

## **Radio as a Tool for Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) 4 in Rivers State**

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### **Abstract**

*The radio plays vital roles in the realisation of the developmental objectives of any society at local, national and international level. The radio is known as an important source for organising the course of nation towards its development goals. As a vital organ and agent of development in the society, the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals in Rivers State to greater extend depend on the level of prominence the media plays. Nevertheless, the roles of the media in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals are some of the missing indicators in the Nigerian 2015 end-point Report that are moved into the Sustainable Development Goals. It is believed that with the aids of the mass media the SDGs could be able to achieve. The Library research method and interview are the method adopted for this work. The theoretical base of this work is the Gate Keeping Theory. Finding from the study shows that much have not been down on how the radio can be used for the attainment of the said goal. It therefore recommended that educational radio programmes that takes care of cue educational subjects be introduced on radio on a daily within the week.*

**Keywords:** Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals, mass media, indicators, end-point report

### **Introduction**

In September 2000, 189 countries of the world including Nigeria signed the Millennium Declaration in New York, with eight times bound and monitorable indicators with a time frame of ending in 2015, which member states were expected to achieve by the end. The implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria began when the Federal Government pledged to apply from the Paris Club Debt Relief in 2005 which was announced in October a relief worth \$18 billion and over reduction of Nigeria's debt stock by \$30 billion ([www.cgdev.org](http://www.cgdev.org) retrieved 18/9/2019). This deal was completed in April 21, 2006, thereby reclassifying Nigeria as an International Development Association (IDA) only country in Africa as well as putting forward an innovative solution to Nigerian debt problem (Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Former Nigeria Minister of Finance).

Nigeria have made appreciable impact in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals which lasted for fourteen (14) years in areas like: Primary Education Enrolment; achieving gender parity in education; reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS; reducing maternal deaths, as well as, halving the percentage of people living in absolute hunger for which it received a recognition from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (Nigeria MDGs Abridged End-Point Report 2015). With the level of progress made so far, but there are missing indicators that shows that the Nigeria MDGs could not finished within the time framework set aside for this programme which is believed to be rolled over to the Sustainable Development Goals framework. This is believed to be lack of commitment from government, stakeholders and monitoring agencies to make use of available means of communication in order to education and make known to the people this programmes that are toward the development of the present and future development of the society.

Section 22 of the 1999 constitution states that the central role of the media as in: the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives of the state, uphold these responsibilities make government to be accountability to the people. It is also required from the media to report the activities of the government to the people and to carry the plight of the people back to government based on the high level of dependence of audiences on the media in a democratic setting like Nigeria (Okpoko 2010). Based on the satisfaction of the needs of the audience in attainment of its goals from the news sources, the need to clearly state and understand government's policies and programmes by members of the society and communicate properly to the society in order to have better understanding is key to sustain the agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Okunna and Omemnugha (2012) sees the mass media as the industrialized production and multiple distribution of message through technological devises, adding that it is the media (machines) that carry information, ideas, attitudes, etc. and the audience they transmit these message to. The sender of the message may be one person but the receivers of the message at the same time are mass and its messages before now were regarded as perishable or expendable (Ndimele and Innocent 2006). Okon (2012) add it that, this nature of communication comprises the institutions and techniques by which specialized groups employ technological devises such as the press, radio, films etc. to disseminate symbolic control to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audience thereby, making it possible for a mechanical reproduction process of the message.

Also Okpoko (2010) posits that for the media to live to its expectation, the need for factual information is critical so that the people can make their own judgement. It is therefore; necessary that the mass media which is sadden with the responsibility of supplying information generate information that are credible on which the general audience decisions are based.

## **The radio**

The radio is a technology that uses waves to carry out information with sound using systematic modulation properties through space electromagnetic energy waves such as amplitude, frequency and phase. The radio which is also referred as sound communication is a medium that transmit programmes from the broadcasting station to multitudes of individuals. Sambe (2008) sees the radio as any medium that could conduct the process whereby sound and messages are sent and received through waves. Rodman (2012) sees it as the changing technology as well as the backbone of national development which began in 1842 with Samuel Morse's invention of the telegraph which was an important precursor to radio which has to do with the transmission and reception of electromagnetic waves of radio frequency, especially those that are carrying sound message.

