

Media as a Tool for Boosting Commercial Agriculture for Nation Building in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper explores the usage of the media in enhancing commercial agriculture in Nigeria as a means of boosting the Nigerian economy for nation building. The media is perhaps the most veritable instrument in enhancing the growth of any developing country. It has long been credited with the ability to simultaneously reach a heterogeneous audience with the power to change attitudes, instill the spirit of patriotism, shape lives of citizens, encourage hard work and resilience in nation building. The dwindling of Nigeria's economy due to the instability of crude oil prices in the international market has forced the country to look

inwards if it must build a strong and virile nation. This emerging stride in the country's economic development has caused a review of the Agricultural sector with evolving media programs that are information base, seeking to address the information needs of farmers in order to move agriculture in Nigeria to a commercial level so as to revive the economy and to trigger growth and development. The paper is anchored on the development media theory. This study shows that the media is an important part of every nation's development.

Background of The Study

More often than not, when the media come up with contents relating to issues of national development, such as the promotion of commercial agriculture in Nigeria, it is looked at from the government's perspectives, what government is doing to improve or promote commercial agriculture as a means of generating revenue for nation building.

The media in every society has the capacity to determine the effectiveness of the messages to be disseminated to achieve desired feedback from the public. Dominick (2013, p.6), looked at audience feedback as "useful to the source because it allows the source to answer the question 'how am I doing? And also allow the source to attempt to improve or change some elements in the communication process".

The audience as that integral part of a communication process is said to be "those who

expose themselves to mass media contents ranging from radio, television, newspaper or magazine directed at the people in the society who finally consume them" (Okuna cited in Asemah, 2011, p.7).

Thus, the government of Nigeria through its numerous agricultural development programs on the television, radio and other media sources, is aims at strengthening commercial agricultural production of the country by educating and providing information of relevance to the farmers, such as; the availability of improvements and innovations in the agricultural sector ranging from improved seedlings, fertilizer availability, credit facilities, modern farming mechanism, pesticides, favorable markets (national and international) for the products, and the elimination of middle men.

The present administration at inception had the intention of diversifying the economy, and the current economic recession bedeviling the country is perhaps one of the reasons the government is encouraging Nigerians through the mass media to go into large scale farming to trigger the growth of the economy, ensure food security and to generate foreign exchange via export, which will boost the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to foster rapid development. This could be made possible by initiating and introducing principles of commercial

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agriculture in the rural subsistence agricultural setting, through provision of comprehensive, proven and state-of-the-art agricultural services to the farming communities in Nigeria.

To this end, the government through the media, especially the Television provides promotion for commercial agriculture and the hope that it will revamp and attract investors to this sector of the economy. "In countries where literacy level is very low especially in rural areas, the choice of mass media is important. In this context the television, plays a major role in transferring modern agricultural technologies to educated and uneducated farmers within a short time for farming communities" (Nazari & Hasbullah, 2008).

Moemeka (1995) argues that, although "people regard televisions as an entertainment channel for the rich, the rural people actually need the medium most. They need it most for its technological capabilities to educate and promote development and it is suited for distance teaching and practical demonstrations". As "TV can provide an illiterate person with valuable instruction and education in agriculture, health population control, sanitation and other aspect of his daily life" (Rahman, 1999).

Furthermore, it is believed that "the media motivates the people as well as ensure participation in the growth and developmental process apart from informing and educating the society" (Adebayo, 1985).

Commercial agriculture as defined by Iwena (2007, p.6) "is that type of agriculture which is concerned with the production of food, animals and cash crops in large quantities for sale." For "several agricultural programs and schemes have been devised in Nigeria over the years, to help equip farmers with information and resources that will help reduce the burden of farming and increase farm yields" (Leman and Smart, 2014). This can be achieved today with increased farmers knowledge and access to quality inputs.

It has been established that "about 70% of Nigerian population engaged in agriculture" (Obasi & Agu, 2000 cited in Ayegba & Ikani 2013). While "90% of Nigeria's total food production comes from small farms and 60% of the country's population earn their living from these small farms" (Oluwatayo *et al.*, 2008 cited in Ayegba & Ikani 2013) and not from commercial scale.

