

## Community Radio in Promoting Agriculture: A Study of “Agric Panorama” Programme on ABU FM Radio

MUSA ALHASSAN, ABUBAKAR SHEHU  
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

**Abstract.** This study appraises the role of radio programmes in promoting agricultural development using an agricultural programme entitled ‘*Agric Panorama*’ on ABU FM Radio and the town of Shika as a case study. The Survey research method using 250 questionnaires is used to sample the views of residents of Shika in Sabon Gari local government of Kaduna state. Findings from this study reveal that radio has immensely contributed to agricultural development of Shika community especially in the area of application of modern farming methods leading to reduction in farming expenditure and increase in productivity. The study suggests the use of similar programmes in other local languages to promote grass root development. Also, *Agric Panorama* should involve opinion/traditional leaders at grass root level to build confidence on the part of the farmers.

**Keywords:** Community Radio, Development, Agriculture, Agric Panorama, Shika.

### 1. Introduction

The term ‘development’ as a concept is associated with a broad range of human endeavors, from agriculture, health, communication, and politics etc. Asemah (2010) sees it as a process of change in attitude, social structure and general acceleration of economic

growth, through reduction of poverty and inequality, noting that development in human society is a multi-dimensional process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Development involves the creation of opportunities for the realization of human potentials. Human beings have certain basic requirements, which must be satisfied so that they can properly function in the society e.g. enough food, employment and the elimination of the kinds of inequality, which lead to poverty.

Keghku (2005) describe the concept as a gradual process of bringing about positive attitudinal change in the people. It is a continuous process of improving their living conditions, through positive change. The essence of development according to Asemah is change in attitudes, leading to change of habit i.e. by just changing things without concurrent change of habit or attitude is not a sustainable development. Development is seen as a changing process of knowledge, attitude and practices. It is in this context that the writer looks at development.

The multi-dimensional level of development enables us to study development at either grass root or national level and those elements that promote it. One of those elements is the media and how it contributes towards development at

all levels. Radio help in the development of Africa and contribute to national development and integration (Roger, 1987).

In recent years, development programming has been focused on the overriding issues of equity and equality in the distribution of the gains from development efforts. A lot of concern has been expressed about the predicament of the rural poor and the imperatives of several baseline requirements for human development. These include access to land and water resources, agricultural inputs and services, including extension and research facilities, and participatory development strategies to tackle rural poverty, with social equity and civil participation viewed as essential to well-rounded socio-economic development (UNDP, 2006). This people-centered development programming helps in emancipating people from poverty, ignorance, filth, squalor, deprivation and exploitation. The media as agent of change focuses on the events, people, issues, trends, etc affecting the community to promote development at all levels. The central mandate of community radio is to promote development at the grassroots. This type of development involves the people themselves and seeks to bring about positive change in their living conditions and environment (Dickson, 2010).

This study investigates the role of community broadcasting in promoting development at grass root. It specifically, focus on the radio programme '*Agric Panorama*' being broadcast on a community radio; ABU Samaru FM Radio.

## **2. Radio as a means of Communication**

Idebi (2008) defines radio as a medium used for sending and receiving messages through the air using electronic waves. It is an electronic device used to receive sound which forms the programs people listen. Radio is one of the primary means by which information and entertainment are delivered to the public in virtually every nation around the world and the most effective medium of communicating with people.

Radio broadcasting has become established over time as not only the most popular means of

communication and of disseminating information, but also due to the oral tradition of the society the preferred medium of cultural expression in Nigeria. Radio which was originally an instrument of colonial government subsequently came to be used in a variety of ways, gradually taking on a range of missions linked to different political, economic and cultural challenges integral to Nigeria's development. The personal and unique character of radio makes it one of the most appealing and universal mass media for participatory communication and development (Teer-Tomaselli and De Villiers, 1998).

Radio has the capacity to reach large audiences, both young and old, including those in remote, underdeveloped and impoverished areas of the developing world. In the absence of other forms of media such as television and newspapers, radio has proven to be a powerful and vital means of entertainment and communication that guarantees community involvement in the communication process (Bosch, 2007).

The appearance of local radio stations (private commercial stations, as well as community based and associative stations) in the 1990s signaled profound breaks with traditional radio and with the national information system. As a result of Frequency Modulation (FM), broadcast and listening quality improved, producing major strides toward greater professionalism. As such, the sector has continued to provide news and information relevant to the needs of community members in the form of a medium which empowers them politically, socially and economically, through locally produced and oriented media content (Wigston, 2001).

Communication is central to the success of development and democracy. And community radio is a crucial communication tool that is easy to run and maintain. Radio is the most accessible mass medium of communication in use. It is a particularly effective means of communication in communities where most people can neither read or write, as those people can speak and listen. Its listenership is therefore far more numerous than the readership of newspapers and audience of television, particularly in developing countries.

