



ENGAGING DEVELOPMENT:

Environment and Content of
Radio Broadcasting in Nigeria

(Report of a study conducted by
Dr. Ayobami Ojebode and Dr. Tunde Adegbola)



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Foreword

Nigeria has developed a relatively huge radio broadcasting sector whose history dates back about seventy-five years. More than one hundred licensed radio stations currently operate in various parts of the country.

Yet critical observers of the Nigeria media scene have claimed that despite the country's huge development challenges, radio broadcasting has performed below expectations in engaging the issues of development.

It is argued that its continuing institutional expansion and size along with its position as a pre-eminent medium of mass communication have not delivered appropriate dividends to the majority of the people of Nigeria.

To enable it occupy its place as a major tool of development in this country, radio broadcasting requires re-positioning. This is a task to which stakeholders have continued to commit attention.

Part of the crucial strategies of the moment is to conduct professional inquiries into various issues which affect the institution of radio broadcasting. These are expected to provide scientific data which would inform the development of future activities.

It was with great delight that we requested Dr Tunde Adegbola and Dr Ayobami Ojebode to help engage this assignment. These are fine scholars whose vision and commitment to development and broadcasting date back a long time.

We believe that readers will find in this study a picture of the crucial challenges confronting radio broadcasting, useful recommendations and an impetus for further work to advance the cause of development-oriented radio broadcasting in Nigeria.

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Chapter 1

Communication in Nigeria: the Pre-colonial Legacy

Communication, the meaningful sharing and exchange of ideas, feelings and thoughts, is a defining property of every people. The ubiquity of this process among humans was what Waltzlawick, Beaven and Jackson (1968) sought to capture with the now axiomatic statement: *man cannot not communicate*. Unlike what has been claimed about writing, technology or particular kinds of religion, no race can claim to have taught the other how to communicate. In that case, the race presumed to have been taught would not have qualified to be a human race in the first instance because communication does make humans human.

This underscores the futility of attempting to date the beginning of communication. For, whereas radio broadcasting began about 1906, television broadcasting began about 1929, and the internet is only about two decades old, communication and mankind are contemporaries. Long before these media of mass communication were invented, some media of communication which adequately catered to the needs of the people had existed. However, in many cultures, more so in Africa, the coming of these 'modern' media of communication has eroded the use of the ones before them. The erosion is such that, as Bourgault (1995) observed, western communication scholars often take pre-colonial Africa as a kind of *tabula rasa* with regard to communication development.

In Nigeria, radio broadcasting began in 1932, and was the idea of the colonial government. But as several scholars (Wilson, 1987; Hagher, 1990; Mundy & Compton, 1995; Akinleye, 2000) have pointed out, public communication before the colonial and mass communication period was properly organised and technical in its own right. It had features which reflected the nature, structure and tempo of the society as well as the worldview of the people. Since this is not a study in indigenous communication, only such features as are relevant to the theme of this work are discussed here.

Communication in Nigeria in the pre-colonial period was predominantly oral, with the exception of some ethnic group in Calabar among whom a writing tradition had emerged (Wilson, 1987), and of Northern Nigeria where Arabic had been used for over 200 years before the coming of European missionaries. Also,

among the Yoruba, there existed the *aroko* tradition, an elaborate and quite complicated way of transferring symbolical messages.

Communication was also slow and restricted. Messages hardly moved significantly faster than the human message bearer, and only a few people, at most a few hundreds, could receive the same message at the same time.

However, communication was a communal and participatory activity. There were, no doubt, leaders in singing, folk (or popular) drama, drumming and cryptic writing, but their art was not complete without the active participation of the community, including, contrary to popular belief, women and children. It was unimaginable for a Gelede musician among the Yoruba, a Kwagh Hir puppeteer among the Tiv or a Dogodogoma among the Kanuris to perform his art solo. Ownership and practice of the art of communication, no matter how esoteric these were, belonged to the community. Permanent and bureaucratic separation of those involved in a communicative interaction into media owners (such as government or an entrepreneur), message sources (such as a radio announcer or an advertiser) and receivers (such as radio listeners) was alien to the Nigerian and African culture. So also is the idea of having to pay in order to have access to media of communication.

The primary responsibility of the traditional media person (poet, musician, theatrical performer, orator, smith or carver) was to the community, not to the monarch, the rich, the influential, or to himself. This was both a result and a reflection of public ownership of the media. As Olabimtan (1981:157) observed, "the traditional poet seemed to have no personal voice. He usually expressed the voice of his society". In times when the ruler's decisions were seen as capable of bringing hardship to the people or disrespect to the value they esteemed, the traditional media persons were known for fearlessly and vicariously speaking out for the people. To borrow from Oepen's (1992:67) words, 'if he is too overtly pro-government, a loss in authority or prestige is inevitable'. Though Oepen was describing the situation in Indonesia, a culture quite different from Nigeria, his assertion aptly describes what obtained in pre-colonial Nigeria. Adedeji's (1981) observation illustrates this. Trying to explain the differences in the levels of popularity enjoyed by two troupes of the old Oyo Empire, Adedeji (1981:224) concluded that the unpopular one was despised because it "had only entertained the court, flattered and amazed the governing class", while the popular one "took

the theatre to the masses, the grassroots". Simply put, the idea of the media being the mouthpiece of the government, or being a moneymaking outfit of the rich and the influential was not part of the Nigerian and the African pre-colonial cultural experience.

The foregoing may help us to understand the resilience with which communities in Nigeria have been demanding for real access to media of communication, especially radio, not as recipients, but as message sources, message producers and as station owners. The demand, it appears, is a reflection of an ancient tradition of community ownership and practice of the media.

Chapter 2

Radio Broadcasting in Nigeria

Radio broadcasting began in Nigeria on December 19, 1932 when a repeater station of the British Broadcasting Corporation set up in Lagos began operation. To listen to radio, one had to subscribe, and be given a loudspeaker cabled right to the station and hung in the house. The excitement that greeted this rudimentary development was illustrated by the fact that within a year, subscribers to loudspeakers outnumbered the available loudspeakers. The service, known as Radio Distribution Services (RDS), was extended to Ibadan in 1939. Colonial broadcasting, as we have chosen to call this era, lasted for nineteen years: 1932 to 1951.

In 1951, the cord of tutelage to the BBC was severed and the RDS came to be known as the Nigerian Broadcasting Service. Incorporated in 1957 as the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, the service monopolised radio broadcasting till 1959, when the Broadcasting Law which permitted the establishment of regional broadcasting houses was passed. The era of federally monopolised radio broadcasting thus lasted for eight years, giving way to a two-tier broadcasting landscape.

Between 1959 and 1962, each of the three regions established a broadcast station: the Western Region in 1959; Eastern Region in 1960 and Northern Region in 1962. The number of regional radio stations witnessed an upswing with the coming of successive military governments which increased the number of regions or states-the Yakubu Gowon administration increased the number of regions from four to twelve in 1967; Murtala/Obasanjo increased that to nineteen in 1976; Ibrahim Babangida upped it to 21 in 1987, and to 30 in 1991; and Sani Abacha increased the number to 36 in 1996. Nearly every state established its own radio station. By 1996, the number of radio stations in Nigeria was about forty.

The two-tier broadcasting landscape was intact for 33 years. Though the 1979 Constitution (Section 36, 2) made express provisions for the establishment of private stations, which would have introduced a three-tier landscape, aspiring private station owners had to wait for 13 years-sixty years after radio

broadcasting began-before realising their aspirations. Successive governments had solidly resisted demands for this section of the constitution to be put into effect, until 1992 when the military government gave in to the legitimate pressure for a more diversified landscape.

As at 2005, Nigeria had a hundred and thirteen (113) radio stations. Of these, 44 were owned by the federal government; 39 by state governments, while 30 were owned by private entrepreneurs. Only this far has radio broadcasting diversity grown in Nigeria. In the final analysis, there are only two types of stations: government and commercial private. The third type-community radio-continues to remain in the realm of things hoped for; demanded but yet unseen.

Right through the over seventy years of radio broadcasting, certain inescapable trends have stood out. First is the monopoly of radio broadcasting by a few who also resist attempts at widening the space for broader participation. In the colonial broadcasting era, especially in the first few years, much, if not all, of broadcasting came from Europe. The station in Nigeria was a mere repeater station, amplifying the voice of the colonial government and verbalizing European images and culture. The trend has continued in the present dispensation: the control of broadcasting is in the hands of government and the few rich entrepreneurs who see the airwaves as a means to greater pecuniary gain. The majority continue to hope for the time that genuine community radio will be approved in Nigeria.

There has been tremendous proliferation without diversification or pluralism. Governments have continued to install and approve installations of transmitters all over the land but this has only been within the bi-polar state-commercial duality. In the face of mounting pressure for community radio, government began, in 2004, the approval of a kind of placebo-quasi community radio stations. Such stations are community only in their appellations; they were asked to pay the same licensing fees as commercial stations, they are run more like commercial stations with paid 'volunteers', and they give strait and limited access to the community they claim to serve. This does not fit the profile of a community radio station as it is known the world over and as articulated by advocacy groups in Nigeria.

Another trend is the legitimisation of the status quo with the hardly justifiable claim that further opening up of the airwaves would be detrimental to national

peace and stability. As Ojebode (2002) and Okusan (2005) among others observed, opponents to community radio, like opponents to commercial broadcasting preceding them, continue to harp on the possibility that community stations could be easily hijacked and used to fan the embers of combustible ethnic acrimony and bitter political rivalry (Okusan, 2005).

Chapter 3

Nigeria's Development Challenges and her Response

What constitutes development has been a subject that has kept many busy for decades. In a sense this is justifiable, given the centrality of the issue to human survival. In another sense, it appears not a few people are over-flogging the issue as if only to keep up their scholarly appearances on the pages of journals. In our case here, we would be as brief as possible.

For over two decades, starting from the end of the World War II, a time when the issue of development became a global concern, the term *development* was understood in economic and industrial terms. A nation's GDP and the extent of its industrialisation were used as development indices. This continued right up to the 1960's when radical thinkers and liberation ideologists guided by the liberation theology of Paulo Friere led an assault, as it were, on the dominant, classical development paradigm (Ojebode, 2006). Now, a broader spectrum of indices and wider understanding attend the discussion of development. Inayatullah as cited by Soola (2003:13), defines development as

A change toward patterns of society that allow better realisation of human values, that allow a society greater control over its environment and over its political destiny, and that enables its individuals to gain increased control over themselves.

Oladipo again cited by Soola (2003:13) says,

development in general is a process of economic and social advancement which enables people to realize their potentials, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment. It is a process aimed at freeing people from evils of want, ignorance, social injustice and economic exploitation.

In his definition, or rather description of development, Iwayemi (2001:8) gives a list of five issues that development must encompass or ensure. First, development is about change that results in sustained improvement in the general well-being of people. Second, it is about enlarging people's choices. Third, it involves achieving a set of social and environmental goals. Fourth, it is about economic as well as political freedom. Fifth, it must place priority on the well

being of the most disadvantaged groups-the poor in our midst. On a general note, he says development must be about creating a better world for all citizens and must be underpinned by advances in skills, knowledge and capability.

Soola (2003:15) believes that true development is about people, by the people and for the people, permeating “the entire spectrum and strata of the society, touching on the lives of the poorest of the poor, lifting them up, as it were, from the abyss of poverty, disease, ignorance, squalor, human rights abuses and similar deprivations”.

Goulet's (1982) description of development is both leftist and, like Soola's (2003), reflective of the multidimensional nature of development. Goulet (1982:18) says development is about:

Freeing men (and women, of course) from servitude, from economic backwardness and oppressive technological institutions, from unjust class structures and political exploiters, from cultural and psychic alienation.

The issue of development goes further than what obtains now to planning for the future generations as well. The use of today's resources without jeopardising the chances of the future generations is called Sustainable Development. There are many facets of sustainable development: sustainable environmental development; sustainable human development; sustainable economic development (Ojebode, 2006)

Nigeria faces immense development challenges. Many of these have been rightly attributed to years of military misrule. Without any doubt, we know that left without a parliament, with a thoroughly pummelled opposition and having shorn the judiciary of its dignity and potency, the military, worst of all, the regimes of Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha, prodigally pillaged the economy, squandered the goodwill of other nations and drove the nation far into the abyss of misery, poverty and hunger. But many of the development challenges Nigeria faces today also emanate from decisions taken within the period of the current civilian dispensation, while a number of inherited others should have been reversed within the first eight years of civil rule.

It is over-ambitious to attempt to discuss all the development challenges Nigeria faces. We thus have picked a few which we consider to be critical. These are health challenges, the economy, the environment and human rights.

Health Challenges

Health statistics about Nigeria is frightening. With life expectancy at only 43 (DFID, 2005), or 48 years for male and 50 for female (WHO, 2004), Nigeria ranks lower than Ghana, Senegal and the Gambia. From every 1000 children born in Nigeria, 200 will die before the age of five. Healthy Life Expectancy calculations show that a newborn in Nigeria can expect only about 41 years of healthy life, compared to 50 in Ghana, 50 in India and 60 in Brazil. In Nigeria, only 60 per cent of pregnant women receive antenatal care whereas 73 and 83 per cent do in Cameroon and Liberia respectively (WHO, 2004).

