The Impact Of Local Program On The Audience: An Assessment Of 'Mu Koma Gona' Programme Of Rahma Radio 97.3 FM

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Abstract: Radio has become a very important tool for disseminating information to a mass audience in Nigeria. In fact, most governments actually run through the use of mass media, radio being one of the most important. This and many more importance/advantage of radio over other media station is the reason why government, agencies and other stake holders used radio to air local program with the aims of reaching target audience; such programmes yield an impact to potential or rather target audience. The aim of this research is to analyse one of the local program aired in Rahma Radio FM tittle "Mu Koma Gona" to what extent the program makes an impact to the target audience. The research is quantitative using survey as a method and the data was collected through audience questionnaires. The researcher analysed the data by using descriptive statistics and presented in tabular form. The findings showed that, there is positive impact of local program on the audience; the audience learn new method of farming and other farming/agricultural activities.

Keywords: Rahma Radio, Audience, Assessment, Information, Farming

I. INTRODUCTION

Radio has become such a vital and indispensable tool for governing in Nigeria especially North-western part, that it is difficult to imagine how modern northerner could be run without the use of radio; it's therefore considered the only truly mass medium in this part of Nigeria. The process of democratization in many African countries including Nigeria has contributed to the calls for the liberalization of the media sector bringing forth community media, which has acquired a special place as one form of independent media capable of evolving a community managed and more interactive communication, and programming of issues on public awareness and human activity.

This liberalization of the airwaves has allowed for the development of private radio stations that cater for various communities by broadcasting community service programs. In these stations, buyers have exclusive controlling rights which exclude their managers, staff, and listeners. If the community it serves has a problem with such a station, there is no way it can resolve it within the stations structures. Instead, only confrontation may change the stations views. Even when the community is granted some kind of access, or participation on this kind of station, it still cannot claim any right over this kind of station thus, legally, rights are exclusively reserved for the individual owner or shareholder.

The proliferation of these media structures has mainly been due to; the narrow focus of the contemporary African media practice and its' tendency of giving 'wish-washy' treatment to issues of rural and impoverished communities; the use of old colonial language in traditional media practice at the expense of other African languages; the tendency of the contemporary African media to perpetuate western perception of the socio- economic and political issues due to its heavy reliance on western news agencies and its' failure to rely on the communities in question. In the context of this study, the term 'community' is used to denote the aggregations of people who have something in common such as residence, geographical region, and shared beliefs, or who claim membership in a common lineage structure or who are

distinguished by similarities of economic activities or class position (Kamweru and Odero, 2000).

Historically, the mass media in Nigeria is foreign as opposed to indigenous in terms of their technology and structure, they are as such, not African although, in their use they have become localized. Like other forms of survival, they require adaptability by the receiving culture or society in a manner that such societies can ensure their own preservation and survival. Primarily, the media process has to be viewed as part of the society's striving towards self-articulation, identity, and existence. The problem of the media being foreign to the Africans is therefore easily demonstrated.

Firstly, even within the regional context, the media are relatively stronger in those societies where European economic power still holds sway. Although political control has gone to the blacks, effective operation after colonialism still remains with the former owner- the Europeans. It is easy to say that a country has so many newspapers and radio stations, but the calculation cannot be accurate unless factors of ownership have been claimed by the African population. The maintenance of the structures still depends largely on the owners of the technological skills, who in another sense are not local blacks, but mostly white companies with local or international link.

The emergence of community radio broadcasting stations, being a result of ideological and political pluralism which is nothing else, but the free expression of social and political reality, demands that variety, difference, contrariety, and divergence are permitted, tolerated and even encouraged. Applied to the mass media, it demands the existence of publication, radio or television stations that are free to express and exhibit the ideological expressions of politics, religious beliefs, economic policy perspectives, cultural diversity such as the use of any language and respect of differences in practices. In Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, the media has been enjoying a period of liberalization, and there has been a sharp rise in the number of independent radio and television stations.

The concept of radio is drastically changing. Gone are the days when the entire country had only a single state radio. Now everyone with money to invest is racing to secure an FM frequency, and the moment they get the station going, they apportion lots of airtime to talk-shows and call-ins. Liberalization has offered an alternative voice to the people of Kenya, but lack of guidelines and clear media policy has meant that there are no restrictions on the content of the independent stations' programming. Some of these stations are filled with foreign content as opposed to local thus posing the question of how relevant they are to the cultural development of the people they are meant for. At some point, the government felt that they were getting cold feet, and decided it was time to regain some control. It therefore introduced a new bill that sought to regulate media practice.

II. MU KOMA GONA: PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

Mu Koma Gona literary means (back to farm) is a thirty-minute program on agriculture with analysis on current methods, new agricultural implements and fertilizers, geared towards better yields. The aim of the program is to draw, especially the rural populace, back to farm, thus reducing unemployment and rural-urban drift.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the media structure and performance theories namely;
✓ The social responsibility theory,
✓ Development media theory.

III. THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORY

The main impetus of this theory was the growing awareness that in some important respects, the free market had failed to fulfill the promise of press freedom and to deliver expected benefits to the society. In particular, this theory argues that the technological and commercial development of the press has led to lower chances of access to individuals and divers groups and lower standards of performance in meeting the informational, social and moral needs of the society; seeing the media as having increased the power of single class. At the same time, it postulates that the rise of the new and seemingly powerful media of radio and film had demonstrated the need for some public control and accountability, additional to those appropriate to the long- established and professionally organized print media. It seeks to reconcile independence with obligation to society.

Here, media ownership and control is to be viewed as a kind of public stewardship and not a private franchise. Under private ownership, the media professional is not only responsible to the consumer and shareholder, but also to the society at large. This theory reconciles three somewhat divergent principles: of individual freedoms and choice of media freedom; and of media obligations to the society. It therefore advocates for the development of public but independent institutions for the management of broadcasting and further development of professionalism as a means of achieving higher standards of performance, while maintaining self-regulation. The social responsibility has the following postulates:
✓ Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society
✓ These obligations can only be met by setting high or professional standards of informative ness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.
✓ Media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions.
✓ The media must avoid whatever might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder, or give offence to minority groups.
✓ The media should be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and to rights of reply.
✓ That the society has a right to expect high standards of performance, and intervention can be justified to secure a public good.

- ✓ That journalists and media professionals should be accountable to society as well as to employers and the market.

IV. DEVELOPMENT MEDIA THEORY

Development media theory is generally opposed to the dependency and foreign domination, and the arbitrary authoritarianism, but is for positive uses of the media in national development for the autonomy and cultural identity of the particular national society. It favors democratic grass-roots involvement, thus participative communication models. The major principles of this theory are as follows:

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

The two theories are aptly relevant for this research, because the main aim of local program of any media station is growing awareness that in some important respects and create nation development; the above theories explained the above assertion.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to note that this is a pilot study which has very little, if any, related past studies due to the fact that it is in the area of one of the most recent developments in the growth of the mass media industry and in particular, radio broadcasting. However, a related research was carried out by Smith (1994), Weaver and Elliot (1985), and Fuller (1983) in the United States on community press. In their study, they were able to show systematic biases in the content of the community press and in the selection of news by the editors and journalists. Smith, in particular established that the media are likely, both to affect and be affected by what goes on in a community. The development role of mass media of which radio broadcasting belong, is well established. Highlighting its' contribution, Schramm says that, it is hardly possible to imagine national, social and economic development going on at its' state without some modern information multiplier, and indeed, without mass communication. Probably the great freedom movements and national stirrings of the last few decades never would have come about at all", (Schramm 1964: 271).

Kasoma, in his study of the rural press in Zambia, stressed the need for the rural folk to set their own rural press as the national or provincial press did not seem to address their needs. In his later study, on the vernacular press in Zambia, Kasoma (1990), he established that this press was ineffective content-wise and circulation-wise.

According to Mbindyo, (1985) development is a result of complex interaction of many factors which cannot be achieved without mass mobilization of the rural communities. These sentiments were echoed during a regional workshop on the development on rural press in Africa held in 1987, which stressed that rural broadcasting should reflect the rural people in such a way that they should be able to identify themselves with the paper or he station. Everette Rodgers, on his part sees development as a widely participatory process of social change, in a society intended to bring about both social and material advancement for majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment. Therefore, development news and features should cover issues that are relevant to the social and economic changes and includes topics on agriculture, health, sports family planning and education. Each of which, deals directly or indirectly with human problem, success, sorrow, joy, or similar human factors.

According to Kasoma, (1991) community newspaper and therefore radio, should be participatory. He describes participatory as that which is for and by the people, containing news views and advertisements for the community which it is meant to serve. He contends, that in order to make the rural community perceive the publication as 'theirs', they ought to be encouraged to contribute. Reporting should not be restricted to the papers staff and the editorial committee should not be the sole determinants of its' content.

The major aim of the community media is to enhance the socio- economic and political developments of a country with a view to achieving better life for the people. Nkinyangi, (1993) on his study on the Homa Bay community radio defines relevance in community radio programming as that which try to deal with the contemporary issues in an objective manner and then into other areas. He further argues that development interventions through the media are part of the liberal approach to change in society that assumes, that by raising people's consciousness about their situation, their enhanced state of awareness can bring about the general dynamics of change. Here relevance is intertwined by those aspects of access and participation, which have major implications for programming, since access and participation are at the centre of devising a more democratic means of communication to serve a more equitable and representative society. Concerning relevance in radio programming, this must mean a faithful or nearly as faithful, a representation of the prevailing social reality in the society.

According to Ikechukwu Nwosu, content should include interviews which emphasize unknown people whose ideas are new, challenging and unique, and can promote or encourage others. In addition, there should be utility programs, which he says are useful in literacy, adult education and public enlightenment campaigns such as farming, health and environmental hygiene.

