
COMMUNICATION, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the relationship between development communication and development journalism and explains what they are and what each aims to accomplish. It also examine the socio-cultural dimension of communication and the use of communication in accelerating the pace of agricultural and rural development in Nigeria. The study also takes a look at the situations affection agricultural and rural development in Nigeria today and found out that despite the country's abundance manpower and national resources, food and animal production continue to be on the decline.

Finally it examines the role of video technology and its application in agricultural and rural development efforts. The study does this by examining the customers are, and what they type film and mostly demanded by their customers. It found out that policy makers, change agents and agricultural extension officers are yet to accord seriousness to the important roles of video technology as effective instrument for agricultural and rural development effort.

Keywords: Development Communication, Development Journalism, Agricultural And Rural Development And Video Technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a vital asset for any living organism; without it, individuals groups and organizations would find themselves irrelevant in the scheme of development. As communication is considered the pivot of development, Sinha (1986) says that communication and development have existed side by side since the dawn of civilization. This explains more the significant place of communication in man's efforts to conquer the forces of nature in order to make the universe a better place for all human habitation.

The seriousness attached to the study of communication and its effects on all human endeavours by communication scholars, social scientist and anthropologist, and the huge investments in that sector of both human and material resources seem justified because as views by Sinha (1986) communication, in all respect is associated with every aspect of human growth. Evolution and development. As an integral part of human and social life communication becomes a crucial factor as well as a driving force in the acculturation process.

In most, if not all developing societies, communication came forcefully into the political and social life of the people, first, as a revolutionary tool of freedom and later, it was re-oriented to assist as an instrument for development.

The period between me "Scramble for Africa, "the "Balkanisation of Africa" and the subsequent colonization of the continent by alien governments provided a fertile ground for a revolutionary and stentorian spirit of communicators which first began in Europe and later imported into the colonies by Europeans journalists and writers.

The traditional role of “defender of the weaks,” “champion of the under privileges” anywhere conferred on the media at their early stages of evolution ate deeply into their fabric. When, at dawn of independence, a new concept of communication called “Development Journalism” was introduced, it was difficult for the media to abdicate completely their previous role of “defender of the weaks” and the “down-troddens” of a society.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the study were as follows:

To examine the role s of communication in agricultural and rural development.

To examine the roles and functions of video service providers in Maiduguri.

To examine the type of video shops available in Maiduguri.

To examine the type of films the video service providers made available to their customers.

To examine who their customers are and what category of films they hire most.

To examine how the video technology as a medium of communication is used for agricultural and rural development.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study becomes important as it would bring our clearly how the video technology is put to use in the society. It would help government policy-makers, video service providers and end users to know the nature and types of services provided by video service providers. This may lead to effective regulation of the business in the overall interest of the people particularly farmers and rural masses. It would enable media practitioners to infer whether he most advocated, “Co-equal.” little-media-centered,” government-with-people communication had been effectively adopted and implemented.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study combine both documentary survey method and descriptive survey method to generate date. In the documentary survey method, date were collected from books, journals and other literature materials available to the researcher during the curse of the study. In the descriptive method, questionnaire and face-to-face interviews were used to generate the data used for the study.

Communication and Development: A Definition

In the words of Sinha (1986), Communication and Developments are two concepts that have been defined in various ways by communication scholars and social scientists. From Sinha’s perspective communication is the transfer of information from one place to another place in a desired directions with an expectation to bring about a desired effect. Ngugi, (2019) citing Oliveir a (1993) says that communication is the transfer of idea of knowledge in ways that enable the recipients to understand, react to and act upon the information received. Mercado (1992) explains that communication is a process of sharing messages between a source and a receiver either directly or through a channel. Communication also can be defined as the process of transmitting information, ideas and knowledge from a source to a receiver or several audiences through a medium or several media with the possibility of a feedback.

Development

Ngugi (1995) has explained that the ten “DEVELOPMENT” has a serious definitional problem. This being so, because it is difficult to pinpoint exactly and accurately what “development” implied to individuals, groups, organizations or society at any given point in time. This is notwithstanding however, various definitions of “Development” have been attempted by social scientists.

Sinha (1986) defines “Development” in its crudest form as an increase in per capital income and betterment of life. Mowlana and Wilson (1990) define Development as a conceptual frame work for a number of individual, institutional and international changes. Another definition of “development” proffered by Haque (1991) sees “development” as six lanes of large motor cars streaming powerfully into and out of gleaming cities, neon lights flashing and juke boxes sounding and skyscrapers rising story upon story into the sky. Because of the definitional problem posed by the term “development” some scholars believe that attempt to pin down the exact meaning of “development” may result in further confusion.

