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Mass Media and Its Effect on Social Development of Women in Rural Areas of Kwara State

Daramola, Florence Olutunu
University of Ilorin, Ilorin

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the mass media and its effect on the social development of women in rural areas of Kwara State. One hundred and forty-four (144) women were involved in the study. A researcher-designed interview protocol tagged "mass media and its effect of the social development of selected women in the rural areas" was constructed, validated and administered to the selected women in the rural areas. Percentage was used for the demographic information while chi-square statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study indicated that there was no significant difference in the responses of rural women regarding the mass media and its effect on their social political and economic development. Both literate and illiterate women farmers and traders in the rural areas are of the view that mass media had most impact on their social development. Based on the findings, it was recommended that federal and state should provide adequate funds and enabling environment for media houses which will make the dissemination of information to women in the rural area as easy task for their social development.

Introduction

There is a growing awareness across the globe of the need to integrate women fully into national economics and to ensure their equal participation in the aspiration and goal being pursued in their countries. This presupposes that woman be given their fair share in the benefits that accrue from developmental efforts. Through this, a more equitable distribution of income among the various sectors of the population can be achieved. It is impossible to achieve the goals of economics growth particularly in terms of increased per capital income, as well as high growth rates of the economy without ensuring full and equal participation of women in society.

It is safe to state that in all the poor, less developed countries of the world, and in most of the economically developed countries of the world, rural women still make up the vast majority of socially and economically disadvantaged group. This was highlighted at a well-organized conference on integrated rural development and women in development, held in Benin, Nigeria, 1980, Adebuseye (1980) asserted that; Women's participation is greatly handicapped due to their persistent subordinate status. The proclamation of 1975 as the international women's Year and the United Nations Decades for women and development should be viewed against this background.

The National Policy on Women was developed in Nigeria to facilitate the full integration of women into social, economic and political life of the nation (Kisekica, 1980). The policy fulfilled the yearnings of federal, state, and local government, non governmental organizations, donor agencies, the private sector, concerned corporate bodies, and individuals to integrate

women fully into national development and thus remove gender inequalities that have evolved in our society over time through structures and processes created by patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism. The national policy on women in development is indeed one of the most direct activation of chapter II, section 17-sub-section 2 (d) of the 1979 constitution, which states that "every citizen shall have equal rights, obligations and opportunities under the law" (WID, 1996). Sub-section 3 of the constitution also states 'all citizens without discrimination on any ground whatsoever shall have the opportunities to secure adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunities to secure suitable employment'. The background of this aspect of the constitution of the national policy on women in development was timely.

Development is essentially a continuous process of generating and allocating resources for achieving greater socially satisfying needs. These resources include natural, human and financial resources. They also include the achievement of socially satisfying ends in which the resources are said to be dependent on a complete function of social organization, level of technology, efficiency of management and context of public policy. Development involves economic growth, equitable distribution of income and natural resources and socio-economic modernization (Hornby, 2001). Integrated rural development can be viewed as a comprehensive strategy for improving the quality of life of rural people. This may include consideration for equitable distribution of wealth and income deriving from increased production. The supply of social amenities (such as clean water, electricity) ensures the encouragement of rural people for increased political and social participation from local to the national level with a view to raising their political awareness.

Women are indispensable in the social, political and economic development of any nation. They form the majority of the nation's labour force and they are responsible for producing 70 percent of the nation's food supply. Women in Nigeria are often unconscious of the value of their productive roles in national development. Consequently agricultural development policies are hardly targeted at women to generate high productivity. For example, less than 20 percent of women farm their own farmland, and less than 10 percent have access to agricultural inputs and less than 5 percent have access to agricultural credit from formal institutions besides, female adult literacy is very low. Only about 31 percent of adult women can read and write. The proportion of adult women requiring functional education is about 70 percent (WID, 1996).

About 50 percent of Kwara women live in the rural areas. They are innovative and though most of their farming techniques are labour intensive and ancient, they paddle the economic boat in the rural areas. The state women commission was set up by the government to ensure the integration of women in development and to remove the obstacles in their way.

At various levels, women organization had existed to look after the interest of women. Examples of such are Women Farmer's Club, Young Women Christian Association, Women Cooperative Societies, Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Ilorin Descendant Women Progressive Union (IDWPU), Ifelodun Ladies Club, etc. Mass media can be used to play significant role in social, political, educational and economic development of women in rural areas. This is because geographical terrain may not be a barrier for the use of mass media. However, most of these women organizations are based in urban or semi-urban areas of Kwara State.

