

# Citizens Participation In Community Radio Programming: A Study Of Two Community Radio Stations In Northern Region

**Dery Alimbey Dominic**

Senior Lecturer and Doctoral Student (B.A. Arts Hons.,  
Dip. Ed., M.A. Human Resource Development),  
Tamale Technical University, School of Applied Arts  
Department of Languages and Liberal Studies

**Kode Kaba Paul**

Lecturer (Dip. In Communication Studies, B.A.Hons.  
Sociology/Psychology, Mphil Communication And Media  
Studies), Tamale Technical University  
School of Applied Arts, Department of Communication and  
Media Studies

*Abstract: This study investigated citizens' participation in community radio programming at selected community radio stations in the Northern Region of Ghana. Participatory communication and the uses and gratification theories were used for the study. Qualitative case study was used for the research and data gathering was conducted through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Findings indicate varieties of programmes are broadcast by the community radio stations in the region. Among some of the interesting programmes are Community Affairs, My Home, Community Development and Farmers Time. The study further revealed that the formation of listener's clubs and the need to get listeners involved in all programmes of the stations have created effective interaction between the communities and radio stations leading to greater citizens participation in community radio programming. The study concludes that community radio programming has generated enough interest for citizens active engagement in radio shows because such programmes are able to gratify the media needs of community radio listeners.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Radio still remains the most popular means of communication among large number of populations in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is equally an important means for communication that is intended to trigger development. "For more than fifty years radio has been the most appealing tool for participatory communication and development. It is without doubt the communication tool most widely spread throughout the world and has always been the ideal medium for change" (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001: p. 12). Community radio though is a new phenomenon in the country that has come to complement the role of the existing public and commercial radio stations operating in the country's pluralistic media landscape, its recent upsurge especially in the Northern parts of the country gives enough room for scholarship to investigate and delve deeper on the programming of such rural and community media. Such investigations however late in coming will serve not only as a prove of the important role radio plays in the socio-economic development of developing

countries such as Ghana but also will galvanize interest among academic communities to contribute their quota aimed at improving the status-quo. If the media is limited in giving voices to the people, to what extent does community radio give voice to the voiceless and the marginalized? This current study investigated whether or not community radio programming gives voice to the voiceless people in Dalun and Damongo to participate in community radio.

Community radio has also grown rapidly in Africa and other parts of the globe thus being used by different social actors to advance their course. While many actors are taking advantage to advance their course, the communities see community radio as platforms where their views can easily be heard and their rights advocated. Community radio is also a platform where the governed raise issues bothering them in areas of local development (da Costa, 2012).

Community radio can be a conduit for transmitting information aimed at educating people on life's skills, fostering behaviour and attitudinal change, empowering grassroots and advancing changes in the fortunes of the poor

persons in society. Radio is not always positive as it is also well documented that radio stations established in the name of communities have also been used to spread hatred and incite genocide and sectarian agendas. Radio is also considered a powerful means of countering extremism, mediating violent conflicts and building a culture of tolerance and peace (da Costa, 2012).

Karikari (1999) argues that the freeing of the airwaves in Ghana makes access to radio a strong reality. He maintains that radio has enormous advantages for community use. The technology offers wide choices to suit different spatial requirements for transmission. Radio is also conducive to participatory programme production and presentation and affords easy collection, recording and playback of events and issues. Radio can also cover several villages or scattered communities at no extra cost because it is a cheaper means of information transmission. The low literacy rate in Ghana and Africa also makes it still the most efficient and accessible mass medium.

According to Karikari (1999) the rationale for community media otherwise community radio or rural media is also that they create conditions for marginalized communities to have their own voices. They enhance the opportunities for the wider enjoyment of freedom of expression. Community media enrich and make real the realisation of media pluralism. The dominant neo-liberal ideology proposes that media under 'free enterprise' promote a 'free market place of ideas' is properly noticeable through community radio.

Manyozo (2009) states that modern-day Africa, like the rest of the developing world, faces increasing social, economic, political, and cultural developmental challenges. To address such challenges according to him demands a lot of strategies including the use of media and communications especially community radio toward actively engaging communities in policy formulation and implementation. Radio according to Manyozo (2009) has borne a huge share of this responsibility, because the medium is pervasive, local, extensive, flexible, available, readily understood, personal, portable, speedy, and efficient.