The golden age of the radio was from 1930 to after the World War II when the television due to the combination of sound, message and pictures became the primary medium of mass communication. Before this time, the radio serviced as the best and most popular medium of entertainment with programmes that were country wide conversation in full range. This became possible because the use of the radio was relatively cheap and can be in operational without electricity from the end user of the radio box characterized the medium true in terms of reaching a mass audience in developing world like Nigeria. The radio has established itself in every society mostly the third world with various items such as the music, radio drama, talk shows etc. the news item is another feature that made the radio acceptable and more popular (Hasan 2016).

Asak and Ohiagu (2013) observed that the combination of technology and audio signals sent through the air as radio waves from the transmitter, picked up by an antenna and sent to a receiver makes the radio different from the print media. The radio is one of the medium of communication

that is more close to the people right from the day of inception. The local or rural dweller that may not have access to the electricity, with the batter radio, information disseminated through the radio can get to the local villages and communities.

### **The Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria**

Like every other developing countries, Nigeria signed for the implementation of millennium development goals in various areas as set by the United Nations in New York 2000. Following Igbuzor (2006) cited by Olabode, Kayode, Hilary and Owonibi (2014) states that, there are important reasons why Nigeria should participate in the MDGs. Adding that the MDGs provide additional entry point to engage government on development in key areas that affect the grassroots as regards the level of government focus on issues that have to do with them. The MDGs objectives are issues that affect all segments of the society which will also serves as link between government and the rural dwellers. Taking the problems of the local and provide a link between local and international community in order to take actions towards human concentrated development.

One important advantage of the MDGs is the drawing of all-inclusiveness in its agenda on issues that require priority to address and have the endorsement and backing by world governments. These objectives are measurable, few in number, concentrated on human development and focused almost on a single date and year of end-point, making government to see the urgency and transparency in delivery of the programmes both to the local as well as the international community.

The Millennium Development Goals had eight (8) objectives such as:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality

5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

These goals are interrelated and should be seen as a whole because its effort is to create an enabling environment for development and the eradication of poverty. It is believed that the eradication of poverty is fundamental to accomplishing the other Millennium Development Goals. This is believed that lack of education, poverty and hunger exposed people to disease, conflicts, child and maternal mortality, environmental issues, etc. (Okoroafor and Anuforo 2012).

### **Sustainable Development Goals**

Nigeria as a member state of the United Nation also keyed in the agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals like every other member state for the realization of 2030 as the end point to end poverty, securing a health planet for the future generation to come, build a peaceful and all inclusive society as one fundamental to ensure dignity of all humanity. The United Nations believes that, no one will be left behind. Meaning that in the next fifteen years, the seventeen targets out of the eight point of the Millennium Development Goal should be achieved through out the federation as well as other member states of the United Nation. It is expected that the world and Nigeria indeed look into the welfare of the people by alienating poverty in the land.

The Sustainable Development Goals other wise known as Agenda 2030, are aimed at seventeen (17) goals, with 169 targets and 230 indicators. This Agenda 2030 is aimed and planned towards getting the people and the planet into prosperity with the set goals which are:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The over view of these goals are targeted toward humanity and the planet with the determination to end poverty, hunger in all form and dimension, so that all human can live a fulfilled life with their God given potential and dignity to labour, having equal right to a better health care system. Reducing planet degradation and issues with climate change that could be

manage in order to support the needs of the present and future generation, having in mind that prosperity can only be enjoyed when human lives a fulfilled life expectation because the economic, society and technology will live in harmony with the natural occurrences (sustainabledevelopment.un.org).

### **Research objectives**

- ☞ Examine the use of radio for the attainment of Development Goals in Rivers State.
- ☞ Unravel the effectiveness of the radio programme to the sustainability of SDGs in Rivers State.
- ☞ Identify the constraints in the use of the radio programme to attain SDGs 4 in Rivers State.

### **Theoretical Review/Review of Related Literature**

This study is based on two major theories in order to examine the role of the radio in the Sustainable Development Goals as it regards to the dissemination of information of the SDGs in Rivers State. Gate Keeping Theory and the Development Media Theory are used for this study.

