ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Assessment of The Role of Radio in Mobilizing Women for Participation in Agricultural Co-operative Societies in Oyo State, Nigeria

KENNETH ASOR TSEBEE (PhD)[1] & MAKINDE TOLULOPE GLORY[2]

Department of Mass Communication Faculty of Social Science Veritas University Abuja, Nigeria kenaston4real@gmail.com
Department of Mass Communication Faculty of Social Science National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja makindeglory7@gmail.com

Abstract

The study used the survey research design to assess the extent to which Radio performs the responsibility of mobilizing women to participate in agricultural co-operative societies and the value of such responsibility on the overall development of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria. The paper found that making known the existing agricultural co-operative societies and publicizing their activities are the major information that the Radio provides in mobilizing women for participation in agricultural co-operative societies. The paper found that Radio is used for mobilizing women for participation in agricultural co-operative societies but the extent such is done is little. Further findings showed that poor/lack of signals from radio stations is the major challenge that women are facing in accessing information on agricultural cooperative societies in Oyo State. The study concluded that radio still remains the relevant tool in agricultural development but its current role in mobilizing women for participation in the agricultural cooperative societies is not adequate.

Key words: Radio, women, agricultural, co-operative societies, Oyo State.

Introduction

The ever-increasing need for achieving sustainable food security today in Nigeria has necessitated a lot of efforts in finding appropriate structure for organizing millions of small-scale farmers for participation towards achieving the desired food security. Agricultural cooperative society has been recognized as the appropriate vehicle for harnessing and pooling the resources of millions of small scale farmer producers together to enjoy the benefit of large-scale production. Although the activities of the National Programme for Food Security (NPFS} which is anchored by the Agricultural Development Programme' (ADP) of states in Nigeria is a community-based participatory approach using contact farmers in the target areas, that has not been able to reverse the upward trend in the price of food stuffs in our markets today (Onugu & Abdulahi, 2012).

Cooperative according to Omotesho (2008) is one of the most effective vehicles for efficient mobilization of production resources and accelerated rural development. The importance arises from the fact that the small-scale individual capacity of the peasant's production cannot cope with technological and capital demands of modernized agriculture. Even though the family farm may be considered efficient within the static framework of its motive of enterprise-self-sufficiency, the dynamic demands of modem times are such that such a framework has to be subjected to drastic structural changes. And the peasant should be educated such that he knows that his interest is being fostered (Okolocha, 1993).

To this effect a number of scholars (Folorunso, 1987 in Umeh 2008; Gershon, 2010 in Garba, 2014; Olaniyi, Adebayo & Akintola, 2011; Oladele, 2006; Opera; 2008; Ajayi & Nwoko, 1995) are of the opinion that meaningful agricultural development cannot be possible without a sound information system. That is to say that sound agricultural development is anchored by sound knowledge of innovations in the sector by farmers. Farmers require sound information on agricultural innovations to update themselves about such innovations towards effective adoption. This is in view of the fact that:

> Agriculture needs to produce more food for a growing population, using a limited amount of farmland, while at the same time reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to

> avoid worsening climate change. This suggests that agricultural production needs to use knowledge more intensively, which means it must innovate. (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, 2014, p. 8).

It is important to note that "a well-informed society is a mobilized society because it is information literate, more responsive to government policies and eager to participate in the nation's development programmes" (Folorunso (1987) in Umeh (2008, p. 8). Gershon (2010) in Garba (2014, p. 2) reiterates that:

> The belief that farmers can use improved information to advance their productivity and profitability as well as contribute to higher rates of agriculture, economic growth and poverty reduction is widely held and has been a key rationale for agricultural campaign as an important element of agricultural development in Nigeria.

A good literature supports the conclusion that agricultural data is obviously vital for enhancing agricultural productivity, relieving poverty, and stimulating rural-urban migration. (Olaniyi, Adebayo & Akintola, 2011, p. 117).