The media has often been described as the fourth estate of the realm or the fourth arm of government after the executive, legislature and the judiciary (1992 Constitution of Ghana). Being the fourth estate of the realm, Article 162 (5) of the 1992 Constitution states that "All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this Constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana". This means that the media has a constitutional mandate to hold government accountable at all levels and given that community radio operates at the community level, then it can monitor and hold decentralized state institutions accountable.

A community radio station is one that is operated: in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. The community can be territorial or geographical - a township, village, district or an Island. It can also be a group of people with common interests, who are not necessarily living in one defined territory (UNESCO, 2015). Community radio in UNESCO's standards can be managed or controlled by one group, by combined groups, or of people

such as women, children, farmers, fisher folk, ethnic groups, or senior citizens.

## II. LITERATURE

Chapman et al. (2003) in studying rural radio in agricultural extension: the example of radio programmes produced in local languages on soil and water conservation in Ghana realised that rural or community radio has a very powerful influence in farming. The study which used both quantitative and qualitative approaches in studying the phenomena was carried out in six districts in the Upper East and Northern Regions of Ghana. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. A baseline study was carried before the programme was aired in March 2001 in the respective regions. In June 2003 when the programme was being aired, the second study and third were carried on the same target audience. The results of the pre-test, post-test studies were compared and in the final analysis, it was proven that radio has a positive effect on the audience since almost all those who listened to the programmes broadcast, adopted the methodology on their farms. This indicates that Radio programmes have tremendous benefits to farmers who listen to specific programmes that address their needs.

Chapman et al. (2003) also revealed that the respondents who were farmers generally liked radio programmes that address their needs especially drama and group discussion issues. Farmers' understanding of soil and water conservation practices, agro-forestry and organic manure, were improved after listening to the broadcast pieces within the period of the study. The researchers underscored that if similar programmes were to be transmitted regularly, such programmes could be used as an educational tool, especially in the area of agro-forestry, where the respondents stated that they lack adequate knowledge and information on the issues involved.

This study also revealed that farmers had resolved to reduce bush burning after listening to education on bush burning. The research increased the farmers' resolve to reduce this practice on their own farms and in the immediate environment because they had been educated enough to appreciate the negative consequences of bush burning. It therefore goes to say that farmers gained a lot of education and information through radio programmes thus confirming scholar's arguments that radio has a profound attitudinal change in the lives of its listeners (Karikari, 2009).

It is imperative to point out that as far as this research was concerned; the radio programmes that were aired were well received because of the target audience and the programmes content. The content of the programmes broadcast had substantial benefits in the livelihoods of the people and was targeting some farming communities whose major occupation is farming. The format used in broadcasting the programmes was another factor which attracted many listeners. The use of the local language or vernacular also gave the programme a popular appeal. Chapman et al (2003) therefore recommended the need for radio programmers to consider timing, sustainability and continuity in radio programming in order to draw the attention of targeted audience of any radio broadcast.

The logic behind these suggestions is that the type of programmes must be designed towards the needs of a particular audience and the timing must also be taken into consideration to ensure that the target audiences have the time to listen to the programmes broadcast.

Serwormoo (2012) also carried out a research on the challenges posed by broadcasting policy to the sustainability of community radio in Ghana using a campus radio station, ATL FM as a case study. The study was an exploratory work that analyzed campus radio broadcasting in the country using the ATL FM, a campus radio station based in Cape Coast and owned by the University of Cape Coast (UCC) as the single case. The main tussle of the research was to investigate the challenges posed by the National Communication Authority's policy on community radio particularly ATL FM and how the station was addressing such challenges in areas of funding, reach and programming.

The researcher used qualitative and quantitative methodology in the study where semi-structured interviews, observation, document analysis and a survey were used in data collection. Findings showed that there was low level of participation among audience in programming and content generation of ATL FM. The station also aired only nine hours and thirty minutes of development programming weekly out of the total weekly broadcast of one-hundred and sixty-eight hours (168).

Serwormoo (2012) findings indicated that the ATL FM spent much of its time on non-developmental programmes as against development programmes and that the station spent 9.3 hours a week representing 5.54% on development programmes compared to 94.46% of non-development programming. Another significant finding was that campus radio has been monitored often and is directed to comply with the NCA's directive not to broadcast beyond 5kilometer radius and also not to generate advertising revenue exceeding their expenses. A situation was when the NCA sent a letter dated January 26, 2006 directing ATL FM not to generate revenue through advertising because it was a campus radio station.