According to Aboyade (1981), information is very critical in strengthening the link and in achieving the integration of various social groups so that they can develop together as a cohesive and well-organized community. For a long time, a lot of units and bodies have tried to carry information to the rural dwellers. These include the mass media, government information ministries, agricultural extension workers social welfare and community development officers, rural health personnel, adult education and local school teachers.

In the recent past, the mass mobilization for economic recovery and self reliance (MAMSER), Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support Programme, National Orientation Agency etc. joined the league of organizations disseminating information to rural women. All these efforts have been geared indirectly towards integrated rural development. Adequate information will not only make for a better understanding and appreciation of the relevance of new programmes to the everyday living condition of the rural dwellers but will also encourage a closer link between the initiators and beneficiaries of development (Nigeria Tribune, 1991).

Many studies have examined the information and education needs of rural women in Nigeria. For instance, needs assessment of rural dwellers around Abuja revealed interesting learning about health issues, elementary agriculture, food processing and so on (Fyenu & Agudu, 1999). Similar study by Odebode (1997) on the educational needs of rural dwellers in Oyo State revealed interest in learning about food processing, family care, sewing and simple hygiene. Ajala 1991 investigated the sources of information of rural women on palm oil processing techniques and found that the main sources of information was through the extension programmes on the radio.

In spite of the provision of the National Policy on education (2004) section 7, subsection vii which enumerate the relevance of mass media form mass literacy and adult education, this vital area has attracted very little attention in educational research activities. Thus, the focus of the present study is to investigate mass media and it effect on the social development of women in the rural areas of Kwara State.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were generated for the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the responses of literate and illiterate rural women regarding the mass media and its effect on their social, political and economic development.
2. There is no significant difference in the responses of women rural farmers, and traders regarding the mass media and its effect on their social political and economic development.

Methodology

Research Type

The study is a descriptive research type, which used a survey method to sample the opinion of rural women on the effect of mass media on the social development of women in Kwara State. According to Jegede (1994) a descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. The survey method involved the use of a researcher-designed guided interview schedule. The

appropriateness of survey type used in this study emanates from the fact that the study focused on the significant difference in the responses of rural women regarding the mass media and its effect on their social development.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population for the study was women in the rural areas of Kwara State. The nature of the study required the purposive selection of the research sample because the state has enough rural settlement. However the study covered a sample of one hundred and forty-four (144) women who were selected through the use of stratified random sampling technique.

The sixteen local government areas in the State were distributed along three senatorial districts in the state. These are Kwara North, South and Kwara Central. One local government area was selected from each of the three senatorial districts. Besides, three rural villages/communities were selected from each of the local government areas, by random selection. Table 1 shows the rural villages that eventually participated in the study.

Table 1: Sampled Local Government and Rural Areas

S/N	L.G.A	Senatorial	Rural Areas Used
1.	Asa	Kwara Central	Owode, Laomi, Egbejila
2.	Edu	Kwara North	Donma, Godu, Kankwo
3.	Oyun	Kwara South	Aperun, Budo-Alfa & Ago mayaki

In each of the sampled villages, women were further stratified along variables of type of vocation that is farmers and traders according to their level of literacy. Random sampling technique was used to select sixteen (16) women from each of the selected villages. Therefore, one hundred and forty-four rural women constituted the sample of this study.

One Local Government was randomly selected from each of the three senatorial districts for the state. Besides, three rural villages/communities were selected from each of the local government areas, by random selection.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for this study was an interview guide entitled Interview Guide on the Mass Media and its effect on the Social Development of Rural Women (IGIMSSRW). The instrument consisted of six major sections, A, B, C, D, E and F. section A elicited information on the personal bio-data of the respondents; Section B was designed to obtain the respondents' information on their access to and use of mass media; section C elicits information on rural women mass media and its effect on their social, political and economic development. This section consisted of a total of three major items and sub-questions. All questions were close ended with "Yes, No, very effective, nor effective and I do not know" response modes. Section D dealt with the percentage of respondents on the value of mass media containing six major items with response modes of; "strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Section E elicited information on the constraints faced by rural women in their use of mass media. It contained a total of six close-ended questions with response modes of Yes or No. the final section F asked for general information or comment on the use of mass media for the development of rural women, and it was structured in an open-ended form.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was examined by educational experts for both validity and reliability. Specifically, three experts in educational technology at the University of Ilorin were requested to assess the instrument for face and content validity. The experts made necessary modifications which were utilized in improving the final instrument.

Data Analysis and Results

For the analysis of data collected, chi-square statistic was employed. The respondents were required to answer the questions from which it was possible to calculate the total scores of each respondent. To test if any differences existed in the responses of the women, chi-square technique was adopted. Percentages and tables were used as supplements in presenting the findings of the study. Two hypotheses were postulated and tested: There is no significant difference in the response of literate and illiterate rural women regarding the mass media and its effect on their social economic and political development and there is no significant difference in the responses of rural women farmers, teachers regarding the mass media and its effect on their social, economic and political development.