#### **Gatekeeping theory**

This theory can be described as the regulation of the flow of information. The theory was propounded by Kurt Lewin in 1947. This theory believes that the media selects what to emphasise and to deemphasise. Ndimele and Innocent (2006) sees this theory as a model that lays emphasis on the people whose role it is to make the choice of the final news that people ultimately hear or read. Adding that, the theory describes the process by which a news item travelling through channels gain clearance at certain checkpoints along the way, calling the checkpoints as gates and the individuals or the organization who give clearance as gatekeepers.

To Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017), this theory deals with the processes and factors that influence the decisions of media organisation to select or reject potentials newsworthy items for publication or telecast. McQuail (2005) cited in Asemah et al (2017) also observed that it as a metaphor been used to describe a process by which choices are made in the media world especially judgments regarding, whether or not to consent a particular news report to pass through the gates of a new medium, into news channels. Adding that it could be refers to as the power to give or withhold access to different voices in society and it is often a locus of conflict. It is therefore believes that before news item to get to the audience from the sources, such news must have passed through the tables of individuals or organisation whose is saddling duties to determine what goes out to the public as news.

A gatekeeper could be the editors, news directors or the station managers who has the obligation to appraise the content to determine the relevance of such news not just to the audience but to the society at large. They can as well revise stories before transmission or even kill the story out rightly. To Ndimele and Innocent (2006), this is a method that owners of media outfits use to make sure that the public hear or see only the activities that they want them to hear or to see. Some things the information that may tarnish the image of its associates or the society will be killed during the gatekeeping process.

Asemah et al (2017) observed that it is a social methodology use to decide which of a certain commodity such as materials or goods and services and information will enter into the channels of communication for the audience to act on as news. Adding that, the gatekeepers are able to control the public's knowledge of the actual events by letting some stories pass through the system, but keeping others out of the knowledge of the audience. The decision making of news is based on what is seen as news values, in house style or the organisational routines.

According to Shabir, Safdar, Imran, Mumtaz and Anjum (2015), different types of information gathered in the world cannot be publish, broadcast or

telecasted because of the gatekeeping process of filtering of information which occurs at different levels of the mass structure rising from the reporter to the editors in the print or reporters to the director of news in the electronic media. Adding that the gatekeeping is organised by levels of important and interest, some times by a person and few times by a group of individuals that determines what will become news and what will not be in the either the print media or the electronic media.

Barzilai-Nahon (2007), sees this as a group of individuals who believes that they have the powers to determine who and to what the audience should pay attention to as news and under what conditions should such news be publish or telecast. This individual could be with political powers, relationship or personal interest to the issues that may arise from the news, seeing gatekeeping as a way or method by which billions of messages that are available in the media are cut down and transformed into hundreds of messages that will get to the audience in a way that is acceptable to the keepers of the gate.

Asemah (2011) cited by Asemah et al (2017) believes that there are factors that affects the gatekeeping process and some of such factors are:

**i. Ownership interest:**

The owner of a media house can dictate what to be reported due to this personal interest or protection of his friends or climate and at some point could also mounts pressure on some news to be publish or telecast. Innocent and Asak (2015) sees that the ownership pattern of the media as the forth estate of the realm is the engine room of all the estate because none other has so ramifying an influence and so great power on the daily lives of millions of people both with and without national boundaries. This is because they can hire only those who agree with their editorial views so that they can issue or orders to downplay some topics, while playing large attention to others. Okafor (2014) observed that owners of media house have continued to play an influential role in the editorial policies of media organisations because he who pays the piper dictates the tune. Hrvatin,

Lenart and Brankica (2004) have pointed that the main reason of control over media outfits by the ownership is potential to exert political influence. Adding that, media power is just like the political power and it gives the owner of the media outlets the will and political level of influence over what is seen as news. In some countries, the relationships with the owners of the stations are not publicly known which can also be seen as hidden ownership.

