



PERCEPTION OF RURAL WOMEN ON RADIO SKILL ACQUISITION PROGRAMMES FOR SOCIO- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF ERO COMMUNITY, ONDO STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the perception of rural women in Ero community in Ondo State on radio skill acquisition programmes for socio-economic development. The researchers seek to know how the skill acquisition programmes that are being aired on Radio had affected their social and economic development. It has been observed that, many of the women in the rural areas have been exposed to one kind of skill acquisition programme or another which had later given them the opportunity to begin a small scale business, thereby enhancing their socio-economic status. This study rests on the perception media theory. 100 rural women who are engaged in farming and petty trades were drawn from the community as samples using the random sampling technique. Data was collected using questionnaire and interview guide so as to answer some questions that were raised by the researchers; This study reveals that women in Ero community have being influenced by the skills acquisition programmes which they have been exposed to and this has encouraged them to start their own small scale businesses. The study therefore concluded that programmes aired on radio station that are targeted at rural women have a way of influencing them especially with the help of opinion leaders which will give them several reasons for them to embrace the programmes and make good use of the opportunity at their disposal. Hence, it recommends that more of such programmes should be aired so as to help the rural dwellers the more.

Keywords: Small scale business, skill acquisition programme, community,

Introduction

Women in the world over are indispensable in the social, political and economic development of any nation. Women make up 49.20 percent of Nigerian's total population (Gazette of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009). Nigerian women like their counterparts in other parts of Africa, form the majority of the nation's labour force (Ibid, 2009). In spite of women's contributions to agricultural produce, they remain mainly invisible to the country's planners (Nwoye, 2007). In

most cases, women are quite often unconscious of the value of their productive roles in national development, consequently agricultural development policies are hardly targeted at generating high productivity. Africa Partnership Forum Support Unit (APFRU) and the WEPAD secretariat (2007) observed that, African women own less than 1% of the African continents. Landmass, received only 1% of total credit to agriculture which has fewer economic rights and lower access to economic opportunities, average workday lasts 50% longer than that of men, and they shoulder the burden of unpaid activity. It also noted that only 51% of females over 15 years in Africa are able to read and write compared to 67% of males. This situation affirmed the assertion that women's entrepreneurship represents an untapped reservoir for job creation, economic growth and social cohesion (Nwoye, 2007).

Saito & Gadzama, (1996) noted that, in Nigeria, women play a significant role in agricultural production, in fact, they make up 60-80 percent of the agricultural labour force in Nigeria, depending on the region, and they produce two-thirds of the food crops. Despite the widespread assumptions that men make up the bulk of farms in the country, the key farmers in the country, the key farm management decisions, and agricultural extension services in Nigeria as well as in other African countries, have been focused on men and their production needs, while neglecting the females folk who constitute more than half of the population force. Extension messages albeit targeted at women focused on their domestic roles like child care and family nutrition.

Statement of the problem

The era of technologies across the globe had to an extent pushed the traditional media; radio, television among others to a far end. In fact, the thought of listening to radio is beginning to even disgust some people in this contemporary world. Yet, despite this shift, some people especially rural dwellers still tap into the opportunity available on the usage of radio but then, the researchers are wondering the percentage of even the rural dwellers that still have the time to use the radio and in situation where they do, how has that affected their social and economic development.?

Research questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the following questions were addressed in the study:

1. What type of mass media do women in rural areas have access to?
2. Do the mass media have any influence on rural women's social, political and economic development?
3. How effective is radio programmes on the lives of the rural women?

Literature review

The Role of the Mass Media

The mass media because of its prevalence in rural and urban areas are indispensable in information dissemination. Mass media can ensure rural women participation in social, economic and political processes thereby influencing and sharing in control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (The World Bank, 1996).

Mass communication is any message sent by a person or a group of people through a medium to a large audience, and mass media is any medium used to transmit mass information. Until recently mass media comprised the eight mass media industries: books, newspapers, magazines, recordings, radio, movies, television, and the Internet, however, digital technology has expanded the scope of

the term mass media (Lane, 2007). Message through mass media reaches large numbers of the public, that is, mass audience.