Oladele (2006, p. 16) notes that in agriculture, the role of information in enhancing agricultural development cannot be over emphasized. Information is vital for increasing production and improving marketing and distribution strategies (Oladele, 2006). Information also opens windows of sharing experiences, best practices, sources of financial aids and new markets. According to Opera (2008, p. 289) knowledge and information are basic-ingredients for increased agricultural production and productivity. The importance of good information on fertilizer availability, cost and application for example cannot be over emphasized. This information is a critical resource in the operation and management of the agricultural enterprise.

Literature Review

In any corner of the world, information is an essential component of farming practice. It is the "data that have been put into a meaningful and useful context which is communicated to recipient who uses it to make decisions" (Adereti, Fapojuwo & Onasaya, 2006).

Agricultural information comprises all published and unpublished knowledge on broad aspects of agriculture, as well as agricultural policy advancements, concepts, and technology (Aina, 1990). According to Ozowa (1995), agricultural information provides data for decision making. Agricultural information is necessary for agricultural expansion and the improvement of farmers' living conditions.

Farmers will struggle to meet agricultural information goals if they do not have access to it (Olawoye 1996). Agricultural information increases farmer awareness of agricultural technologies that can be adopted. The first and most significant step in the adoption process, according to Agbamu (2006), is obtaining information. Farmers, according to Adefuye and Adedoyin (1993), must be aware of and act on agricultural information in order to ensure a continuous flow of accurate, understandable, and factual agricultural progress.

As a result, the availability and accessibility of accurate and trustworthy information has a significant impact on how far individuals develop in agriculture. According to Obinne (1994), the largest setback in agricultural output in Nigeria is a failure to communicate recommended practises to end-users, rather than a lack of proposed practises required for economic growth and rural transformation. According to Adeniji (1977) and Idowu (1994), as cited in Bello et al. (2014), in the contemporary world, there is a great body of information acquired from study as well as indigenous technological skills. They believed that knowledge's effect on the trajectory of human progress lags behind this huge knowledge. They contended that this is particularly the case in agriculture, in which the systems that constitute that the entity are divided into properly trained technology generation systems (acacdemics),

comparatively well-educated technology dissemination systems (extensionists), and a mass of new tech utilising systems (farmers) with little or no formal education. Majid and Kassim (2000), cited in Siyao (2012, p. 3) aver that:

> Information is considered as an important resource that contributes to the development of a nation. It provides the core for the development of knowledge, it is the basis for innovations, and is a resource for an informed citizenry, with the result, that it is a key commodity for the progress of a society.

Similarly, Olorunda and Oyelude (2003) argue that information has become a strategic resource, a commodity and the foundation of every activity. Information increases the capacity to see things more clearly and become more focused (Ikoja, Odongo & Ocholla, 2004). Information has a key role to play in agricultural development. It is an indispensable factor in the practice of farming and it is the basis for extension service delivery (Ofuoko et al., 2008); Kalusopa (2005) indicates that there is a direct relationship between the provision of effective information and agricultural development. Lwoga (2010) adds that quick access to relevant knowledge and information can enable smallholder farmers to make informed decisions regarding their agricultural production activities, marketing of their agricultural produce for better profits, and benefiting from health, disease prevention and advice.

Lack of information is argued to act as a barrier to development because of importance of information provision in "capacity building" and "empowering communities" (Apata & Ogunrewo, 2010 cited in Wakelin & Simelane, 1995; Adimorah, 1995). To that effect, there is said be a correlation between the radio, knowledge acquisition and improved agricultural development (Crouch & Chamala, 2001; Olaleye, Gana, Umar, Ndanisa & Peter, 2009). Experience in rural communications demonstrate that radio is a practical and creative medium for facilitating the education and empowerment of the poor, including women and youths (Balit, 1999). According to Williams (1998), radio communication is useful in agricultural messages to a large number of people at relatively low cost and at faster rates. It brings about widespread of awareness, enkindles and sustains interests of the farmers. To increase its effectiveness in technology adoption, it should be supplemented by other training methods. Nweke (2001) notes that technology is easier to be adopted if it is divisible, does not involve major changes in the former ways of doing things and is not expensive. Cobata and Nwagbo, (1999) report that adoption cost is positively related to adoption.

