MEDIATISATION OF DEVELOPMENT: AN EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE MASS MEDIA IN THE REPORTAGE OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The mass media have been identified as catholicons or panacea to development challenges in any polity especially the developing economies like Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the role and the influence that the mass media exert on development in the society. Anchored on the Development Media Theory, this study employed the qualitative method of analysis and appraised findings from empirical studies bringing to the fore the strengths and weaknesses of the mass media on the reportage of development programmes in Nigeria. The analysis noted that the mass media are capable of raising the consciousness of the citizens to embrace development through their hype and reportage of development programmes but they are also limited by ownership and political parallelism. The review then concluded that though the media correlate positively with development, their operations are affected by the nature of the media organs and the prevalent socio-political and economic status of the audience in a given society. The study therefore recommended that given the changing nature of the communication media infrastructure (the emerging new media) and the dynamism of our society, integrated channels of communication should always be employed to enhance the success of development programmes in Nigeria.

Keywords: Development, media, mediatisation, reportage, review

Introduction

The dynamism of any society is determined by the spate of development in such polity. Development simply means advancement, progress or growth that makes life meaningful in a given social milieu. Since communication is at the centre of every human activity, there is a positive correlation between development and the operations of the mass media of communication in any society. McQuail (2010) notes that the mass media serve as agents of development through disseminating technical know-how; facilitating individual change and mobility; spreading democracy; promoting consumer demand; and assisting literacy, education, health and population control among others. In the developing economies such as Nigeria, the media are expected to focus on development at the national, state and the local government areas or the rural levels. Hence, the media are often seen as partners in the promotion of development by the leadership of each level of governance in the polity.

The marriage between development and communication is called development communication. Udoakah (1998) sees development communication as a new philosophy in the use of modern media of mass communication in the developing countries. According to him, development communication is corrective, integrative and revolutionary in nature. Development communication is also known as development journalism. Under this genre, media personnel are expected to tilt their practice towards promoting positive news on economic and social progress in the society. Bassey (2016) explains that news on socio-

economic rights of citizens entails reporting issues of healthcare, education, employment, special protection for motherhood, children, the aged, the homeless and the hungry. He further explains that such news is always about communities without potable water, electricity, access road, schools or hospitals with a view to drawing government attention to these denied rights.

Nwabueze (2009) posits that development news refers to occurrence that has to do with improvement of man‘s life and the society at large. He explains that development news includes reports on ―infrastructural projects, skills development, planning and implementation of development policies, programmes and projects in various sectors of the society, health, education, sports, business/finance, crime fighting, civil service, science and technology and the military,‖ (Nwabueze, p.121). The mass media are not just catalyst in development, they influence and are being influenced by development in the society, hence the concept of mediatisation. It is against this backdrop that this paper examined mediatisation of development in Nigeria, the strengths and weaknesses of the mass media in accelerating development.

Justification for the study

The mass media have the obligation to raise the consciousness of the citizens on development projects through monitoring and reportage as well as holding the communities, organisations and the government accountable. As agents of development, the media in discharging their surveillance function owe the society a duty to report on the implementation, failure and success of development agenda of governments. Pavlik and McIntosh (2011) note that surveillance function of the media refers primarily to journalism, which is aimed at providing information about the processes, issues, events and other developments. Through gathering, collating and disseminating of news, the press fulfils this crucial function of surveillance.

Hasan (2013, p. 127) quotes Wilbur Schramm as saying, ―we ask the mass media to serve as our eyes and ears, sometimes our voices in distant places. We count on them to survey our environment and report it realistically to us.‖ Reporting development programmes in the society is obligatory to the media. Successes have been recorded by the mass media in creating awareness on myriads of development programmes in Nigeria since Independence in 1960. But the media are not immune to socio-economic and political challenges prevalent in the country. Udoakah (1998) asserts that the media cannot stop people from recalling their earlier experiences of collapsed economy and injustices in Nigeria and as such the people have the right to reject media explanation and form their own impressions. Given the above scenario, the mass media may not be a panacea to development if other factors that guarantee conducive living conditions are absent. Hence, this study examined the strengths and weaknesses of the mass media in facilitating development in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

This study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the roles of the mass media in the development of the state.
2. To assess the strengths of the mass media in the reportage of development programmes.
3. To identify the weaknesses of the mass media in the reportage of development.

