease, thereby exposing them to the various diseases.

Community Broadcast Media and Rural Health Care Delivery in Nigeria: Finding the Nexus

It is a fact that the health needs of the rural population requires proper attention for effective result and researches done in this area have shown that there is unequal delivery of health care programmes to the rural people, this is because health practices are mostly concentrated in the urban areas.

Additionally, Nigeria must examine its health care system in order to create a robust national health care system that can provide all Nigerians with efficient, high-quality, and reasonably priced healthcare. The United Nations'

Sustainable Development Goals include health in a good location. The core of SDG-3, which is connected to all other objectives, is universal health care (WHO, 2017).

It is an obvious fact that communication is the web of human society; communication helps to protect our social environments and constitutes a very critical aspect of our everyday social life. (Egbon, 2006, p.156). However, communication through the broadcast media channels is so vital to our day – to – day activities, hence, health care delivery as a human activity should be reported as such.

Findings from researches shows that the broadcast media especially radio, because of its unique effectiveness remains the most relevant in development communication. This is why government agencies mostly apply them. Even though community broadcast media is still underutilized.

It is against this background that this study here looks at the various ways stakeholders can apply community broadcast media in health care delivery to the benefit of the rural people in Nigeria via the following:

- Health Education and Awareness
- Dissemination Health Information
- Media Advocacy and Behavior Change Communication
- Advertising, Marketing and Publicity
- Health Advocacy, Sensitization and Mobilization
- Emergency Response and Disaster Preparedness
- Feedback Mechanism, etc.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

1. *Seidu Al - Hasssan, AlhassanAndari and Abdulai Abdul-malik (2011) The role of community Radio in Livelihood improvement: The case of Simli Radio. Field Actions Science Reports. Journals. Openedition. Og/Facts Vol.5*

The study concentrated on how Simli Radio helped the residents of Ghana's Northern Region's TolonKumbungu and SaveluguNaton Districts improve their standard of living. 12 communities were chosen for the study using a multi-stage sampling technique. Information was obtained about the promotion of traditional culture, communication, income promotion, and the use of broadcasting as an educational instrument. The study established that Simli Radio has work to improve awareness and knowledge of solutions to community development problems ranging from culture, rural development, education, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture to local governance.

The station has been an appropriate medium that has facilitated an interface between dirty bearers and right holders. Findings also show that the station has promoted small and medium enterprise development by creating market opportunities for small and consequently improved sales and income. The study recommended that regular feedback from the listening public is essential in identifying listeners' preferences and the taste of various listeners' segments (i.e youths, women, men, aged etc.) and to avoid politics and religion.

2. Chrisantus Oden (2015) *The influence of Nigerian Television Authority in improving Rural Health care services: A study of Ugwuaji community of Enugu South Local Government Area Enugu State*. Published at <https://www.Projecttopices.org/olamidedaniels.blogspot.com>.

This study examines the influence of NTA Enugu in improving rural health care services in Ugwuaji community. In carrying out the research, both primary and secondary data were used and a sample size of 360 respondents were selected. Descriptive statistics was used. Findings showed that NTA played notable roles in improving rural health care services by informing the government on the poor state of health services in Ugwuaji community and sensitizing the rural populace to appreciate and participate in the health programmes.

Findings also indicated that the station helped in mobilizing the masses for positive actions towards health improvements e.g. environmental sanitations, nutrition, etc. The research build its foundation on the diffusion of innovation theory which shows the audience on the existence of some disease and mobilize them towards accepting some decision and strategies that will help to improve the general health of the rural people. The research however recommended that government should regularly sponsor health programmes in NTA. Also, government should provide infrastructural facilities to improve the literacy level of the rural dwellers for them to participate in health programmes.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on two media theories:

Development Media Theory:

This is one of the normative theories which is concerned with what the media ought to be in the society rather than what they actually do. In general, the dominant ideas about the obligations of mass media will be consistent with other values and arrangements on a given society.