In rural areas, radio, television, newspapers/magazines play a vital role in spreading information, conducting propaganda, educating and enlightening people, strengthening national integration, and creating national identity. Mass media mould opinions, thinking attitudes and behaviour. Because of their reach, mass media are far more powerful and their impact is greater than that of other media (Saxena, nd.). There are two major usage patterns for mass media. Serban (2004) quoting Rubin (1984) identified these as primarily ritualized and instrumental. The primarily ritualised usage deals with habitual use of the mass media for diversion or in order to consume time accounts for health, education, and political information gathered by individuals through passive exposure to mass media. The instrumental usage is purposive or utilitarian for informational reasons, through seeking media content.

The mass media has the potential for information, inspiration, and instruction for rural women. From the definition of rural dwellers, most will be illiterates and few literates, engaged in the production of food fibers and raw materials. Those engaged in agriculture would no doubt require information on specific supplies required on their farm. They need to know where, when and how to begin to plant seeds, use pesticides, use mechanical equipment, etc. They also need to know the process, names of suppliers and how to satisfy the conditions for obtaining them. People who are engaged in rural non-farm economic activities need information on food processing, banking, textile, weaving, raffia work and tailoring, among others. They also require information on wood works, metal work, repair services for radio, vehicles and watches and other miscellaneous activities like soap making. Rural people also need information on the importance of good source of drinking water and the prevention of common diseases. Mortality and malnutrition of children are particularly prevalent in rural communities; therefore, a lot of information on childcare is required. Rural dwellers also require information on social participation in any programme for rural development.

Egbule and Njoku's (2001) study on mass media's support for adult education in agriculture in Delta State, Nigeria revealed, among other things, that the mass media have performed poorly in disseminating requisite agricultural information to farmers, although there is a positive correlation between mass media usage and farm yield. In Saxena's (nd.) finding in India, a majority of women respondents opined that, at present, mass media is inducing vulgarity in the society; directly or indirectly mass media has increased crime against women, as well as exploiting of women at work places. One third of females maintained the view that due to mass media, people try to imitate, especially children do imitate some socially undesirable acts like violence and deceit. It noted further that that mass media have raised aspiration of the people through exposure to materialistic world.

The Role of Radio in Rural Development

Rural radio helps to achieve development in the rural areas, as issues of development are aired to audience in the form of various programmes and individuals are exposed to happenings in and around their society, through listening to these programmes. Communication serves as the basic element of interaction and information sharing in life. Communication creates pool of ideas, strengthens the feeling of togetherness, through the exchange of messages and translates through thoughts, into actions, Asemah et al (2013).

According to the foregoing, information is crucial to the society as everyone is entitled to it. It is more effective when it takes place between people and not just one person. Also, it is very important that there is nothing like a break in the information shared in order not to distort the on-going process. Furthermore, communication which is the process of passing information around the globe is a medium of bringing people together to agree on a certain ideology.

Radio communication educates citizens on new issues inherent in the society. For example, issues on politics, business, current affairs, etc, are aired to create awareness. Radio serves as an agent of social mobilization, people are moved to delivering a certain goal, based on their awareness of their rights and responsibility to the society, Asemah et al (2013). Thus, this study examines the place of radio in rural community development.

According to Asemah (2011), of the mass media generally available to Africans,

Radio is the most widespread and accessible. And because of its special qualities, radio can be a major force in bringing about development. It is carried out in isolation from the direct involvement of extension services and is literarily opened in the sense that programmes are directed at unorganised audience. The advantage of this strategy is that, since radio is widely diffused and readily accessible, even in peripheral areas, it can reach large audiences at a low cost. And because it reaches more rural people in third world than any other medium, its potential to bring about increase in knowledge and provide motivation for shifts in practices is considerable. Radio helps to achieve development, both in the rural and urban areas, as issues of development are aired to the audience in the form of various programmes and individuals are exposed to happenings in and around their society, through listening to programmes.