Similarly, Venkatesan recognises the following as the primary responsibilities of broadcasting (including radio) in agricultural growth in Mboho (2009):

a. a. Broadcasting raises farmer awareness of new practises and motivates them to seek more information from extension agents.
b. It is one of the easiest ways to contact a big number of farmers in a short period of time, making it valuable in times of emergency, such as a massive insect assault.
c. Broadcasting may be used successfully to announce meeting locations, training dates, work schedules, and give farmers with information on a wide range of subjects other than technology, such as pricing structure, market products, agriculture policy, revisions, and so on.
d. Broadcasting has the benefit of allowing extension agencies to engage with the farmer and others to inform them of new agricultural discoveries.
e. Broadcasting specialists and agricultural journalists should continuously strive for better agricultural message quality. Rather than making the media the mouthpiece of the 'official' agency, they should offer farmers with access to numerous sources of information. They should also create synergies between mainstream press and face-to-face outreach sessions in the field.

Broadcasting could be used to enhance access to essential loans and the acquisition of good suggestions about agricultural practises in the country, in addition to providing information on farming activities, agricultural inputs, crop production, harvest and storage, and biotechnology, as recognised by Mboho (2009). Ridwan, Suleiman and Fatonji (2014, p. 154) realize that radio is a very powerful tool that helps agricultural campaign to this effect. This is evident considering the fact that a greater proportion of Africans recognise radio as a crucial and vital source of information.

In their effort to emphasize the position of radio among Africans in relation to public mobilization, Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) have stated:

> Because radio sets are cheaply available, portable, run independently of power grids and do not exclude those that are illiterate, are far away the mass medium of choice for more than two thirds of Africans, both rural and urban. It is thus considered a key driver to spread development messages and advance poverty reduction and agricultural mobilization.

Experiences through researches have revealed the potential gains of agricultural campaign from both the coverage and programmes of radio using participatory communication approaches in Africa. Small-scale farmers produce approximately 70% of the food consumed in Sub-Sahara Africa. Yet, despite being the primary food producers, small-scale farmers are more likely than any other segment of the population to been developed by researchers and by small-scale farmers themselves that if adopted on a wide scale would make a significant contribution to increasing food security and reducing poverty. Too often, these innovations are hidden in a localized development project or stuck in a library shelf. The challenge is to find a way to communicate these ideas to hundreds of thousands of farmers in an affordable way. Agricultural radio has long been used as a dissemination strategy, but, until recently, not much evidence was available to confirm that farmers listen, learn and act broadcasts, and little was known about best practices (Perkins, 2010).

According to Siyao (2012), several issues are known to impede farmers' access to information in Africa. The challenge pointed out by Ango et al. (2011) in Gababolokwe and Hulela (2014, p. 383) in accessing agricultural innovations by farmers included lack of electricity which affected the information dissemination through television. Noted in this regard was that farmers tend to face some challenges and difficulties in accessing the required information through mass media (Hassan et al., 2010), inadequate staff and awkward broadcasting times. Other challenges as outlined by scholars included ineffective transfer of the agricultural technology and information to farmers (Gababolokwe & Hulela, 2014, p. 383).

Asemah, Anum and Edegoh (2013, pp. 28-31) state that there are so many factors that hinder development communication in Nigeria. This informs why most social development programmes in Nigeria often fail which agriculture is not an exception. Among the problems are:

> Communication Related Problems; Message Related Problems; Illiteracy; The Use of English Language by the Electronic Media; Multiplicity of Language in Nigeria; Lack of Audience Feedback; Ownership Problem; Dearth of Qualified Personnel; Urban-Centred Development Journalism; Dearth of Community Based or Vernacular Radio/Telecommunication.

Theoretical Framework: Agenda-Setting Theory

The paper is anchored in the Agenda-Setting Theory.

