



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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UTILIZATION OF MASS MEDIA FOR THE IMPLIMENTATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN OBIO AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The importance of mass media to the development of human society cannot be overemphasized. Its role in recreating awareness, mobilization of community members for community development among others remains very crucial. As such community media are driven by democratic principles which are socially oriented and not profit driven. This paper therefore, examines the utilization of mass media in the implementation of community development projects in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. It was guided by four research objectives and research questions. The study used the descriptive survey research design and the population used for the study was 300 respondents. Self structured questionnaire which was validated by experts in community development was used as the instrument of data collection. Simple percentage was used in the analysis of data collected. This study reveals that local songs and jingles, radio, television etc can be utilized in creating awareness for community development projects in the area of study. It further reveals that establishment of community radio, newspaper and television are mass media strategies which can enhance community development projects. The study recommends among others that community development practitioners/agents should ensure effective circulation of information among different community members/participation by using mass media tools and channels appropriately for community development actions.

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is one of the emerging countries that are very keen to attain high level of developments being appreciated by the industrialized countries like USA, China, Germany etc. This keenness could be seen in various policies and programmes being made by the government in the country. These programmes include but not limited to vision 20:20:20, Education for All (EFA) by 2015, Poverty Eradication and Alleviation Programme (PEAD) etc. It is unfortunate, so to say, that these laudable programmes and policies, have never achieved their objectives. There is therefore, the need to examine all the possible factors, which have undermined these laudable programmes and policies that are designed to hasten Nigeria's development and place it in a proper place among comity of nations (Akintola and Yusuf, 2001). Nonetheless, it is a known fact that no country would develop independent of

various communities and sub-communities that make up the country. In other words, development of the nation is a function of sub-communities in that nation. This involves the amount of constructive community development projects being executed in various communities of a given nation which determines, to a large extent, the degree of development of that country (Eyiah, 2004). Community development as viewed by Flo and Anne is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solution to common problems. Community wellbeing (economic, social, environmental and cultural) often evolves from this type of collective action being taken at a grassroots level. Community development ranges from small initiative within a small group to larger initiative that involves the broader community. In achieving development of any country, communication plays an indispensable role in its acceleration. According to Eyiah (2004), without communication no society can exist, much less to develop and survive. Umechukwu (2001) sees mass media as channels for delivering mass communication messages. Thus, mass media is essential for the success of any development project that is intended to reach the mass of the

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people. Truly, mass media deals with communication addressed from one person to many individuals, mediated by elements in mass media, such as radio, television, film, newspaper, magazine, internet, advertising, books, which media organization use in disseminating information to their target audience. Mass media has been influencing the social, cultural, economic and religious aspect of the society. It is an agent and instrument of socialization. It complements the functions of other agents of socialization such as the church, school, family and peer groups (Okunna, 2002). The role of mass media in development of the society cannot be overstated. Mass media, virtually, relates with all the sectors-education, economy, and agriculture, politics-needed for the proper development of a society. The United Nations Development Group (2014), defines community development as a process where community members come together to take action and generate solutions to common problems. Typically, it aims to build stronger and more resilient local community for holistic development. Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need to effect change within their communities. However, certain aspects like health, education, employment generation, infrastructure, environment protection, sanitation, energy conservation and entertainment can be the determinants of community development efforts. Mass media can play a crucial role in community development by influencing and shaping behavioral patterns of the community people.

Thus, it is known that communication in Nigeria have always been a beacon of hope throughout history and has always sustained the urban communities, yet the hope of many people, especially those at ObioAkpokor local government area of River state, for a fulfilled life in the community seems to be declining. This appears to be due to the seeming underutilization of mass media in the implementation of community development projects in the area (Umechukwu, 2001).

Six roles of mass media in the development of every nation as identified by Eyiah (2004) includes:

- Surveillance of the environment
- Correlation of parts of society
- Transmission of social heritage
- Education for the masses
- Entertainment and mobilization of the members of the society

Mass media plays a key role in the collection and distribution of information within and outside a particular environment. The information flow is necessary for unity and coherence if we live in the society of collectivity. The correlation function includes the interpretation of the information, the prescription of conduct and, the comment on social value. By communicating information through the mass media we are transmitting social and cultural values, which aim at sustaining the society. Education on the policies of governments and on the rights and responsibilities could be carried out through the mass media. The mass media also entertain the public by providing emotional relaxation, intrinsic and cultural enjoyment (that is, provision of momentary escape from problems) and killing boredom. The mobilization function of the mass media is very important to developing communities everywhere. It seeks to bring the people together and helps to advance national development (Eyiah, 2004).