Technically, its production costs are significantly lower than those of most printed or video community media. Likewise, its reception is easier and more affordable than that of community video or television, and leaves out the distribution nightmares of community publications (Lumko, M., Marie-Hélène B., Nkopane, M. & Kodjo, N. (1998).

### **3. The Concept of Community Broadcasting**

Community radio, rural radio, co-operative radio, participatory radio, free radio, alternative radio, popular radio or educational radio began some 50 years ago in Latin America. Poverty and social injustice were the stimulus for those first experiences, one beginning in Bolivia in 1947 and known as the Miners' radios and another in Colombia in the same year, known as Radio Sutatenza/Acción Cultural Popular. In Africa, community broadcasting started in Kenya by UNESCO in May 1982 named Homa Bay community radio, on Lake Victoria. The various definitions of community radio that have been formulated share many common elements. The simple and catchy phrase, 'Radio by the people and for the people' is often used as a good summary. This phrase captures well the essential principle that must be in place for a broadcasting service to be considered true community radio. Community broadcasting is a non-profit service that is owned and managed by a particular community, usually through a trust, foundation, or association. Its aim is to serve and benefit that community. It is, in effect, a form of public-service broadcasting, but it serves a community rather than the whole nation, as is the usual form of public broadcasting described above. Moreover, it relies and must rely mainly on the resources of the community (Colin and Sonia (2001).

Section nine of the National Broadcasting Code describes community broadcasting as the third tier of broadcasting and a key agent of democratization for socio-cultural, educational and economic development. It is a non-profit, grassroots public broadcast service medium through which community members are able to contribute and foster civic responsibilities and

integration. Such communities include a local, non-profit organization, an educational institution (campus), a cultural association, a co-operative society, and a partnership of associations. A community broadcasting service shall be owned and controlled by the community through a trusteeship or a foundation with a Board of Trustees and all the operating broadcast equipment of the service shall be sited within the community.

Community radio stations are established for various reasons. In some European, Australian and North American cases, minority groups (such as indigenous, immigrant, refugee or black communities) were marginalized by mainstream media and therefore used community radio as a tool for highlighting their rights and raise issues concerning their interests; in South Africa, the apartheid laws ensured that the majority of citizens were disadvantaged and marginalized in the interest of the white minority. This led to struggles engaged by progressive forces, which then led to the establishment of community radio as a tool for development by community groups from the historically disadvantaged majority. Members of associations can set up radio stations to further the interests of members e.g. Labour Unions, Right Activists, Gender groups etc (Lumko, Marie-Hélène, Nkopane, & Kodjo (1998).

A study by Huizies (2007) reveals that community radio remains a crucial component of the global media environment. It contributes immensely to the social and economic development of the entire society and provides alternative media for listeners, active community participation and is now becoming the largest talent feeder to both the Public and Commercial Broadcasters. With the increasing concentration of the ownership of mass media, the role of community radio becomes important in the defense of unprejudiced access to information and the "strengthening of a people driven participatory democracy.

### **4. Brief About 'Agric Panorama'**

*Agric Panorama* was introduced by the Farm Broadcasts Programme unit of the NAERLS for

disseminating agricultural information to Northern states in the early eighties. It is a radio programme aimed at disseminating modern system of agricultural to specific target audience i.e. practicing or potential farmers. The program combines both spoken and musical items; making it entertaining and interesting with a definite purpose of informing and educating listeners (Omenesa and Shittu, 2004).

When NAERLS received the mandate to provide extension support services to the entire Country, the Farm Broadcasts Programme expanded its radio programmes to include other Nigerian languages like Igbo, Kanuri, Nupe, Fulfulde, Yoruba and Pidgin English. To ensure that each language zone is adequately catered for in the programmes, each Zonal liaison office has a radio producer/broadcaster. They liaise with the Universities, Research Institutes, Polytechnic and ADPs in their zones to produce programmes that will serve their peculiar needs. Such programmes are then aired by the local radio stations.

The program features experts from various fields of agriculture who focus attention on only one topic. *Agric Panorama* is a typical radio feature program adopted and approved by the NAERLS/ABU Zaria weekly and is been aired on ABU Samaru FM 101.1 every Monday at 9:30am with a repeat broadcast on Saturday at 10:30am to give farmers a voice to speak out, extends and disseminate proven farming technologies to farming communities. The producer and presenter of the program is Abdul'aziz Haruna.

## 5. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Development Media Theory propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987. The theory canvasses media support for an existing government and its efforts to bring about socio-economic development. It argues that until a nation is well established and its economic development well underway, media must be supportive rather than critical of government, but assist them in implementing their policies. The theory favors journalism that seeks out good news, requires that bad news

stories are treated with caution, for such stories could be economically damaging to a nation in the delicate throes of growth and change. The media is seen to fulfill particular social and political duties; hence media freedom while desirable should be subordinated to national integration, socio-economic modernization, promotion of literacy and cultural creativity (Adekoya, 2012).