To Crocker (1993), the term development should be replaced by words such as “progress,” “transformation,” “beneficial change,” “liberation” or some cases, even “revolution.” However, Mercado’s definition of “development” draws us closer to a full understanding of the meaning of development as it stands to affect the welfare of the people, particularly rural transformation and empowerment. According to him, development is a process of providing disadvantaged people the opportunities to realize and improve their knowledge, attitude and skill, to utilize, sustain and improve their productivity of available resources within their environment in order to improve quality of their life and the society where they belong.

Explaining the exact implication of Mercado’s definition of “development” Ngugi (2019) tells us that development is a type of social changes which has the sole intention of bringing about both social and material advancement for the generality of the people and this also include the area of the people’s human rights (see also Rogers, 1978).

Development Communication: Its Relationship with Development

Journalism

Particularly interesting, insightful, revealing and captivating in this area of professional communication is the thought-provoking work of Ngugi (2019). In it, no effort was spared in providing the origin and growth of Development Communication and what it sought to accomplish. It gives us also a clear demarcation between development communication and development journalism.

Development communication was a product of developed and industrialized nations. It was brought into the third world nations in the 1960s as an instrument of experiment in a purely agrarian environment, all in an effort to encourage the growth, transformation and progress from agrarian to industrialized societies. Its founders which include Lerner, Pye and Schramm conceived development communication to stand for technology – based communication networks which regardless of message and content would create a suitable and (sustainable) climate for development.

According to Jayaweera and Amunugama (1987) it should generate the right orientation within which economic and productive activity must originate and grow. In the word of Ngugi (2019), development communication was perceived as a facilitative factor of the means to an end which is development. Most probably due to the greater role development communication should play in a society, it was later expanded to include a systematic utilization of all appropriate communication

channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development. It was also to inform, motivate and train rural populations mainly at the grassroots levels., Because of this expanded role, communication as the planned and systematic use of communication through interpersonal and mass channels to achieve development (see Oliveira, 1993;Sinha, 1986, Domatob & Hall, 1983).

Development and Journalism

Development Communication, Mercado (1992) says, is a sub-system of the larger system of communication. It deals with a planned use of communication resources to enlist society's support in achieving national development goals. Its aims are purposive in nature with a clear, well-defined objectives to change people's attitudes, skills and behavior toward positive nation building. Principal target audience of development communication are usually farmers, traders, researchers, health and population professionals, development planners and policy makers.

In terms of development Journalism, there is disagreement as to what it is.

Aggarwala (2020) says that development news which is a by-product of development journalism is not different in any way from regular news of investigative reporting. To Ngugi (2019) this assessment of development journalism is totally wrong as both are different from each other. To him, development journalism exist separately from what is generally referred to as journalism or Mass Communication. Sussman (1978) sees development journalism as the coverage of scientific and economic news and relating them to the development needs of the country. Rampal (1984) says that development journalism include the use of the media in formal and non-formal educational purposes. Ngugi (1995) concludes that development journalism is the aggregate responsibilities added onto the usual business of Journalism when it comes to be practiced in a developing environment. In this way, Ansah (1990) agrees that in a developing society, development journalism means news about new schools, hospitals, bridges, roads, (farming methods and produce) especially if these achievements were made possible through collective self-reliance local efforts.

Development Journalism: Its Origin, Aims and Objectives in A Developing Environment

The concept of Africa development journalism was first forcefully articulated by Ghana's first President, Nkrumah (Domatob & Hall, 1983). A leading Pan Africanist, Nkrumah saw the media as a revolutionary tool of Africa liberation from the fetter of colonialism and imperialism. According to Domatob and Hall, Nkrumah viewed the media as a significant extension of the government and its policies of social, economic and cultural development. Nkrumah's position about the role of development journalism in developing states was embraced whole-heartedly by African head of governments and prominent personalities.

Mamman Daura, a one-time Editor-in-Chief of the Kaduna based.

New Nigerian Newspaper argued that in the absence of an articulated African society there are so many forces that need to be balanced. The mass media therefore should be an agent in mobilizing the society in educating society, in consolidating independence and in one or two cased revolution. Again, in 1976 UNESCO meeting Darius Mbella, a Senior Kenyan government Official said that Africa needed a totally committed mass media, based on Africa socio-economic-cum political policies and not a replica of either the East or the West.