Though commercial agriculture today, is taking the lead among other means of diversification in sub-Saharan Africa, it is also so in Nigeria due to the fall in global oil price. It is worthy to note that "before Nigeria discovered crude oil in the early 1960s, and primary attention were focused on hydrocarbon which currently earns 95% of the country's export revenues, agriculture accounted for over 60% of Nigeria's GDP and agricultural commodities were the country's main exports" (Boyfield, 2013, p.15).

"Nigeria's dependence on crude oil has brought about the strong decline in domestic agricultural production that reduced the country to a growing dependency on imported foodstuffs" (Chukwu, 2015, p.20). Thus, this dependence on petroleum has relegated agriculture to the sidelines in the economic development of Nigeria and has strained the economy and hampered the infrastructural growth of the country.

Today the story is different as the government and relevant authorities are encouraging a return in agriculture in commercial scales as a means of diversifying the nation's economy among other means of diversification. It is to this end, that the government, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the media have the duty to educate, inform and enlighten farmers on the needed farming skills to enable them move from subsistence to commercial farming so as to place Nigeria's agricultural sector on the world map and attract foreign investors.

According to Alam and Haque (2014) "Information plays a key role in agricultural development and production and their effective communication will help facilitate mutual understanding among farmers, agricultural scientists and extension workers". However, Kaye (1995) observed that "good information improves decision-making, enhances efficiency and provides a competitive edge." Consequently, Opara (2008) opines that "Knowledge and information are basic ingredients for increased agricultural production and productivity as information is a critical resource in the operation and management of the agricultural enterprise" Abbas, Lodhi, Bashir and Mahmood, (2008) argued that "lack of information adapted to local needs and lack of technical knowledge at farm level are the important factors

responsible for this low yield.”

Information is therefore, “considered as one of the most important resources in agricultural and rural development that assists the farmers to take decisions and appropriate actions for further development related to farming” (Harris *et al.*, 2001; Morrow *et al.*, 2002 and Stefano *et al.*, 2005). Adding credence to the above;

Mass media methods in agricultural information dissemination generally, are useful in reaching a wide audience at a very fast rate. They are useful as sources of agricultural information to farmers and as well constitute methods of notifying farmers of new developments and emergencies. They could equally be important in stimulating farmers' interest with new ideas and practices (Aniet *et al.*, 1997).

Thus, “Radio and television are the most effective tools in communication for the support of development” (Hussain, 1997).

This paper is therefore, aimed at understanding the use of the media in nation building through the enhancement of commercial agriculture in Nigeria.

Statement of The Problem

Agricultural development programs in Nigerian mass media are inadequate compared to that available in developed countries of the world. Such countries dedicate channels 24 hours a day for science and technology, and other educative programs. This is because, for every development program communicated via the media, it is in a bid to foster participation from its citizens, and in turn, use it for the advancement of their country. However, most farmers in Nigeria are still lacking in information of modern agricultural knowledge due to the remoteness of their location and lack of electricity. They need an easy access point to get and meet their information needs. Information need has three basic elements: availability, access and utilization but the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) initiatives are hard to reach by the farmers.

Objectives of The Study

The purpose of this study is to look into the use of the media in Nigerian in boosting commercial agriculture as one of the major sources of income for nation building. Thus, the study is carried out

the following objectives:

1. To investigate if the mass media in Nigeria helps in nation building through agricultural production.
2. To examine the role of the media in enhancing audience awareness on best and modern agricultural practices for large scale farming.

Research Questions

1. Can the media play any important role(s) in nation building?
2. Do the media in Nigeria help enhance commercial agriculture through its programs?

Boosting Agriculture in Nigeria Through The Mass Media

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economies of developing countries, one of which is Nigeria. Interestingly, “the Nigerian economy during the first decade after independence could reasonably be described as an agricultural economy because agriculture served as the engine of the growth of the overall economy” (Ogen, 2003). From the standpoint of occupational distribution and contribution to the Gross Domestic Product, (GDP), agriculture employs about 50% of the labor force of Nigeria and contributes between 40% and 50% to the GDP of the country. This sector like other sectors is however characterized by risks and uncertainties which require timely information to overcome, hence, the development of agricultural extension which ensures adequate flow of production, processing, storage, marketing, weather and other information to the farmers. (FOA, 2010) It is the information that bridges research institutes and farmers and ensures information flow among farmers.

According to Nwankwo and Orji (2013), “agricultural extension service is the out-of-school educational process to help farmers solve their day-to-day agricultural problems”.