Agenda-setting theory was formally developed by Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw in a study on the 1968 presidential election. In the 1968 "Chapel Hill Study," McCombs & Shaw demonstrated a strong correlation between what 100 residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina thought was the most important election issue and what the local and national news media reported was the most important issue (McCombs & Shaw

1972, cited in Iwokwagh, 2004). Agenda-setting theory describes the ability of the news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002, as cited in Iwokwagh, 2004). That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently the audience will regard the issue as more important. According to Shaw (2008, p. 96), the agenda building paradigm is based on two key assumptions: first, the press and media do not reflect reality; instead, they filter and change it; and second, the media focuses on a few themes and issues, leading the public to perceive those concerns as more important than others. Shaw (2008) adds that the time span for this phenomenon is one of the most crucial components in the notion of mass communication's ideology role. Furthermore, the power of different media to establish agendas varies. Agenda generation is the direct cause of a cognitive process known as accessibility (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

The more commonly and publicly the news media covers a subject, the more that concern becomes accessible in the audience's memories. When asked what the most critical problem confronting the nation is, respondents often respond with the most prominent news item in thought, which is commonly the subject on which the mainstream media has concentrated the most. The agenda-setting process is affected by the aggregate influence of a very significant number of communications, each of which has a different content but all which deals with the same basic topic (Rogers, 1988).

Mass-media coverage in general, and agenda-setting in particular, have a tremendous influence on what individuals believe other people are thinking (Noelle-Neumann, 1977) and, as a result, they prefer to prioritise problems that have also been extensively covered by the media. This is also called schemata theory. Agenda-setting theory implies that the mass media predetermine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a given society. It is assumed that the media sets the agenda for our general discussion. Baran (2004, p. 385) says the agenda-setting theory argues that "while the media may not tell us what to think, the media certainly tell us what to think about". What this means is that by the amount of time and space devoted to a story, the mass media may well determine the important issue thus giving the audience food for thought. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972, p. 176), in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but how much importance to attach to that issue. From the amount of information in a news story and its position, they mass media may well determine the importance of the issue, that is, the media may set the 'agenda' of the issue.

Although we have a right to think what we want to think, surprisingly, we tend to think most of those things the media highlight as important (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008, p. 89). To Iwokwagh (2008, p. 12), agenda setting theory suggests that media agenda determines public agenda. In an attempt to overcome mirror-image effects of agenda-setting that implied direct influence of media agenda on the audience, several scholars proposed that the model of agenda-setting should include individual/collective audience characteristics and/or real-world conditions that are likely to affect issue importance. They discovered that certain individual and group characteristics are likely to act as contingent conditions of media impact and proposed a model of "audience effects" (Erbring, Goldenberg & Miller (1980, p. 16).

According to the audience effects model media coverage interacts with the audience's pre-existing sensitivities to produce changes in issue concerns. Thus, media effects are contingent on issue-specific audience characteristics (Erbring, Goldenberg & Miller, 1980, p. 16). For example, for large audiences that were most impacted by a particular topic or crisis, news exposure enhances the salience of that subject significantly, yet the same engagement has minor impact on other groups. Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller (1980) have established that persons who do not discuss political problems are more susceptible to narrative influence because they rely more largely on media material than those who get knowledge from other sources, such as

colleagues and friends.

Another aspect that influences the relationship between the media and the public narrative is whether a problem is "disruptive" or "uncluttered" (Rogers, 1988), or if it has a rising or falling threshold (Lang, 1981). Obtrusive or low threshold concerns are often those that affect practically everyone and on which we may have firsthand experience. For example, consider city-wide violence or gas-pump inflation. Because of their connection to personal problems, these topics practically force political elites and the news media to pay attention. Furthermore, with these types of concerns, the matter would be of broad concern even if the news media did not cover it (Lang, 1981).

Non-intrusive or high threshold concerns are ones that are typically out of reach for almost everyone. For example, high-level government wrongdoings such as Watergate, or the tragedy of Syrian refugees (Rogers, 1988). According to Zucker's research, a problem is intrusive if the majority of the public has real interaction with it, and much less intrusive, if audience have no direct experience with it. This suggests that the less direct people experience with the subject matter goes, the greater the effect of the news media on popular opinion on that topic (Lang, 1981). Furthermore, inconspicuous or high threshold concerns do not enter the media agenda as soon as obtrusive ones and hence need a crescendo, which is determined by factors other than the number of space or time that the media devotes to the story.

These may push the story over the edge of inattention, hence it is also crucial to consider the type of coverage to understand how a specific situation would become a concern (Lang, 1981).