Former President of Cameroon, Ahmado Ahidjo advanced similar defence when he said that the information media in developing states cannot pride themselves the luxury as happens in places

where there is abundance of personnel or where the state is firmly established on past centuries of representing sections, interest, factions and cliques, Inyang, cited in Domatob and Hall (1983) says that mass media freedom in Nigeria, if defined from the standpoint of the American First Amendment loses its meaning because developing countries see journalism first, as a means for encouraging development.

From the above perspectives, Domatob and Hall (1983) conclude that developing states, government use the media to promote national development goals, inform citizens of relevant governmental policies, introduce national leaders, foster political stability, promote national integration and educate both broadly and narrowly. In general, media act as one of the mobilizing agents in societies that are predominantly underdeveloped. The sorry side of development journalism, greatly lauded at its inception says Domatob and Hall (1983) is that this brand of development journalism has been grounded in an idealistic and now widely discredited view of the development process which was widely accepted through the 1960s when it seemed possible to build institutions entirely from the grassroots.

Today, developing world journalists who were the architects, and at the forefront of this doctrine have finally denounced it after seeing the corruptions of objective and professional journalism which have emerged in its name (Domatob & Hall, 1983).

Communication and Rural Development: The Nigerian Scene

The history of rural development according to Sinha (1986) is as recent as the early twentieth century. This being so, because, developing nations of Asia and Africa have recently regained independence from decades of colonial rule. Nigeria attained independence in October, 1960. It is a big nation blessed with abundance of material resources especially oil. The land is fertile and almost all crops can grow well in the country. This means that to feed the population effectively should never be a problem. In more than twenty years ago, Nigeria relied almost exclusively on cash crops such as cocoa, groundnuts, rubber, palm oil and kernel for its foreign exchange earnings. The country is again blessed with adequate manpower that could be trained and deployed for effective management of the nation and its natural resources.

According to Ubeku (1985). Agriculture accounted for the nation's 70% G.N.P and was the mainstay of the country's economy. Its export constituted mainly of agricultural products such as cocoa, groundnuts, cotton, rubber, palm oil and kernel as well as timber which altogether accounted for 85% of the nation's foreign exchange earnings. By the end of 1970's, agricultural exports had fallen below the 1960 level of about 35% Palm oil which had been the country's major foreign exchange, earners suddenly had to be imported. It was a kind of shock to Nigerians, when, on Tuesday, November 2, 1982 the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that Nigeria had imported up to 102,00 tons of palm oil from Malaysia in 1981. Malaysia, a country which had to borrow palm seedlings from Nigeria to experiment on Malaysian soil only a decade ago. According to Ubeku, (1985) the neglect of agriculture was due largely to the increasing role of oil in the economy. Between the period 1970 to 1971 the share of oil in the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 33.1% while in 1974-75 it was 45.5%. The growth rate of the GDP in real terms rose from an average of 5% in the 1960s to 7.6% during the period 1970-1975 and to 10.3% in 1976-1977.

In 1970, says Ubeku (1985), earnings from oil were N510 million as against N445.4 million for agriculture. In 1980, earnings from oil rose by 2.55% to N13,523.0 million while earnings from agricultural and other exports rose by only 8% to a mere N91.9 million. The "oil boom" enabled

the government especially during the period 1970-77 to engage in modernization of the country's infrastructure. This in turn created employment opportunities and acted as stimulants that attracted young hands from the rural areas who abandoned their agricultural pursuit to the urban towns in search of white collar jobs. The aging population left behind in the rural areas could no longer produce enough to feed the population, talk less of export. This gradually led to the decline in the agricultural sector while the oil sector witnessed astronomical rise and patronage.

Sensing the danger of agricultural decline and its effects on the nation's development efforts, government, between 1973 to 1979 took some panicking measures to redeem the agricultural sector. In its effort to rescue the agricultural sector from total collapse governments spent vast sum of money on the purchase of agricultural inputs such as tractors, fertilizers, chemicals and pesticides. River Basins were created and major irrigation works were commissioned between 1973 and 1979.

The situation of Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria today

Despite the country's abundant manpower, land and water resources, food and animal production continues to be on the decline, a situation which prompt government to import food to meet the nation's food requirements.

Nigeria's agriculture suffers from problems of illiteracy and low productivity. According to Gana (1978). This situation in the nation's agricultural sector is largely due to poor production techniques, in availability and affordability of intermediate inputs such as fertilizers, modern farming tools lack of infrastructural facilities, and low level of awareness about modern agricultural production methods.