According to Siebert et al (1956) in the book *Four Normative Theories of the Press*, the press takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operate. This theory propounded by Dennis McQuail (1978) canvasses media support for an existing government and its effort to bring about socio-economic development. It argues that, until a nation is well established and its economic development well underway media must be supportive rather than critical of government but assist them in implementing their policies.

Development media theory seeks to accentuate the positive. It nurtures the autonomy of the developing nations and gives special emphasis to indigenous cultures. It is both a theory of state support and one of resistance to the norms of competing nations and competing theories of media. As the press performs its responsibilities, according to McQuail, it bears the following in mind;

Media must accept and carryout positive development tasks that are in line with the policies formulated by the political leadership and freedom of the press should not be at variance with economic priorities of the government and the development need of the citizens.

Media should therefore give priorities to the coverage of those areas that touch on the lives of the people. In other words, content should be development drives and should center on socio-economic and political lives of the people.

Society Marketing Theory

First proposed by Kotler and Zaltman in 1971, social marketing was defined by Kotler as the design, implementation, and control of programmes calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product, planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971 p.5). Social marketing focused primarily on influencing consumer behaviour by emphasizing the “for Ps” – product, price, place, and control of communicable diseases, this meant promoting and selling over-the counter antibiotics, condoms, AIDS-related drugs, antiretroviral drugs, and drugs to prevent and treat opportunistic infections at subsidized prices that were affordable to a defined population. Altman and Pilot Row (1980) says, “Social marketing could promote not only a specific product such as antiretroviral drugs but also a practice such as control, elimination of reservoir of infection, interruption of the pathway of transmission and protection of susceptible hosts”.

Price would mean psychological cost of adopting a health practice that others frowned upon. Place, could refer to any distribution channels, commercial, or otherwise, that would reach the intended client or consumer. And, promotion could range from point-of-purchase information to pharmacies to billboards, mass media (print, broadcasting, etc) or any form of advertising and even community entertainment events (Kotler and Roberto, 1989; Manoff, 1985; Lefebvre and Flora, 1988). In fact, by 1995 the definition of social marketing had expanded to include not only most voluntary public health programmes but also many other social issues. Thus, in the words of Alan Andreason (1995 p.7), social marketing is broadly defined as “the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programmes designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society”.

For instance, as the threat to AIDS spread worldwide, social marketing became a major strategy in developing countries for selling condoms to men, who were rarely reached by clinical or field services. Piotrow, Kineaid, Rimon II, and Rinchart (1997 p.20) says “social marketing has brought a useful, discipline and focus to addressing the problems of communicable diseases and to the communication component of these programmes”.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Community broadcasting plays a pivotal role in healthcare delivery in Nigeria, particularly in reaching underserved populations with vital health information and services. Radio stations, in particular, serve as powerful platforms for health education and awareness campaigns, effectively disseminating information on disease prevention, available healthcare resources, and promoting healthy behaviors.

In a research titled “Radio Stations as Health Education Platforms” conducted by Adeyanju, A. G., & Adebola, O. T. (2020) highlights the significance of radio stations in Nigeria as channels for health education, emphasizing their role in disseminating information on various health topics to rural and urban communities. Also, according to a study by Ajuwon, A. J. et al. (2019), on “Impact on Rural and Underserved Communities” community radio broadcasts have been instrumental in reaching remote and underserved areas in Nigeria, contributing to improved healthcare outcomes by increasing awareness of preventive measures and available healthcare services.

Equally, findings from Olorunsaiye, C. Z. et al. (2018) in a study on “Empowerment Through Dialogue” emphasize the importance of community radio programs in fostering dialogue and empowering individuals to actively engage in discussions about health-related issues specific to their communities, thus promoting a sense of ownership over their health.

In a study on “Partnerships with Healthcare Providers”, by Ogunbanjo, O. W. et al. (2017) collaboration between community radio stations and healthcare providers has been highlighted as an effective strategy for enhancing healthcare delivery in Nigeria. Such partnerships facilitate the dissemination of accurate health information and promote access to healthcare services through targeted radio programs.