Method

The paper adopted the survey design in which questionnaire was used as the research instrument for data collection. Survey design was the most appropriate for this study because the issue under investigation seeks to obtain the feelings and opinions of the people to determine how radio contributes in mobilizing women for participation in agricultural cooperative societies in Oyo State, Nigeria and the value of such role to the overall agricultural development in the state.

Results

Result show that a majority (29.04%) of the respondents sampled in the study said making known the existing Agricultural Cooperative Societies was the kind of information that the radio provides to mobilize them for participation in agricultural cooperative societies, followed by 26.92% who opined it was publicizing activities of Agricultural Cooperative Societies, while others include relevance of Agricultural Cooperative Societies (17.50%), advocacy for support (14.81%), and linking members together (12.12%). This implies that making known the existing Agricultural Cooperative Societies and publicizing their activities are the major information that the radio provides to mobilize women for participation in agricultural cooperative societies as compared with educating them on the relevance of Agricultural Cooperative Societies, advocacy for support, and linking members together.

The paper found that 44% of 520 respondents sampled identified poor/lack of signal as their major challenge in accessing agricultural information, 11% out of 520 said their major challenge was lack/inadequate power supply, 4% of 520 respondents identified poverty as their major challenge in accessing the information on the station, 7% of 520 respondents identified illiteracy as their major challenge, 13% of 520 respondents identified lack of repeat broadcast as their major challenge, 9% of the respondents identified poor programme presentation as their major challenge, while 12% of the respondents were of the opinion that lack of participation in agricultural programmes on the station hindered them in accessing the progarmmes.

This implies that women farmers in Oyo State have many challenges hindering them from accessing agricultural programmes on the Radio but the greatest one is poor/lack of signals from the radio stations.

Table 1: Kind of Information on Radio to mobilize Women for Participation in Agricultural Cooperative Societies

Response	No. of Respondents						Total	
	Ogbomoso		Akinyele		Ibadan North			
Make known existing Agric Cooperative Societies	65	28.26	52	30.23	34	28.81	151	29.04
Publicizing activities of Agric Cooperative Societies	61	26.52	47	27.33	32	27.12	140	26.92
Relevance of Agric Cooperative Societies	37	16.09	31	18.02	23	19.49	91	17.50
Advocacy for support	35	15.22	23	13.37	17	14.41	75	14.81
Linking members together	32	13.91	19	11.05	12	10.17	63	12.12
Total	230	100	172	100	118	100	520	100

Table 2: Major Challenge of Women in the use of Radio for Information on Agricultural Cooperative Societies in Oyo State, Nigeria

Response	No. of Respondents			Total
	Ogbomoso	Akinyele	Ibadan North	
Poor/lack of signals	92 (40.0)	83 (48.3)	56 (47.5)	231 (44.4)
Lack/inadequate power supply	23 (10.0)	20 (11.6)	14 (11.9)	57 (11.0)
Poverty	12 (5.2)	7 (4.1)	4 (3.4)	23 (4.4)
Illiteracy	19 (8.3)	9 (5.2)	6 (5.1)	34 (6.5)
Lack of repeat broadcast	35 (15.2)	19 (11.0)	13 (11.0)	67 (12.9)
Poor presentation of agricultural programmes	21 (9.1)	16 (9.3)	11 (9.3)	48 (9.2)
Lack of participation	28 (12.2)	18 (10.5)	14 (11.9)	60 (11.5)
Total	230 (100)	172 (100)	118 (100)	520 (100)

Discussion

Based on the data analysed, the following are the specific findings of the study.