The role of media in national (community) development lies in their capacity and capability to teach, manipulate, sensitize and mobilize people through information dissemination (Ucheanya, 2003). Similarly, Nwabueze (2005) viewed that the mass media can chart a course for the public in line with the agenda setting theory, thus, crafting in the minds of the people, issues that should be viewed as priority including development programmes and policies. In this regard, the mass media can help the people to form attitudes through the creation of appropriate values for the community. However, despite the important roles of mass media in the development process there is still debate on the utilization of mass media and the concomitant development it could bring. For instance, Lane, (2007) observed that proper utilization of mass media will engender positive community development services. Utilization as defined by McGraw-Hill Concise Dictionary (2002) is the extent to which a given group uses a particular service (mass media) in a specified period. However, Lane and his colleagues stated that only mass media cannot engender meaningful changes. He therefore advocated for mass media transformation" (Ike, 2001). We cannot overlook the role of mass media in the implementation of community development projects. Implementation as defined by dictionary.com (2010) is to give practical effect to a programme, policy or project and ensure the actual fulfillment by concrete measures. Laudon (2010) defined it as a specified set of activities designed to put into practice a project of known dimension. Accordingly, implementation processes are purposeful and are described in sufficient detail such that independent observers can detect the presence and strength of the specific set of activities related to implementation. The use of mass media is unavoidable because it speeds up the rate of community development projects and services. Community development projects, no doubt depends on information sharing for its implementation, existence and sustenance. The functional information sharing network among the stakeholders of community development projects is made possible through mass communication, including the modern and traditional medium.

Baran (2004,) asserts that the two ways to understand opportunities and responsibilities in the process of community development are to view the mass media as the cultural storytellers and to conceive them as development forum. This assertion is no doubt rooted in the notion that we are all involved in the business of transforming and developing our communities, which will define the community. The present level of development in ObioAkpokor seems to indicate that community development projects are not successfully implemented, even though they have laudable goal of building stronger and more resilient local communities. Community development projects in ObioAkpokor, such as sanitation, portable water scheme and the establishment of markets for different categories of buyers and sellers as well as building of civic centers and community halls have failed to achieve their objectives. This suggests that either those interested in the development of the community have not been sufficiently involved or they have not adequately understood the opportunities and their responsibilities in the process. For so many years, development as a concept was used to purely describe economic growth alone. This is so because economic growth was often considered from the perspectives of the Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country which were used as a standard for measuring development. With time it was discovered that the definition was not encompassing as economic growth alone

could no longer be used to measure the infallible index of human and national prosperity, Nwabueze (2005). Not until recently, a lot of social developments in Nigeria were directed towards people in the urban areas while those in the rural areas that make up the bulk of the population were relatively neglected. Although the necessary materials for the development of these rural areas abound; naturally within their immediate environment, their lack of awareness and participation tend to impede community development. The problem of social and political integration is, perhaps, one of the most intriguing to people of a developing society like Nigeria. No nation can achieve its goal of development without conscious efforts at integrating its people and mobilizing them to understand, appreciate and identify with the ideals of development. For a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse nation like Nigeria with very high level of illiteracy and unemployment, the need for public enlightenment and social mobilization is imperative. Basic to any developmental process is man's desire for a better life and better environment. But development, as stated in the 4th National Development Plan, *"does not start with goods and things; it starts with People; their orientation, organization and discipline (4th National Dev. 2 Plan")*. When a society is properly oriented, organized and disciplined, it can be prosperous in natural wealth.

Statement of the Problem: In our present century, every community is expected to be developed due to the radical changes in technology and various forms of printed and non-printed and electronics media, where basic information are fully carried and disseminated to all parts of the world. However, despite the pace of development in mass media many towns in ObioAkor inclusive are still finding it difficult to get the basic information, education, enlightenment and orientation which will help to empower them to contribute effectively towards community development. This dearth of information has impacted negatively to the implementation of community development projects. Regrettably these problems have totally caused changes in respective ways in the lives of the affected people in the community ranging from denial of education, access to current information of the present day, inability to be economically viable, political unconsciousness and social irresponsibility. The problem of this study therefore, is to ascertain the utilization of mass media in the implementation of community development projects in the area of study.

Research Questions

The following are the guiding questions for the study:

- To what extent can mass media be utilized in raising community awareness for effective implementation of community development projects in ObioAkor Local Government Area?
- To what extent can mass media be utilized in mobilization of community members for effective implementation of community development projects in the area of study?
- What are the strategies for enhancing the utilization of mass media for effective implementation of community development projects in the area of study?.
- What are the factors militating against the effective utilization of mass media for community development project in the area of study?.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of Utilization: Utilization according to McGraw-Hill (2002) is the extent to which a given group uses a particular service. Utilization is the decision making process of implementation based on instructional design specification. Byers (2007). She further noted that before media is used, the instructional designer should analyze and utilize the type of media that is appropriate for the community. Media utilization involves identifying the key factors for selection and use of technological resources that meet the requirements of the community. Alex (2001) viewed utilization as a way to promote successful community development projects. The utilization function includes: the selection, diffusion and institutionalization of instructional methods and materials. Resier (2012). Therefore utilization is a thorough process by which to develop and deliver material effectively. In the utilization of mass media a number of guidelines, plans and principles are to be followed. One basic plan for utilizing media as noted by Brown et al (2005) requires the community to prepare, present and follow-up any project in the community. In this context, utilization is all about the selection of the communication medium and the delivery system.

