

## EXPLORING THE POTENTIALS OF COMMUNICATION APPARATUS IN DRIVING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

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### ABSTRACT

*The study explored the active role of communication apparatus in driving national development in Nigeria. The study unravelled some seeming challenges to national development and ways to addressing these issues. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP.) "New Millennium Goals" was leveraged on as a yardstick to assess and fast track development in Nigeria. The study was anchored on the umbilical cord of Agenda Setting Theory which assert that the media do not only tell the people what to think but what to think about. Conceptually, the study sought communication apparatus and national development as a strategy for driving the process of development through mass media strata. Media studies and national development was also sought as an avenue for which radio, television, newspaper, traditional systems and social media can leverage on for the dissemination of useful information that will facilitating awareness and education in promoting economic growth by facilitating business communication, advertising and marketing. More so, fostering social cohesion through dialogue, understanding and among different groups and however, holding those in power accountable ensuring transparency, accountability and good governance. The study concludes that societal development requires synergy and active participation both on the part of the media and the citizens of Nigeria.*

**Keywords: Exploring, Potentials, Communication Apparatus, National Development.**

### INTRODUCTION

National Development is crucial in human survival as it is the only thing that has engaged man's consciousness since creation. New and better ways of doing things keep springing forth as time and day go by expectedly thus modifying, reinforcing or challenging existing lag in development which may be termed as obsolete overtime. This was how humans has tortuously journeyed from Stone Age to Information Age and now Jet Age. These ages difference brought about transition in various levels of National Development and through the exploration of the potentials of communication apparatus people become aware of new ideas, innovations, more so form a link between the past, present and the future (Asadu, 2012).

To drive National Development requires the full participation of the media leveraging on its responsibility to provide a supportive role in the development of the society as it was enshrined as part of normative theories of the press and as captured in Nwabueze (2014) that the media should pursue development goal in any society. Anaeto et'al (2010) posited that the media must accept and carry out positive development task in line with national established policy; freedom of the media should be open to economic priorities and development needs of the society; the media should give priority in their content to national culture and language; media should emphasis news and information that link with other developing countries which are close geographically, culturally and politically; journalist and other media workers have responsibilities and freedom in their information gathering and dissemination task.

However, in bid to fast-track national development the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) which has the responsibility of reducing poverty by initiating and encouraging development across the globe. In 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 summit held in New York, the world leaders met and improved on the existed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals have become a kind of development road map to the nations of the world. They further concluded with adoption of a Global Plan of Action entitled "Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Goals". These goals include:

1. Zero poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and wellbeing
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduce inequality
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institution
17. Partnership for the goals

These goal was introduced for basically for lagging nations of the world whereby all nations affected can leverage on the seventeen point millennium goal to create a better and habitable environment for humans and their wellbeing. Therefore, it is the germane role of the media to help push the UNDP's ideology to a notable conclusion without relent. In same vein, Ndimele and Kasarachi (2016) has it that communication can be channelled towards tackling the myriad of a socio-political and economic problems of the people of the developing nations that development communication evolved. Ugboajah (1985) assert that national building should beacon on development communication. He see development communication as a techniques of human communication applied to the speedy change of a country and mass of its people from poverty to a moving state of economic growth that makes possible, greater social equality.

Furthermore, for there to be a society development, there must be development communication using strata of both traditional and modern communication apparatus in reporting and dissemination of appropriate information and promotion of development at all levels of a society. Conversely, Nigeria as an enclave have not significantly met with the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) in the recent years and this in the eyes of the world rated Nigeria as still underdeveloped (<https://www.undp.org>). Okoro (2013) emphasize that the press in Nigeria should be an effective and vibrant independent entity that would be instrumental to achieving sustainable development goals. The real influencers of the media in national development can be said to be peculiar to the media themselves, the society in which they operate and the audience they reach (Anyanwu et'al, 2019). However, the focus of this study is to unravel and address the challenges surrounding the lack of development in Nigeria through various channels of communication.

### **Statement of the Problem**

National development is beyond national concern but of the world, this was the essence for the creation of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to strengthen the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the increasing importance of communication apparatus in Nigerian,

national development remain a perpetual struggle. Ordinary one would ask why Nigeria is struggling the national, could be the fault of the subsistence government or the citizens or lack of understanding on how these apparatus can be leveraged on to drive development in Nigeria and Africa at large. This study will aim at addressing the limited understanding of the role of communication apparatus for national development, inadequate utilization of communication apparatus for development and lack of effective communication strategies for development.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to explore the potentials of communication apparatus in driving national development. The specific objectives are to:

1. To explore the potentials communication apparatus in drive national development in Nigeria
2. To identify the opportunities and challenges associated with using communication apparatus for national development

### **Research Questions**

The study sought to provide answer to the following questions:

1. How can communication apparatus be leveraged to drive national development in Nigeria?
2. What are the opportunities and challenges associated with using communication apparatus for national development?