Making known the existing Agricultural Cooperative Societies and publicizing their activities are the major information that the radio provides to mobilize women for participation in agricultural cooperative societies as compared to educating them on the relevance of Agricultural Cooperative Societies, advocacy for support, linking members together. These findings agree with the earlier findings in the studies conducted by Olaleye, Gana, Umar, Ndanisa and Peter (2009), Afaicereta (2010), Nazari and Hasbullah (2010), Nazri, Hassan, Parhizkar, Hassanpour and Megat (2012), Ridwan, Suleiman and Fatonji (2014), Pur and Gwary (2008), Oluwatosin (2015), Olajide and Amusat (2012), Chapman, Gordana and Zakariah (2003), among others which all indicated the involvement of radio as the medium of mass communication in spreading agricultural innovations to farmers. These findings also revalidate the Agenda Setting theory used as theoretical basis for this study. The Diffusion of Innovations theory indicates that "an innovation is communicated through certain channel (such as the radio) over time among the members of a social system(s)" (Rogers, 1995, p. 69). Agenda Setting Theory also shows how media attention on an issue (such as agriculture) tends to attract attention of the people more to such issue. According to the agenda setting, "the press and the media do not reflect

reality; they filter and shape it; and media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues" (Rogers, 1995, p. 69).

Another finding of the study is that Radio is involved in mobilizing women for participation in agricultural cooperative societies but the extent such is done is little as it dwells much only on making the women know the existing cooperative societies and publicizing their activities compared to educating them on the relevance of Agricultural Cooperative Societies, advocacy for support and linking members together. These findings corroborate the earlier findings of scholars like Olaleye, Gana, Umar, Ndanisa and Peter (2009), Mgbakor, Okezie and Ugwu (2013), Ridwan, Suleiman and Fatonji (2014). For instance, Mgbakor, Okezie and Ugwu (2013), in their study, found only few messages out of the messages disseminated in assessing the effects of radio listening of farmers in agriculture were relevant in their needs to enhance agricultural productivity.

Findings also revealed that greater part of information on agriculture to women on radio is disseminated through straight news compared to discussion, interview, drama, commentary/news analysis, jingles and commercials.

Findings equally revealed that the role of radio influences the participation of women in agricultural cooperative societies in Oyo State but the extent that this is done is little. These findings confirm the earlier findings in the study conducted by Olaleye, Gana, Umar, Ndanisa and Peter (2009) which revealed that although most of the farmers got agricultural information through the radio some had to depend on friends/relations and Extension Agents (EAs) for agricultural information. The study found that despite the advantages of the use of radio on this issue, 48% of the farmers considered it ineffective and some of the problems identified included language barrier, clarity of messages and improper interpretation of scientific terms / units of measurement as contained in the messages to be disseminated. It noted that in view of all these, more than one-half of the respondents did not record significant improvement in their farming activities. Other scholars like Mgbakor, Okezie and Ugwu (2013) and Siyao (2012) also corroborated these findings.

Finally, findings revealed that women in Oyo State have challenges like poor/lack of signal, lack/inadequate power supply, poverty, illiteracy, lack of repeat broadcast of agriculture programmes, poor programme presentation, and lack of participation in agricultural programmes on the station which hinder them from accessing agricultural programmes on Radio but the greatest one is poor/lack of signals. To support these findings, Siyao (2012) reveals that the barriers to accessing agricultural information are associated with the lack of means and facilities by which information can be easily accessed. It is therefore recommended that the means and facilities by which growers can access agricultural information should be put in place, there should be rural women empowerment and involvement in the decision-making process at all stages, and the provision of agricultural information to rural farmers.

Conclusion

Making known the existing Agricultural Cooperative Societies and publicizing their activities are the major information that the radio provides to mobilize women for participation in agricultural cooperative. In doing so, radio is involved in mobilizing women for participation in agricultural cooperative societies but the extent such is done is little as it dwells much only on making the women know the existing cooperative societies and publicizing their activities compared to educating them on the relevance of Agricultural Cooperative Societies, advocacy for support and linking members together. Greater part of information on agriculture to women on radio is disseminated through straight news compared to discussion, interview, drama, commentary/news analysis, jingles and commercials. The kind of role that the radio plays influences the participation of women in agricultural cooperative societies in Oyo State but the extent that is done is little. Poor/lack of signals from radio stations is the major challenge that women are facing in accessing information that can

mobilize them for participation in the agricultural cooperative societies in Oyo State. It can be concluded majorly that radio still remains the relevant tool in agricultural development but its current kind of role in mobilizing women for participation in the agricultural cooperative societies is not adequate to achieve the desired objective of effectively mobilizing them.

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