#### **ii. Economic**

The desire to make profit is another factor that affects the gatekeeping process. Individual or institutions with wealthy also at some point mediate between what comes out as news because of their influence over key issues relating to what should have formed the news. The non-payment of editors and news directors are some of the economic factors that affect the quality of news, what should be a commercial is presented as news. Advertisers may also exercise to a loud extend have a considerable influence over the news transmitted by the news media.

#### **iii. Deadlines**

Reporters are expected to beat deadline, but if they are unable to meet up their news become dead. According to Daniel (2017) news is a perishable commodity, treated and package differently by the reporters and the editors. Adding that if news is perishable, it therefore means that time is of utmost importance, without which it becomes perishable.

#### **iv. News values**

Asemah et al, (2017) pointed out that, what is considered as important or the potential impact of anything that must see the light of the day in order to be publish or telecast must be a good news stories that has value or it is newsworthy. An event that is seen not to be newsworthy is rejected in the gatekeeping process and accepts what is believed to be newsworthy with the yardsticks set aside to judge what becomes a newsworthy.

This theory addresses the various forces that come into play as news. The people that make decisions about what messages will be selected to present to their audiences. These individuals are also seen as the coolers of the day to day activities of reporting in the media outlet and also serve as a building block for influencing the news selection and framework for understanding mass communication. It also gives insight into how power is bestowed to gate keepers.

This theory did not address the developmental activities that the media will help in the development and realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, therefore the development media theory shall be consider in order to deal with the subject matter.

### **Development Media Theory**

This theory emerged in the 1980s and was formulated by McQuail to fill a void which became increasingly noticeable as the gap between the developed and developing countries widened (Okunna and Omemnugha 2012). The purpose for this theory is to use the media to serve the general good of the nation by making the mass media function as instrument for growth political stability, national sovereignty, and cultural development. One key emphasis in this theory is that there can be no development without communication. According to Asemah, et al (2017), the development media theory is otherwise known as the development communication theory or development support communication. Adding that, under this theory the media undertakes the role of carrying out positive developmental programmes, accepting restrictions and instructions from the state; facilitating the process of development in the developing countries.

Believing that the mass media are expected to carry out positive development programmes Mcquail (2005) observes that the media should carryout positive development task in line with national laws that establishment it and give priority to news, developments issues and

information that will link with other developing countries closed to the geographical location, cultural as well as their political activities. Adding that the journalists and other media workers have responsibilities based on their freedom to information gathering and dissemination. Also Ndimele and Innocent (2006) posit that the media in the developing society/countries which in most case is generally referred to as third world nations should be used exclusively for the development of the society, especially in the areas of agriculture, health and social mobilisation. This they believed could be done through a deliberate designed means that will enable members of the audience to key in to the development activities of the state.

Asemah et al (2017) also pointed out that the media need to subordinate themselves to political, economic, social and cultural needs of the people hence development should be the key point in its reporting. Adding that it is the media that can champion social, economic, political, educational and cultural development of any society, knowing that the need to achieve all set goals is very urgent and link these set goals with other developing countries. The mass media has been used in the campaign against various kinds of dangerous disease and other social vices such as the fight against polio, cancer, malaria, child mortality combating HIV and AIDS, environment sustainability etc. which have received encouragement and promote sustainable national development.

Development media theory is relevant in this research and to the study of national development because it advocates for positive use of the mass media in economic and social harmony of a nation. It is also relevant to studies that are centre on mass media and rural development and other related studies. Although the theory supports government development efforts by advocating its policies and its efforts to bring about national economic development, it is however equated with government propaganda.

## Methods

The research method use for the study was the library research, interviews and questionnaires. Wali (2002) sees this methodology as an examination of contents that at the end produces useful information that could be used for various purposes. Adding that, it is use to ascertain the current status of a problem or phenomenon by studying a form of representative population. Ndiyo (2015) sees this method as the involvement of selecting and studying of samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables.

## Research findings

1. Examine the use of radio for the attainment of Development Goals in Rivers State.

The radio has been used to champion social, economic, political, and cultural development goals in Rivers State. Much of this is in the area of health programmes. This has been in the area of the campaign against various kinds of dangerous disease and other social vices such as the fight against polio, cancer, malaria, child mortality combating HIV and AIDS, environment sustainability etc. which have received encouragement and promote sustainable national development. Using the questionnaires through public opinion poll of the U-Reporter, it was discovered that only 39% have knowledge of what MDGs and SDGs and 61% don't have knowledge of what MDGs means, talk of SDGs. Therefore there is need for government to do more.