The researcher recommended the need for owners of campus radio stations to institute mechanisms to ensure that their programming were tailored to the needs of their target audience and do development programming that addresses either students and lecturers as in the case of campus radio instead of generic programmes that turns to compete with commercial radio stations. The study also recommended the need for the NCA to have open discussion with operators of campus radio to avoid the ambivalence in the communication policy directives.

In another related study by Conrad (2013), it was realised that Community Radio in East Africa was sustained through donor funding and also organisational structures. It also points out that political economy played significant roles in community radio practice. Using an in-depth interview with a sample size of 64 respondents who included radio managers, staff and experts working in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, the study revealed that the kind of journalism practiced in the study areas was different from the typical community radio practice.

Conrad (2013) focused on local funding structures using six community radio stations operating in East Africa as the

case study. The study debunked theoretical perspectives on Community media and argues that scholar's "proclivity to privilege community radio as model alternative to everything else has created an archetype that may not exist in practice". Spending four months on field study, the results showed that historical and regulatory context plays significant roles in the way such stations operate. Results demonstrated that the region's oldest operating Community radio stations went on air between the year 2000 and 2004 as part of the East Africa Community Media Pilot Project. The project was a partnership between the local development organizations and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

Conrad (2013) indicates that East African community radio stations are fully funded by donor agencies and this he indicates defeats the purposes of community radio since the donors would continue to dictate the kind of programmes broadcast in such stations. The concerns have been captured in these words;

Foreign donors are woven into the history of community radio; it was a foreign donor agency that facilitated and funded the training of community journalists and the construction of the stations from the very beginning. Although funding from SIDA ended in 2007, several other donors have since taken their place and continue to demonstrate leadership and financial commitment to the development of the community radio sector in East Africa; UNESCO has supported the creation of about two dozen stations in Tanzania since 2008.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The approach to this study is qualitative. The study adopts a case study approach. In this direction, the study of the two community radio stations, how they operate in terms of programmes and how listeners or citizens participate in the programmes of the community radio are matters of studying situations in-depth. The case study employed here enabled the researcher to adequately investigate whether community members of Dalun and Damongo participates in the community radio stations found in their areas and if they do, what motivates them to participate or not to participate in programmes aired or broadcast in these community radio stations.

The population for this research is the community radio stations operating in the Northern region out of which two community radio stations were sampled using purposive sampling technique. According to the NCA (2015), the country has a population of 63 community radio stations. The Northern region has 12 community radio stations as of March 2015. Since this study adopted a case study as a methodology, purposively selecting two radio stations in the Northern region is not only ideal but scientific in orientation.

PAD community radio and Simli radio were purposively sampled out of the 12 community radio stations in the region. Merriam (2002) indicates that purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling procedure enables phenomena to be understood from the participant's perspective. It is a type of sampling convenient for qualitative case study research. It enable researchers to select respondents or sites through which the researcher can obtain 'information rich' and relevant to the

subject under study. Purposive sampling enables the researcher “to select a sample from which the most can be learned”, (Merriam, 2002:12). Creswell and Clark (2011, as cited in Palinkas et al. 2013) pointed out that purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or group of individuals who are knowledgeable about a particular topic and have experiences that can enhance the interest of the research.

Kumekpor (2002: p. 138) states that “In purposive sampling, the units of the sample are selected not by a random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for study because of their characteristics or because they satisfy certain qualities which are not randomly distributed in the universe, but they are typical or they exhibit most of the characteristics of interest to the study”. In this study, the researcher adopted the purposive sampling because of the respondent’s level and depth of knowledge in the subject under study. The selection of the two managers of the two radio stations as respondents was based on their knowledge and experience in the operation and management of community radio stations. They conduct day to day administrative and journalistic duties for the two radio stations and have dossier of information relating to their place of work. Additionally, the documentations and all necessary information relating to the two radio stations are in their custody and are therefore the best respondents with adequate characteristics to provide the researcher with the needed information.

Besides the community radio station managers, the listeners clubs were equally purposively selected as respondents since the managers of the stations recommended one of the clubs from each of the stations. This was after the managers were told the researcher was adopting purposive sampling as a procedure to gain adequate knowledge from the respondents. “Where it is known that certain individual units, by their very characteristic, will provide more and better information on a particular subject than a randomly-select unit, then such units are purposefully picked up for study” (Kumekpor, 2002: p. 138).