Nigeria's economically active population between 1993 and 1994 reportedly by "Events of 2000" (2001) was put at 29 million. Out of this total, 13,259,000 were said to engage in agriculture than any other sector. This drives home the fact that there is an urgent need to promptly re-vitalise the agricultural sector.

Beginning from 1960, government in various way have sought to improve agriculture in an effort to raise the income of farmers and thereby improve the living standard of the rural areas because governments perceive agricultural improvement as rural development. From the First to the Fourth Nation Development plans, efforts have been made by various governments to deal with the problems of the agricultural sector. Farm settlements schemes have been established. These include: Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), The Green Revolution Programme (GRP), River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), The National Accelerated Food Production (NAFP), The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI). These programmes were put in place to ensure rural food production, diversified rural economy and improved income which would ultimately guarantee quality of life for the rural population. However, Olumiji (1996) observes that despite the huge financial investment in rural development, government fail to achieve the desired rural transformation due to less attention attached to the re-organisation of the needs of most developmental projects to suit rural situations. He also blames the failure to the absence of formal and effective co-ordination of rural development activities between rural development institutions and the beneficial communities, as well as inadequate mobilization of the people to genuinely participate in projects beginning from the periods of their conception to the implementation stages (see also Kurungtiem, 2000). Project failure equally occurred largely

because of gross misappropriation of allocated funds and blatant, non-challant attitudes of change agents to farmer's plights.

The use of appropriate new information technology in conjunction with other suitable media of communication would provide a formidable means of persuasive information sharing between change agents and rural recipients that could lead to the breaking away from the age-long traditional methods to embracing modern methods of practicing agriculture.

Feuerstein (1999) agrees with this postulation when he too says that modern technological society increasingly requires the development of individuals possessing critical thinking skills. Stressing further, he adds that in predominantly rural settings, an agrarian economy needs individuals who are capable of problem-solving and creative development. People who found themselves in an agrarian environments or a self-professed democracy need the tools to evaluate and re-orient themselves in a rapidly changing and highly complex technological world.

The Video Technology in Rural Development

Among the various channels of information that could hasten rural development efforts in video technology which is described as one of the communication technologies capable of bringing about rural transformation if properly and effectively utilized. According to Agrawal (1986) there are various modes of video technology application in developing or agrarian societies. The impact of the video technology has resulted in various uses such as "Video rooms," "Video clubs," "Video theatres," and "Video halls."

The technology of video can be rightly described as a "television" that is available anytime one wants it. (Agrawal, 1986).

Because of the proliferation of the technology, its availability at lower cost and its potential impact, it is regarded by many as another effective and cheap medium for dissemination of messages, particularly demonstration messages to a wider audience. If government policy makers and extension officers are really serious in the development of the rural areas, they must begin to give serious and committed attention to the professional development of messages for the rural population and these messages must be distributed through cultural communication channels for positive result. The importance of cultural communication channels in the development process has been clearly articulated by Soola (1995). He says that people at the grassroots are faithful custodians of community cultures and traditions and therefore networks of relationship existing in the rural areas provide a cohesive force that can galvanise the rural population into development oriented action (see also Sinha, 1986).

In the words of Soola (1995) Video Cassette recorders and cameras constitute a relatively cheap medium for small scale information – sharing.

The audio visual capacity of the video recorder makes it a useful tool for disseminating demonstration messages and provoking discussion among predominantly illiterate rural communities. However, Soola (1995) cautions that small format video must have local relevance, focusing on issues and problems of the community and deriving its talents as much as possible from community members. This is the role in which the new technology of video would have placed in ensuring the transformation of the rural population. The serious question facing the society is whether the new technology of video has been rightly and effectively applied for the benefit of the rural communities.

The concern to establish how the video technology is put to use in our society prompted the author to carry out a study in Maiduguri with the aim of establishing types of video shops available in

Maiduguri, the role and functions of video service providers, who are their customers and the types of video films made available to their customers; films they stock in their service and those that are in high demand by their customers. This study was carried out to ascertain the direction in which the technology of video has been put to use. This in turn would enable us to ascertain whether the video technology is effectively employed for rural and agricultural development efforts.

Data Presentation

A total of 210 questionnaires were prepare and distributed. Out of this number, 85 questionnaires were distributed among Super Service Providers, while a total number of 125 questionnaires were distributed among Ordinary Service Providers. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select the samples. The technique of informal interview with respondents helped the researcher to probe more into respondent’s responses. All video rental shops and marketing centres within the around Monday Market and its surroundings were purposely sampled. Out of the total number of questionnaires administered, 200 were correctly completed and returned; seven (7) were not returned while three (3) were returned uncompleted. The results presented below are based on the 200 accurate questionnaires returned.