2. Unravel the effectiveness of the radio programme to the sustainability of SGDs in Rivers State.

With high rate of information dissemination on HIV/AIDS programmes fight against polio, cancer, malaria, child mortality and other dangerous disease. Rivers State was ranking the most prevalent state in Nigeria but presently ranking the third among the states with the highest prevalence rate. This

could be believed to be the effective use of the radio to disseminate information about the virus.

Using the generated questionnaires through the public opinion poll of the U-Reporter, finding shown that 40% of residents in Rivers State believe that NGOs and Civil Society has responsibility to implement the programme and the level of effectiveness could be still high. About 25% of responses of the respondents do not have the knowledge of the effectiveness of the radio in implementation of Sustainable Development Goals but believes that the radio is doing it best in order to inform the people about the programme. 15% thinks that it should be added into school curriculum in order to save the next generation while 20% think that it for it to be more effective then there is need for local language is an added advantage which they call for Donor Agencies in Nigeria to come into play.

### 3. Identify the constraint in the use of the radio programme to attain SDGs 4 in Rivers State.

There are some levels of constrained to which the radio programme has that use of radio programme has to the attainment of SDGs 4 in Rivers State and these constrain raise from the presenter of the educational programme (the presenter of the programme may be faster than the listeners or the manner of his/her presentation could be offensive to the learner which may not be known to him based), power/bratty/rechargeable set radio boxes (in one way or the other electricity plays a major role), timing of the lesson, questioning and feedback, the state of the learner. Another constrained is the issues of finance from the end user and that of the radio states as well.

Mulholland, Bernardo and Berger (2017), pointed out that 2030 is known to be the people's agenda and therefore all stakeholders must be carried along in order not to leave any one behind. Adding that the level of media impact on public awareness toward the Sustainable Development Goals in Rivers State is low as the television sector had 28%, the radio has 13% while

newspaper has 6%. The website has a total number of 6%, town-hall meetings have 5%, the social media has 39% and the Nollywood has a total impact assessment of 2% (end report of MDGs in Nigeria 2015). Finding shows that the radio has not impacted much on public awareness toward the development of this programme in order for grass root participation which is due to lack of financing the media campaigns of this programme.

### **Recommendations**

It is therefore very important that the following communication strategies be look into in order to have attainment the expectations of the Sustainable Development Goals with the aid of the media industries.

1. Develop educational content programme that will run on radio daily to educate the members of the society on specific subject as it is run in Kenya, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia
2. Introduces the use of radio programmes in schools that will help the teacher equip the teachers to correct the confusion posed by different English text books they come across. Giving a better understanding of the subject matter.
3. Develop appropriate branding for the SDGs knowing that the programme is time base; there is the need to brand it products/projects that implemented.
4. Develop ICT-based communications platform that will help to monitor and access the level of impart from the programme and those benefiting from the programme and not just document policy base. Feedback mechanism
5. Strengthen relations between government, stakeholders and partnership such as the private sector, communities and traditional leaders/institutions. It is important that all stakeholders should know what is going on with the programme. Therefore, proper communication of on the state of programme, challenges as well as a progress report from time to time in the implementation of the

programme. The need to carry out a progressive and sensitisation of the programme within the stakeholders respective of the fact that they are part of the SDGs programme is very important to keep them with resents/ground breaking development in the programme.

### **Conclusion**

Rivers State has not made much appreciable impact on the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals as compared to other states in the country in areas like: primary education enrolment; achieving gender parity in education; reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS; reducing maternal deaths, as well as, having the percentage of people living in absolute hunger reduced to some level of acceptability of growth but you could see that there are a good number of person living without food as well as a good number of persons still live below the poverty level.

With the level of progress made so far, there are indicators that show that the programme has been rolled over to the Sustainable Development Goals framework. This is due to lack of commitment from government as well as the media organizations to make use of available means of communication to educate the people and inform them that these programmes that are toward the development of the society.

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