This research purposively selected Simli and PAD radios for in-depth study. Simli and PAD community radios are located in Dalun and Damongo respectively. While Simli radio is located in the Kumbungu district, PAD radio is located in the West Gonja district both in the Northern region. Simli radio started broadcasting half daily in 2007 through a relay link through Radio Savannah, a GBC regional radio station based in Tamale. Simli radio was established through a Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) project that was being implemented in Dalun at the time.

PAD and Simli radio were purposively selected for this research because Simli radio was the first community radio station to have been established in the Northern Region and has not seen much academic research since its establishment in 2007.

Data for this research was collected using in-depth interviews, documentations and focus group discussions. The data was collected from respondents in Dalun in the Kumbungu district and Damongo in the West Gonja district both of the Northern region between June, 2015 and May, 2016. The principal researcher collected all the data from the field with some assistance from a research assistant, who

volunteered his services and was trained on data collection procedures. This research assistant assisted during focus group discussions at Dalun where some of the respondents co-switched English and Dagbanli. During transcription of same audio, the research assistant helped in translation of the audio recordings. This was later analysed by the principal researcher to make meaning of the data collected. Baxter and Jack (2008) state that in a case study, data can be collected using multiple sources and then converging into the analysis process rather than handled individually. “Each data source is one piece of the ‘puzzle’, with each piece contributing to the researcher’s understanding of the whole phenomenon.

Doku (2013) carried out a research on the title; “The use of participatory communication in a national programme: a study of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP). Adopting a qualitative research approach and in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as the data collection methods, Doku investigated how the participatory communication process was being applied in addressing poverty problems. Two focus group discussions were conducted to obtain information from the beneficiaries of the programme who are residents of Abokobi in the Greater Accra region. Using a structured interview guide, each interview consisted of six beneficiaries as respondents and lasted for 30-minutes each. In-depth interviews were also conducted on two officials of the LEAP programme after which the data was analyzed thematically according to the research questions.

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS

##### A. PROGRAMMING OF SIMLI AND PAD RADIOS

Participating in community radio of Simli and PAD takes many forms. Management of the two community radio stations have instituted a number of mechanisms to ensure that community members adequately participate in all the programming and programmes of the two stations. Interviewing listeners, they indicated that they participate in community radio programming especially on issues that address their basic economic and social livelihoods. Mefalopulos and Tufte (2009) categorised participation into passive and active participation explaining that the passive participant just consumes the messages without reacting to them while active participant listens and reacts to the message by making contributions to make their voices heard in the process. The two radio stations have an innovative way of making citizens participate in their programming. They make sure that all programmes developed for broadcast at the two community radio stations (PAD and Simli) are pilot tested on the people before actual broadcast and this results in higher participation. The pilot test is done through a vox-pop where people would be told the content of a new programme after which their opinions would be gathered using a tape recorder. The details of how citizens of Dalun and Damongo participate in community radios of PAD and Simli have been categorised into five forms which are; How do community members participate in community radio programming of Simli and PAD radios?

## B. PHONE-IN-SEGMENTS

Almost all programmes broadcast at the community radios receive some form of participation through *phone-in-segments*. This is a process where part of the broadcast period is devoted to receive phone-calls or messages from listeners. This gives people the opportunity to either clarify an issue or contribute to the discussions ongoing. *Community affairs* which is one of the programmes aired at PAD FM, receives a lot of participation through phone-in segment because the entire period is devoted to the listener after the problem of the day is introduced. The rest of the other magazine programmes discussed earlier namely; *my home, what's it, farmers time, maternal mortality, women's time, youth affairs and community development* all devotes at least 10 minutes of their air time for the listener. Some audience take advantage of community radio as a medium or tool through which they vent their anger and frustrations about the poor economic conditions under which they live, authorities and the government therefore continue to suffer vilifications, verbal abuse and at times receive threats for non-performances or for their inability to fulfill one promise or the other. This means community radio and the media in general serves the interest of the governed and the government. It has also transform the linear model of communication to participatory form of communication albeit at the decentralized level where the implementer of policies and development workers are seen at same level with community members in decision making process.

Community member's participation in the community radio can be described as two-way form of communication otherwise referred to as participatory communication. Mefalopulos and Tufte (2009) define participatory communication as an approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitating empowerment especially for those who are most vulnerable and marginalised. Community radio therefore has given a better opportunity for the government to measure and monitor its progress in terms of fulfillment of policies that are intended for the benefit of the people.