With regard to HIV/AIDS, Nigeria does not fare much better. Nigeria is one of the few large populations to cross the 5 per cent prevalence threshold having the fourth largest number of PLWHA in the world. The epidemic is spreading at the incredible rate of one new infection per minute (WHO, 2004; Gureje, 2005). DFID (2005:9) puts it more dreadfully: "One in twenty Nigerians live (sic) with HIV/AIDS. There are 1 million AIDS orphans".

This gory picture is only the national average: the situation is worse in some parts of the country than in others. For the most part, the situation in the rural areas is much worse than that in the urban. Whereas under-5 mortality rate is 129 of 1,000 live births in urban areas, it is 192 of 1,000 in the rural; while 32 per cent of children in urban areas got vitamin A supplement in 2001, about 20 per cent of their rural counterparts had that privilege. And, whereas under-five mortality rate was 119 per 1000 live births in the urban, it was 192 in the rural areas. But maternal mortality rate was higher in the urban area (828 per 100,000 births) than in the rural areas (351 per 100,000 births).

The situation is worse in some regions than in others. For instance, whereas households without access to health facilities were only 3% in the South West, they were a whopping 21% in the North East in 2001 (UNICEF & FMOH, 2001). The prevalence rate of diarrhoeal diseases among under-five children was higher in North East (21%) than in the North West (17%) or in the South West (9%). Under-five mortality rate in the North West was put at 217 per 1000 live births; but it was 119 in the South West (UNICEF & FMOH, 2001).

The foregoing and many more explain why Nigeria ranks 187th among 191 countries in regard to overall performance of her health systems. Mozambique

gets around \$50 in aid per person per year; the African average is \$20 but Nigeria gets about \$2 in aid per person per year (DFID, 2005). With the percentage of budgetary allocation to health still lower than what obtains in poorer nations such as Ghana and even Benin and Ivory Coast, it takes a leap of faith to assume that the health situation in Nigeria would improve dramatically and soon (Gureje,2005).

The Environment

The physical environment in Nigeria poses another critical development challenge. Nigeria faces immense internally- and externally-induced environmental problems. Internal problems result mostly from poor environmental habits, government inability to provide the minimum requirements for proper environmental hygiene especially with respect to waste management, unplanned expansion of cities¹, growth in population and consumption, and weakly enforced environmental policies.

In Nigerian cities, huge mountains of domestic wastes are common sights along major roads and public places. Where there are refuse collection points, they are left to overflow, sometimes, for months. Writing on the appalling physical state of Nigerian cities, Mabogunje cited by UNICEF & FMOH (2001:19) laments,

The first and most obvious characteristic of Nigerian cities is the degraded condition of the houses and surroundings in which most of their citizens, particularly the poor, have to live.... Most streets lack basic drainage and where this exists, the drains are often blocked with refuse. Most of the wastes generated are not removed. In spite of citizens cleaning their immediate environment, the inability of the local governments to remove the numerous heaps of refuse all over the city highlights most vividly the very poor level of governance in Nigerian cities. Filth is thus a pervasive feature of most Nigerian cities and the poor have to survive and contend with this on a daily basis...

Public conveniences are few and in an execrable state. About 25% of urban population urinate or defecate in open spaces with serious health implications in densely populated urban settlements (UNICEF & FMOH, 2001). If Enweze's

¹According to the DFID, Nigeria has one of the fastest urbanization rates in the world: it is urbanizing at the rate of 5.3% per year; Lagos, Nigeria's commercial nerve centre, is growing at the rate of 10% a year and will become the third largest city in the world by 2020 (DFID, 2005).

(2000) indicting observation is true, not a single city in Nigeria has a modern central sewage system.

Both in the urban and rural areas, anthropogenic activities are on the increase with consequential deforestation and alteration of the topography (Olorunfemi & Jimoh, 2000; Ahmed, 2000). The felling of trees for the production of coal for domestic and industrial use has witnessed a wild upsurge especially in the South West in the last seven years. Yet, this has not elicited any regulatory response from the government (Brieger and Salami, 2003). The aftermath of these include rapid deforestation and farmers' neglect of farming for coal burning.

The activities of oil companies especially in the Niger Delta pose another internally-induced environmental problem. Uncontrolled oil exploration, gas flaring and frequent and devastating oil spillages create severe environmental problems and make farming, fishing, in fact, living in these areas difficult and hazardous. Occasional bursts of pipes that ferry fuel to different parts of the country as well as deliberate pipeline destruction for fuel theft lead to fire outbreaks destroying human lives and property, and annihilating flora and fauna. Some, such as the Lagos pipeline fire of Wednesday 27 December, 2006, claim hundreds of lives; others, such as the Jesse pipeline fire of October 1998, wipe out whole villages.

Industrial wastes take unfair tolls on the environment as well. These come with severe consequences. Government neo-liberal policies manifested in a pampering "come all" invitation to foreign investors seem to be worsening the situation. A rather sordid example that illustrates the point being made here is that of a number of tanning factories owned by Lebanese, Indians and Italians which had been using a part of Kumbotso Local Government Area, Kano State as an industrial waste dumping site. In 2004, inhabitants of over eight villages in the area began noticing strange skin and other diseases, the ground began to "ignite fire" and by July that year, all domestic animals had died; all the inhabitants fled. These, it was confirmed were the effects of the toxic industrial wastes from the factories (*Tell*, 2004, July 12, 2004:56).

So far, we have been looking at internal environmental challenges. Externally-imposed environmental challenges constitute another category of challenges that cannot be overlooked. These go beyond global warming and the increasing threat to the ozone layer to more specific cases of abuse. Examples include the

activities of international waste traders. With active permission of and little payment to the governments of receiving countries, these traders dump toxic matter all over the developing world. In 1993 alone, Britain exported 106,000 tonnes of waste to developing countries (Redclift, 1996).

Increasing consumption, and the production of wastes in the North (advanced countries) are indissolubly linked to the environmental problems of the south (developing countries) sometimes directly...but always indirectly (Redclift, 1996:90).

Nigeria has had its share of these foreign wastes. For instance, in the late 1980's, five shiploads of extremely poisonous chemical wastes, including radioactive ones from over ten major European firms, were dumped in Koko, a port town in the then Bendel (now Delta) state. Several contractors in Europe had rejected these loads of waste, and the dumping would have gone unnoticed but for the alarm raised by eight Nigerian students in Italy who had been alerted by environmental groups (Ogunseitan & Ogbeide, 1988).

Nigerians import used vehicles and electronics from the west. Many of these, having outlived their usefulness and become a burden to the original users, shortly after arrival, become infernal contraptions on Nigerian roads, air pollutants and junk. It is the paradoxical case of paying to buy waste and hazard.

Successive Nigerian governments have attempted to address these environmental problems. Their efforts included introducing mandatory monthly clean-up exercises and forming environmental protection boards and agencies. Possibly the oldest example of such agencies is the Lagos Executive Development Board formed in 1928. Others include the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) formed in 1989. But the persistence of the environmental problems discussed attests to the limited, if any success at all, of such efforts.

The Economy

Although development thinking did depart from using strictly economic indices as yardsticks for development progress evaluation, the economy still remains one of the fulcrums of overall development of a nation. This, in our view, explains the concern which everyone, including the non-literate, demonstrates in the economy of the nation. Coming immediately after politics, the economy, as Ndanusa (2006) correctly observes, is the second commonest subject of discussion including discussions in *molue* buses. As a result, we have decided to be as brief

as possible on this aspect.

With the probable exception of government officials, the verdict of most observers has been a unanimous dirge over the poor performance of the economy. Most of the commonly used indicators of the health of a nation's economy suggest that the Nigerian economy has been performing poorly. Data on Nigeria's per capita income shows a fall from \$780 in 1980 to \$210 in 1995. As Iwayemi (2006) observes, for most of the 1990s, real per capita income growth was negative. The per capita income providentially upped to \$260 in 2000 and slowly inched its way to almost \$400 in 2004. The growth rate and pattern of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) which had been unstably volatile between 1970 and about 1993, continue to show a slow though steady rise from the mid 1990s. The growth rate was estimated at 3.0% in 2003 and 6.9% in 2006.

Poverty rate is high. A survey by the Federal Office of Statistics² (FOS) covering a period of over 16 years shows that the proportion of Nigerians living below the poverty line (that is, those earning less than about \$1.40 daily) rose from 28% in 1980 to 66% in 1996. In absolute figures, the number of those living in poverty rose from 18 million in 1980 to 67 million in 1996 (FOS, 1999). The depth of poverty also increased. Specifically, the proportion of those living in extreme poverty (called the core poor) increased from 3.0% in urban areas in 1980 to 25.2% in the same areas in 1996. DFID (2005) puts the number of Nigerians living in absolute poverty at 75 million, which is more than half of the population; though CIA (2007) put the proportion at 45% (CIA World Fact Book, 2007). It is not certain if this represents a positive growth between 2005 and 2007, or if it is a case of numerical disagreement. The truth is that neither of these is good news.

Human Rights

Nigerian human rights record was among the poorest in the world in the days when General Ibrahim Babangida and the late General Sani Abacha ruled the nation. General Abacha, the worse of the duo, possessed an obsessive allergy to free speech and dissenting opinion. This manifested in his use of the crudest and most ruthless methods to silence the opposition and drive Nigeria into becoming a pariah nation. Describing Babangida and Abacha's reign of terror satisfactorily

²The current name for the Federal Office of Statistics is Bureau of National Statistics. We retain the old name here because the study being referred to was carried out before the change of name.

is a challenge. Summary execution of dissenters, mysterious disappearance of press men and ladies, cruel and capricious closure of media houses, deftly crafted retroactive decrees aimed pointedly at hacking down the opposition were the hallmarks of these military regimes.

The situation has tremendously improved since Abacha's death and the coming of civilian rule in 1999. The mass media have become freer to do their work of surveillance, and rights groups have gained more hearing from the authorities. The National Human Rights Commission has become much more credible than it was. But the situation is still far from the ideal. In fact, there are occasional and worrisome relapse into the military culture of rights abuse and disregard for the rule of law. Examples of this backsliding into insidious habits are innumerable:

In November 1999, federal troops invaded Odi, a village in Bayelsa state following the murder of twelve policemen, raped women and killed thousands of people including women and children. In October, 2001, the Tivs and the Jukuns in Taraba state began a bloody clash over ownership of farmlands. Strange enough, some slain fighters on the Jukun side were discovered to be men of the Nigerian Army. The army retaliated most viciously killing hundreds of Tiv men, women and children and levelling towns and villages.

The Government continued placing limits on freedom of assembly and association, citing security concerns. Some state governments placed limits on some religious rights.

There have also been many cases of policemen shooting and killing drivers and commercial motorcycle riders for refusing to give N20.00 (about \$0.15) bribe. These include the shooting of a bus driver in Jigawa state on 25 June 2003; the shooting of a commercial cyclist in Delta state on 8 September, same year and the shooting of a medical student in Ebonyi state on 29 May, same year (US Department of State, 2004). Other instances of police harassment include the manhandling of journalists. On 1 May 2007, in Akure, Ondo State, a reporter with the Ondo State Radiovision Corporation, Mr Dare Folorunso was pummelled to a state of unconsciousness by ten policemen led by the Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department. Mr Folorunso was handcuffed and even when taken to the hospital, he was chained to the hospital bed as a criminal. His offence was unauthorised video recording of the activities of some female police officers during the May Day rally (*Nigerian*

Tribune, 3/05/05; online edition).

Describing the human rights situation in Nigeria in 2003, the US Department of State (2004) states:

The Government's human rights record remained poor, and the Government continued to commit serious abuses. Elections held during the year were not generally judged free and fair and therefore abridged citizens' right to change their government. Security forces committed extrajudicial killings and used excessive force to apprehend criminal suspects, and to quell some protests. There were several politically-motivated killings by unknown persons during the year. Security forces regularly beat protesters, criminal suspects, detainees, and convicted prisoners; however, there were fewer reported incidents of torture by security agents than in previous years. Impunity was a problem. Shari'a courts sentenced persons to harsh punishments including amputations and death by stoning...but no death by stoning has been carried out.

From all indications, the government must do much more than it has been doing to improve the nation's human rights score.

The treatment meted out by security agents on the African Independent Television (AIT) when in 2006 it gave full and at times live coverage to National Assembly debates over proposed constitutional amendments allegedly aimed at granting President Obasanjo tenure elongation created a *déjà vu* in the minds of many as it re-enacted scenes of military anti-rights conduct. Staffers of AIT were arrested and detained and its station in Abuja was ransacked by security operatives who made away with tapes and files among others things.