5. RESULTS

Table 12.1: Kinds Of Video Service Provider

Service Providers	No. Of Quest. Returned	Percentage
Super Service provider	80	40.0%
Ordinary Service provider	120	60.0%
Total	200	100.0%

According to the results shown in Table 12.1, out of the total number of questionnaires distributed among Super Services Providers, 40.0 percent (80) were returned, while 60.0% (120) were returned out of the total number of questionnaires.

Table 12.2: Types Of Films Available In Shops Distributed Among Ordinary Service Providers.

Types Of Films	Super Service Providers’ Shops	Ordinary Service Providers’ shop

Western Films	900 : 18.0%	900 : 18.0%
Chinese Films	900 : 18.0%	900 : 18.0%
Indian Films	800 : 16.0%	900 : 16.0%
Documentary Films	700 : 14.0%	700 : 14.0%
Cartoon Films	600 : 12.0%	600 : 12.0%
X-Rated Films	500 : 10.0%	500 : 10.0%
Educational Films	600 : 12.0%	600 : 12.0%
Total	5,000 : 100%	5,000 : 100%

Table 12.2 explains the various types of films that can be obtained from the services of both, the Super Service Providers and the Ordinary Service Providers. Table 12.2 further shows that films in high supply by the Service Providers are mostly entertainment films (900) 18.0% Indian films (800) 16.0% Cartoon films (600) 12.0%; X-Rated films (500) 10.0%, making a total of 74%, while the remaining 26.0% of the total stock is for educational films. The same trend was observed with slight variation in the case of Ordinary Service Providers where the total stock of entertainment films slightly jumped up to 76.0%, while educational films slightly reduced to 24.0% in the total stock available in their service.

Table 12.3: Age Range Of Customers

Age Range	Super Service Providers	Ordinary Service Providers
12 – 18 YRS	15.0% (12)	16.5% (20)
18 – 25 YRS	37.5% (30)	37.5% (45)
26 – 35 YRS	22.5% (18)	25.0% (30)
36 – 45 YRS	17.5% (14)	12.5% (15)
46 – YRS ABOVE	7.5% (06)	8.5% (10)
Total	100% (80)	100% (120)

According to the results shown in Table 12.3, customers who patronize video service providers must fall within the age range of 18-35 years with the higher percentage of 37.5%; 22.5%; 37.5%, 25.0% respectively.

This is closely followed by those within the age range of 36-45 years with the percentage of 17.5% and 12.5% respectively.

Table 12.4: Types Of Films In High Demand By Customers.

Types Of Films	Super Service Provider	Ordinary Service Providers

Cartoon Films	(3) 3.8%	(10) 8.5%
Indian Films	(15) 18.8%	(25) 20.8%
Educational Films	(4) 5.0%	(06) 5.0%
Western Films	(43) 53.8%	(45) 37.5%
Documentary Films	(00) 00.0%	(08) 6.6%
Chinese Films	(15) 18.8%	(17) 14.2%
X-Rated Films	(00) 00.0%	(09) 7.5%
Total	(80) 100%	(120) 100%

The results in table No. 4 above show that the film is very high demand by customers are Western films with a high rate of 53.8% and 37.5% respectively. This is followed by Indian and Chinese films with a rating of 18.8% and 20.8% respectively. Educational and Documentary films in both cases were rated very low. 5.0% and 6.6% respectively.

6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This study clearly indicated that there are two major groups of video service providers in Maiduguri. These are the Super Service Providers with a strong financial base which provide multiple video services, such as renting of video cassettes, at functions and ceremonies. There is also another group called Ordinary Service Providers and this group though in the majority provide limited service to their customers, and this is renting of video cassettes.

6.1 Conclusion

The technology of Video, as this study reveals is known and generally accepted by the people of Maiduguri. As may be the case in other urban and semi-urban places, the technology of video is put to various uses here as there are video restaurants, video halls, video rooms and video clubs. The increasing acceptance of the video technology in Maiduguri has led to the springing up of several video rental shops that provide various types of video services to their customers. As this study shows, the video technology is used in Maiduguri mostly for entertainment purposes while the educational advantages of the technology is mostly neglected. Those who use this technology more effectively are youths and therefore they found it's a useful tool for entertainment and gratification of their inner desire. It is clear that for now, the technology of video is yet to be effectively used for rural transformation. It is the duty of Policy makers to realise that the technology of video and tape recorders, if properly utilized can play a revolutionary role in rural communication and transformation.

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