From the foregoing, radio is more popular than other medium of broadcasting and also it is the least expensive which makes it to be affordable for the people. Radio can be employed to pass vital information about the right attitude, behaviour, knowledge, techniques and skills, which are expected from the members of the public. Radio has been found to be one of the most effective media of transforming an under-developed society to a developed polity.

Theoretical Framework

The Perception media theories are the most appropriate theories for this study since the researchers deal with the perception of rural women. According to Burgoon and Ruffner (1978) perception means "the process of making sense out of experience". Also, Corner and Hawthorn (1980) suggest that it is the way an individual makes sense of his or her world. They went further to say that it depends on a complex of variables such as psychological disposition, past experiences, cultural expectations and social relationships. All these in conjunction with language constraints and the limited experience factor result in the selective perception process, which takes place in a 'stop-gate' fashion with selective exposure, attention and retention.

Selective Exposure

Folarin (1998) opined that people often seek out for information that caters their own interests, confirm their beliefs and boosts their egos while avoiding those that are contrary to their own

predispositions and attacks their self image. Hence, these often determine the kind of programmes they will listen to or watch and the kind of paper they subscribe to or read at all.

Selective Attention

It is well known that there are so many things that distract the hearts of people from giving attention to some programmes especially due to physiological impairments or needs (bad eye sight, hunger), physical hardship (heated in market square without shade) among others.

Selective Retention

This theory was of the opinion that not every message can be retained. However, some are easily forgotten more quickly than others because people often remember messages that are favourable to their self-image than those that are not. The saliency of the message, the method of transmission and the interests and beliefs of the receiver are also known to affect retention rate. (Folarin, 1998), Suffice to say that most rural women only expose themselves to programmes that are of importance and relevance to them as well as those that are air in the language they will understand better.

Methodology

The Researchers adopted the Survey method with the use of questionnaire as instruments. The target population for this study consisted of all the women in the Ero community of Ondo State. The selection of rural women in Ondo State was purposive because the state has large rural settlements. However, the study covered a sample of 100 women who were selected through the use of random sampling techniques. It was discovered that women in these areas have access to the Adaba Fm(88.9) as well as Futa Fm(93.1) but for the sake of this study, researchers only focus on Adaba Fm. A research-developed questionnaire was used in collecting data from the respondents in the traditional language to enhance a better understanding as well as to be able to extract accurate information from them.

Data Analysis and Discussions

Research Question One: What type of mass media do women in rural areas have access to? The analysis related to this research question is as shown in Table 1: Mass media women in rural areas have access to

Table 1
Mass media women in rural areas

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Television	20	23.3
Radio	64	74.4
Newspaper	2	2.3
Magazines	0	0
Social media	0	0
Total	86	100%

Table 2
Item 4: which Radio station are the rural women more conversant with?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sunshine FM	17	20.0
Positive FM	8	9.3
Breeze FM	6	7.0
Orange FM	5	5.8
Adaba FM	51	59.3
Total	86	100%

As shown in Table 1 rural women responded that they had more access to Radio sets as 64 (74.4%) were of these opinion, while about 20 (23.3%) claimed they have access to Television sets. Also, about 2 people (2.3%) said they have access to newspaper while no one claimed to have access to magazines and social media. Moreover, majority of the respondents said that they could access Adaba FM more than all other radio stations in the state especially because of the proximity of the media organisation to the rural women.

In a related study conducted by Seidu Al-hansan, Alhassan Andani & Abdulai Abdul-Malik (2011), on the people of Tolon-Kumbungu and Savelugu-Naton Districts of the Northern Region of Ghana, where data were gathered using a multi-stage sampling technique to select 12 communities for the study on the use of broadcasting as an educational tool, the promotion of traditional culture, communication and information sharing, entertainment and income promotion. The study found out that Simli Radio has been used to improve awareness and knowledge of solutions to community development problems within various sectors including culture, rural development, education, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture and local governance among rural people living in the Dagbani speaking districts in particular.

Research Question Two: Do the mass media have influence on rural the women social, political and economic development?