The right to vote and be voted for is both a human right and a non-negotiable ingredient of democracy. Since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, several elections have been held. In all cases, these have been followed by allegations of rigging and electoral violence levelled by the opposition, foreign observers and even members of the ruling and winning party. Responding to the landslide victory of the ruling People's Democratic Party during the first leg of the 2007 elections, Vice President Atiku Abubakar, who by then had crossed to the opposition, described the whole exercise as worse than robbery. That comment could be disregarded as having been contaminated by opposition prejudice but the same could not be said of the comment made by Senator Ken Nnamani, the Senate President and member of the ruling and winning party. Senator

Nnamani said,

As long as we practice the culture of impunity and the big party must win all; it must muscle its way and if it cannot do it by mobile police, it will do it with soldiers;...as long as that is the case, we are deceiving ourselves and democracy will not grow...The problem we have had in Nigeria is that every successive election is worse than the previous one. In other words, the election of 1999 was better than that of 2003, and 2003, if care is not taken, would be better than that of 2007. (*ThisDay*, 20 April 2007)

The Minister of Information, Mr Frank Nweke Jnr, responded acerbically and, one is constrained to add, characteristically and expectedly, to Senator Nnamani's comments accusing him of scheming to foment anarchy so he could head an interim government if the elections failed. But not a few foreign observers at the elections share Senator Nnamani's views. Two days after the first leg of the elections, the Independent News and Media Limited, London, published the views of a foreign observer, Richard Dowden, who monitored the elections in Ekiti state. It is impossible to edit Dowden's report without mutilating the mood and the message. Here is the full report:

The mayhem started as soon as Nigeria's state polls opened. The first polling station we visited had just been raided. A gang had stolen one book (box?) of ballot papers and half-filled another with votes for the candidate of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). At the second, the register was missing and, as we were asking what happened, shots were fired from a passing BMW. Party agents gave chase and got its registration number. They said it was a state government car.

At the third, an angry crowd which had seen one ballot box stolen by PDP activists was setting up a roadblock. A heavily armed police unit was trying to remove it, but the crowd shouted that the police were trying to steal ballot boxes and stuff them.

Back at the first polling station, a crowd of young men were running off with the ballot box. After a chase and a spate of shouting, they returned it. Everyone had voted and they were keeping it for safety, they said. But the election official said they were members of the PDP. Just two out of 286 registered voters had been brave enough to vote.

At the town of Oye, a line of soldiers blocked the road while a silver Toyota with no number plates sped off. We were mobbed by a furious crowd. "No vote here; there has been no vote here," they bawled. Since the polls opened, thugs

from the PDP had been shooting in the air to disperse voters. But now, a crowd gathered around a blue Pajero, pulled the occupants out and began to beat them. Only the intervention of one of the candidates' bodyguards prevented the men being killed.

In another part of town, a furious crowd swirled around a house. Five people were brought out - one a woman - to a deafening roar. Half a dozen ballot boxes had been hidden inside. The crowd went wild, kicking, punching and hitting the men with sticks and whips - only the woman was spared. Battered and bleeding, they were pushed into the back of a car and driven off to be handed over to the police.

In the evening, Maurice Iwo (Iwu), the commissioner for the Independent National Electoral Commission, said on Nigerian television: "We are very happy with what we have seen so far." And President Olusegun Obasanjo said: "So far so good."

Events in Ekiti state may have been the exception, but they showed how crude the PDP can be when trying to rig an election. The areas that Mr Obasanjo wants to win are Ekiti and the Delta states, Bayelsa and Rivers.

The elections for state governors and senators may be more important for ordinary people than next Saturday's presidential vote. The governor of Ekiti, a poor, rural state with just 2 million people a few hours drive from Lagos, receives 19.5bn naira (£77m) a year from central government. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, which is investigating 31 of the 36 incumbent governors, has impeached five, including the previous governor of Ekiti, Ayo Fayose. The final straw was the murder of a potential rival last July. The President put Ekiti under a state of emergency.

The state is the most ethnically homogenous in Nigeria; everyone is Yoruba. With no ethnic divisions, parties are simply a vehicle for mobilising support. Aspirant politicians shop around for a nomination.

The Action Congress (AC) candidate challenging for state governor was Kayode Fayemi, formerly a London-based activist who worked to restore democracy during Nigeria's 16 years of military rule. His campaign cost £2m, and he admits that, in Nigerian politics, "there are things you must do in the short term to achieve something long term". On Saturday, he travelled through the district trying to calm his supporters.

That evening, I went to the centre where the results were to be checked. A power cut had left it in darkness but officials were counting by the pale light of mobile phones. Reports came in from all over the state of ballot box thefts

and PDP intimidation of voters. But on the votes counted, Mr Fayemi was clearly in the lead, beating his rival two to one in two wards. The electoral commissioner in charge of the centre, however, was closeted in his office with some Big Men including President Obasanjo's adviser on political affairs. The PDP candidate, Olusegun Oni, was declared the winner yesterday morning.

At least 21 people were killed across the country in election-linked violence. Some estimates put the toll as high as 50. The PDP was declared victorious in 11 of the first 13 states to announce a result (See Dowden, 2007).

Dowden's experience is, sadly, representative of those of many other foreign observers during the 2007 elections. Understandably, such reports as his never made it to the electoral bulletins of government-owned television and radio stations.

But if the government dismissed the views of the opposition, those of genuinely concerned top party members and those of foreign observers as prejudiced rant, the government, specifically the President, did not leave anyone in doubt as to its/his desperation concerning the 2007 elections. Weeks before the election, the President had declared, during an open rally, that the elections were going to be "a do-or-die affair". When the press, members of the civil society and some politicians pointed out that that was an open invitation to anarchy, the President, never known to eat crow under any circumstances, simply put the statement in different words:

We want to assure all Nigerians that we are ready to conduct peaceful polls.
But what we know is that it is PDP (his party) or nothing. (Tell, 2 April 2007).

The obvious conclusion from the foregoing is that Nigeria must take deliberate steps for its human rights record to reflect its status as a democracy. Distinguishing a democracy that cannot guarantee basic human rights, and which brooks no opposition from a dictatorship is indeed a hair-splitting exercise.

Other development challenges the country faces include poor infrastructure especially power supply which degenerated to an indescribable level in 2007, and corruption, which though has been fought gallantly, continues to be a national embarrassment. There are also the challenges of insecurity of life, and industrial

disharmony manifested in strike actions and boycotts.

Nigeria's Response

Not even the most cynical of government critics would fail to notice some of the landmark achievements within the few years of civilian rule. Nigerian tele-density has increased from a 400,000 in 1999 to about 5 million subscribers with the introduction of the global system of mobile communication. The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), empowered and emboldened by the civilian administration, recorded amazing success in the fight against fake and substandard drugs. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has arrested, probed and secured judgement against hundreds of corrupt public officials and private businessmen some of whom had been hitherto untouchable. The economy, as earlier observed, has grown slowly but steadily. The nation accomplished complete salt iodization within a few months and recorded widespread success in children vaccination. There has also been improvement in education.

In 2004, the government inaugurated a comprehensive three-tier development strategy known as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). Each state was to have a state version of the programme to be known as the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), while each Local Government was to have the Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS).

Drafted by a 35-member committee with membership from government ministries, manufacturers association, labour, the Nigerian economic summit and the civil society, NEEDS is more than an economic programme. It rests on four major strategies: reforming the way government works and its institutions; growing the private sector; implementing a social charter for the people; and re-orientation of the people with an enduring African value system. The main four goals of NEEDS are wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation (CBN, 2004).

Implementing NEEDS is designed to be a participatory process involving at the apex, the presidency and involving at various levels, bodies and individuals from the private sector, civil society, donor organisations, the National Planning Commission, and the National Assembly. There are Independent Monitoring Committees to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategy.

As part of its efforts to attain the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Nigeria set out her own MDGs reflecting the eight UN MDGs. Approved at the 1 December 2004 meeting of the Federal Executive Council, the MDGs are to:

- Halve, between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
- Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.
- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and extend that to all levels of education no later than 2015
- Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.
- Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.
- Halt, by 2015, and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources. Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. Address the special needs of the least developed countries.

In pursuit of these goals, the government is pressing on with a number of measures. These include the Universal Basic Education scheme meant to ensure that every Nigerian receives some basic education. In 2005, government also released a special fund to help prosecute the health aspects of the MDGs. There appears, however, still a long way to go given the short time available between now and 2015, and the enormity of the challenges faced.

CHAPTER 4

Radio Broadcasting and Nigeria's Development Challenges

The contribution of radio to development-by which we mean making life better for people-is well acknowledged by media scholars and radio enthusiasts. The capacity of radio to serve social functions came to limelight about a hundred years ago when, set up as a shore-side contraption, it was used to announce the names of survivors of the *S. S Titanic* wreck and to console and rally the bereaved (Ojebode, 2003). Between then and now, radio has remained on the first line of choice among development communication media.

Owing to its features, which have been extensively highlighted by several people (Moemeka, 1981; Ojebode, 2006) radio has been described as a veritable medium of development. Its inexpensiveness both to own and to maintain makes it affordable to most people; the simplicity of its operation makes it operable by both literate and non-literate owners; its use of batteries removes the obstacle posed by power supply-and that is a major obstacle in Nigeria; the convenience which accompanies listening to it makes multi-tasking possible. Radio is also portable and can report an event on the spur of the moment.

There is evidence that radio was expected to perform such functions as could be described as development-oriented in Nigeria right from the outset. For instance in the old Western Region, the potential of radio for promoting development was eloquently espoused by the founders of the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (WNBC). The WNBC was to

Provide television and sound (radio) broadcasting services which include entertainment and *educational* programmes to provide for and to receive from other persons, matters to be broadcast; to organise, provide and subsidise *educational* activities and public entertainment for the purpose of broadcasting (WNBC Ltd, 1968:9, emphasis added)

If the opinions of observers and media historians are anything to go by-and one has no reason to think they are not-the stations neither faltered nor procrastinated over this. Duyile's (1979:315) opinion seemingly captured the views well:

Radio and television ... began to make their impact felt in Nigeria since the

early sixties... (They) brought *education* to the masses in *environmental hygiene* through films and radio talks; and even lectures. Radio and television educate masses on the effect of *excessive speed* by motorists, aiming at preserving lives of the people (emphasis added).

In the words of Atanda (1996:27), a historian of no mean repute, radio and television were at the forefront of promoting “Yoruba intellectual activities...which form an aspect of Yoruba culture and civilisation”.

In rendering these development-oriented functions, radio employs a variety of formats: news, group discussion, straight talk or lecture, interviews, testimonials, drama, magazines, spot announcements and notably, jingles (Ojebode, 2003). In many cases and for obvious reasons, these are rendered in the indigenous languages of the audience. Studies have been conducted to examine how successful radio has been in performing these functions.

Studies on Radio as a Development Communication Medium in Nigeria

Studies on the effectiveness of radio as a medium for promoting development are a motley multitude. This must be as a result of the extensive use of radio in development communication, which in itself is a reflection of those positive characteristics of radio earlier discussed. In this section, we have selected few of such studies. We have particularly selected those that have clear lessons and implications for the use of radio as development medium.

McLeod's (1971) survey was based in Lagos. Her purpose was to find out how credible radio listeners regarded radio messages, compared with other media of mass communication. She discovered that television was rated as more credible than radio, and radio was adjudged more credible than newspapers.

Brieger (1990) conducted a research in two rural Nigerian towns on the availability and use of four major mass media in health education. Of the 427 respondents interviewed, 75% listened to radio; 48% watched television; 29% read newspapers while 19% read magazines. He discovered that “radio listeners consistently gain more health information than do those who receive other major mass media” (p.79). He however noted that “only 27% of those with no education listened to radio daily. In contrast, 55% of those with some education listened daily” (p.79). In other words, those literate people who could access development

information from newspapers and magazines were still the ones patronising radio. If the aim of radio is to reach the non-literate, which it should be, then it has failed in this regard. Very few of the non-literate people listen to radio.

El Nafaty (1999) studied the effectiveness of a Radio Kaduna programme, *Don Makiyaya a Ruga* (For the Nomads in their Homesteads) in increasing school enrolment among the nomadic herdsfamilies. About 83% of his respondents said that it was the radio programme that encouraged them to enrol their children in nomadic schools. El Nafaty however noted that the school hours were made flexible, and many rules were relaxed, unlike in other formal schools.

Ojebode (2002) set out to determine, among other things, the effectiveness of radio jingles that carried development messages rendered in the indigenous language. He discovered that listeners easily understood the messages of the jingles, remembered the jingles well and found the messages credible. However, only on a few occasions did they apply the messages of the jingles.

Oyero's (2003) study, based in a cosmopolitan and multilingual setting, was aimed at finding out the significance of indigenous language usage in radio broadcasting and public preference of it. About 72% of his respondents, including those who were literate, would want radio to broadcast in their indigenous language and dialect. Ninety percent firmly believed that such a radio was capable of "contributing significantly to development" (p.193).

Yahaya (2003) examined the use of radio for development from a gender perspective. In a survey involving 376 women farmers in Kaduna and Katsina states, he discovered that women farmers and especially women in purdah (seclusion) utilised radio more than any other mass medium. They also preferred drama and would rather listen to radio in early morning and evening hours. They engage in group listening and would love to participate in producing radio programmes.