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Communication

For development to be participatory, the people must have access to information on development, hence the need for communication. Asadu (2012) notes that development can only be seen to have taken place when it has been communicated to the people. Wilson

(2005) posits that since development is ―a gradual growth or advancement through progressive changes‖ then there must be a channel for arriving at those changes. This calls for application of communication. Hence development and communication are mutually related. Communication is at the heart of every human activity including development. It regulates and shapes all human behaviour.

Hasan (2013) traces the root of communication to the Latin word ―*communicare*‖ which is the verb form of ―*commnis*‖ meaning to make common. She notes that communication is a much-hyped word in the contemporary world and it is more than mere transferring or transmission of ideas or thoughts; it is not static but a dynamic process of action and interaction towards a desired goal. Hasan then defines communication as process of sharing or exchange of ideas, information, knowledge, attitude or feeling among two or more persons through certain signs and symbols. According to Anaeto et al (2008, p. 15), ―communication is an exchange of meaning, communication is what makes the world goes round, a kind of life-giving elixir. It is the engine that works human activities.‖

Development

The concept of development is a multifaceted phenomenon that has to do with positive changes in man‘s ways of living. The changes must touch the physical environment, economic, social, political, intellectual and spiritual lives of the people. Reviewing the concept of development, Udoakah (1998) asserts that all the definitions of development point towards the desire for changes that will affect citizens‘ welfare positively, and the non-allocation of responsibility for citizens‘ welfare to nobody but all. Uwaoma and Onu (2017) note that development conveys the idea of becoming more profitable or more productive or useful. The concept, according to these authors, ―connotes a state in which things are improving, growing, increasing, advancing, progressing or a steady improvement in quantity, quality or both,‖ (p.220).

Asemah (2011) describes development as a continuous process that improves the quality of life and beautifies the living conditions of the people through positive change, spiritual, material and infrastructural transformation. He explains that development is ultimately not a matter of technology or gross national product but the attainment of new knowledge and skills, the growth of a new consciousness and the expansion of the human confidence. This assertion corroborates Soola (2003), who posits that the new paradigm of development has shifted attention from modernisation to public participation in the development processes and procedures. Ojobor (2016) quoting Lent (1987) explains that the new paradigm places emphasis on self-reliance, people participation and faith in the people‘s ability to learn and change. This new paradigm encourages horizontal flow of information, application of traditional media and interpersonal communication channels to link development with the people‘s values, beliefs, attitudes, opinions and social needs.

Mass Media

These are channels of mass communication that carry development information to a large audience at the same time. Hasan (2013) lists mass media through which messages are transmitted to include radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, films, records, tape recorders and video cassette recorders. Baran (2013) also lists the mass media of communication to include radio, television, books, magazines, newspapers, movies, sound recordings, cell phones, and computer networks. Baran‘s listing seems to include the new media, which are ICT-based media like Internet, World Wide Web and social media platforms. We now have the traditional mass media and the new media in vogue.

Journalism

Journalism is a profession where practitioners engage in the gathering and dissemination of information on people, events and places of interest to members of the public. The profession is recognised by law and it is well developed as an academic discipline studied in tertiary institutions across the world. Hasan (2013, p. 174) defines journalism as ―a discipline of collecting, analysing, verifying and presenting news regarding current events, trends, issues and people.‖ She also cites Denis McQuail as defining journalism as paid writing for public media with reference to actual and ongoing events of public relevance. The implication here is that like other professions, those who practise journalism make a living out of it. The major article of their trade is news, the job is news reportage and the practitioners are called journalists.

Mediatisation

The concept of mediatisation helps to understand how the mass media permeate the society, become intertwined with, and influence other fields or social institutions, such as democracy, politics, economy and health. Mediatisation refers to the influence that the media exert on a variety of phenomena in the society. Hjavard (2013) observes that contemporary culture and society are permeated by the mass media to the extent that the media may no longer be conceived as being separate from cultural and social institutions. He explains that through the influence of the mass media, social institutions and cultural processes have changed character, function and structure in response to the omnipresence of the media. It has been postulated that all information is mediatised as coverage of development programmes can suffer from media outlet‘s attendant bias and framing and must be located within media agenda and conform to established news values.

