

Chapter 4

Television as Vehicle for Community Development: A Study of *Lotunlotun* Programme on (B.C.O.S.) Television, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at assessing the role of television programmes on community development with a focus on Lotunlotun programme on Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (B.C.O.S.) television. The study attempted to assess how the programme was packaged to mobilize people at the community level. It also attempted to determine the peoples' opinion on Lotunlotun programme and the influence of the programme on the target audience. The study adopted development media theory and participatory media theory as its theoretical framework. The subjects of the study were youths and adults who were target audience of Lotunlotun programme (people within the age range of 18-50). The study utilised questionnaires and interview to solicit responses from respondents. The study proved that television programmes play positive roles in community development. It was discovered that the objectives of the programme were to improve the ways of life of people and bring the government closer to the people. It was discovered that due to the positive influence of the programme, majority of the respondents have started contributing to developmental issues in the community.

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BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Information plays a vital role in the development of a society. Prosperity, progress and development of any nation depend upon the nation's ability to acquire, produce, access, and use pertinent information. According to Harande (2008), access to information and advice is a key resource for local people in maintaining active and independent lives.

Information is the lifeblood of any society and is vital to the activities of both the government and private sectors. Bell (1974) holds the view that "the dependence upon information to create innovation and change, places a high premium on the ability of (developing) nations to access and use information to create advances in society". The development of countries globally cannot be achieved without the development of the rural community. This is because 75 to 80 percent of the people in developing countries who live in the rural areas need positive, relevant and prompts attention in their daily activities.

No serious and organized government would want to neglect rural communities. Lack of development has a positive correlation with the neglect of rural areas. Rural neglect brings negative consequences such as rural-urban migration, resulting in unemployment, crimes, prostitution, child labour, insecurity, money laundering, bribery, poverty, proliferation of shanty living areas, spread of diseases and overstretching of the facilities and infrastructures in the urban areas. Any nation that neglects the development and empowerment of the rural communities should not expect meaningful development.

Alegbeleye and Aina (1985) reiterate that the third world countries have recently come to realize that unless the rural areas are well developed, hardly would any meaningful development occur in these countries. Development can only be effective if rural dwellers have access to relevant and diverse information for their activities. Efforts must be made to give access to knowledge and information by non-literates who constitute the majority of rural dwellers.

Commenting on the role of information in community development, Oki (2003:1) states that, rural development is a basis for economic development and information is an important ingredient in development process. People in rural areas whether literate or not should have access to information which will help empower them in their social and political obligations and enable them to become better informed citizens.

Similarly Diso (1994: 143) in his opinion holds the view that information must as a matter of policy, be seen as a basic resource for development if durable structures are to be provided for effective access and utilization, which entails information capturing, coordination, processing, and dissemination. In the Nigerian context, accessibility to information by both the urban and rural communities is stated in its development plans.

Information plays an important role in almost every human activity and its value in the development process has been a topic of extensive debate. Supporting this view, Aguolu (1989) views information as embodying interrelated or structured data which are required to enable one to act knowledgeably as well as to take appropriate decisions in any given setting and the only one way to get information across to the people is by communicating with them.

Statement of the Research Problem

For development to take place in the grassroots, there is a need for information carriers, including television programmers to sensitize and mobilize the people to participate in the development process. Television is an influential and appealing medium, capable of drawing the attention of viewers regardless of the

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