“It disseminates agricultural research findings to farmers to improve their analytical capacity and communication skills to help them in their farming and farming related activities” (Bruin & Meerman, 2010). According to Ango, Yakubu and Usman (2012), “agriculture is becoming increasingly information sensitive”. Hence, “access to information has become a pre-requisite and a

valuable resource for agricultural development” (Padre, Sudarshana and Tripp, 2003). In this context, “information is needed to exploit opportunities in time, raise awareness about the potential negative impacts of current choices and to get to know about opportunities of other farmers in order to search for better opportunities and sustainable solutions” (LEISA, 2002).

Nwankwo and Orji (2013) also stated that, “in Nigeria the limited number of agricultural extension agents, 1,400 farmers, makes it impossible to reach all farmers by inter-personal means” (Mohammed & Olabode, 2007). “The limited coverage of conventional extension methods necessitated the use of mass media methods in extension communication. Mass media enables the extension staff to operate more effectively.” Agbamu (2006) grouped mass media system into print, screen and broadcast technologies. In Angoet *et al.* (2012), the importance of the mass media means of communication is important such that its roles cannot be underscored in the process of positive change. Van den Ban and Hawkins (1996) opined that the mass media does this by setting agenda for important topics, transferring knowledge, forming and changing opinions and behaviors. “The media is also believed to create awareness and diffuse a personal value system favourable to innovations, mobility achievement and consumption” (Nwachukwu, 2003).

Mohammad, MdSalleh, Saadat, Behooz and Magat Al-Imran. (2012) have written that broadcast media is a powerful communication tool, (Chapman, 2003; Cremedas & Lysak, 2011). And they also have proved to be the most effective in promoting agriculture and development in rural areas (Nakabugu, 2001; Binswanger *et al.*, 2010). Buttressing further (Hussain, 1997, Nazari & Hassan, 2011) believe that radio and television are the most effective tools in communication for the support of development. Radio is also acknowledged by (FAO, 2001; Nazari & Hasbullah, 2010) as the most important medium for communicating with the rural populations in developing countries. Television also has proved to be a profound means of communication and potentially capable of leaving tremendous effect on the society (Verhoeven, 2010). In comparison to

radio, television has a further privilege of 'seeing' rather than 'listening' only. Although the cost and expenditure of television exceeds that of radio, it is more effective and powerful from the educational viewpoint (Elman, 2010).

Pur and Gwary (2008) in their study “Determinants of Effectiveness of Electronic Media in Agricultural Information Delivery in Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria”, radio and television have been more extensively used in most developing countries. Wele, (1991) suggest that “Television clubs or groups in India, Sudan, Ivory Coast and Brazil have been successful in transferring and spreading of information to farmers” According to Baxter (1989),

Radio and television closely attuned to farmers' needs and conditions and timed to complement agricultural operations can be a strong adjunct to field extension service – but not a substitute for them. Given the continuing expansion of market oriented agriculture and the increasing complexity of input requirements, there is a need for a continuous education of farmers and extension staffs, and radio and television would be a good way to disseminate information to them.

The study further stated that most (50.9%) of the farmers own both radio and television.

Nwankwo and Orji (2013) posits, The mass media methods of agricultural innovation dissemination available in the study area include internet services, television, radio, bulletins, newspapers and magazines. Others are pamphlets, handbills and posters. Based on multiple responses, the methods most available and most utilized were radio and television sets, While 50 respondents (83.33%) had access to radio, 45 respondents (75%) had access to television. In concluding, the study said the use of mass media for information dissemination has become necessary. The study adduced reinforcement of previously known agricultural technologies, credibility to already known ones, and reaching different persons of different strata of the society at the same time as the reasons for this necessity.

Using a 5 point Likert scale (Ango *et al.*, 2012) in “Farmers' Perceptions on the Role of Mass Media in Sustainable Agricultural Development: A Case Study of the Northern Zone of Sokoto Agricultural

Development Project (S.A.D.P.), Nigeria” stated that 48% of the respondents agreed that

“Television and radio were more beneficial in disseminating agricultural information. On the other hand 0.8% of the respondents disagreed, whereas 41.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that radio and television program were beneficial. The study further said the results indicated that majority of the respondents were in favor of radio and television in disseminating agricultural information which also agreed with Padre, Sudarshana and Tripp (2003) who reported that “short time radio and television programs were acclaimed to be the most effective media means for sharing agricultural scientific knowledge to the masses”.