Review of Related Literature

Development refers generally to the process leading to innovations and positive changes often experienced in the course of time in any society. It must necessarily affect human beings and the state of amenities positively in such polity. Ochonogor (2019) notes that development is growth or expansion in the social, economic and general wellbeing of the community members. He explains that it is the improvement of basic amenities that are required to make life meaningful and worth living. Development presupposes meaningful changes in the society. Soola (2003) defines development as change for the better, the ordering of society, social and economic processes leading to the eradication of abject poverty, poor health and illiteracy and resulting in improved standard of living and increased material comfort for all citizens.

It is obvious that communication facilitates development. Communication is pivotal to any attempt aimed at inducing change in any society as it provides information which helps people to understand and appreciate the necessity to accept development initiatives. Communication is germane to development because it engenders understanding and helps the beneficiaries of development to accept and participate in the innovation given the accruable benefits enunciated. Asadu (2012) asserts that communication supports participation and spread of sustainable development. He explains that communication enhances knowledge transfer and capacity building, adding that it is only a well-informed society can move for change.

According to Ochonogor (2016), the concept of communication can be viewed from two perspectives, traditional and modern. He explains that traditional communication finds expression in face to face interaction, accomplished through the word of mouth, symbols and customs that are native to a given society. The modern communication on the other hand depends on the mass media, which include the radio, television, newspapers, magazines, films, books, journals and the web-based new media and the Internet.

Ochonogor notes that the emergence of modern communication media has not obliterated the importance of the traditional media. This makes multimedia communication campaign necessary for the mobilisation of citizens towards acceptance and participation in development programmes.

Udoudo and Nwosu (2019) note that the need for communication for development and sustenance emanates from the fact that no human activity can succeed without appropriate and effective communication. They argue that many development projects which are supposed to improve the lives of the citizens especially those of the rural dwellers, have only been imposed on the citizens. They assert that the people whom development projects are meant for, should be engaged through strategic communication. This brings to the fore the concept of development communication. According to Udoakah (1998) development communication is preoccupied with the deliberate effort to redress the battered image given to the developing countries by the western media and it is aimed at attracting investments. He notes that the mass media have the obligation to bring citizens together using reporting techniques and programmes considered most appropriate to bring about wealth and wellbeing of citizens.

The mass media of communication have the ability to reach wide and heterogeneous audience simultaneously with information about issues and new ideas. Wilson (1997) posits that the mass media of communication are so pervasive in their socio-cultural and political influence such that there is hardly any field of human endeavour that they do not have specific role to play. The implication of this statement is that the mass media are expected to report and raise the people's consciousness to embrace development. Udomisor and Bwala (2010) assert that the mass media play prominent roles in development because of their capacity to inform, educate, entertain and enlighten the citizens.Specifically, the mass media perform the following roles in enhancing development in any given society. These roles are: (i) information, (ii) education, (iii) persuasion, (iv) entertainment, (v) surveillance, and (vi) correlation.

The information role of the mass media primarily hinges on their ability to provide the latest development news to members of the public to keep them abreast of current happenings in the society. Hasan (2013) notes that the latest technologies in media make transfer of information faster and wider, emphasising that accessibility to information through the media is a form of human empowerment. Under education function, the mass media have the advantage of a great reach and are capable of providing information meant for instruction and teaching. Asemah (2011) posits that learning takes place through the various information purveyed by the media. He asserts that the programme, ―*Who wants to be a millionaire*‖ aired on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is an education programme, which gives knowledge, ideas and skills to many people. It is evident that many discussion programmes on radio and television have imparted knowledge and skills to the audience.

The mass media usually create strategic messages to reach select audiences. This involves the use of social marketing strategies to bring about a desired behavioural change. This is bringing to the fore the persuasive power of the media. Most development projects in health, agriculture, economic self-reliance and financial inclusion rely on the persuasive power of the media to reach the people. This involves advocacy campaign aimed at convincing the citizens to adopt innovation like the use insecticide treated net, observing non-pharmaceutical protocol against COVID' 19 and rural banking among others. Under cultural and sports development, the mass media help to make the message tick through entertainment, which provides relaxation to all classes of the audience. Okunna (1999) observes that the mass media provide diversion and escape from the harsh realities of life, offering relief from the monotony of day to day existence and lessening the stress and

strains arising from the hustling and bustling of life. This means that the mass media have the capacity to provide amusement, diversion and means of relaxation. Most development messages in the mass media are often designed with appealing cultural music and colours.