Table 3
Item 6: Does Radio has influence on rural women's social, political and economic Development.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	81.4
No	5	5.8
Don't Know	11	13.1
Total	100	100%

Table 4
Item 7: which of the programme affect the rural women more?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Entrepreneurship hour	54	62.8
Women in focus	12	14.0
Ojumo Ayo	10	11.6
Oyato (Farmers)	8	9.3
Others	2	2.3
Total	100	100%

Table 3 above shows that the women have been influenced by the radio programmes as about 70 (81.4%) affirmed that they have been influenced by some of the programmes aired by the radio station while only 5.1% negated it. This means that the rural women through their exposure to the programmes aired by the radio station had become enlightened about their social and economic behavior and this had brought about great development. Also, table 4 shows that most of the women are exposed to the entrepreneurship hour programme that is aired by the radio station as 62.8% of the respondents said they are more influenced by the entrepreneurship hour while 14.0% voted for women in focus, 11.6% percent claimed to be influenced more by "Ojumo ayo" 9.3% were of the opinion for "Oyato" and 2.3% were for other programmes. This in essence shows that the women are more influenced by the entrepreneurship programmes. However, interview held with some key officials of the station reveals that the feedback they get on the entrepreneurship programme is higher than the one they get on all other programmes. Similarly, Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) in their research on community radio for change and development also found that since radio broadcasting leaps the barriers of isolation and illiteracy and it is the most economical electronic medium to broadcast and receive, hence, it brings about great development in all areas.

Question 3: How effective is radio programmes on the lives of the rural women?
This question shall be answered using item 9 and 10.

Table 5
Item 9: What is the extent of influence that radio has on rural women?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high extent	66	76.7
High extent	14	16.3
Low extent	2	2.3
Very low extent	1	1.2
Undecided	3	3.5
Total	86	100%

Table 6
Item 10: how effective are the programmes the rural women are exposed to?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	61	70.9
Effective	15	17.4
Low effective	5	5.8
Not effective	0	0
Don't Know	5	5.8
Total	100	100%

Table 5 & 6 show the level of the effectiveness of the programmes that the rural women are exposed to, 76.7% claimed that the programmes have a high level of influence on them, 16.3% said it influenced them on a mild level, 2.3% said it had low influence on them, 1.2% said it has a very low influence on them while about 3.5% were undecided. Also, about 70.9% of the respondents claimed that the programmes had been effective on them as it has affected their social-economic behavior greatly while 17.4% only said it was mildly effective, 5.8% said the effect was low while 5.8% could not decide.

Moreover, the study carried out by Vaaswem (2009), shows that radio actually determines the pattern, shape and level of economic development in Nigeria. Radio like catalyst quorums development; acting like development agents or as change agents. This gives the medium the multiplier effects with capability to spread favourable attitude for social, economic, political, cultural etc. Most women across the globe rely on the informal work sector for an income. If women were empowered to do more, the possibility for economic growth becomes apparent. Hence, radio is a vital tool to empowering women in their various vocations.

Findings

The Researchers discovered the following;

1. The respondents had benefitted greatly from the programmes and this had turned their social and economic standpoints around.
2. The programmers at Adaba Fm said some of the rural women had also benefitted from loan schemes to allow them establish their own businesses.
3. The Rural women are no longer idle like they use to be as a result of the skill acquisition programmes they have been exposed to.
4. Programmes such as entrepreneurship hour and women in focus also have training programmes where some of the rural women are being trained in some handiwork which they can later find their livelihood on.
5. The Radio station air the programmes in the language that the rural women will understand better since such programmes are targeted at them.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Radio is a good medium of communication for development. It had been in use for ages and even with the coming of the social media, it has not yet lost its relevance. One of the reasons is because of its mobility nature, that is, people can carry it around unlike television which is so large to carry.

However, programmes aired on radio station that are targeted at rural women have a way of influencing them especially with the help of opinion leaders which will give them several reasons for them to embrace the programmes and make good use of the opportunity at their disposal. This study had also shown that the women have benefitted greatly from the various programmes aired by the radio station. Hence the researchers recommend that more of such programmes should be allowed to kick off and even training at their various locale should be encouraged. Also, the rural women should be given an opportunity for them to also share their experiences on the platform so as to discouraged laziness among their fellows.

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