## C. LISTENERS CLUBS

*Listeners clubs* exist at Simli and PAD community radio stations where citizens have been grouped as loyal listeners of community radio to participate in the programming of these two stations. At Simli radio, the listeners clubs are 24 in number and were formed right after the establishment of the radio station with the support of the Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA), a Danish funded non-governmental organization that established the radio station. It was intended to give the community the opportunity to participate in the programming of the station and till date such groups still exist in the Dalun community and its environs who actively participate in every aspect of the community radio. The formation of the listeners clubs at PAD radio started in 2013 through a sponsorship programme from the World Food Programme (WFP) and being executed by the Association of Church-based Development (ACDEP). There are 24 existing

listeners clubs in Damongo at the time of carrying out this research and each of the clubs consist of 25 members. Members of the clubs have been given mobile phones and other media kits to participate in the discussions of any programme of their choice on PAD radio and at times, the hosts of some of the programmes call some of the loyal and knowledgeable listeners to participate in programmes that they have expert opinions. Leadership of the listeners clubs have also been trained to co-ordinate activities of membership. Some of the members are periodically invited to the stations to host programmes or to be panelists of talk-shows of their choice. In order to sustain these listeners clubs at Dalun and Simli, the management of the stations and their donors have given the citizens livelihood empowerment training programmes to enable them become economically active and independent when such funding opportunities were no longer available.

Community radio can be a powerful medium for the government to get feedback from the people easily and also to enable the people at the grassroots to gain direct contact and feeling of being part of the governance process. Governance is therefore decentralising faster through the medium of community radio. People at the grassroots now can take part in national affairs although at the local level. In this direction, a form of gratification is being fulfilled among the people as one interviewee remarked; "I felt very happy when I heard my own voice on Simli radio for the first time...hmmm, I never thought I am that important". This form of gratification can only find reason in the Uses and Gratification theory. Baran and Davis (2010) argue that audience members are not passive receivers of information rather they have power over its consumption. Despite the availability of other radio frequencies in their areas, the people of Dalun and Damongo prefer to listen to Simli and PAD radios because they feel a part of these stations and can associate with the issues discussed. The other FM stations in these areas are not located and use English and other foreign languages in broadcast.

## D. PANEL CONSTITUTION

Another major process through which community members or citizens participate in community radio programming is the selection of knowledgeable community members as panel members to discuss issues in the two community radio stations. In both stations, they select people to constitute the panel depending on the topic under discussion. If the issue concerns politics, the vibrant political parties in those localities are selected to participate in the discussions while matters that require expert opinions such as health, education, sanitation and agriculture, an expert in those fields are invited from the decentralized state institutions to constitute the panel. The panel is usually varied to make the discussions interesting and this again gives opportunity for listeners to contribute from the comfort of their homes. In programmes such as *community development, farmer's time, youth affairs* which are broadcast at Simli, citizens must always be part of the panel while discussions are broadcast in the local dialect to enable citizens to fully participate.

Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005) makes sense here when he said "The new concept of development puts premium on

participation in the discussion of the affairs of the state as well as in decision making". Ansu-Kyeremeh argues that for the purposes of national development or self-development, people should be allowed to share ideas and discuss freely, exchange views, evaluate alternatives and criticize where necessary. This is consistent with the functions of community radio which is to provide an avenue for social interaction and participation which the mass media should provide for the exchange of comments and constructive criticisms regarding public affairs. Conrad (2013) argues that participatory communication adopts a horizontal process through which collective involvement in media-making and community empowerment act as catalyst for desired change. By adopting an approach where citizens can openly question authorities on their responsibilities, stakeholders of development would conduct themselves diligently and accountably.

#### E. COMMUNITY FORA

Out of broadcast (OB) is a common term in broadcast journalism which refers to broadcasting a programme live outside of the studios of the radio station. This has been used on many occasions by both Simli and PAD community radio stations. Before broadcast could be aired for OB, the people in a given community are usually pre-informed to be prepared for such an occasion which they have been complying by gathering together at a community forum. Quoting the manager of PAD radio, this is what he had to say;

Usually, we do live broadcast at community levels sometimes and since many of the people think radio is a complex thing, they come in their numbers to witness and not only witness, many of the people who are willing to speak on air are given the opportunity. The broadcast is aired in the dialect of the community we are visiting using the listeners' clubs who have all be given radio sets by our donor.