Concept of Mass Media: The concept of mass media has been defined by various authors. Ruben (1984) defines mass media, as a communication of behavior- related information. Croft (2004) in his view sees it as the sharing of ideas and feeling in a mood of mutuality. Smith (2012), defined mass media as those forms of broadcast media such as in the case of television and radio, print media like newspaper and magazine, the internet include e-mail. Many people around the world rely on mass media for news and entertainment and globally, mass media is a huge industry. Nwabueze (2005) put it as a communication that is to a large group, or groups, of people it can be written, spoken or broadcast communication. Some of the most popular forms of mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, advertisements, social media, television, Internet, and films/movies. According to smith (2012) mass media tries to reach a very large market, such as the entire population of a country. By contrast, local media covers a much smaller media provided for particular demographic groups. Other definitions place emphasis on the importance of signs and symbols, as well as the transmission of cultural information, ideas, attitudes, or emotion from one person or a group to another.

This branch of mass media involves in some ways the aspect of theater, music, dance, folklore, and other complementary traditional communication media. mass media are tools capable of facilitating short term intermediate and long term efforts on audience. He further noted that short term effect include; exposing audience to empowerment concepts, creating awareness and knowledge, altering outdated or incorrect knowledge and enhancing audience recall of particular advisements or public service announcement (PSAs), promotion or programme name. Immediate term effects include all of the above mentioned effects as well as changes in attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of social norms. Finally, long term effect incorporates all the above mentioned effects in addition to focused restructuring of perceived social norms and maintenance of behaviour change. Definitions of mass media tend to capture the general idea of the social impact of media on one hand, and the variances in individual perspective of media approach on the other hand.

From whatever angle we look at it, these definitions may fit well into specific aspects of human development from philosophy, to psychology from sociology to education etc. Media in today's world has been described as a combination of content, comprising scientific and artistic ensemble of music, film, TV, radio, publishing, advertisement, and electronic games, (Locksley, 2009). In a similar perspective, Lane (2007) describes Mass media as any medium used to transmit mass information. He makes categorical classifications of what could be termed as mass media forms comprising of the eight industries of mass media; books, newspapers, magazines, and recordings, radio, movies, television and the internet. Mass Media has attained rapid remarkable expansion, resulting in proliferated dynamism over its content, platform, and devices, following technological innovative changes over a long period of years. These developments have provided some dimensions of influence over various industries and social institutions. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2005) defines mass media as all organizations that provide information and news for the public through the various communicating mode such as radio, television, circular, letters and newspapers. In the context of this study, mass media will be defined as all media and organizations involved in the dissemination of information such as news, values, programmes and policies to a large audience. Indeed, it plays a crucial role in influencing the attitude and values of the populace.

Community Development Projects: The United Nations defines community development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. It is a broad term given to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities. Community development is also understood as a professional discipline, and is defined by the International Association for Community Development (www.iacdglob.org), the global network of community development practitioners and scholars, as "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organization, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings". Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need to effect change within their communities. These skills are often created through the formation of social groups working for a common agenda. Community developers must understand both how to work with individuals and how to affect communities' positions within the context of larger social institutions.

On the other hand, community is a group of people who share the same culture and space. According to Michelle (2002) community is used in two ways, paralleling usage in other areas. The first is an informal definition of community as a place where people used to live. The second meaning is similar to the usage of the term in other social sciences: a community is a group of people living near one another that interact socially. A community can be defined as people of the same origin, living in the same area or people with similar occupations. A community may be a tribe or neighborhood, a region or a larger society (Nzeneri, 1996). Community development therefore shows the coming together of these

people who share the same culture to achieve a goal that will effect a positive change in the area. According to Oduaran (2001) community development will help to organize the people and their resources in such a way as to satisfy some of their needs and so, doing, acquire the attitudes, experience and cooperative skills for repeating this process again in their own way. Community development, according to Esenjor (1992) is a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are not limited to the efforts of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the community to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them contribute fully to national progress. To clarify this definition, Esenjor further stated that this term (community development) embraces the efforts of individuals, self-help groups, non-governmental and governmental organizations, collective thinking, collective action and participation of each uniting body identifying with different roles towards the actions growth to make this unifying. The community development approach emphasizes self- help, the democratic process, and local leadership in community revitalization (Barker, 1991). Most community development work involves the participation of the communities or the beneficiaries involved (Smith, 1998). Thus, community participation is an important component of community development.