The mass media act as watchdog in the society. This is surveillance function. The mass media often serve as the eyes and ears of the public. Surveillance means that the mass media scout round the environment and play up development programmes and the challenges. The mass media are saddled with the responsibility to monitor the progress of development projects in the polity as well as expose those factors militating against the development efforts of governments and the citizens.The correlation role of the mass media entails interpretation of information about present development programmes. The mass media often provide the forum for debate and discussion and thus help the citizens to interpret and understand the development projects better. Orewere (2006) explains that correlation refers to the process of going beyond mere gathering and distribution of information to include rational interpretation of what is given out as news about the environment. This could be presented as ‒news behind the news‖, editorials, news analysis or news commentary.

The need for the mass media to support development in the developing economies like Nigeria has led to the emergence of a genre of journalism called development journalism or development news reporting. Development news reporting according to Nwabueze (2009) is not just the skeletal straight news reporting, it includes all forms of featured, in-depth news reports on development issues. Such news reports also involve personality sketches and interviews on key players in development issues, development-oriented government and non-governmental organisations, initiators and beneficiaries of development efforts.

Nwosu (1996) categorises development news, articles and features as special news stories and features which are purposefully prepared for conscious application in the socio-economic and political development of a country and the achievement of a better life for its people. According to him, development news reports consist of the coverage of the progress on new bridges, schools, hospitals, houses, villages, industrial estates, offices, hotels and roads. Often times, the development journalists build the stories from press releases, speeches, workshop papers, field trips to project sites, investigation of abandoned projects and disappearance of funds for development projects. It appears that development news covers a variety of issues bordering on physical environment, social services and the wellbeing of citizens.

Nwabueze (2009) notes that development news reporting plays educative role and improves the capacity of the citizens to utilize the opportunities around them for their uplift. He explains that development news reportage draws government‘s attention to the development needs of the society. Development journalism, according to Nwabueze, mobilises the citizens to support or participate in actualising development policies, programmes and projects of government. Therefore, development news reporting facilitates the achievement of government development goals. It is expected that this genre of journalism will bring to the public knowledge the projects that government is planning to execute, the budget for the project and the extent of implementation. Development journalism as a typology of media operations that suits the developing countries allows for participatory development where the citizens make their needs known to the government and such needs are factored into development policies. Nwabueze (2009) further explains that development reporting enforces the role of the press as the watchdog of the society and makes the press more responsive and people friendly. He asserts that development news stories make those policy makers in government to be conscious of the fact that the citizens are aware of the responsibilities that their leaders owe the society.

Folarin (2000) identifies two type of development journalism operating in Nigeria. These are investigative development journalism and the benevolent –authoritarian development journalism. According to Folarin, the investigative development journalism thrives on critical questioning and evaluation of the usefulness of development projects and the efficiency of control by the authorities involved. He explains that this genre of development journalism brings to the fore public complaints of misgovernment and investigates allegations of corruption both of which may stall the development plans. This genre is often practised by the privately owned media organisations that are committed professionally. Folarin posits that the second genre of this development journalism, which is benevolent-authoritarian development journalism, believes in selective handling of information to safeguard the fragile economy of the developing countries from being plunged into crisis. This kind of practice calls for self- censorship on the parts of the development journalists. This type is usually seen in government owned media houses and those media outfits owned by politicians, whose cronies are in government and those handling government contracts.

Nwabueze (2009) corroborates this when he observes that government-owned media houses seem to spearhead development journalism to amplify the efforts of their employers (Federal and State governments) to the people. ‒But the snag here is that the government-owned media tend to concentrate on the commissioning of projects, flagging off of development campaigns – immunization, family planning, agricultural programmes. Most of these media hardly focus searchlight on stories about embezzlement of funds for development projects,‖ (Nwabueze, 2009, p.126). Nwabueze asserts that government-owned media in Nigeria do not usually report on supply of inferior materials for projects, substandard development projects done by contractors especially when such projects involved government officials. He however gave kudos to the privately-owned media organisations in Nigeria for reporting development news and exposing the bad stories on development-related issues in the society.