Ojebode (2005) conducted 12 focus group discussions in six local government areas of Oyo state and interviewed programme directors of two radio stations to determine the impact of environmental radio programmes. He discovered that the producers had firm confidence in the effectiveness of their messages but the audience rated the messages low. They claimed that they did not adopt the recommendations of the environmental radio messages (such as dumping refuse in designated drums, rather than in gutters) because the government failed to

provide the infrastructure (such as drums and waste-lifting vehicles) needed for such adoption.

Ojebode (forthcoming, a) discovered in a rural community in Nigeria, that most non-literate people who listen to radio tune in for entertainment and what he calls “bizarre occurrence” programmes. Such programmes include *Irikerindo* and *Nnkan n be* which explore strange, cultic and bizarre and most likely exaggerated happenings in the world. Most of those who tune in for radio development-health, educational, agricultural, human rights-programmes are the literate ones. In fact, the higher the educational attainment, the higher the tendency to listen to these latter set of radio programmes.

What do these studies teach us? First, radio is performing below expectation. In most cases, a nexus of social, political and other factors hampers the ability of radio to maximally engage development. Second and more specifically, audience members' needs and interests vary as much as their cultural background, educational level, and location vary. It is therefore difficult for a single radio station to serve everyone in a state or a region. Third, listeners want a radio station that is close to them. Only such a station can speak their language and dialect, and live with them their peculiar need. Fourth, the impact of radio is grossly hampered by government's failure to provide complementary infrastructure to enable listeners to adopt the propositions radio makes. Where infrastructure matches message, as is the case in the *Don Makiyaya* example, tremendous progress is made. Finally, staffers of radio stations do overestimate the impact of their messages. These staffers who are often located in the urban areas hardly conduct audience surveys and often have to depend on commonsense and phone-in comments in determining audience pulse. Nonetheless, radio holds great potential for engaging development.

Chapter 5

The Study

The current study recognises the important role radio has been called to play in the development of the nation. It also recognises the conclusion of numerous studies-some of them earlier cited-that radio is performing below expectation and capacity in fulfilling its development role.

The Problem

Critical observers of the Nigeria media scene have claimed that radio broadcasting has performed below expectations in engaging the issues of development. It is said that the affairs of political office holders and commerce dominate the programming on radio stations in the country. This, along with an environment characterised by inclement policy, legislation and regulatory framework, is considered mainly responsible for this low score on the development front. Yet, Nigeria has huge development challenges to tackle.

We reiterate that many studies have been conducted in the area of radio broadcasting as a medium for engendering development. Our concern however is that with a few exceptions, such studies have tended to be narrow in their scope. Engaging the issues of development through radio is an interaction among a number of active participants and components. These include the listeners, development partners, radio stations and their staff, researchers, government officials, and the development issues being engaged. But many of the studies we have reviewed and/or cited, focused on one or two of these components which made it difficult to present a comprehensive view of the scenario. Most focused on the broadcast content and audience perception of the content but these could not expound the legislative and environmental factors that impinge upon the content of the broadcasts. None covered more than one of the nation's geo-political zones; in fact, many focus on one or two rural communities. Given the diversity of the nation's ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural composition, such a narrow geographical focus is inadequate for findings that would have national applicability.

It must be stated that these are illuminating and tremendously helpful studies in

their own right, and they are an indispensable launching pad for this study. Only that in the effort to build broadcasting into a major stakeholder of development in this country, carefully conducted scholarly enquiries are urgently required so that an accurate picture of the challenge is presented and the right building blocks of action can begin to be laid.

Methodology and Procedure

We adopted a combination of qualitative content analysis, survey and document analysis for this study. In specific terms, we analysed recorded radio development programmes and news bulletins, administered a structured questionnaire on listeners and an unstructured one on staff of radio stations. We studied station programme schedules, regulatory and other documents in order to gain needed insight into the environment of radio broadcasting in Nigeria. We wanted to understand the following:

- The dominant themes and issues in radio news bulletins
- The dominant programme types and issues in programme schedules
- The nature, structure and content of development programmes aired on radio
- The extent of staffers' commitment to their listeners compared with their commitment to government
- Listeners' perception of how successful radio has been in engaging development
- The regulatory and legislative environment in which radio operates

We spread our sample across the six geo-political zones of the country. Combining stratified with convenience sampling techniques, we had 151 respondents selected from all the zones respond to our questionnaire. Forty-six of these were staff of radio stations while 116 were listeners. We contend, in the words of Simpson and Tuson (2003:26) that "a small sample size does not make the research unsound". Rather than size, representativeness of a sample matters most.

Each category of respondents had a separate set of questionnaire designed for it. The radio staff questionnaire had 21 major items seeking to solicit, among other

things, their demographic information (including educational qualifications), the language in which they produce their programmes, the title of their programmes and the issues these programmes treat; the problems they face in running their programmes and their commitment to audience and station owners (See Appendix I for a copy of the questionnaire for radio staff). The listeners' questionnaire has thirteen major items with independent sub-items which bring the total to over twenty-five. The items seek listeners' assessment of radio stations and their programmes; and the overall contribution of radio to development (See Appendix II for a copy of the questionnaire for listeners). We also conducted an interview with a staffer of a private radio station.

We selected six government-owned radio stations, one from each zone. To get a good mix, we chose three FM stations: Glory FM, Yenagoa, (South South); Coal City FM, Enugu (South East); Premier FM, Ibadan (South West); and three-Radio Benue, Makurdi (North Central); Radio Kaduna, Kaduna (North West), and Bauchi Radio, Bauchi (North East-from other frequencies. Three of these were owned by the federal government; three by states. We also selected a private radio station-Raypower FM based in Lagos. The selected staff respondents were chosen from these stations.

We selected the programme schedules of the stations, and recorded news and development programmes broadcast on the stations. We recorded and analysed a total of 31 such news and programmes. In defining development programmes (or development-oriented programmes) we took guidance from the human and comprehensive view of development. Such programmes aimed at preserving the physical environment, promoting productivity and innovation, unity in diversity, health, agriculture, indigenous culture, skills, and science and technology were considered as development programmes. Our conceptualisation is consistent with that of other scholars who have moved the thinking about development beyond mere economic indices.

We embarked on qualitative content analysis, a technique which combines the thoroughness of content analyses with the flexibility of frame studies. We examined patterns discernible from programme content and schedules; levels of audience participation; the extent to which the content reflected a sound understanding of the audience needs and culture. Rather than counting incidence of content categories for counting sake, for which content analysis has

been criticised (Entman, 1993), we chose the midcourse that combine strengths. Representative quotes and portions of programmes were used. In analysing focus of news, however, we adopted pure content analysis. We created six categories: government, communities, civil society organisations, commercial organisations, opposition, and others.

For the data from the two sets of the questionnaire, we employed simple frequency counts and percentages. That necessitated the use of charts and tables. Those whom one may describe as statistical acrobats have tended to regard frequency counts and percentages as quite facile techniques. But in situations where understanding the big picture is the target, more handy alternatives are yet to be proffered (See Bamgboye, Lucas, Agbeja, Adewale, Ogunleye and Fawole, 2006).

Chapter 6

Findings

The presentation of our findings is theme-driven. We paid keen attention to the two leading issues which run through the study right from the title: environment and content. Therefore, for clarity and exhaustiveness, we segmented the presentation into two. Before we present the core findings of the study, it is pertinent to state briefly some information about our respondents which made their views credible enough to inform the kind of statements we present in our findings.

Exactly 80% of our radio staff respondents were staff of the stations; 20% were freelancers. This mix reflects what obtains in reality. Only 24.4% had only secondary school education. The rest had all attended higher institutions of learning. In fact, some (6.7%) had postgraduate qualifications. We believe they were qualified to respond to our questionnaire without encountering linguistic noise. About 84% of them had worked for over three years in radio broadcasting. In fact, about 36% had over ten years experience as broadcasters. See Appendix III for charts that present these pieces of information about the radio staff respondents.

Our listener respondents had high educational qualifications: about 50% of them had first degrees or Higher National Diploma. Only 2% had just secondary school leaving certificate. None had only primary school certificate. Most of them (68.2%) listened to radio either very often or often; only 1.7% listened to radio rarely. Majority (66.4%) had access to between 1 to 3 radio stations. Some (3.4%) claimed to be receiving from as many as ten stations. See Appendix IV for charts that summarise these bits of information about the listeners.

Environment of Radio Broadcasting

In studying the environment of radio broadcasting in Nigeria, we adopted a spatial progression from outside inward. We first looked at the external environment of broadcasting-the regulatory framework, the economic milieu, and location. This we call the external environment. We then progressed to look

at station's philosophies or vision/mission or focus, the management style and the organisational climate pervading the stations. This, along with matters relating to equipment and infrastructure in the stations, was what we call the internal environment. A good part of the next section is a mix of findings from our own research, analysis of events and some literature.

The External Environment

Under what regulatory framework does radio operate in Nigeria? Radio broadcasting is heavily regulated by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) which wields a big stick. The Commission is under the control of the presidency; it is the president who appoints and removes its Director-General. It oversees the issuance and withdrawal of broadcast licences. It makes recommendations to the president who is the ultimate approver of broadcasting licences, and must affix his imprimatur to every licence before a station can go on air.

The NBC has been quite tough in delivering its mandate. Between 2003 and 2006, it admonished, warned and closed down several radio stations: Independent Radio in Benin was sealed up on August 21, 2003 for playing martial music and causing a stir among listeners who thought there was a military coup; Raypower FM was sealed up on October 23, 2005 for announcing the crash of an aircraft without clearance from the authorities, in contravention, NBC claimed, of certain sections of the NBC code. Others, including Minaj Radio, Obosi; Universal Broadcasting Service, Lagos; MG Communications, Kaduna, Freedom Radio, Kaduna and Radio Jeremi, Warri were suspended for various transgressions, including reluctance to renew their licences. The body also banned several programmes such as traditional medicine adverts which it deemed contradicted regulatory provisions (See Ojebode, forthcoming b).

From the foregoing, one cannot overlook two major trends: one is that the broadcasting environment is fettered with regulation. The second is that it appears that private broadcast stations bear heavier brunt than do government-owned stations. One of our respondents from a private station observed:

The NBC code is meant for only us in the private radio sector. We pay higher than the government stations to get and keep our licence, and we cannot do

what we deem right unless government approves it.

One may argue that the NBC is stiffer with private stations because they have the proclivity to want to put commerce before social responsibility and public service.

The second aspect of the external environment of broadcasting in Nigeria is the economic milieu. With unrestrained celerity, Nigeria is becoming a neoliberal society with major economic control being given to the private sector. On April 18, 2006 while inaugurating the Presidential Council on the Social and Economic Development of Coastal States of the Niger Delta, the then Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo said a number of times with unmistakable definiteness, "We insist the economy must be private-sector led, private-sector driven". This statement is a summation of a movement that pre-dated Obasanjo's civilian administration, a précis of a global transmutation from government headship of business and economy to predominant control by the private sector (Ojebode, forthcoming b).

Neoliberalism has its impact on the focus, strategies and performance of the broadcast stations. In 1992 when the airwaves were deregulated, government stations were asked to become more economically viable. Within a short period, there was serious commercialisation of the airwaves. As Ojebode (forthcoming b) demonstrates, there was increase in the rate at which public service and development programmes were dropped by the stations, as there was a scramble for space by advertisers and freelancers. It is in an environment of crushing competition that radio is called upon to engage development. Development programmes, as we know, are public service and humanitarian programmes which do not generate much, if any, income for stations.

The third aspect of the external environment is location. No organism or organisation is immune to the influence of the immediate environment. A broadcast station draws its inspiration and relevance from its immediate environment. In spite of the virtual abolition of space and time made possible by the internet, it is still impossible to conceive of a broadcast station that is completely unaffected by its immediate environment or that seeks to be relevant to a remote environment rather than the immediate one. Even if this were possible, it would amount to an ethical problem known in broadcasting as

Afghanistanism³. A radio station responds to the needs of its environment. And for a station to be relevant to a community, it must be located within the community.

In a 2005 study by Panos West Africa and the Institute for Media and Society (IMS), it was shown that all the radio stations in Nigeria were located in the urban areas. The situation has not changed. It simply means that these stations respond to the needs of the urban listeners while the rural areas, where the majority live, are unattended to.

The Internal Environment

We began examining the internal environment of broadcasting by examining the philosophy, vision, mission or objectives of the station. This is because an organisation's philosophy and objectives determine much of its practice and outlook. The organisational internal climate (environment) is intricately tied to its philosophy. Equally tied to its philosophy is its treatment of its clients. The philosophy reflects the overarching gamut and direction to which other specific operational details are tied.

Surprisingly, there was little or nothing about the station's philosophy in their programme schedules though these schedules contained introduction and for some, history, of the stations. Radio Benue, for instance has a programme schedule produced with high quality materials the first page of which is dedicated to the history and growth of the station. But little is said about the guiding philosophy, mission, vision, objectives or focus of the station. The last sentence of the history gives some obscure indication about this. It says, "With this perfect configuration, our concern is not just to give you best services but simply our reason for existing (sic)" (Radio Benue, 2004:1).