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Science (2003) stressed that community development embodies two major ideas; the first is that of conscious acceleration of economic, technologic and social change (development), the second is loyalty which refers to planned social change in village, town or city. It relates to project that have obvious local significance and that can be initiated and carried out by local people. One of the major aims of community development is to encourage participation of the community as a whole. Indeed, community development has been defined as a social process resulting from citizen participation (Smith, 1998). Community development projects are projects that aim to improve the social, economic and political spheres of the community. The assessment of community needs can be determine through the process of well-planned interviews or questionnaires designed for community member especially the enlighten ones. Through these, their felt needs may be well identified and appropriate strategies for satisfying them discovered. An example of community needs can be found in Tanzanians experience in such campaign programme as "*mtuniAfya*" (man and health) and the "*ChakulaniUhai*" (food is life). These campaigns came as a result of identifying health and food production as the felt needs of the Tanzanian community. According to Okonkwo (2013), some of the community development projects in Nigeria include:

- Provision of regular education: kindergarten, pre-school, and after- school progammes;
- Recreation, parks and playgrounds;
- Sanitation, potable water and garbage collection libraries;
- Electrification projects;
- Establishment of markets for categories of buyers and sellers;
- Building of civic centers or community halls;
- Construction of roads to aid easy transportation;
- Social services for elderly, homeless and the disabled;
- Health care

- Purchase of tractors and other agricultural equipment to aid cultivation and mass production.

Community development projects is multi-faceted and numerous. The education needs of a community may, according to Freire in Nzeneri (2010), be in the area of political and ethical, scientific, esthetic and technical. It is the duty of the development agents or specialists who are working at the local level to bring about human-centered development with adult groups through adult education, health, community development, agriculture, social worker, religious educators, labour leaders etc. to collaborate with the communities and foster their development of their various projects according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Roggers client centered therapy. For the purpose of this study, however, community development projects are projects designed to facilitate access and improve the well-being of community members.

Mass Media for Raising Community Awareness: Mass media is any media which inclines to reach large audience, it either takes broadcast or print media form. Broadcast form of Media is also denoted to as electronic media and is peculiar to radio and television technology. Print media on the other hand, operates in the form of newspaper, magazine, journal and other print material. The Internet is the most recent form of mass media. Mass Media has become a huge industry in the world market on which many people around the world rely for information, news, and entertainment (Smith, 2003). There are many ways through which mass media can be utilized in raising community awareness for effective implementation of community development projects Dutton (2002) pointed out that interactive radio and television programme based on a selected topic are dispersed to distinctive audience to help inform them. According to Dutton the use of account and dialect language, the tone and pace of delivery and the establishing of dialogue with the audience, for example, via the phone in a programme of radio stations and the demonstrative method of television education are all different ways through which mass media can raise consciousness in strengthening the community. According to Barham and Boyd-Baret (2000), in community awareness programmes, the mass media especially the printed media, for example, newspaper, and magazine have done well in creating community awareness for diversity of people on various issues associated to family life education. Community awareness programmes like cultural education, religious institutions and socio political education are captioned on the reach of the audience. Karachi (2013) stated that mass media can be utilized in raising community awareness through creation of learning environment. Mass media educate people on the need to stand and criticize violence in the community.

Therefore, mass media helps to eradicate superstitious and harmful doctrines among the people of the community. It can be utilized in raising community awareness for effective implementation of community development projects politically, economically, morally, culturally as well as to take active part in the development of their living standards and in the overall development of their community. From origin, man has been and is still a mobilizer, such that man has always been in the business of telling people to channel their support or resources towards a social cause. He has done this function either as an individual or a group. From a general view, mobilization can be seen as a process whereby people can be sensitized to pursue a social change for themselves. In a

nutshell therefore, mobilization is all about how the society or individual(s) can be informed about things especially developmental programmes around them. The influence of mass media on human behavior has been a subject of research over the last 50 years (Piotrow, Rimon and Winnard, 1990). Over time, the sociological capability of media has gone beyond the primary cardinal functions of information, education and entertainment. The role of mass media has assumed creation of the environment for solving socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political issues that has provided fertile grounds for the debate on media use. Some of these areas of concern have not only been founded on the premise of striking balance between different types and forms of communication, but also have always centered on the efficacious power of the media on social change. Bandura, (1986), argues in support of the social learning theory which suggests that mass media may have far greater capabilities than the acknowledged role of creating public awareness or spreading specific information. He argues in favor of this claim that no other form of media carries the potent ability to directly influence changes in human behavior like television does. "When media influences tend to lead viewers, in the case of audio visual, to discuss and negotiate matters of importance with others in their lives, the media set in motion transactional experiences that further shape the course of change", (Bandura, 2002). He stressed that a drama series targeted at social cognitive theory, has the potential ability to serve as a tool for both personal and societal change better than the listening media. His view point is based on the assumption that people learn by observation and by using other people as role models better than they do hearing a story. He concluded that Mass media productions inform people, and enables them adopt effective strategies and motivational support to exercise control over their life conditions (Bandura, 2002).