At radio Simli, the scenario is not too different, a form of community forum is organised by the station where people's views about a particular development problem would be sought and pre-recorded and later aired on the station for stakeholders to provide redress or solutions to the problems identified. In this scenario, the grassroots are not only given the chance to participate in decision making that affect them but are given the opportunity to make decisions about their own developmental matters. The existence of these listeners clubs in Dalun has made it possible for many of the residents to participate in programmes of their interest. When the issues are aired which are obviously legitimate concerns coming from the people, stakeholders especially local political leaders become very concerned which sometimes results in rapid responses. This invariably leads to development for the people.

The common language used on such platforms is the local dialects which gives the people the opportunity to patronise programmes that are broadcast in those stations. They explained that it gives them the needed pride and identity. The high illiteracy rate in these communities makes it difficult for them to comprehend programmes that are broadcast in English hence very few people listen or participate in such programmes. Local dialect is the most common medium of

interaction on radio and as such enables the people to follow discussions and participate as when they wish to do so.

#### F. COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS

*Community Resource Persons* are people working in the two communities who have specialised knowledge based on their professions and where they work. They also constitute another section who are periodically invited to the studios of the two stations to offer their expert knowledge depending on the topic under discussion. These resource persons are usually selected from the decentralised District Assembly Departments. Some departments whose staffs have often been used for this purpose include the Ghana Education Service (GES), Ghana Health Service (GHS), Department of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Traditional Council. Aside these state agencies where resource persons are drawn to share their expert opinions, there are civil society organizations working within these catchment areas who are also consulted depending on the area of their expertise to ensure that the issues being discussed are fairly dealt with for the benefit of the people.

The panel is usually constituted depending on issues affecting the community at a given time which may require any expert from these institutions to assist in discussing them. The topics for discussions are normally picked from the community members through the phone-ins or during community foras where citizens freely speak out their minds on their challenges. Before the talk-show begins, radio synopsis or questions relating to the areas to be discussed are often prepared for the panelists to enable them prepare themselves ahead of time. Conrad (2013) states that an independent media is a good foundation for a functional democracy to exist and its access and use by citizens creates enabling environment to check accountability of state institutions. These state institutions through community radio are able to have free discussions and interactions with citizens thereby ensuring accountability.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

In assessing the benefits in participating in community radio programming of Simli and PAD community radios, there was a strong indications that people in these communities see radio as an integral tool in their daily lives and as such devote time to listen, get informed, entertained and participate in whichever capacity in the programming of these stations. This has affected quality of their lives positively to the extent that radio broadcasting is synonymous with the truth. People depend so much on radio to the extent that any information that they hear must be confirmed by radio before they believe it. It was revealed through the research that many of the people have positively changed their attitudes from a traditional believe to a more modern attitude where the influence of the modern system through radio had changed many of their lifestyles. The initial notion of radio being a complex tool has been refined to radio being "a friend" to the

residents such that all their problems are brought to the radio stations for discussion and redress.

Quite a significant number of the people participate in community radio programming because of the existence of the listeners' clubs. People develop good rapport while at the group level and turn to develop positive relationships toward one another hence participation increases in radio activities. Some of the respondents were of the view that the clubs create an avenue for them to meet friends and have good interactions both in the studios and out of the station. There are 24 listeners clubs in Dalun and its surrounding communities with each club having membership of thirty and over. Damongo has clubs among the seven dialects who broadcast on PAD radio. Discussions on air sometimes become competitive of ideas among the clubs. The emotional and psychological benefits people of Dalun and Damongo gain from community radio is enormous. Many people rely on radio to reduce stress after their daily work. It is no surprise to see people gathered in the evenings listening to radio discussions and debating among themselves on issues that have been broadcast on the community radio stations. The listeners clubs that have been formed in those communities have brought many people together who ordinarily would not have been friends anyway. Once they come together, they share ideas for the welfare of the individuals and the community as a whole. Aside this, community radio has provided economic opportunities for the people to acquire economic skills and credit facilities. These economic opportunities are to enhance their standard of living.