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Theoretical Anchor**

The Study was anchored on the umbilical cord of Agenda Setting Theory

#### **Agenda Setting Theory**

Agenda-setting theory is a mass media effect theory propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. Credence was given to Walter Lippman for a clue of this theory through his work titled "the world outside the picture in our head" in 1922. This theory sets out an agenda for public opinion by underscoring topical issues and studying how political campaigns were covered by the media. It also seek to engage the people on what to think but what to think about.

According to McQuail (2010) the media do not only tell the people what to think but what to think about. The mass media move issues from press agenda to public agenda. This theory further posits that when the media emphasis and issue by frequently reporting it and also giving it prominence, people adopt it as an agenda of discourse. Daramola (2003) see this theory as a societal builder. He added that the media have the ability to mentally order or organise the world for the people. This means that the amount of prominence given to a particular issue or event affects the level of importance the mass media attach to it and determines the value the public, government and other institutions places on them.

The mass media has the power to make an issue a matter of everyday discourse through the engagement of the audience members of the society in a salient topical issues in the society, thereby stimulate their focus and attention to the diurse. Ndimele and Kasarachi (2016) took to cognisance of agenda setting theory and its powerful nature. They further assert that "the press may not be all successful on engaging the people on what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling it audience on what to about".

In consonance with Cohen's view on Agenda setting. Ukaegbu (2018 in Maxwell and Shaws, 1976) posit that the media emphasis influences the audience to see the event as important. Media do not only inform its masses but also influences its masses on what is paramount to think about and that way agenda is set for the society for discourse. The event was not only on national news but also given prominence by some media houses as a matter of radio, television and social media discourse. Another instance, during 2014 general electioneering campaign the media gave coverage and emphasis to certain issues and topics on the election while at the same time relegating other issues

and topics. Such emphasis and coverage ultimately become more important others to the voters and subsequently form the basis of election debate and campaign. How candidates address the issues becomes the determining factor to influencing the voter's allegiance to candidates or otherwise (Igwe, 2014).

Nevertheless, Agenda-Setting Theory to this study aim at leveraging on all media systems in promoting national building through government active participation and citizen's engagement at all levels gears towards the fulfilment of Millennium Goals as stipulated by UNDP. However, it is within the purview of the media to informing the public on issues of societal concerns and other important innovations in the society.

### **1. Communication Apparatus and National Development**

National development solely depend on the mass media of various strata in directing diverse developmental issues bothering the society as captured by United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP). The reason for this was for the media to set an agenda with the use of traditional and modern communication apparatus to convey the yearning desire of the mass to the appropriate authorities. These communication apparatus are classified into traditional media (print, radio and television) and new modern media (social media and online platforms).

#### **a. Role of Traditional Media (Print, Radio and Television)**

Broadcast media is one of traditional communication media in the electronic genre. It is simply the application of electronic assisted technology in the distribution of audio (radio) and video (television) content to a large and dispersed audience irrespective of location within same area of coverage while the print medium covers newspapers, magazines, books, and comics or graphic novels (Igwe, 2024). The print, radio and television are agent occasioned to inform, educate and entertain the public they serve without any form of prejudice. The traditional media is specifically referenced to social responsibility and communication for development. Newspapers/ magazine, radio and television are important tool in shaping the development process of a country. In the same vein Igwe (2024) further assert that development involves changes and advancement in a nation and improving the economy, political affairs and social wellbeing of the people in line with the universal standard of living.

In furtherance, national development is a multidimensional process of action, organization and communication which involves economic, political, social and cultural factors. The real influence of the media in national development will depend on the media themselves, the societies in which they operate, and the audience they reach. (<https://www.iprojectmaster.com>)

However, these various strata of traditional media will continue to emerge as powerful tool for national development hence the journalist and media workers are free from greed and corruption. Mostly the killer of growth in the society remain bad governance and selfish leadership whose interest is to boycott development strides due the society for personal gain. Successively, only a right thinking innovative leaders in the society see development as paramount and consistent hence nation building is concerned.

#### **b. Impact of New Media (Social Media and Online Platforms)**

New media also known as Web 2.0 has contributed to democratization of the society by allowing members of the enclave opportunity to easily share ideas and participate in public discourse irrespective of location and proximity. The impact of the online media are:

1. **Free Exchange of Ideas-** New media has created a space for people to speak and exchange ideas freely without fear and this recons with the core concept of the marketplace of ideas. This equally means that members of the public can resonate issues bothers on national development for public sphere which encourages democratic participation of citizenry's.