A Political Scientist, Karl Deutsch cited in Obasanjo and Mabogunje (1991) defines mobilization as a process in which major clusters of old, social economic and psychological commitment are eroded and broken and people become available for new pattern of socialization and behaviour. According to Udokah as cited in Nwodu and Ukozor (2003), mobilization is the awakening or activation of the dominant consciousness of a greater number of people with the use of views, ideas for the purpose of gaining their support for an action or inaction. It is a process of creating new loyalties. It entails building and sustaining cohesive alliance between development agents and targets or beneficiaries of a given developmental programme as well as serving their support and participation in the programme. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) (1987) notes that human history is dotted with examples of massive efforts to mobilize different human societies to achieve some set goals. The report states that to mobilize people is to increase their level of awareness of certain set objectives with a view to achieving those objectives. Social mobilization is traditionally perceived as a community-based or country-level action. The guiding principle of this series, though, is to recognize new scope for social mobilization strategies at both a global and local level. This "new" social mobilization takes advantage of constantly evolving communications tools and technologies, acknowledges the impact of globalization and recognizes a "community" as being defined by shared issues across borders rather than by locality alone. Social mobilization begins with a conscious recognition of the problem to be addressed. Only when people become aware of how the epidemic matters to

them and what action they can take, will true social mobilization begin. Social mobilization, according to Political Bureau Report (1987) cited by Adamolekun (1989) must be seen in terms of involving the people in taking part actively and freely in discussions and decisions affecting their general welfare. In other words, social mobilization and community development should aim at increasing people's level of awareness or cognition of political and other issues so that they can apply their energies positively and participate actively in the social and political life of the country. Social mobilization, as defined by United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), on its website www.unicef.org in December 2013, is a process that engages and motivates a wide range of partners and allies at national and local levels to raise awareness in the community.

The successful implementation and sustenance of any community development project requires the integration of elements such as citizen participation, mobilization and community leadership (Oduaran 1994). For mobilization to be successful certain conditions have to be established. Oduaran (1994) listed three factors. First, the minimum level of socio-economic satisfaction for example food, employment, understanding, basic education and so on must be adequately provided. Secondly, a guarantee of government support where the community's efforts are inadequate or are even not forthcoming, and thirdly, the legitimization of the plan for community improvement all have to be secured. Apart from this, working more intensively through such institutions as the traditional and religious leaders, clubs and societies, co-operatives, labour unions, student bodies among others might be worth trying out. Mass media therefore, has been essential instrument in mobilizing community members for development. In addition to informing, educating and entertaining the people, the mass media also create the environments for resolving socio-cultural, economic and political issues that affects the community. The mass media is also utilized to inform and enable them to adopt effective strategies to channel their sources and support to social issues.

Factors Militating Against the Effective Utilization of Mass Media: No doubt, mass media are reliable tools for community development in Nigeria, however, there are some factors militating against the effective utilization of mass media in the implementation of community developments some of these factors are poor funding, management problem, illiteracy, lack of technical know-how, low level of penetration and weak economic amongst others. The acquisition and maintenance of mass media like computer and television requires adequate funding. Unfortunately, Nigeria though a rich country, has not been able to set aside enough funds for it. This is not surprising because of her weak economy which makes her appeal for different kinds of aids from developed countries Olise (2010). Ndibe (2011) pointed out that the patterns of mass media ownership in Nigeria contribute varying levels of constraints towards community development. He noted that state and federal governments own some newspaper as well as television and radio stations which incidentally, shape how effective mass media can be utilized. He further noted that any community development project carried out on these media is well sponsored to protect the image of the owner but far from discharging the needed information. Nzeneri (2008) asserts that educational broadcasting in Nigeria faced a number of problems which include electrical power failures, technical insufficiencies etc.

these problem may at times adversely influence the effective utilization of mass media for community development. This explain why Mbachu (2003) stressed that "since the development of technology and its effective application, are both function of a given society's level of economy and social development, the ability of the Nigerian mass media to absorb and deploy recent advance in technology has been hampered, by the country's continuing underdevelopment". The newly emerging trends regarding mass media globally, indicates that mass media deployment and development in Nigeria will increasingly be left behind unless the country breaks the chain of corruption and economic stagnation and achieves a higher level of development that generate its people a higher standard of living that will be a strong stimulus for production and consumption of mass media.

Utilization of Mass Media for the Implementation of Community Development Projects: There are numerous plans for enhancing the utilization of mass media in the implementation of community development projects. Mass media plans generally refer to the method, tactics, ways, a planned series of actions; the media adopted in order to ensure that their messages are effectively delivered to the audience with positive and immediate feedback. There are various plans for enhancing the community development projects. According to Deborah (2004) mass media would be utilized effectively in community development by setting media objectives for publicizing various projects that will strengthen the community, identifying the peculiarities of the audience and the group it aim to reach. WHO (2007) noted that the formative plans for enhancing utilization of mass media for empowerment such as formative research which enables the mass media to identify existing norms, test messages, develop character or story lines and determine the most effective and relevant channel to reach the targeted audience or group within the community. In addition, Bagadikkan (2013) argued that identifying developmental and empowerment issues are also important plan for enhancing the utilization of mass media in the implementation of community development projects. Mayor (2012) observed that for mass media to be effective in its adoption for community development, it has to portray a democratic approach. According to Mayor, the media should have its own construction and ownership, uniting the different needs, opinion and interests of the citizens in the process. Consequently, the media should call for equitable economic, social, cultural and information distribution to all stakeholders as well as political enlightenment, and fair representation in the community. One of the hindrances to effective use of media for community development and empowerment is the ownership of mass media. Concentration of media ownership in recent decades in the hands of few co-operatives led to the narrowing of censorship, enabling viewers, readers and listeners to receive a broad spectrum of information from varying source that is not tightly controlled, biased and filtered. This plan according to him has the potential to enhance the utilization of mass media for community mobilization and development. Williams (2001) opined that the use of dialogue networking technologies which promote dissent and reforms can lend credibility to development projects and empower people. This dialogue networking technologies, according to Williams, will enhance the utilization of mass media in the implementation of community development projects. In sum, incorporating the mass media in identifying developmental and empowerment needs, mobilizing people, addressing differences, and promotion of