Okunna and Omenugha (2001) observe that government-owned media organisations have been known to gloss over such government _weaknesses‘ as failure to create jobs, to eradicate poverty, to fund education, to provide quality healthcare. When it comes to issues of development, journalists are as essential as any other professionals in the society. It is instructive to add here that most privately-owned media houses _manage‘ or suppress news reports on frauds in development projects because of financial inducement or the proprietors‘ relationship with the contractors. Investigative development journalism is good to ensure transparency and accountability in projects execution in the country. Kasoma (2010) posits that good reporters are essential to their communities and their nations as any professional or government person. Wilson (1997) maintains that the media in Africa and indeed Nigeria are expected to function as educators, informers, entertainers and mobilizers for social action when it comes to issue of human rights enforcement.

According to Nwabueze, most probe panels set up by the Federal Government to investigate allegations of frauds in certain sectors of the nation are products of development journalism-oriented investigative reports. Given the benefits of development news reporting enumerated above, the mass media in Nigeria should come out with vigour and determination to discharge the functions of development reporting conscientiously because they are agents of development in our society. The development journalists owe the society a lot through their consistent reportage of news on development that affects the wellbeing of the people in the polity.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Development Media Theory as its theoretical foundation. This is a normative theory propounded by Denis McQuail in 1987 to explain the operations of the mass media in the developing economies. Given the prevalent socio-economic and political situation in the developing countries, there was a need for a distinct media typology that will suit their circumstances. Hanson (2005) asserts that the development media theory prescribes appropriate press behaviour for developing nations in order to promote industry, national identity and partnerships with neighbouring nations. He asserts that the theory is meant to address the special needs of emerging nations, whose governments may feel that they need to restrict freedom of the press in order to promote national development. Asemah et al (2017) notes the theory owes its origin to the UNESCO's MacBride Commission of 1979, which recommends that press freedom should be subjected to some restrictions according to economic priorities and the development needs of the society. According to Folarin (2000), the major tenets of development media theory as formulated by McQuail (1987) are as follow:

First, Media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy; second, freedom of the press should be opened to restriction according to economic priorities and development needs of the society; third, media should give priority in their content to the national culture and language(s); fourth, media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries which are close geographically, culturally and politically; fifth, journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks; and sixth, in the interest of development ends the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict media operation; and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified.

Hasan (2013) argues that the limited application of the four established theories- Authoritarian, Libertarian, Soviet-Communist and Social Responsibility- of the press to the third world countries led to the birth of this new approach whereby communication is used to carry out development tasks. She explains that the overriding objective of the Development Media Theory was to use the mass media for nation building and support national development programmes like poverty alleviation, population control, literacy drive, employment generation schemes and others in the developing countries. The theory therefore emphasises the setting up of government agencies; monitor of training and licensing of media practitioners; control of the development of media institutions and regular censor of media content before distribution. It is all about the positive use of the mass media to boost social, economic, political, educational and cultural development of the country, hence its relevance in this study.

Methodology

This paper adopted the qualitative research method, reviewing the available literature in the genre of development communication, its theoretical basis and the concept of mediatisation in journalism and media studies. It relied on secondary data sources and examined some empirical studies on the performance of the mass media as they concern the reportage of development programmes in Nigeria.

Review of Empirical Studies

In a study aimed at finding out the percentage of programming dedicated to development oriented programmes by Globe FM 98.5, a federal radio station in Bauchi State and Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC), FM 94.6 respectively conducted by Wada (2018), it was found out that the state owned BRC carried more community development news than the federal radio, the Globe FM based in Bauchi State within the period of the

study spanning January, 2012 and December, 2014. The study titled, *Redirecting media use for national development: A comparative study of the programming content of two radio stations in Bauchi State, Nigeria,*made use of content analysis. The programme contents analysed were segmented into news, current affairs, entertainment, commercial and enlightenment.