In Nigeria similar studies have been done. The ''Don Manoma'' (for farmers) is an encouraging innovative agricultural programme on Radio Kaduna and a family village (Alabarkawa) was created using the air time drama. It succeeded as an effective way of teaching the rural peasants the procedure and rules of mechanized farming and how to cater for the new crops. Agricultural research findings have successfully been simplified into Hausa songs and effectively communicated to farmers. The programme attracted satisfactory response and participation from rural dwellers, Ugboajah (1986:13).

VI. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore impact of local programme on audience. In order to achieve the aim of this research, 'survey research method' was adopted, and it is most suitable for this research because it allows for the study of a fair random representation of the entire population. Survey method is mostly used to assess thoughts, ideas, opinions and feelings. "Surveying is a research method that we use to get information about certain groups of people who are representative of some large group of interest to us." Khotari, defined survey as the method of securing information concerning a phenomenon under study from all or selected number of respondents of the concerned universe. This also aptly describes what this study aims at doing.

VII. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The instrument of data collection for this study is 'questionnaire.' Questionnaire elicits information that enables the researcher to answer objectives of the survey. Kothari assert that:

"A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms; questionnaire is mailed to respondents who are expected to read and understand the questions and write down the reply in the space meant for the purpose in the questionnaire itself."

Specifically, the study uses a questionnaire research design tool that enables the researcher to, accurately and comprehensively, test and measure the variables of the research questions.

VIII. POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

A sample is a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population. And a population is an aggregation of all survey elements. The population of this study is Rahma Radio listeners within Kano metropolis. The sampling techniques employed for this study is 'simple random sampling'. As traditionally accepted in random sampling technique, each person is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, this means that each person has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during sampling process.

By using simple random sampling techniques, a total of 80 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, and 62 questionnaires were filled-in and returned. The eighteen questionnaires that were not filled, were removed from the data being analyzed leading to 62 questionnaires being used.

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Do you have any idea about 'Mu Koma Gona' programme aired by Rahma Radio?	Yes	54	87%
2.	Do Mu Koma Gona Programme create awareness to potential farmers?	Strongly agreed	30	48%
3.	To what extent Local Program have an impact on the Audience?	Large extent	28	45%
4.	Does Mu Koma Gona program help in persuading audience back to farm?	Yes	48	77%
5.	If yes, in what way does Mu Koma Gona program help in persuading audience back to farm?	Answering audience questions	22	35%
6.	How local program especially Mu Koma Gona establish and promote the growth of agriculture?	Very good	24	40%
7.	Does Mu Koma Gona programme improve the economic condition of farmers?	Yes	51	82%

Source: Field Work

Table 1: Questionnaire Response

IX. RESULT

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: TO WHAT EXTENT LOCAL PROGRAM HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE AUDIENCE?

The answer to this question was shown in the table which indicated, majority of the respondents indicated that local programme have an impact on the audience to a large extent, 28 respondents representing 45% indicated that local program have an impact on the audience, 13 respondents representing 21% indicated that local program have an impact on the audience to some extent, 15 respondents representing 24 indicated that local program have an impact on the audience is not pronounced while 6 respondents representing 10 revealed that the local program is pronounce. Therefore, based on the findings we can conclude that local programme have an impact on the audience to a large extent.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: DOES MU KOMA GONA PROGRAM HELP IN PERSUADING AUDIENCE BACK TO FARM?

The answer to this question can be shown in the table, the table above shows 48 respondents representing 77% indicated that Mu Koma Gona program help in persuading audience back to farm, while 14 respondents representing 23% indicated that Mu Koma Gona program did not persuading

audience back to farm. Based on the finding, the result revealed that Mu Koma Gona program help in persuading audience back to farm because majority of respondents believed in that.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: DO MU KOMA GONA PROGRAMME CREATE AWARENESS TO POTENTIAL FARMERS?

The answer to this question can be shown in the table. The table shows 30 respondents representing 48% strongly agreed that Mu Koma Gona Programme create awareness to potential farmers, 21 respondents representing 34% agreed that Mu Koma Gona Programme create awareness to potential farmers, 6 respondents which constitutes 10% are in the position of neutral, 5 respondents representing 8% disagreed that Mu Koma Gona Programme create awareness to potential farmers while no absolutely disagreed Mu Koma Gona Programme create awareness to potential farmers. To this end Mu Koma Gona Programme create awareness to potential farmers as revealed by the result.

X. CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to make an assessment of 'Mu Koma Gona' Programme of Rahma Radio FM 97.3 In order to achieve this objective, information concerning the programming, their contents, guiding policies and their relevance in terms of fulfilling the needs of the community and by extension, the society were obtained through questionnaires. Data was then analyzed as per the research questions, most of which used descriptive statistics which mainly summarizes, describes and presents pictures of data in form of tables. From the findings of this study, we can conclude that: local programme persuade audience to go back to farm; local programme promotes agricultural policies and enhance farmer's economy. Local programme contributes a lot towards enhancing awareness about agricultural innovation.

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