However, Adeyemi, I. A., & Tijani, O. O. (2021) in a study on “Government Support and Policy Implications” discuss the role of government support and policy frameworks in strengthening community broadcasting for healthcare delivery in Nigeria. They advocate for policies that promote the sustainability of community radio stations and ensure their alignment with national health priorities.

Barber and William (2004) investigated the role of the mass media as a social change that shape individual behaviour and discovered that exposure to the media may affect behaviours via attitudinal change. For instance, they found out that exposure to mass media is related to child-bearing behaviour such as preferences to smaller families and tolerance of contraceptives. This result should motivate the use of mass media in getting people especially rural Africans to change their general attitude towards causes of disease infections and their modes of transmission such as HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, etc.

Community broadcast media therefore remains the key component of the global strategy for sustainable health development through adequate information and education on issues as drugs/herbs, vaccines and the importance of qualified health personnel. Health programs, healthful living practices, prevention, cure and eradication of disease are advertised and publicized through the mass media. Warring about standard, fake and expired drugs are issued to the masses through the mass media thereby safeguarding thousands of people from dieing unknowingly from drugs they have taken to cure them from their ailments in this case, the mass media are watchdogs and will continue to be active watchdogs given the necessary support and favourable environment to buy the stakeholders.

In conclusion, community broadcasting, particularly through radio stations, plays a crucial role in healthcare delivery in Nigeria by effectively disseminating health information, reaching underserved populations, fostering dialogue, and promoting partnerships between healthcare providers and communities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has looked at the need to apply community broadcast media channels in ensuring the implementation of health care policies and programmes at the rural areas. It has shown that the rural people have general and peculiar health problems. It has also shown that government at all times has plans in place that could deal with these problems. The paper has identified various ways the health care policies and programmes could benefit the rural people. It ends by outlining various ways community broadcast media channels can be applied in health care delivery programmes.

One can conclude here that community broadcasting plays a crucial role in health care delivery in Nigeria by disseminating relevant health information, promoting health education, and addressing local health concerns. Through radio stations, community-based programs, and partnerships with health organizations, community broadcasting helps to raise awareness about preventive measures, disease outbreaks, available healthcare services, and local health resources. It also facilitates community engagement, empowerment, and participation in health initiatives, contributing to improved healthcare outcomes and overall well-being. Though rural health problems are peculiar and multifarious, they are not intractable. It is also clear that the government can make greater impact in solving rural health needs through community broadcast media channels.

FURTHER STUDY

1. Government agencies and policy makers should provide adequate structures to enable researches to study the rural area with a view to identifying its peculiar communication channels (mode) and ways of applying them in health care delivery programmes. This would make it easier to monitor policy implementation in rural areas.
2. Community broadcast station should show package programmes containing factual information on development of man power and facilities in the health sector.
3. The stations should feature some members of the public in participatory discussion, talk, mini-documentary programmes in certain health related issues.
4. Community broadcast stations should produce and air sport announcement, jingles, radio, story-telling and drama in local languages to tackle some health issues in our communication.
5. The government should provide a legal frame work in community broadcasting and also fully support the establishment of these stations as it is obtainable in developed countries.

6. The study recommends the importance of culturally sensitive and locally relevant health communication strategies, effective partnerships between community broadcasters and healthcare stakeholders, and the use of innovative technologies to reach remote and underserved populations.
7. Considering the nexus between community broadcasting and rural healthcare delivery in Nigeria, this study provides valuable insights for policymakers, healthcare providers, community broadcasters, and other stakeholders interested in enhancing healthcare access and outcomes in rural areas.
8. Finally, the study recommends the need for collaborative efforts to harness the potential of community broadcasting as a catalyst for improving health equity and wellbeing in Nigeria's rural communities.