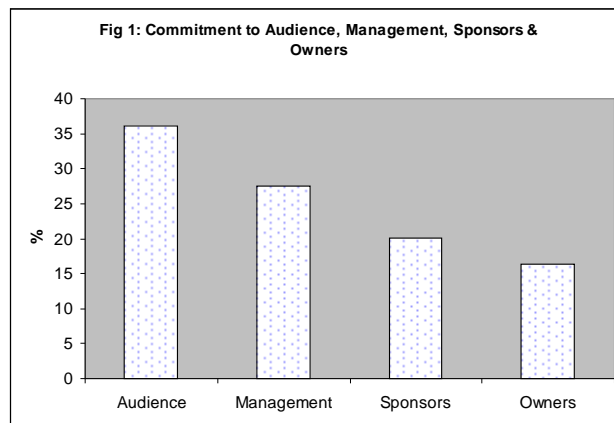
Responses from the selected staff of radio stations yielded more information about the philosophy, objectives, vision, mission and focus of the stations. Many responded by just stating the tripartite functions of the media: to inform, educate and entertain the people. Others however were more specific. In all, the

³As Okunna (1995) observed, the term was coined by Jenkin Lloyd Jones in 1948 while challenging stations to cease focusing on far away Afghanistan and concentrate on their (American) national problems.

responses of the latter showed that the stations seemed to be driven by two interrelated sets of objectives-to serve government by promoting government policies, and to serve the people *mostly* by telling them about government. Examples of such include this response: “using her programmes for societal change as well as reaches (sic) out to people on government programmes and policies”. Another that suggests this dual commitment was “uplifting the people and uniting the nation” commonly stated by respondents from FRCN stations.

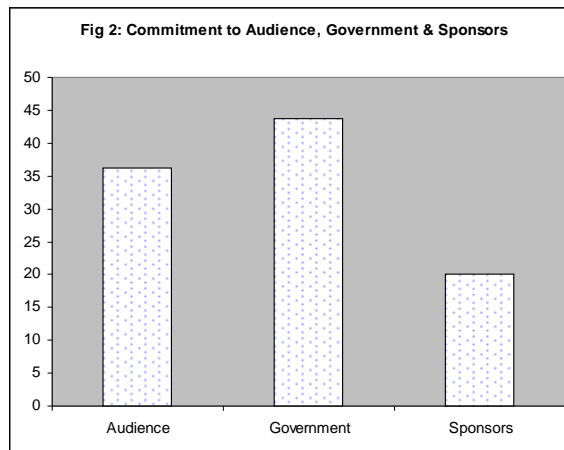
How balanced is the scale of this dual commitment? The respondents did not leave us in any doubt about the imbalance in the scale. When listeners' interests conflict with government's, the outcome is usually a tilt in favour of government. A quite representative quote puts it squarely: “[Our aim is] to inform and educate the people and *above all* to promote the activities of government.” The interest of the government is “above all” other interests.

An item on the radio staff questionnaire asked respondents to describe the levels of their commitments to their audience, the management of their stations, programmes sponsors and station owners-the government. They were asked to conceive of their commitment as equal to 100 and to share this among the various contenders, as it were. We then proceeded to find the average 'Commitment Quantity' to each of the contenders. Fig 1 shows the various levels of commitment which the staff felt they had.



On the average, approximately 36% of the commitment of staff is to the audience; the least, 16% was to the station owners. On the surface, we may conclude that

this contradicts what our analysis of the station philosophy revealed to some extent. A deeper observation, however, shows that rather it reinforces the earlier analysis. When we collapsed commitment to management with commitment to owners, the commitment quantity overshadowed that of the audience. This collapsing is justifiable because in most radio stations, the owner and the management are indistinguishable. Though clearly so in the private station, it is not untrue in the government stations as well. The managers of the government stations are civil servants who have risen through the service ladders and are steeped in the civil-service culture of servile submission to the government. Fig 2 shows the pattern after the merger.



Commitment to government (43.8%) towers a little over commitment to the audience (36.2%). The difference is indeed slim.

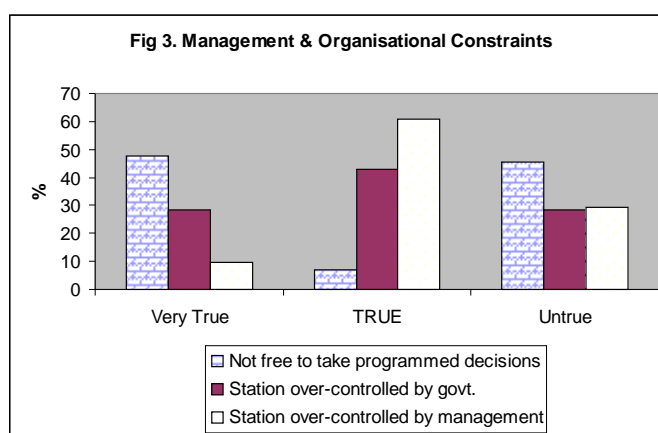
From a private radio station, we noticed a dimension of commitment different from the foregoing and from what we had expected. From its claim, Raypower FM, located in Lagos

is motivated by a unique *altruistic* aim to promote a methodical reduction of tension and friction and foster a greater appreciation of humanity (DAAR Communications, 2004: unpagged)

The word “altruistic” is quite instructive-and the experiences of Daar Communications, owners of African Independent Television (AIT) and Raypower FM in recent times quite confirmed their altruism, showing that the claim might

not be without substance⁴. And this is counter-intuitive because private stations are expected to and are often accused of being almost completely driven by pecuniary considerations.

The second aspect of the internal environment is management style and organisational climate of the stations. We sought the views of workers on certain key issues to reveal what the management and organisational situation was in the stations. Fig 3 shows that majority perceived the management style and organisational climate to be unfriendly.



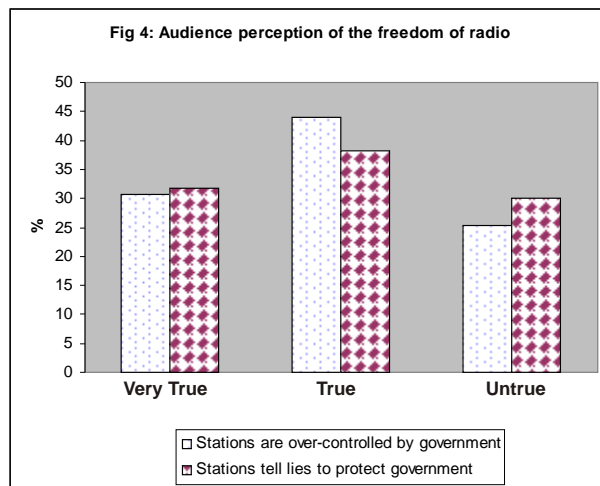
To many staff, the management style and internal organisational climate in their radio station is such that does not allow them to make decisions about their programmes. Those who claimed that the statement, “I am not free to take

⁴Its live coverage of the National Assembly debates of constitutional amendment proposals in May 2006 is classic in exemplifying altruism. As the debates progressed, those in support of the amendment meant to elongate the tenure of the incumbent president or give him another term of four years-a grossly unpopular side-became uncomfortable, and lobbied the NBC to shut down AITthe TV arm of Daar Communications. NBC refused but some armed men besieged AIT premises in Abuja, vandalised its plants and equipment, and seized some tapes. Nonetheless, AIT pressed forward with the live broadcast of the debate and the reputation of the “third termers” as they were called, and the popularity of their idea sank further. As this was going on, The Patriots, a cross-ethnic association of respected elderly Nigerians, produced a documentary that dissected previous attempts at tenure elongation in the days of the military. The documentary showed that the same bards who led tenure elongation efforts in the days of Generals Babangida and Abacha were those leading it for President Obasanjo, and concluded that they would fail just as they had failed before. Of all the 288 broadcast stations in Nigeria, only AIT could air such a tape. This irked the government and “third-termers”, and on May 14, 2006, armed security operatives besieged AIT and seized many tapes, making sure to include The Patriots’ documentary. But AIT was not deterred in its defence of the people’s right to know. At the end, the amendment efforts failed at the National Assembly and everyone praised AIT and the print media for salvaging democracy (See Ojebode, forthcoming b)

decisions about my programmes” is 'Very True' or 'True' account for about 55% of our respondents as seen in Fig. 3. Most felt their stations were being over-controlled by government. Merging those in the 'Very True' category with those in 'True' gives us over 71% of those who held this opinion. Those who thought they were free to take decisions, or that their stations were not being over-controlled by government or management were not in the majority.

Majority complained that their stations were being over-controlled by the management. About 70% of our respondents described as 'Very True' or 'True' the statement that their stations were being over-controlled by management.

The situation is not lost to listeners as well. We asked our audience respondents to state if they felt the radio stations were being over-controlled by government. We also asked them to show if they felt radio tells the truth all the time especially in matters concerning government. Fig 4 shows the feelings of the listeners.



Majority of the listeners felt that radio was over-controlled by government. Combining those who chose 'Very True' and 'True' gives us 74.6% of those who felt government was over-controlling radio stations. Also, 70% felt that when the matter concerns the government, radio hardly tells the whole truth.

Going by the views of majority from both staff and audience groups, we have firm grounds to conclude that the organisational climate and management style was not what radio station staff and the listeners would have wished it to be. Writing

on the management style in African broadcast stations, Bourgault (1995:45) had stated that,

Broadcast management in most Black African nations has almost always resembled Theory X, sometimes Theory Y, but almost never Theory V.

Theory X regards people as basically lazy needing to be coerced through physical force or to be persuaded through monetary reward and appeals. Theory Y on the other hand regards people as reasonable and capable of working on their own for the nobler motives other than money. It focuses on workers' needs for growth, motivation, knowledge and self-respect (Bourgault, 1995). Theory V, a later addition to the duo, stresses the dynamic of management and the creation of a work environment fostering human growth. It sees management as a process involving persons relating to one another through directives. Whereas Theory X focuses on the manager, Theory Y focuses on managing while Theory V focuses on the managee. Still on broadcast management in Africa, Bourgault (1995) said further:

...the moralistic and paternalistic tone of admonitions from senior management typifies attitudes found in management systems operating under Theory X...There is little bottom-up communication in broadcast organisations...this is the exact opposite of the ego-strengthening, growth-fostering management style advocated in Theory Y (Pages 47, 51).

Our findings agree with Bourgault's (1995) position that the stations are run mostly under Theory X. The management approaches and strategies consistent with this theory are counter-productive and they muzzle creativity.

When we asked our respondents to state the problems they face in their jobs as programme producers and presenters, the third aspect of the internal environment surfaced. The most frequently mentioned problem was obsolete and problematic equipment and studios. A respondent wrote:

After you have spent time and energy producing your programme, you will discover that our transmitter goes off on its own. This can be frustrating.

The next most frequently mentioned problem was logistics which include motor cars for programme personnel to use for out-of-the-station assignments. Funding came third while poor welfare package came fourth. Other problems mentioned included difficulty encountered in getting good guests for interview programmes and lack of access to up-to-date information.

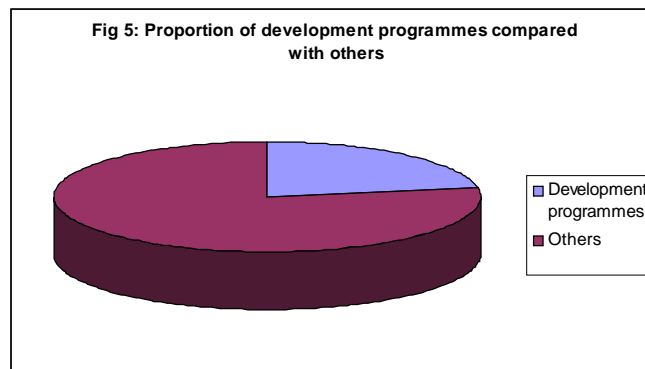
To sum up the salient points regarding the environment of broadcasting in Nigeria, one would say the environment is regulated, economically competitive, and in physical terms, urban, therefore alien to the majority who dwell in the rural areas. The stations are predominantly pro-government in their outlook and philosophy. The management style is pro-establishmentarian, and it stifles creativity. Poor equipment and poor funding, among others, are the major problems facing the stations.

Content of Radio Broadcasting

In studying the content of radio broadcasting in Nigeria, we sought to explain the subjects of broadcasts; the language of broadcasts; the content of news.