fair representation will enhance the effectiveness of mass media in the implementation of community development projects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design: The research design that was used in carrying out this study was the descriptive survey research design. This research design is considered most appropriate for gathering information for this study because the survey research focuses on people's opinions, attitudes, motivation, perceptions, behaviours and beliefs that provide a more comprehensive understanding of a social phenomenon and process. According to Ali (2006) a descriptive survey design uses the sampled data in an investigation to document, describe and explain what is in existence or non-existence or present status of existence of the phenomena being investigated. Therefore, the survey research design was considered appropriate for the study.

Population of the Study: The population of the study consisted of youths in selected communities in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The communities included Elioizu, Rumuodara, Rumukwurushi, Rumuodomaya, Elelenwo, Woji, Rumuokoro, Rumuomasi, Elioparanwo. A total of three hundred (300) respondents were selected as the population.

Table 1. Population Distribution of Respondents for the Study

S/N	Communities	Population
1	Elioizu	40
2	Rumuodara	35
3	Rumuokwurushi	38
4	Rumuodomaya	42
5	Elelenwo	36
6	Woji	35
7	Rumuokoro	25
8	Rumuomasi	20
9	Elioparanwo	31
	Total	300

Sample and Sampling Technique : In order to give the people equal chances of selection, the random sampling method was adopted. The proposed sample size was (300) comprising mainly respondents from Obio-Akpor LGA. It is in the view of this paper that the size of the sample will be a true reflection and the respondents of Obio-Akpor, hence this proposed sample size, the respondents are chosen as research universe because when we talk of mass media, the class of audience is within this class. To this effect, (45) pieces of papers were cut and wrapped in the same size (25) of those papers would contain the role of Mass Media in Community Development, while the remaining (20) would be blank. After this (25) persons had picked, the researcher would be able to adopt the random sampling method. This is to ensure that bias is not introduced regarding who is included in the survey.

Instrument for Data Collection: A structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher to get the necessary data for this study. The questionnaire items were generated based on the research questions and designed to elicit information from respondents. The questionnaire was made up of sections A and B. section A contained information based on the respondent's demographic characteristics while section B contained items which elicited information on the extent of utilization of mass

media in the implementation of community development projects in Obio-Akpor L.G.A of River State. The instrument was based on four-point rating scale of:

Very High Extent (VHE) -	4points	High Extent (HE) -	3points
Low Extent (LE) -	2points	Very Low Extent (VLE) -	1point or
Strongly Agreed (SA) -	4point	Agreed (A) -	3points
Disagreed (D) -	2points	Strongly Disagreed (SD) -	1point
$10 \div 4 = 2.5$			

Therefore a criterion mean of 2.5 was adopted for the study. Any item with a mean score of 2.5 and above was accepted while those below the mean score of 2.5 were rejected.

Validation of the Instrument: For the validation of items in the questionnaire, content and construct validity were carried out. This was done to ensure that the instrument accurately measures what it sets out to measure. Therefore, the research instrument was subjected to content scrutiny by experts in the field of community development. In addition, the researcher ensured that majority of the items in the research instrument successfully measured the theoretical constructs of this study, which led to the fine-tuning of the items in the questionnaire to make them suitable for the study.

Reliability of Research Instrument: The reliability of the research instrument is the degree to which it can yield consistent finding when replicated. The reliability of the instrument was established through test re-test reliability method. The pilot test involved 15 respondents from port Harcourt Local Government Area was used.

Procedure for Data Collection: The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the respondents. The respondents filled the questionnaire and returned them to the researcher on the spot. In other words, on the spot administration and collection strategy was adopted as a result of that all the distributed instrument were completed and returned according to 100 percent return rate.

Method of Data Analysis: The data was analyzed using mean statistic. The mean was used to analyze all the research questions. The mean of each item was obtained by dividing the scores by the number of responses. Four rating scale was used to calculate the points. Therefore, items with mean score of 2.5 and above were accepted while items below 2.5 were rejected.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: To what extent can mass media be utilized in raising community awareness for effective implementation of community development projects in ObioAkpor local Government Area. Table 1 shows that the mean score of 3.04 of the respondents accepted the use of local songs and jingles in the media can raise awareness in the community for effective implementation of community development projects in Obio-Akpor.