REFERENCES

- Adeyanju, A. G., & Adebola, O. T. (2020). Role of Radio Stations in Health Education in Nigeria: A Study of Radio Nigeria, Ibadan. *Journal of Health, Medicine and Nursing*, 79-88.
- Adeyemi, I. A., & Tijani, O. O. (2021). Government Support and Policy Implications for Community Broadcasting in Healthcare Delivery in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 42(2), 242-255.
- Ajuwon, A. J. et al. (2019). Community Radio Broadcasts on Health in Nigeria: Impact on the Rural and Underserved Communities. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 23(3), 111-118.
- Chiakaan, G. J (2006) *Broadcasting and the Broadcast Media in Nigeria*. Lafia: Obande and Crown City Printers.
- Chiakaan, G.j. & Tsegnyu, S. (2008). "Mass Media and Sustainable Development: Nigeria in Focus" *International Journal of Development Studies*. Vol.3, No. 1.
- Chrisantus Oden (2015) *The influence of Nigerian Television Authority in improving Rural Health care services: A study of Ugwuaji community of Enugu South Local Government Area Enugu State*. Published at [https://www. Projecttopics.org@olamidedaniels.blogspot.com](https://www.Projecttopics.org@olamidedaniels.blogspot.com).
- CIA World Fact Book (1991) *Nigeria Primary Health Care Policies* <http://photius.com/countries/ingeria/society>.
- Gbaden J.C (2013) *Broadcasting and the Broadcast media in Nigeria*, Markers: Engle Prints
- McQuail.D. (2005). *News Reporting and Eorking 7th Edition*. Madison WI: Brown and Bench-mark Publishers.

- Naseem, A. Q. et al (1996) "Strategies for Enhancing the use of Primary Health Care Services by Nomade and Rural Communities in Saudi Arabia" in Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal, volume 2, Issue 2, Pp. 326 - 333.
- National Planning Commission (2004) National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) Nigeria. Lagos: b3 Communications Limited.
- Nwosu, I. E, Soola, O E, Nwodu, L. C. (2008). Communication for health and sustainable development in Nigeria. Enugu: ACCE Nigeria Chapter. RhyceKerex Publishers.
- Ogunbanjo, O. W. et al. (2017). Strengthening Healthcare Delivery in Nigeria through Partnerships between Community Radio Stations and Healthcare Providers. African Journal of Primary Health Care & Family Medicine, 9(1), 1-4.
- Olorunsaiye, C. Z. et al. (2018). Fostering Dialogue and Empowerment Through Community Radio Programs on Health: A Case Study from Nigeria. Journal of Community Health, 43(2), 365-371.
- Omeje, S.O (2010) community Journalist in rural broadcasting Enugu: Glanic Ventures.
- Onabajo, O. (2004). Paper Presented as a Workshop Organised by Center for Democratic Research and Training, Mambayya House, BUK Center for Research and Documentation and the Political Science Department of Stockholm University Sweden.
- Seidu Al - hassan, AlhassanAndari and Abdulai Abdul-malik (2011) The role of community Radio in Livelihood improvement: the case Simli Radio. Field Actions Science Reports. Journals. Openedition. Og/Facts Vol.5
- Sidoti, C,D (2003) Rural People's Access to Human Right Paper Presented at the international meeting on Access to Human Rights, Guadalajara, January 17 - 18 2033.
- The Nigeria Broadcasting Code (2006) by the National Broadcasting Commission, Abuja.
- Ubani, E, Alum, C. Eke U; Isigwe, P. &Obas, I. (2013) issues in rural development, Aba.Ker Expert Books.
- World Health organization Regional office for Africa (undated) Guidelines in the Health Desk.

www.articles19.org "African Chanter on Broadcasting" Retrieved March 24,
Chanter on Broadcasting" Retrieved March 24, 2010.

Yaehere, M.T (2003). "A Review of Development Communication Strategies for
Third World Rural and Urban Settings" In Soola, E.O (ed.)
Communicating for Development Purposes. Ibadan: Kraft Books LTD.