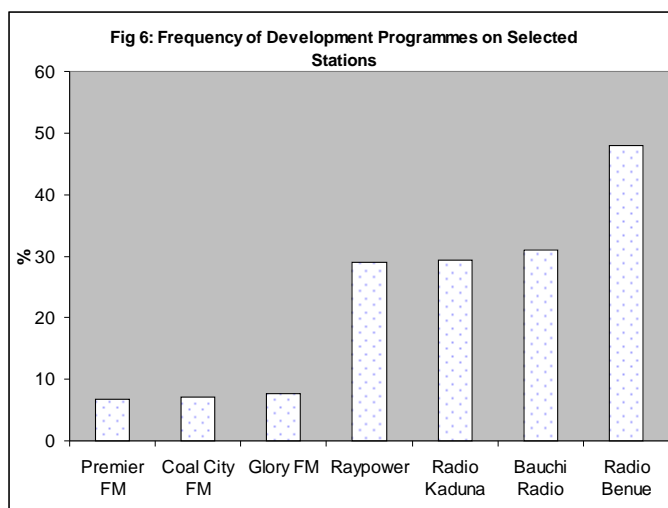
The Subjects of Radio Broadcasts

What issues predominate in the radio airwaves? Our analysis of the programme schedules of the selected stations revealed the presence of a broad spectrum of subjects. We identified thirteen development subjects that the stations deal with: agriculture, health, culture, education and literacy, science and technological development, diversity, road safety, environment, security, economic development, human rights, family and relationships, and moral development. Whereas most programmes deal with a single subject, we encountered magazines which deal with more than one subject. In spite of this broad spectrum, as fig 5 shows, programmes classified as development-oriented are still in the minority. Put together, they constitute only 22.5% of all the programmes of the selected



stations.

As we expected, the proportions of development programmes varied from one station to the other. The highest frequency of such programmes was found in Radio Benue: on its AM stereo, development programmes constitute 48% of the total number of programmes paraded on its schedule. This was remotely followed by Bauchi Radio. Development programmes constituted 31% of Bauchi Radio programmes. Fig 6 presents the distribution.



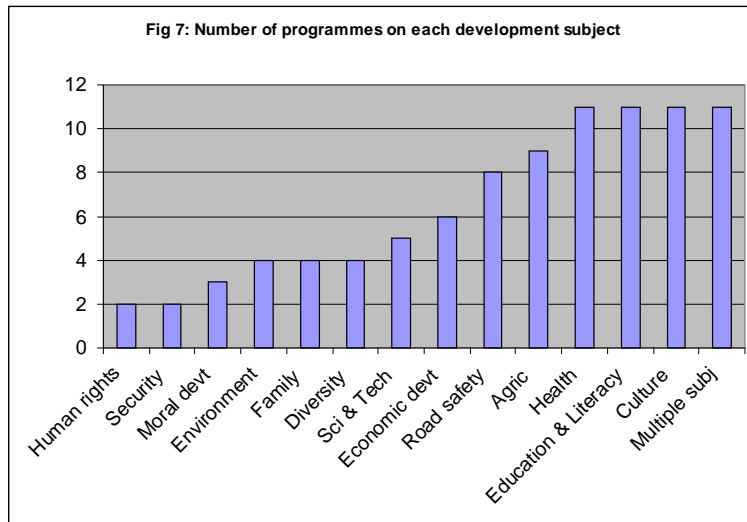
It is instructive that Raypower FM-a commercial station, ranks higher than some of the government stations in the quota of its programme dedicated to development issues. This is consistent with the findings of Fadeyi (2004) that private television stations devoted slightly more space to development programmes (13%) than government (12%).

Our analysis also shows that Radio Benue which had the highest proportion of development programmes also has the fewest number of sponsored programmes. Premier FM, which has the lowest proportion of development programmes, has the highest number of sponsored programmes.

Our listener respondents affirmed that radio has indeed accorded a minority status to development programmes. Exactly 75% of our respondents described as 'Very True' or 'True', the statement that radio stations pay more attention to

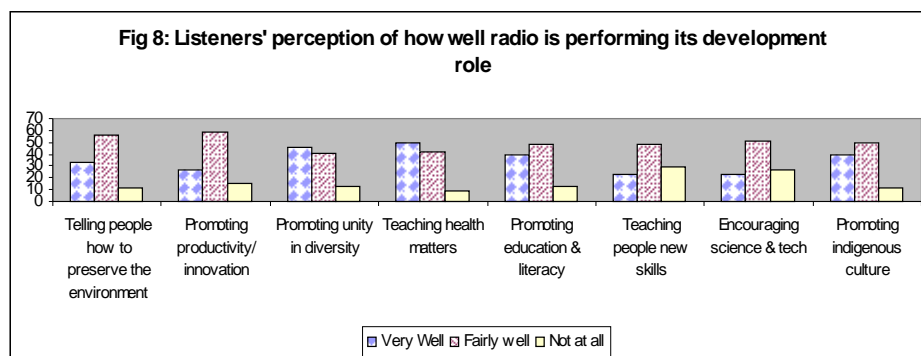
programmes. Significantly, 41.6% of radio staff respondents agreed with the audience that their stations paid greater attention to sponsored programmes and commercials than they paid to development programmes. This is significant given that it is coming from radio station staff themselves.

Different development subjects received varying proportions of emphasis from the stations. Of the twelve subjects we identified, as Fig 7 shows, health, education and cultural programmes are the most frequent ones. They are followed by education, then agriculture.



Programmes treating a combination of development subjects are as many as those on culture, health and education. The least frequently discussed development subjects are human rights issues and security.

How well is radio promoting the subjects in this wide array? We asked radio listeners to judge. We outlined eight development subjects and asked respondents to assess radio's effort in promoting such subjects. Fig 8 shows that majority rated radio as doing only 'Fairly Well' in nearly all of the subjects.



The chart indicates that with regards to health promotion, and the promotion of unity in diversity, those who rate radio as performing 'Very Well' outnumbered those who chose 'Fairly well' or 'Not at all'. One cannot but commend NGO's and government agencies that sponsor health programmes. A leading example is the Society for Family Health whose *One thing at a Time* health-promoting drama series is aired by most of the stations we studied.

Though programmes promoting unity in diversity are few (as Fig 7 shows), listeners felt the programmes were having impact and thus rated radio as doing 'Very Well' in that regard. The stations parade programmes such as *Exceptional World* (Premier FM) which focuses on the physically challenged people; and *Heal the World* (Radio Benue) and *Olile Anya Ezi Ndu* (Coal City FM) both of which seek to help listeners understand and accept people living with HIV.

The width of development scope covered by radio is one thing; the content matter of the programmes dealing with the subjects is another. There are trends that evoke critical comments in the content of the programmes. Many of the programmes are lectures and interviews. A few are discussions and several are magazines. Some are phone-ins. We noticed that while some of the interviews feature speakers who are both articulate and knowledgeable; a few feature people whose knowledge of the subject matter suggested they should rather have been listeners not lecturers.

An example is a phone-in health programme on Coal City FM which featured, on February 20, 2007, the highly attractive topic: "HIV/AIDS: Focusing on youth vulnerability". Blaming ladies for fuelling sexual recklessness through indecent dressing, the guest speaker and all the callers declared explicitly that HIV is

contracted through sex. A caller said, "People with HIV lack self control. It is lack of self control that makes people go about like dogs, committing sex and contracting HIV". And to all callers, HIV leads to immediate death no treatment, remedy or cure. In fact, a caller used the expression, "contracting death" (for contracting HIV) to show that HIV is synonymous with death. The anchor's attempt to correct these fallacies came far too late in the programme; it was in fact flatly ignored by callers and the guest. Worst still, the closing song was about Sodom and Gomorrah and the wrath of God which awaits the sexually immoral!

Two issues make it difficult to exonerate radio in this sad case. First is that radio has been at the forefront of HIV/AIDS education since it was discovered in the country in 1986. That people still hold on to such erroneous opinions about HIV/AIDS as aired on that programme is a direct indictment on radio and other agents and agencies of health education in Nigeria.

The second reason for not exonerating radio is that in the sad case discussed above, there was the choice of the wrong guest. The same happened with *Youth Train*, a youth programme on Coal City FM meant to discuss proper conduct in the period of lent. Two of the speakers declared that they did not believe in fasting and lent. What is the rationale for bringing someone to discuss an issue he or she does not believe in? If the programme is an argumentative debate, that would be almost understandable. Another programme that illustrates the problem of choice of wrong speakers was a discussion programme on the topic "Rights and Responsibilities of the Voter". The discussants were a teacher and three politicians from the ruling party. There was not a member of the civil society or a lawyer.

Still on the content matter of the programmes, in many of the interview programmes, interviewers talked to interviewees rather than to the listeners. It was too obvious with Mrs Rebecca Afatyo, coordinator of Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP), Benue state and guest at *Environment this Week* on Radio Benue. A number of times, she turned to the interviewer saying, 'You know very well...' and the interviewer replied affirmatively.

Are the content matters offered by radio the things that interest listeners? As we addressed this question, it became obvious that radio staff only imagined what people need and where people's interests lie. And it appeared they misjudge the

audience-at least occasionally. For example, during an edition of *Good day Enugu*, a phone-in programme of Coal City FM, a caller pointed this out: “We want you to invite governorship aspirants...we want to question them before the elections. That is what we need” The topic of discussion of that edition was avian influenza. A vox pop was conducted and one of the testifiers wondered, “Avian flu? I don't know it. I am not interested in it”. Though not completely irrelevant, the topic was not just what the listeners were interested in. Many (43%) of our radio staff respondents said they got feedback when audience visited them in stations; another 40% got feedback through text and phone messages from audience. Few (15%) ever visited their listeners in the community. Most simply presume what listeners' interests are.

Impossible or incongruous recommendations are another feature of the content matter of these development programmes. A speaker advised farmers to wear suits and sun shades to the farm to mitigate the effects of the harmattan season while another advised people not to go to sleep without lighting up their surroundings despite the interminable electric power failure Nigerians experience.

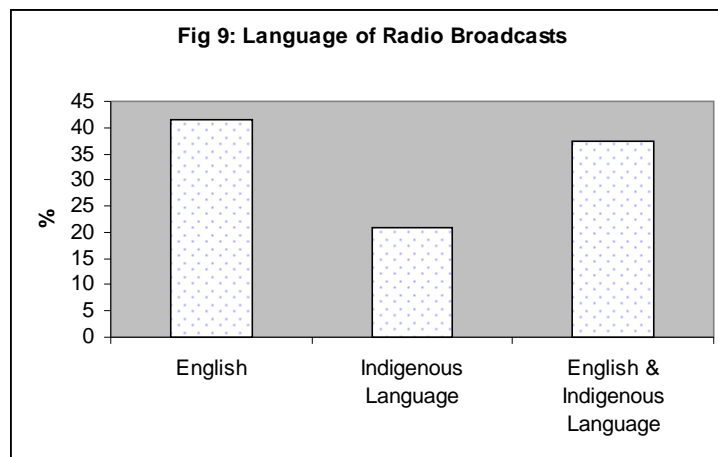
Finally, the content of the programmes clearly shows their non-participatory nature. In all cases, listeners were told what to do. Even when government is clearly at fault, the blame is ultimately heaped on the people. For instance when a landslide occurred in a part of Rivers state causing the loss of five lives and property, in the Coal City FM news reporting the incident, the community was blamed for not heeding earlier warnings about the slide, though the reporter stated that government had not fulfilled its promise to help the community relocate. Radio thus becomes the mouthpiece and advocate of the government.

The Language of Broadcasts

Nigeria is a multicultural and multilingual society. She has a good fraction of the estimated 3,000 to 10,000 languages spoken all over the world (Crystal, 1987). Grimes (2000), using genetic relationship as a guide, identified over 500 languages in Nigeria. Using the mutual intelligibility criterion, Egbokhare, Oyetade, Urua and Amfani (2001) mapped these into 112 language clusters. Egbokhare (2003) believes that many of the so-called languages are not actual autonomous languages but dialects which share mutual or at least one-way

intelligibility one with another.

The situation is quite complex: in Northern states like Kaduna, Plateau and in nearly all the South-South states, several languages are spoken within a few kilometres radius. It is in such a complex milieu that radio does its job, adding English language to the linguistic gamut. What language does radio speak? This is a pertinent question because broadcasting is communication, and communication is quite substantially (definitely not completely) a linguistic process. We asked our radio staff respondents to indicate the language in which their programmes were produced. Fig 9 shows that the language most often used was English. Many staff respondents produced programmes in both English and the indigenous languages.



This is quite disturbing given that only about 25% of Nigerians could speak English-going by the guesses of Wikipedia (2007)⁵. We observed that some crucial programmes, especially education and literacy programmes exist only in English. It is ironical that such programmes so much needed by the non-literate-who often are also those who do not speak English-are offered in English.

More disturbing, however, is the nature of the English language spoken on the

⁵The percentage of Africans speaking English is put about 10 to 20, with the exception of Liberia where about 40% speak English (Wolf, 2001). The guesstimate by Wikipedia may even be higher than the actual figure. In that case, the percentage of those alienated when radio chooses to speak English may be higher than 75%.

programmes. We refer specifically to lectures and straight talk programmes wherein an expert is invited to enlighten the audience on selected topics. Most times, the expert carries on without regard to the knowledge quotient and literacy level of the audience. Some examples help bring home the point being made here.