The focus of this study was on enlightenment programme such as adult literacy (*Yaki da Jahhilci*), farming for wealth (*Noma Tushen Arziki*), developing rural communities (*Mu Raya Karkara*), science and technology (*Kimiyya da Fasaha*). It found that the Globe FM allotted 20% of its programmes to development issues within the period of the study while BRC FM gave a slot of 32% of its programmes development issues, which included programmes on education and professional improvements aimed at raising the awareness level of the audience. The study also found out that BRC aired programmes that encouraged participatory and interactive rural development projects.

This review shows that though Bauchi State Government has the same political leaning with the Federal Government-led All Progressive Congress (APC) at the time of the study, the two radio stations- BRC FM 94.6 and the Globe FM 98.5, performed differently in terms of development oriented programmes because their ownership is not the same. The study concluded that state owned radio station gives more air time and commitment to the issues of community development projects than the federal radio station based in the same state.

In another study conducted to find out the frequency and level of prominence given the five-point development agenda of the Akwa Ibom State Government conducted by Bassey (2018), it was discovered that the state government- owned newspaper, *The Pioneer* newspaper, reported more balanced news and gave prominence more to the five-point development agenda than *The Sensor*, a privately owned media house. The study titled, ‒Reporting development in Nigeria: A study of media coverage of the five-point development agenda of Akwa Ibom State Government‖ by *The Pioneer* and *The Sensor*Newspapers**,** had employed content analysis on the copies of the two newspapers published between May 29, 2015 and May 29, 2018 respectively. The five-point development agenda analysed were wealth creation, economic and political inclusion, poverty alleviation, infrastructure expansion and job creation.

The analysis revealed that *The Pioneer* newspaper allotted 9% space to wealth creation reports while *The Sensor* newspaper gave 8.4%; *The Pioneer* newspaper gave 8.5% attention to economic and political inclusion while *The Sensor* newspaper allotted 8%; poverty alleviation was accorded 6.8% space in *The Pioneer* newspaper while *The Sensor* gave 5.7%. Infrastructure expansion got 17% attention in *The Pioneer* newspaper and 14.3% in *The Sensor* while job creation got 7.9% attention in *The Pioneer* newspaper and *The Sensor* newspaper accorded it 6% space. The analysis showed that *The Pioneer* newspaper accorded the five-point development agenda 49.2% as compared to crimes and other reports which got 50.8% attention in the same newspaper. *The Sensor* newspaper on the other hand gave the development agenda 42.4% attention while crime and other reports got 57.6% space. The study concluded that ownership structure and political interests are impediments to development news reporting. It noted that public funded or government-controlled media appear patronising and so do not ask critical questions or spend time to monitor the execution of the development projects. The privately operated media houses on the other hand with different economic and political interests pay little attention to development news reporting.

Eyoh (2020) in a study titled, ‒Media coverage of sustainable development goals in Akwa Ibom State‖, examined the coverage of sustainable development goals (SDGs) by Radio Akwa Ibom, NTA 12 Uyo and *The Pioneer* newspaper between January and

December, 2019. The study employed content analysis of the 17 goals of SDGs as reported by the three media outfits. These goals are: (i) elimination of poverty, (ii) zero hunger, (iii) good health and wellbeing, (iv) quality education, (v) gender equality, (vi) clean water and sanitation, (vii) affordable and clean environment, (viii) decent work and economic growth, (ix) industry, innovation and infrastructure, (x) reducing inequality, (xi) sustainable cities and communities, (xii) responsible consumption and production, (xiii) climatic action, (xiv) life below water, (xv) life on land, (xvi) peace, justice and strong institutions, and (xvii) global partnership for the goals.

The analysis revealed that out of 2, 086 reports on SDGs carried by the three media houses, *Radio Akwa Ibom* reported 893, *NTA* -568 and *The Pioneer* newspaper -625. In terms of prominence given to SDGs reports, *Radio Akwa Ibom* recorded 6.2%,*NTA 12 Uyo* scored 2.7% while *The Pioneer* newspaper got 2.6%. The study also revealed that in terms of frequency of coverage, goal 3 of health and wellbeing recorded the highest cumulative score of 11% from the three media houses. The work concluded that radio as a medium of mass communication is more pliable to promoting development programmes than other mass media organs.