The mean score with 2.92 accepted that mass media can be used to create awareness in the community, while those who accepted that it is through mass media that community members become aware of developmental projects had a mean score of 2.52. Those that accepted that radio, television and newspaper programmes can be utilized in promoting needs of the community had the mean of 2.5.

Table 2.

S/No	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	Use of local songs and jingles in the media can raise awareness in the community	139	60	76	23	193	3.04	Accept
2.	Mass media can be used to create awareness in the community.	130	68	52	52	878	2.92	Accept
3.	Radio, television and newspaper programme can be utilised in promoting needs of the community.	100	50	50	100	750	2.5	Accept
4.	Community members can use the various channels of the media to express their challenges.	138	50	17	18	754	2.51	Accept
5.	It is through mass media that community members become aware of developmental projects.	92	40	100	68	756	2.52	Accept

Table 3

S/No	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	The use of influential resource persons in radio/television/newspaper can increase interests in community mobilisation.	133	91	33	10	881	2.93	Accept
2.	Mass media can be used to promote community solidarity through interactive programmes.	90	77	75	58	799	2.66	Accept
3.	Mass media can raise collective consciousness by highlighting the benefits of projects such as erosion control, construction of water boreholes, etc.	80	120	76	24	856	2.85	Accept
4.	Mass media can be used to rally community members for developmental projects.	100	100	60	40	860	2.86	Accept
5.	Mass media can be used to educate the community on the strategies for enhancing their living standard.	150	44	80	26	918	3.06	Accept

Table 4.

S/No	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	Low level of literacy hinder the utilisation of mass media in creating awareness for community development projects.	150	103	35	12	991	3.30	Accept
2.	Inability of media channels such as radio, television, newspapers etc. to broadcast in the local dialect affects its utilisation for community development.	125	83	52	40	893	2.97	Accept
3.	Insincerity on the part of the promoters of development projects affect the use of mass media.	58	65	77	60	681	2.27	Reject
4.	Effective use of mass media for community development is hindered by high cost.	132	79	50	39	904	3.01	Accept
5.	Political interference hinders the effective utilisation of mass media in the community.	100	44	82	74	768	2.56	Accept

Table 5.

S/No	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	Establishment of community radio/television/newspaper can enhance the use of mass media for development projects.	120	100	50	30	910	3.0	Accept
2.	Mass media should be democratic in be democratic in carrying out its developmental projects.	215	35	40	10	1055	3.51	Accept
3.	Mass media should utilise formative research in carrying out developmental programme so as to identify existing norms and most relevant channel to reach the target audience.	200	48	37	15	1033	3.44	Accept
4.	Mass media should identify the audience for which a developmental programme meant for to avoid misplacement of priority and encourage the enhancement of mass media utilisation for developmental project.	180	90	14	16	1034	3.44	Accept

The respondents with the mean score of 2.51 accepted that community members can use the various channels of the media to express their challenges. These responses by the respondents shows that mass media have been utilized in raising community awareness for effective implementation of community development projects in Obio-Akpor, L.G.A of River State.

Research Question 2

To what extent can mass media be utilized in mobilization of community members for effective implementation of community development projects in Obio-Akpor?

Table 3 indicates that respondents with the mean score of 3.21 accepted that the use of influential community members as resource persons in radio/ television/ newspaper can increase interests in community mobilization. The respondents with the mean score of 3.06 accepted that mass media can be used to educate the community on the strategies for enhancing their living standard. Those with the mean score 2.86 accepted that mass media can be used to rally community members for

developmental projects, while those with the mean score of 2.85 accepted that mass media can raise collective consciousness by highlighting the benefits of projects such as erosion control, construction of water boreholes, etc. The respondents with the mean score of 2.66 accepted that mass media can be used to promote community solidarity through interactive programmes. The responses above shows that mass media have been utilized in mobilization of community members for effective implementation of community development projects in Obio-Akpor.

Research Question 3

What are the factors militating against the effective utilization of mass media for community development project in Obio-Akpor?

Table 3 above indicates that those who accepted that low level of literacy hinder the utilization of mass media in creating awareness for community development projects had a mean score of 3.30 while those that accepted effective use of mass media for community development is hindered by high cost

had a mean score of 3.01. The respondent that accepted inability of media channels such as radio, television, newspapers etc. to broadcast in the local dialect affects its utilization for community development were 2.97 while those that accepted that political interference hinders the effective utilization of mass media in the community had the mean score of 2.56. Those who accepted that insincerity on the part of the promoters of development projects affect the use of mass media had the mean score of 2.27. Therefore, the responses show that the factors militating against the effective utilization of mass media for community development project have been utilized.

Research Question 4

What are the strategies for enhancing the utilization of mass media for effective implementation of community development projects in Obio-Akpor?