Our first example is taken from *Environment this Week* anchored by Thomas Yange, Radio Benue. An episode of the programme discusses the proposed 31st conference of the Forestry Association of Nigeria billed to hold in Makurdi, Benue State capital. The opening was jazz music-not any of the indigenous music types. From its content, it is clear the programme was meant to sensitise people about the conference and invite the participation of all stakeholders in forestry, especially “timber dealers, academicians, foresters, farmers, saw millers, environmental experts, hunters, bee keepers, agriculturists”, to quote the speaker.

On the programme was the Deputy Director of Forestry, State Ministry of Animal and Forestry Resources who, in addition to inviting the public, gave a talk on erosion, causes and consequences of environmental degradation. In her words,

Loss of trees results in the reduction of the earth's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, and this is said to be the cause of global warming...loss of biodiversity, that is plants and animals are lost...

How many farmers, timber merchants and hunters understood the speaker if at all they have some smidgen of English? How many knew carbon dioxide, global warming and biodiversity? How many understood what was meant by “plants and animals are lost” in this context? We can only guess the answers to these. From all reasonable indications, the speaker only succeeded in reaching very few, and might have well confused many more others. Our examination shows that *Environment this Week* was the only environmental programme on Radio Benue, meaning that left to Radio Benue alone, majority of Benue indigenes would have no access to environmental education.

As it was with Thomas Yange in Radio Benue, so it was with his Kaduna Radio counterpart, Wayura Bassi, who anchored *Environ Watch*, a programme whose montage is an Indian music-like. In an edition of the programme apparently

directed at farmers, she talked of volcanic eruptions predicted to occur in Adamawa state without explanations. So also it was in Coal City FM whose guests, talking to farmers, repeatedly talked of “highly pathogenic avian influenza”.

Clearly the most astounding illustration of disrespect for the audience knowledge and linguistic capacity was a lecture given by a medical doctor on Thomas Yange's *Environment this Week*. The lecture was aimed at enlightening parents, especially in the rural areas, on how to protect themselves and their children and aged ones during the approaching harmattan season. However, the language is appropriate most probably to only medical professionals. The following extracts show this:

[Harmattan is caused by] north-west wind coming from the Sahara desert to the country and is characterised by very low temperature...highly dust-laden...low humidity...

[It can cause]...other respiratory tract infections...broncho pneumonia, bronchitis...conjunctivitis...infections with the inflammation of the eyes...pneumonia even.

[For children, we need to] increase their dietary intake so that their immunity will be strong enough to withstand the attacks of virulent pathogens that can cause diseases in these children...a group of people that are highly vulnerable within this period are neonates and infants, and of course the elderly too...they have very low disposition of fat on the subcutaneous layer... [and they are] not highly insulated against the cold.

It is quite natural to quickly relapse into the use of familiar expressions when we communicate; so, one can hardly blame our medical director for using the expressions that were part of his daily vocabulary or for preferring 'dietary intake' to 'food'; 'neonates' to 'newborn children' and 'highly insulated' to 'highly protected'. But one cannot excuse the interviewer for not asking the lecturer to clarify. The success of an interview programme depends on, among other things, the interviewer's ability to 'incarnate' the average listener and ask such questions as the listener would have asked.

This skill was quite fruitfully applied by Mohammed Ibrahim, the interviewer on Radio Kaduna's *Kiwon Lafiya*, a health talk. The lecturer was Dr Abdullahi Mohammed Wambai, a lecturer at the Ahamdu Bello University, Zaria, and though he spoke Hausa, the lecture was laden with technical jargons in English.

However, the interviewer would not allow the lecturer get away with any terminology without asking him to explain in Hausa. The subject was cancer. The following sets the edition in clear contrast to the ones we just discussed.

Interviewee:	...jikin mu an yi shi da cells.	...our bodies are built with cells.
Interviewer:	Cells? Menene cells?	Cells? What are these cells?
Interviewee:	Cell din nan da Hausace shi ne watau halita da yafi kaskanci a cikin jikin mutum, sa'anan kuma yana da zaman kansa. Da kaskancin cell din nan shi ne kuma ya gina jikin mutum	Cell, in Hausa language, is the smallest creature in the body, and they dwell as single whole (independently). Though they are minute, they unite to build up people's body.
About six minutes later...		
Interviewee:	...Kaluluwa din nan, yayan wam abu ne wanda muke kiran white blood cells. White blood cells dinna shi ne ake kiran lymphocytes masu kara garkuwan jiki...	Lymphs are substances in the white blood cells. White blood cells are called lymphocytes which are defensive agents of the body.
Interviewer:	Menene white blood cells?	What are white blood cells?
Interviewee:	Farin cell na jini, muna kiran sa white blood cell donin shi ba ja bane. Fari ne...Su ne mayakan jiki, su ne in babu su ajiki sai garkuwan ka ya kare.	They are white cells inside the blood, they are not red. They are white...They are defensive agents of the body. If they are not in the body, the body becomes defenceless.

The game went on. Mohammed Ibrahim kept asking: What is lymph? What is ovary? What is oestrogen? Interviewing people requires the deft ability to interrupt them without disrupting the flow of thought and the whole communication process.

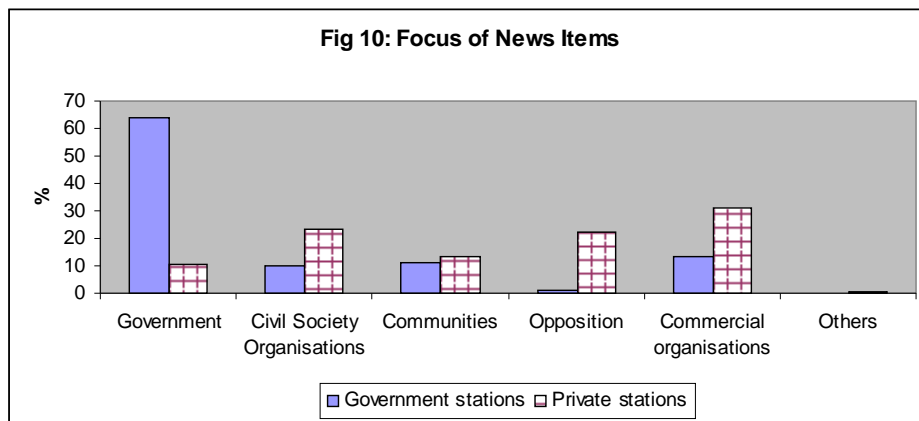
Radio Benue parades the most linguistically diverse array of programmes. There are programmes in Tiv, Idoma, Igede and Etulo. This, one hopes, brings the development message to people in the languages they truly understand and promotes a sense of belongingness in members of the several ethnic groups. However, there is a major question to that. What happens to the Idoma listener when Tiv programmes are on air? On Sundays, for instance, between 13.00 hours and 15.30 hours, a period of 2 ½ hours, three programmes are aired, two in Tiv

(*Tor Lishor* an entertainment programme, and *Tser Pinen*, a request programme), and one in Idoma (*Oyeiyi Eipe*, a religious programme). What does the Igede listener do during these hours? To such a person, radio cannot fully engage development.

The Content of News

By far the commonest reason for listening to radio, news ideally serves to aid the information and surveillance functions of the media. Through news, people should be made aware of key events in their environment especially the immediate one. Proponents and supporters of developmental reporting have advocated that news should transcend mere reporting and include sufficient analysis which should help listeners understand how events affect them. Proponents of participatory development communication advocate that news should not be about what a segment of the society does and says (Huesca, 1995). The social responsibility theory of the media also underscores the need to ensure that the media agenda reflect all the constituent groups in the society.

We recorded 18 news broadcasts and analysed these to find out the inherent subject matter of news and the players in the news. We found that 64.1% of news from government-owned stations was about government and government officials. Fig 10 shows the pattern.



Though the commercial station paid more news attention to commercial organisations than government stations did, they (commercial stations) also paid more attention to civil society organisations and gave more space to the opposition. We also noticed that whereas 88% of news about government as carried by government stations was positive, most of the news items dealing with communities and community based organisations were negative-about crises and disasters. Compare these items taken from the *News Update* of Coal City FM of February 23, 2007:

1. A Judge of the Supreme Court has advised politicians to adhere to the democratic concept of the rule of law. (Government; positive)
2. The Central Bank has said it has taken adequate measures to ensure the availability of the new naira notes and coins. (Government, positive)
3. President Obasanjo said electric cables to connect Akwa Ibom and Benue to the national grid would soon be laid. (Government, positive)
4. A community in Rivers state lost 5 people including a pregnant woman, and property worth 12million naira in a landslide. (Community, negative)

Our findings are consistent with those of Akinleye and Ojebode (2004) who from analysing 1,650 radio and television news items discovered that news about the community (specifically rural communities) was not only meagre (8%) but also predominantly negative. About 60% of the news items dealing with rural areas was negative, they discovered. Our study shows that when a positive news report about a community makes the headline, it most probably has to do with government. This item from Radio Benue illustrates the point we are trying to make:

A peace meeting held by the people of Gwer Local Government to resolve the crisis which erupted in the wake of the announcement of results of State Assembly primaries has resolved among others to uphold the election of Mr Asema Achado as the PDP candidate for the Gwer East constituency. A communiqué signed by the caucus chairman, Fidelis Tyokura and secretary, Agba Injo, Acting Caretaker of Gwer Local Government, Joseph Akaabee and PDP Chairman in the area, Albert Gile reaffirmed their confidence and loyalty to the Governor and leader of the PDP in the state, Dr George

Akume and congratulated him for his victory as Zone B Senatorial flag bearer.

It is easy for a potentially community news to become a pro-government news in government stations, and for a government news to be varnished with community flavour in order to give it some smattering of credibility.

The seeming desperation to please government occasionally bears out in ridiculous ways. Just an example might fully illustrate this: we recorded a world news bulletin on Bauchi Radio. The 10-minute 3-second world news broadcast had seven (7) news items but only one item is foreign. The others were about the government-federal, Taraba, Bayelsa, and Rivers state governments, and about the Nigeria Delta Development Commission (NDDC). Even in world news bulletins, all the listener is fed with is government activities.

With regard to coverage of the opposition, our findings are consistent with what NBC monitors discovered during the 2003 elections campaigns. They discovered that among the thirty political parties, the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) alone got 55% of the total airtime on the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigerian (FRCN) but only 37% on Raypower FM, while Zamfara State Radio gave 100% of its coverage of political activities to the ruling party (Okinobanyi, 2003).

As Ojebode (forthcoming, b) noted, whole news analyses were sponsored by ruling politicians and their supporters though this is prohibited by Section 5.1.19 of the NBC Code. For instance, the news analysis of March 5, 2003 on Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Enugu station was sponsored by the Nkanu Local Government and the theme was the need to re-elect the then incumbent governor of the state. A group identified as 'Good Friends' sponsored the news commentary of March 7, 2003 on FRCN Ebonyi and the focus was Chief Obasanjo's presidential rally. The 7 am news analysis of FRCN Jos on 13th March, 2003 was sponsored by 'Committee of Friends' of the then state governor. As if bent on outdoing others, Governor Mbadinuju of Anambra State himself sponsored the whole of the 7 am news of 14th and 17th April, 2003, in which presenters stressed why the Governor should be voted for a second term.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

Radio broadcasting in Nigeria takes place in an environment that is not conducive to meaningful engagement of development issues: the environment is neoliberal which predisposes stations to jettison development programmes and hanker after fiscally profitable ones. Fiscal profit comes from business organisations; fiscal and several other benefits come from patronising government. Located in urban areas, the stations are removed from the rural areas where the majority live. The physical separation is reflected in the content as well. The management style is authoritarian in most stations, the philosophy is pro-government and the equipment is in a terrible state.

Development issues are in the minority and in stations where commercial programmes are many, development programmes are few. Of all development subjects, human rights issues are the most rarely treated. On many interview programmes, the chosen guests are the ones not qualified to treat the issues being discussed while many interviews are not properly handled. Guests make impossible and incongruous recommendations which only show that they are not familiar with the peculiar situations of the listeners. Producers and presenters do not involve listeners in programme conception and execution. They think for the listeners and imagine what listeners' real interests are.

The English language (an exexclusive preserve of a small minority of the country's urban elite according to Wikipedia) is used more often than indigenous languages in treating development subjects. This automatically puts at a disadvantage about 75% of the listeners. Worse still, the varieties of English spoken on many programmes are guests' professional dialects laden with jargons. In stations where attempts are made to broadcast in specific indigenous languages, large segments of the audience who do not speak the chosen languages are neglected.

News, especially on government stations remains predominantly about government and government officials. Where the community makes the headline, it is most probably that the community is commending government or it is in crisis. The opposition is invisible in news except on private stations.

The listeners' verdict is that radio is doing only fairly well in engaging development. That too was the verdict of nearly half of the staff of the stations.

That was what our content analysis revealed as well.

Recommendations: six steps we must take

Given the prevailing environment, radio *cannot* better engage development, and this is in spite of the qualities of radio that endear it to development agencies and governments elsewhere. As Ojebode (forthcoming b) suggests, for radio to realise its potentials as a development medium in Nigeria, some far-reaching and major restructuring need to be effected, and the current media landscape must be altered.