Discussion of Findings

From the analyses of the three empirical studies presented above, it is obvious that the mass media play crucial roles in the development of the society. In consonant with the first objective, this study has brought to the fore the fact the mass media have the capability to reach heterogeneous audience simultaneously with information about development programmes. Thus, the mass media enrich and facilitate development of any given society through information dissemination, education, persuasion, entertainment, surveillance and correlation of the environment (Asemah, 2011; Hasan, 2013; Udomisor & Bwala, 2010)).

The second objective of this study hinges on the strength of the mass media in enhancing development. This review has shown that the major strength of the mass media centres on their capacity to report development programmes frequently and prominently. In the study done by Wada (2018), it was discovered that the media create programmes on development such as adult literacy (*Yaki da Jahhilci*), agriculture (*Noma Tushen Arziki*), rural development (*Mu Raya Karkara*) and science and technology (*Kimiyya da Fasaha*). This corroborates the assertion by Udomisor and Bwala (2010) that the mass media derive their strength in national development through their capacities to create programmes to inform, educate, enlighten and entertain the people.

In the same vein, the study carried out by Bassey (2018) on the reportage of the five-point development agenda of the Akwa Ibom State government by *The Pioneer* and *The Sensor* newspapers showed that *The Pioneer* newspaper accorded the five-point development agenda 49.2% attention as compared to crimes and other reports which got 50.8% attention in the same newspaper. *The Sensor* newspaper on the other hand gave the development agenda 42.4% attention while crime and other reports got 57.6% space. *The Pioneer* newspaper almost dedicated 50% of its space to development agenda of the government of the day. This tallies with the concept of benevolent-authoritarian genre of development journalism practice by government-owned media as expounded by Folarin (2000).

In another study by Eyoh (2020), the strength of radio in the dissemination of development programmes among the populace was brought to the fore. The analysis revealed that out of the three media houses studied concerning coverage of SDGs programmes, *Radio Akwa Ibom* recorded 6.2% as against *NTA 12 Uyo*, which scored 2.7% while *The Pioneer* newspaper got 2.6%. This finding corroborates the fact the radio is cheap to own, operate and it is not restricted by linguistic barriers, goes beyond geographical borders and its programmes are highly educative and informative (Asemah, 2011).

The third objective of this study centres on the major weaknesses of the mass media in the mediatisation of development. This review has revealed that the major weakness of the mass media in the reportage of development programmes in Nigeria consist in their ownership structure, political parallelism and the nature of the media. In the study by Wada (2018), it was shown that Globe FM being Federal Government radio station in Bauchi did not reflect development programmes like Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC) owned by the Bauchi State Government. The same goes for the study by Bassey (2018) on the reportage of development programmes by *The Pioneer* newspaper owned by Akwa Ibom State Government and *The Sensor* newspaper, a private media outfit. The private newspaper did not give as much attention to the development programmes as the government media. The ownership and political party affiliation of media houses could hinder professionalism, kill workplace initiative and drive.

Sometimes, government-owned media appoint party loyalists as management staff, recruit cronies as employees and divert funds meant for programmes execution in the media organisation. This variation in degree of attention to development programmes corroborates Nwabueze (2009) assertion that government owned media houses usually do well in reporting development projects initiated by such government. The nature of the media as shown in the study by Eyoh (2020) could impede the dissemination of development programmes. Where the target audience members are not sophisticated, newspaper may not be the ideal media tool.

Conclusion

From the above exposition, the mass media are germane to the success of development programmes in Nigeria. The mass media have the capacity to reach wide and heterogeneous audience simultaneously with information about issues and news of development programmes. They enhance development in any given society through their roles of information dissemination, education, persuasion, entertainment, surveillance and correlation of the environment. The major strength of the mass media in development lies in their ability to report and raise the people‘s consciousness to embrace development. Ownership of the media, political parallelism and the nature of the media are major weaknesses of the media in promoting development.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, this study recommends the following:

1. Development news reporting should be accorded priority by the mass media as a matter of moral obligation irrespective of ownership given the development needs of our society. This also calls for social responsibility on the part of the media in terms of being truthful, accurate, fair and objective in spite of ownership and political leanings.

2. Proper combination or mix of the media should be engaged to break linguistic, socio-cultural, technical and geographical barriers in getting development messages across to the people.

3. The initiators of development programmes, government officials and the citizens, should also act sincerely and responsibly to promote the overall goals of development of the society. This gesture will go a long way to reducing incidents of adversarial press.

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