2. **Democratization of Power**- New media have helped distribute power to people, allowing them to be the source of development ideas and initiative
3. **Dialogue between Media and Audience**- The advent of new media created a more robust interactive relationship between the media and the audiences whereby communication is more like a channel for dialogue and peaceful coexistence rather than the media organisations having sole control over dialogue among citizens which also pose as a form of national development especially where the environment declines human threat and hostility.

The concept of a free marketplace of ideas is attributed to John Milton, through Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill who influenced individual freedoms in distribution of ideas. The marketplace of ideas is a metaphor for free market and public discourse where an uninhibited conversation about public issues will lead to the acceptance of true information.

## **2. Media Studies and National Development**

Media studies plays a crucial role in national development by examining the complex relationships between media, society and politics. The media creates channels to reach out to the public and these channels include; radio, television, newspaper, traditional media systems and social media in dissemination of useful information facilitating awareness and education, promoting economic growth by facilitating business communication, advertising and marketing. Fostering social cohesion through dialogue, understanding and among different groups and however, holding those in power accountable ensuring transparency, accountability and good governance. Media studies and national development create room for:

Media and Communication for Development (MCD)

This factor considers the role of the media in promoting development goals which include poverty reduction, health, and education, social, economic and political development. MCD recognizes the role of the mass media and communication play in changing and shaping public opinion, influencing behaviour and promoting social change. This concept cannot survive without the involvement and participatory communication of stakeholders and empowerment of the marginalized sector of the society through the provision of access information and knowledge on the economy and progress of the state. MCD promotes sustainable development through communication supporting long-term socio-economic, and environmental goals putting to cognisance cultural sensitivity.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Research Question 1: How can Communication Apparatus be leveraged on to Drive National Development in Nigeria?**

Studies have shown that traditional media (print, radio and television) commands development if properly put to use by press whose sole responsibility is to serve as the watchdog of the society. According to Nnanyelugo (2003 in McQuail, 1987) charge the media to carry out positive development task in line with national establishment policy and the media should be free to report negative and positive development in the society.

In furtherance, Ochonogor (2019) infer that for the development of Nigeria to be even and all-inclusive, the mass media must serve and most be seen to be serving the interest both the rural and urban dwellers, as well as meeting the information needs of the elite and ordinary citizens. It has been observed that if a country is to experience even and all-inclusive development, all segments of the country must develop simultaneously otherwise the lagging segment will slow down the pace of development of the rest.

It is regarded that it was perceived imperative for the mass media and workers to make conscious effort to report all segments of the country in order to reveal the potentials in each section for the good of all.

**Research Question 2: What are the Opportunities and Challenges Associated with using Communication Apparatus for National Development?**

The study investigated that the opportunities associated with the use of communication apparatus for national development are very enormous if properly put to use by reporters and media practitioners. Same communication system has provided the society with increase and access to information at tip of the finger, improved governance whereby facilitate transparency, accountability and citizen's participation in governance. In Asadu (2012) the proficient use of media apparatus can promote economic growth, business communication, advertising and marketing, more so, social cohesion in promoting dialogue, understanding and tolerance among various ethnicity, religion and social groups.

The challenges according to Oluwatoyin (2020) that the same way other profession have code of conduct that guides their profession, same way it is with journalism. A professional journalist is expected to use its communication apparatus proficiently in the service to humanity and nation building by accepting to report the truth and objectivity hence national development is concern but sometimes reporters are engrossed with money spinning reportage such as political events, image building, advertisement for corporate entities and brown envelope syndrome. It was also observed that information overload, digital divide, cultural and linguistic barrier, lack of resources and support, complexity of development issues, fear of retribution or censorship, limited opportunities for investigative reporting and lack of audience interest. Asemah et'al (2017 in Okunna) assert that economic development and nation building should take precedence over some freedom of the press and of individual. And that the mass media should assist the government in the task of nation building and that the government should control the media as well as journalist to achieve this goal as posited in McQuail postulation on development media theory.

**CONCLUSION**

To drive National Development requires the full participation of the media leveraging on its responsibility to provide a supportive role in the development of the society as postulates in the development media theory of the press. Significantly, the proficient use of media apparatus by reporters and media practitioners continuously remind the government and development experts on the need to provide the basic needs of the nation as ascribed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

However, the role to disseminate information on nation building shouldn't be limited to the press alone rather abreast the masses on the democratization of the society whereby by members of the enclave opportunity to easily share ideas and participate in public discourse irrespective of their location and proximity.

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