First, and the one that requires the strongest political will, is that government should take its hands off radio. A truly public service system should be put in place. Public service stations are not government stations but public property. All government-owned stations should be turned to true public stations, fully responsible to the public. Their staff and management will be supervised by a coalition of civil society organisations, labour, religious bodies, the academia and other interest groups. The stations will be funded from three different sources: First will be radio license fees⁶. Second, a fraction of the Petroleum Trust Development Fund (PTDF) and the Education Tax Fund (ETF) should be set aside for funding these stations. A third source of fees for the proposed stations will be occasional state subventions to be approved by the National Assembly.

The second suggestion towards making radio engage development more fruitfully is that government should stop vacillating over the establishment of community radio. Our study shows that radio stations are alienated from the community and from listeners. It is unrealistic to expect an urban-based station which panders to the whims of government and the business sector to articulate the views and cater to the needs of the rural community. It is only a community station that can truly engage development in the community, and put the community in the driver's seat. An enabling legislative and licensing environment that will allow community stations to exist and thrive must be created. This includes creating a less expensive licensing regime for community radio.

Third, development planning and practice in Nigeria should be integrated. In Nigeria, different government and development agencies work independently and often at cross purposes. For instance, while advocates of the prevention of

⁶ Nigerians pay radio and television license fees to the local governments each time they need documents from the LG's but such monies neither reach the radio or television stations nor are they even accounted for.

mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS (and these include UNICEF) advise pregnant women and nursing mothers to consider alternatives to breastfeeding in order to reduce chances of mother-to-child transmission, advocates of exclusive breastfeeding (including powerful agencies such as the Baby Friendly Initiative of Nigeria) say no. Radio is often caught in this crossfire, confused and confusing its listeners. If the concerned agencies would sit with radio staff and a representative sample of the audience, and map out both strategies and messages, radio would be a lot more fruitful.

The fourth suggestion, which is related to the third, is the need to ensure that the tasks radio encourages people to perform in its jingles and programmes are feasibly supported by existing infrastructure. If radio asks people to dump refuse not in gutters but in government-provided trashcans, there is need to ensure that such trashcans exist in the first place, and that they are regularly emptied. If the message is that drivers should not drive against the traffic, government must ensure that both sides of a dual carriageway are passable. If radio makes recommendations that are not matched by requisite infrastructure, radio becomes less relevant and credible, and a feeling known as 'rising frustration' is elicited and nurtured among listeners (Ojebode, 2002).

The fifth step we must take is that government must support private stations in order for them to more fruitfully participate in development communication. Our study shows that these stations devote more time to development issues than do government stations. Supporting such stations will show that the government is indeed serious about its invitation to the private sector for public-private partnerships (PPP) in the provision of social amenities. Such support is enjoyed by private stations elsewhere. In China and India, for instance, private media establishments enjoy extensive support from the government. In Indonesia, government even facilitated the establishment of private stations which also enjoy considerable government subsidies (Chadha & Kavoori, 2000). Such support could be downward review of licence fees and tax holidays for stations that demonstrate remarkable commitment to development.

Finally, we suggest that Nigerian communication schools and colleges review their curricula to include topics on public journalism. Also known as civic or citizen journalism, public journalism seeks to put the citizens at the centre of news and reports. They are news sources and makers not news consumers. If we want to make radio perform public service and engage development fruitfully, we need producers and presenters who are citizen-conscious and citizen-loyal. Those groomed under the civil-service yesmanship may have a hard time fitting in.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Questionnaire for Staff of Radio Stations

This questionnaire is aimed at gathering data about radio broadcasting in Nigeria. Issues explored include programmes and station philosophy. We consider your views as a professional in radio broadcasting very important on this subject. Your response will be kept confidential.

1. Name of station:
2. State
3. Location
4. Your status (Pick one)
 - a. Employee of the station []
 - b. Freelancer []
5. Your educational qualification (Tick all that are applicable)
 - a. WSCE/SSCE []
 - b. OND/NCE (State course of study) []
 - c. HND/B.A/B.Sc (State course of study) []
 - d. M.A/MSc/MBA (State course of study) []
 - e. PhD (State course of study) []
6. For how long have you worked in the station? -----years
7. What is your station philosophy/mission/vision:
8. List the languages that are spoken by people in the area covered by your radio broadcasts:
9. List the languages that are used to broadcast on your station?
10. What are the names of the programmes you handle?
 - a. -----
 - b. -----
 - c. -----
 - d. -----

11. What are the languages used in the above programmes?

- a. -----
- b. -----
- c. -----
- d. -----

12. Briefly state the philosophy/objectives of these programmes:

- a. -----
- b. -----
- c. -----

13. What specific issues are generally treated in the various programmes?

- a. -----
- b. -----
- c. -----
- d. -----
- e. -----

14. Please list the specific issues treated in the last five editions.

- a. -----
- b. -----
- c. -----
- d. -----
- e. -----

15. How do you get feedback from the audience? [Pick as many as are applicable].

- a. Listeners phone or send text messages []
- b. Listeners physically come to the station []
- c. I visit listeners in their homes/offices []
- d. Any other method/way, specify

16. Are there ways the listeners make input into the programme?

17. Please give titles of programmes in your station that performs the following functions:

- a. Programmes that discuss issues about the physical environment:
- b. Programmes that promote innovation/productivity:
- c. Programmes that promote inclusion, unity in diversity etc:
- d. Programmes that discuss health issues:
- e. Programmes that discuss educational/literacy matters:
- f. Programmes that encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, new skills, self employment:
- g. Programmes that encourage science and technological development:
- h. Programmes that promote indigenous culture:

18. What are the problems you face in producing your programmes?

19. As a programme maker, how do you spread your responsibility

- a. Responsibility to the audience [_ _ %]
- b. Responsibility to management [_ _ %]
- c. Responsibility to sponsors [_ _ %]
- d. Responsibility to the station's owners [_ _ %]

Total [100 %]

20. How true is each of these statements in your circumstances?

	Statement	Very True	True	Untrue
a)	I am mindful of the need to cater for varying audience interests			
b)	I am very careful about not upsetting government			

21. How true is each of these statements in your station?

	Statement	Very True	True	Untrue
c	I am not free to take decisions about my programme			
d)	Our station is being over-controlled by government			
e)	Our station is being over-controlled by management			
f)	Our station gives equal treatment to people of different opinions, religions, languages, ethnic groups etc.			
g)	Our station gives equal access to the different political parties.			
h)	Our station pays more attention to sponsored programmes and commercials than it pays to social development programmes.			
i)	Issues of health, agriculture, entrepreneurship are often neglected in our station's programming			

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Listeners

This questionnaire is aimed at gathering data about radio listening in Nigeria. Issues explored include listening preferences and patterns, and the role of radio in society as perceived by listeners. All questions refer to Nigerian radio stations. Please do not consider foreign radio stations. Your response will be kept confidential.

1. Name of the city/town/village where you live _____

2. Your occupation_____

3. Highest educational qualification

- a. Primary school leaving certificate []
- b. WSCE/SSCE []
- c. OND/NCE []
- d. HND/B.A/B.Sc []
- e. M.A/MSc/MBA []
- f. PhD []

4. How often do you listen to radio?

- a. Very often []
- b. Often []
- c. Occasionally []

d. Rarely

5. How many local radio stations do you get on your radio _____

6. Which of them is your favourite radio station? _____

7. Why is this station your favourite radio station?

8. What is your favourite programme? _____

9. Tell us briefly what they do in the programme/what the programme is all about.

10. Which of the following statements best describes the station(s) in your state? (You get on your radio) (Choose one)

a. A station that represents the views of the people

b. A station that is a mouthpiece of the government

c. A station that works for its own monetary profit

11. How true is each of these statements about the radio station(s) in your state?

	Statement	Very True	True	Untrue
j)	The radio stations are being over-controlled by government			
k)	The stations do not tell the truth when the matter concerns the government			
l)	The radio stations give equal treatment to people of different opinions, religions, languages, ethnic groups etc.			
m)	The radio stations give equal access to the different political parties.			
n)	The radio stations pay more attention to sponsored programmes and commercials than it pays to social development programmes.			
o)	We are satisfied with what the radio stations are doing			
p)	The radio stations address the true needs of the people			

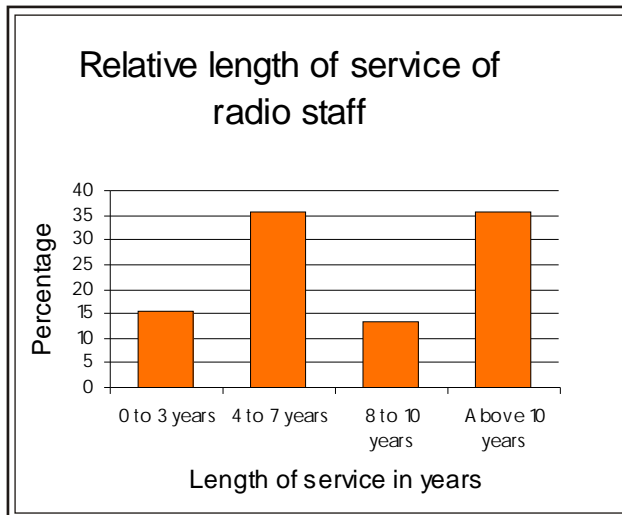
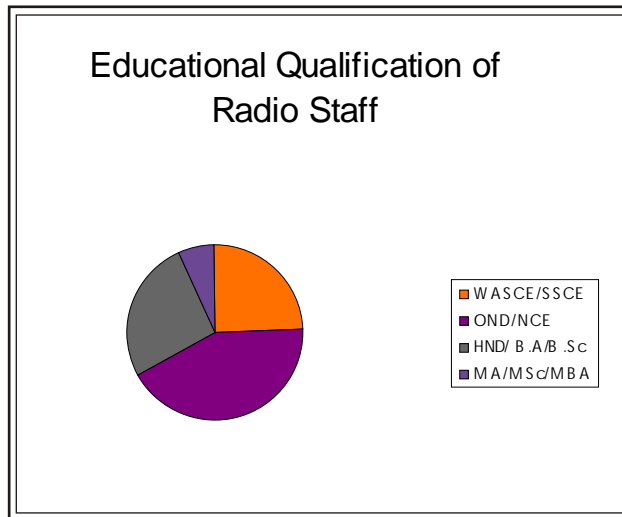
12. How well are the radio stations performing the following functions?

	Function	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not at all
a)	Telling people how to preserve the physical environment			
b)	Promoting productivity/ innovation			
c)	Promoting inclusion, unity in diversity etc.			
d)	Teaching people about health matters			
e)	Promoting educational matters including literacy			
f)	Teaching people new skills			
g)	Encouraging science and technological development			
h)	Promoting our indigenous culture			

13. Name some of the programmes that you consider informative on issues of

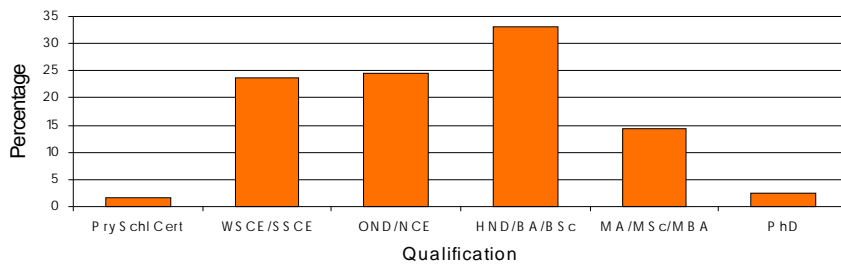
	Function	Programme	Station
a)	Preserving the physical environment		
b)	Promoting productivity/ innovation		
c)	Promoting inclusion, unity in diversity etc.		
d)	Teaching people about health matters		
e)	Promoting educational matters including literacy		
f)	Teaching people new skills		
g)	Encouraging science and technological development		
h)	Promoting our indigenous culture		

Appendix III: Background Information about Radio Staff

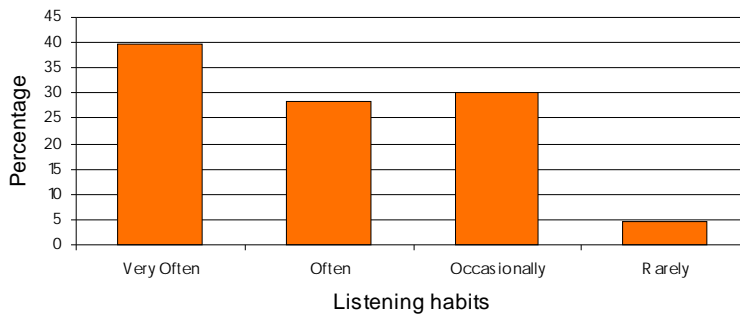


Appendix IV: Background information about listener respondents

Respondents' qualifications



Respondents' radio listening habits



Access to radio stations