Biographical Information

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by educational background

Item	Education
Literate	Illiterate
96 (66.67%)	48 (33.33%)

Table 1 reveals the distribution of the respondents based on their educational background. The result indicates that out of the 144 respondents majority 96 (66.67%) were literates, while the remaining 48 (33.33%) were illiterate.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by occupation

	Occupation	
Item	Traders	Farmers
	84 (58.33%)	60 (41.67%)

Table 2 shows that 84 (58.33%) were involved in one form of trading or another; while 60 (41.67%) were subsistence farmers.

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Results

Hypothesis 1 states that there is no significant difference in the responses of literate and illiterate rural women regarding mass media and its effect on their social, political and economic development. In order to this hypothesis chi-square was used.

Table 4: Chi-square result on the responses of literate and illiterate rural women

	Literate	Illiterate	Total	Df	Calculated T. value	Critical T.value
Yes 1	37(33.22)	67 (70.78)	104	1	3.84	2.28
No 2	9 (12.78)	31 (67.22)	40			
Total	16	98	144			

Significant level: 0.05

A critical examination of this result that the table value of 3.84 is higher than the calculated value of 2.28. This means there is no significant difference in the responses of literate and illiterate rural women on the mass media and its effect on their social political and economic development. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis two states that: there is no significant difference in the responses of mass media and its effect on their social, political and economic development. To test this hypothesis, chi-square was used. A summary of the result is shown on table 5.

Table 5: Chi-square result on the responses of rural women farmers and traders regarding the mass media and its effect on their social, economic and political development

	Literate	Illiterate	Total	Df	Calculated Chi value	Critical Chi value
Yes 1	50 (49.83)	54 (54.17)	104	1	3.84	0.0040
No 2	19 (19.17)	21 (20.83)				
Total	69	75				

Significance level 0.05

The table value 3.84 is higher than the calculated value of 0.0040 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no significance deference in the responses of rural women farmers and traders on the mass media and its effect on their social, political and economic development. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of findings

The researcher investigated the mass media and its effect on the social development of rural women. The result of the chi-square analysis revealed that there was no significant deference in the responses of rural women regarding the mass media and its effects on their social development. This result is contrary of similar studies. For instance, the latter confirmed that mass media plays a prominent positive role in the social development of the rural areas. Ajala and Odebode (1999) examined the information needs of rural women palm oil processors in Oyo State. They found that most of the respondents received their information through extension services organized through radio. This shows that radio was the major source of information for rural women.

Based on the results it could be concluded that mass media endlessly contribute to the development of an area. Consequently, the mass media have a lot of prospects for embracing rural women social development programmes. James (2002) revealed that rural women in Kwara State now feel that people are concerned about them since such concern is inherent in most of the programmes the media stations broadcast, which also satisfy the needs of the rural dwellers. Some of these programmes are Arugbo S'ogeri, farming habits, health talk, schools challenge, and Agbojo Owo.

Conclusion

From the preceding findings, the following conclusion could be drawn; there was no significant difference in the responses of rural women regarding the mass media and its effect on their social, political and economic development. Both literate and illiterate women farmers and traders in the rural areas are of the view that mass media has most impact on their social development because about ninety-seven percent of the rural women claimed access to mass media, most especially radio made a great impact on them. Though change is a complex and difficult phenomenon, changing societal conceptions of women roles and raising the awareness of women can be brought about most rapidly with the aid of the mass media.

Recommendations

The following are recommendation made based on the findings from this study. Enlightenment should be given to the rural women on the need for television set, radio, etc. as well as utilizing it in knowing some of the programmes they broadcast and the time of broadcast.

Government should build community viewing centers, newspaper assembly enlightenment centers where government policies and programmes that affect the social development of women in the rural areas would be disseminated.

Media stations particularly radio stations beaming signals to rural areas should be mandated by the government to explore the culture of such communities and the local language of such areas should be used.

Adequate funding and provision of enabling working environment for the media is also very important. Provision of constant electricity supply, standby generating sets, modern broadcasting equipment will make the media to discharge their responsibility of disseminating information. Successive administrations must put in place various programmes like the Directorate for Food and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI) and Better Life for Rural Women. These programmes have imparted positively on the social development of women in the rural areas. The outright cancellation, abrogation or change shows how inconsistent the government is toward development of the rural areas. In order to have massive transformation in the socio-economic and political development of the women at the rural areas there should be consistency in the programmes of the government.

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