This study also found out that ownership of community radio is a problematic situation in the study area of this research. While the researcher cannot generalise the situation, it was found out that the two radio stations were established by non-governmental organizations with funding for some of the programmes sometimes coming from donor agencies. This is not the ideal situation in terms of global perspective of community radio. The rule as per the NCA's requirement is that community radio must be established and operated by the community members. This ideal requirement is also supported by the UNESCO (2015) definition of community radio in a phrase such as 'radio for the community and by the community' are used. The Ghana Developing Communities Association, a Danish NGO owns the Simli radio while PAD is funded by Self Reliance and Sustainability Development Initiative, a non-governmental organization formed by the Catholic Church Archdiocese of Damongo. This is compelling evidence that 'communityness' of these stations is missing.

## VI. CONCLUSION

From this study, a few major conclusions have been drawn and these are discussed below.

- ✓ So significant is the tool of community radio that it is replacing the 'gonggong' beater in rural communities and spearheading development and education in rural communities. It is truism that community radio plays immeasurable contributions to rural dwellers and creates an atmosphere for free speech and effective interactions among divergent segment of the population. It is also noticed through this study that the use of the local

language has played significant role in deepening participation and this implies radio has no limitation in cultural and linguistic levels thus making it a unique tool worth dependent for the needed education to champion development.

- ✓ Community members gain great satisfaction for using community radio. They gain psychological, emotional, economic and social gratification and that improves their livelihood. The psychological gratification is derived from the expression of being recognised and using the tool. The expression, "I never thought I was important" following the use of radio is an indication of being psychologically satisfied. Radio reduces stress and gives people relief after they experience problems in their communities. They simply tune in to the radio and listen to their favourite programmes and laugh off the problems they were going through. Social gratification is sought through the interactivity community members share through exchange of conversations on radio. Some gain social gratification at the listener's club level where groups of people are grouped to listen to radio and participate through phone-in segments. Through such participations, some become friends and can share ideas and problems together as well as network for mutual benefit. Through listeners clubs, some women at Dalun have formed groups and access credit facilities from financial institutions and this has invariably improved their economic conditions.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Ansah, P. V. (1980). *Mass Media Training and Professionalism*. Paper presented at a workshop on Development, Democracy and the Mass Media in Ghana. University of Ghana, Legon. December 8-11, 1980.
- [2] Baran, S. J. & Davis D. K. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory* (sixth ed.): WADSWORTH CENGAGE Learning.
- [3] Baxter, P. & Jack S. (2008). *Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design Implementation for Novice Researchers*. The Quarterly Report, 13(4), 544-559 Retrieved on June 8, 2015, from <http://www.nova.edu/ssw/QR13-4/baxter.pdf>
- [4] Chapman, R. et al. (2003). *Rural radio in agricultural extension: the example of vernacular radio programmes on soil and water conservation in Ghana*. Agricultural Research & Extension Network. Network Paper 127(1-16). London.
- [5] Conrad, D. (2013). *Deconstructing the community radio model: Applying practice to theory in East Africa*. Journalism 2014, Vol. 15(6) 773-789 ©The Author(s) 2013.
- [6] da Costa, P. (2012). *The Use of Participatory Communication Radio in Africa: Emerging Lessons towards sustainability*. Nordicom Review 33 (2012) Special Issue, pp 135-148.
- [7] Frazer, C., Estrada, S. R. (2001). *Community Radio Handbook*. UNESCO (2001).

- [8] Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005). *Indigenous Communication in Africa: Concept Application and Prospects*. Accra 2005, Ghana University Press.
- [9] Kwame Karikari (1999). *The Development of Community Media in English-speaking West Africa*. Accra, Ghana. Ghana University Press.
- [10] Kumekpor, T.K.B. (2002). *Research Methods & Techniques for Social Research*. Accra, Ghana. SonLife Press & Services.
- [11] Manyozo, L. (2009). *Mobilizing Rural and Community Radio in Africa*, *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, 30:1-23
- [12] Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Introduction to Qualitative Research*. San Francisco. John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- [13] Mefalopulos, P. & Tufte, T. (2009). *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*. *World Bank Working Paper* No. 170.
- [14] NCA, (2015). *NCA Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Community Radio Stations*. Accra: NCA.
- [15] Republic of Ghana (1992). *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- [16] Serwornoo, M. W. (2012). *The Challenges posed by Broadcasting to the Sustainability of Community Radio in Ghana: the case of ATL FM*. Unpublished Master of Philosophy thesis presented to the University of Education Winneba.
- [17] UNESCO (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-dialogue/past/community-radio/information/media/community-me>

IJIRAS