Table 5 shows that the respondents with the mean score of 3.51 accepted that mass media should be democratic in its own construction in carrying out its developmental projects while those that accepted that mass media should identify the audience for which a developmental programme is meant for to avoid misplacement of priority and encourage the enhancement of mass media utilization for developmental projects had the mean score of 3.44. Those who accepted that mass media should utilize formative research in carrying out developmental programme so as to identify existing norms and most relevant channel to reach the target audience had a mean score of 3.44. The respondents with the mean score of 3.03 accepted that establishment of community radio/television/newspaper can enhance the use of mass media for development projects. These responses indicate that the strategies for enhancing the utilization of mass media for effective implementation of community development projects have been utilized in Obio-Akpor L.G.A of River State.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The respondents were of the opinion that mass media has been utilized in raising community awareness for effective implementation of community development projects in Obio-Akpor using local songs and jingles. Mass media has also created awareness in the communities using radio and newspapers to promote community needs and make community members become aware of developmental projects. This explains why Barham and Boyd-Baret (2000), stress that in community awareness programmes, the mass media especially the printed media, for example, newspaper, and magazine have done well in creating community awareness for variety of people on various issues related to family life education. Community awareness programmes like cultural education, religious institutions and socio political education are captioned on the reach of the audience. Karachi (2013) stated that mass media can be utilized in raising community awareness through creation of learning environment. The result of the findings also showed that mass media can be utilized in mobilization of community members for effective implementation of community development projects in Obio-Akpor. This can be achieved through the use of influential community members as resource persons in radio/ television/ newspaper can increase interests in community mobilization; to promote community solidarity through interactive programmes, raising collective

consciousness by highlighting the benefits of projects such as erosion control, construction of water boreholes, etc; to rally community members for developmental projects strategies for enhancing their living standard and mass media to educate the community on the strategies for enhancing their living standard. This is true in the words of Oduaran (1994) who opines that successful implementation and sustenance of any community development project requires the integration of elements such as citizen participation, mobilization and community leadership.

In addition, the findings also revealed that certain factors militate against the effective utilization of mass media for community development project in Obio-Akpor. These factors include low level of literacy; Inability of media channels such as radio, television, newspapers etc. to broadcast in the local dialect; high cost and Political interference. That is why Nzeneri (2008) asserts that educational broadcasting in Nigeria faces a number of problems which include electrical power failures, technical insufficiencies etc. these problem may at times adversely influence the effective utilization of mass media for community development. Mbachu (2003) stressed that "since the development of technology and its effective application, are both function of a given society's level of economy and social development, the ability of the Nigerian mass media to absorb and deploy recent advance in technology has been hampered, by the country's continuing underdevelopment". Finally, the study showed that there are strategies for enhancing the utilization of mass media for effective implementation of community development projects. These strategies, identified by the research include Establishment of community radio/television/newspaper; utilization of formative research in carrying out developmental programme to identify existing norms and most relevant channel to reach the target audience; and the ability of the mass media to identify the target audience for the developmental programme in order to avoid misplacement of priority. According to Deborah (2004) mass media would be utilized effectively in community development by setting media objectives for publicizing various projects that will strengthen the community, identifying the peculiarities of the audience and the group it aim to reach. WHO (2007) noted that the formative strategies for enhancing utilization of mass media for empowerment such as formative research which enables the mass media to identify existing norms, test messages, develop character or story lines and determine the most effective and relevant channel to reach the targeted audience or group within the community.

Conclusion

Therefore the study concludes that the use of mass media has promoted community needs and create awareness of development projects as well as the use of local songs and jingles to raise awareness of community development projects in the the area of study. There are various ways the mass media can be utilized in the effective implementation of community development projects. These are using influential community members as resource persons in radio/ television/ newspaper which can increase interests in community mobilization, promoting community solidarity through interactive programmes and raising collective consciousness by highlighting the benefits of targeted projects such as erosion control, construction of water boreholes, etc. Other ways the media can effectively be utilized for community

development projects are to rally community members and educating them on the strategies for enhancing their living standards. There are factors that militate against the effective utilization of mass media for community development projects, such as low level of literacy, inability of media channels such as radio, television and newspapers to broadcast in the local dialect, high cost and political interference etc which militate against the effective utilization of mass media for community development projects. More so, establishing community radio/television/newspaper, utilizing formative research in carrying out developmental programme to identify existing norms and most relevant channel to reach the target audience and the ability to identify the target audience to avoid misplacement of priority can enhance the effective utilization of mass media for the implementation of community development projects.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

- The need for each member of the community to be made aware of the importance of communication in the process of community development projects. In realization of this, community members should be encouraged to embrace the mass media in order to digest its contents and messages, particularly those related to community development projects. This will go a long way in ensuring that the utilization of mass media for community development projects are maximized.
- Community leaders should also endeavour to engage in clear communication so as to enlist the participation of everybody in the process of community development projects.
- Community development agents should ensure effective circulation of information among different participants by using mass media tools and channels appropriately to the groups involved.

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