The fundamental tenets of the theory as identified by McQuail (1987) are:

- Media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy;
- Freedom of the press should be opened to restriction according to economic priorities and development needs of the society.
- Media should give priority in news and information to link with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally or politically.
- In the interest of development ends, the state has the right to intervene in or restrict media operations and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified.
- Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities, as well as, freedoms in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.

This theory is relevant, as the programme *Agric Panorama* produced by the National Agricultural Research and Extension Liaison Services' (NAERLS), is a medium designed to teach modern agriculture with a view to boost farming and improve the living standard of the rural populace. The programme canvasses support for government policy on food security and its efforts to bring about socio-economic development.

## 6. Research Objectives

- To determine how the program *Agric Panorama* contribute to agricultural development of Shika people.
- To assess the level of compliance to modern farming methods presented in

- Agric Panorama by Shika people.
- To determine the benefits farmers derive from applying new farming methods.

**7. Research Questions**

- In what ways do the program *Agric Panorama* contributes to the agricultural development of Shika people?
- To what extent do people of Shika apply modern farming methods aired by *Agric Panorama*?
- What benefits do local farmers derived from adopting the new farming techniques?

**8. Research Method**

The research design is descriptive survey. Descriptive surveys document a particular state of affairs regarding public opinion or behaviour or population characteristics at one point in time (Gunter, 2000). The study employed questionnaire as an instrument of data collection, since the study is focusing on the educated members of the community. The questionnaires were distributed to 250 farming households in Shika community on the role of community radio in promoting agricultural development with specific reference to ‘*Agric Panorama*’ programme aired on ABU FM radio.

The sampling technique considered for this study is simple snowballing sampling. The Snowball sampling is used most often in academic research. A researcher randomly

contacts a few qualified respondents and then asks these people for the names of friends, relatives, or acquaintances they know who may also qualify for the research study. These referrals are then contacted to determine if they qualify for the research (Wimmer and Dominick (2011). This is possible since Shika is a small community where majority of its residents know one other.

The village head of Shika; Alhaji Abdulkareem Aboki Shika puts the population of the village at 5,000 inhabitants. He further explained that Shika community is divided into 12 districts, each controlled by Mai-Anguwa (Ward head). The majority of the 5,000 inhabitants of Shika community are people whose main occupations are civil service, farming and trading.

The researcher mathematically calculated 5% of 5000 (Shika Community) which equals to 250 which implies that 250 questionnaires are administered to Shika community. This is adequate as Barbie (2007) recommends a minimum of 5 percent of any population as sample size that can be used to represent a bigger population.

**9. Data Presentation**

The data gathered for this study is analyzed along with the application of descriptive and analytical method objectively to aid quick understanding of the data i.e. the data will be presented in a descriptive way. The data generated will be presented in a simple percentage table as illustrated below:

Table 1: Sex of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Males	132	52.8
Females	118	47.2
Total	250	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2016*

Table 1 above shows that 132 (equivalent to 52.8%) respondents are males, while the remaining 118 are females.

Table 2: Respondents Opinion on How Often They Use Radio

Variable	Respondents	Percentage
Very often	84	33.6
Often	123	49.2
Rarely	29	11.6
Never	4	1.6
Total	250	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2016*

Table 2 above indicates that 84 out of 250 respondents very often use radio as a source of news and information.

Table 3: How Beneficial is the Information they received from radio programmes

Variable	Respondents	Percentage
Very Beneficial	80	32.0
Beneficial	156	62.4
Not Beneficial	14	5.6
Total	250	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2016*

Table 3 above indicates that 80 out of 250 respondents describe the information they received from radio as very beneficial.

Table 4: Respondents Opinion on What They Think About the Programme 'Agric Panorama

Variable	Respondents	Percentage
Informative and Educative	138	55.2
Entertaining	41	16.4
Educative	60	24.0
Total	250	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2016*

Table 4 above shows that 138 out of 250 respondents believed that Agric Panorama is Informative and Educative

Table 5: Respondents Opinion on the Extent They Apply the Information They Get from Agric Panorama in Farming?

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Very large extent	49	19.6
Large extent	123	49.2
Rarely	68	27.2
Never	8	3.2
Total	250	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2016*

Table 5 above shows that 49 out of 250 respondents apply information they received from Agric Panorama.

Table 6: What Benefits Have You Derived From Applying New Farming Techniques Aired on Agric Panorama?

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Improved yields	75	31.6
Reduce cost of labor	76	30.4
Increase revenue	95	38.0
Total	250	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2016*

Table 6 above shows that 75 out of 250 respondents benefit from Agric Panorama on how to improve