Further, regarding the convenience of use of radio and television, the study found out 59.2% of the respondents agreed that the use of television and radio is more convenient than any other agricultural communication methods; 2.5% were undecided on convenience whereas 1.7% disagreed on the convenience of radio and television in broadcasting agricultural programs. In terms of efficiency and use of radio and television 50.8% strongly agreed that radio and television were more effective, whereas 0.8% expressed their disagreement. Regarding the broadcast of new agricultural practices, the study found out that 41.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that farmers adopt the new practices disseminated through radio and television; however, 35.8% felt that new practices broadcasted were mostly adopted. All the same, 13.3% disagreed with the adoption. On the whole, most of the farmers in the study area adopted new practices due to availability of television as well as the portability of radio”.

The Role of The Media in Educating Farmers

The development of agriculture in developing countries mostly depends on the use of information and communication technologies which can connect the different communities of people. Radio and television have played a very important role in enhancing the capacity of farmers by broadcasting different agricultural related programs. Similarly Television disseminates scientific and agricultural knowledge among farmers and provides latest information with the discussion of agriculture

experts. In the context “of India and Ethiopia, television has played a most vital role as a medium of diffusion of information about agriculture. It was showed that farmers can get easily information by watching the agriculture related programs on television” (Murty & Abhinov, 2012).

“Television has provided lot of information to all stakeholders of the society. Television has created awareness and knowledge among farmers about use of technologies in farming. Television produces programs which create interest among masses and mostly the masses depend on the media for getting information regarding education, health and agriculture” (Age, 2012).

The fruitful results about agriculture development depend on “the use, access and the mobilization of the community, which relies on television. “The experts of agriculture extension believe that mass media can bring the positive changes and growth of agriculture in developing countries by using the communication technologies in their countries” (Salleh, 2010). Television is one of the effective medium of communication for the dissemination of agricultural information among farmers quickly. In different countries such as “India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Srilanka the farmers' education is low therefore television is one of the best and favorite medium of communication where farmers can watch and get the information about the use of different techniques and pesticides in short time” (Nazari & Hasbullah, 2008).

The study conducted in Iran, had result which indicated that 68% of the respondents believe that television produced agriculture programs which provided good benefit to farmers. Furthermore, it indicated that the programs should be produce in their regional languages which can provide good benefit to farmers. However, 87% of the respondents said that 6 to 8 pm is more suitable time for broadcasting the agriculture programs in this time most farmers were free to watch program easily and around 20 minutes duration is enough for agriculture program on television. It was indicated that in various related issues of agriculture such as in bad weather situation television is one of the most important source of disseminating agricultural related information among farmers (Nazari and Hassan, 2011, Loges, 1994).

The information about agriculture could be

transferred by using the appropriate tool of information communication technologies such as television which is a famous communication medium of communication tool among farmers to use and diffuse the information regarding agriculture. "There are many ways to transfer the information about agriculture by newspapers, magazines, brochures as well as electronic media such as radio and television" (Rolle & Satin, 2002). Different communities use the information and communication technologies in different ways such as farmers prefer to watch television and get the information about weather and markets regularly. However, farmers also use other communication tools for information. Many developing countries have established different centres of communication technologies for providing the information about agriculture to farmers. While in some countries government have started information services centres for agriculture information. However, "television is one of the good source of agriculture information among farmers in developing countries" (Fara, 2009 & Goyal, 2010).

The electronic media have brought revolutionary changes in the life of different communities mostly farmers are getting more benefit from these technologies such as television. Television has given new choice to farmers for watching the different agriculture programs on different channels. "Television is playing an important role in sharing attitude, creating interests and presenting factual information" (Buren, 2000). Television helps the different stakeholders to provide information about different issues while the farmers are also getting good benefit from this technology and obtaining the information about agriculture. Television has provided new approaches in the development of countries. By television many new programs were introduced for awareness of farmers in rural areas of developing countries. In the perspective of agriculture development, "television producers and directors should make the objectives or the development of agriculture a priority by producing the different programs for growth of agriculture" (Age, 2012).

Television is one of the widespread media as 88% of respondents indicated that television is their first preference. Nowadays television could be

considered vital which could extensively provide different information to different communities such as farmers, fishermen, doctors and teachers. Furthermore, researchers highlighted that television change from other mass media in the way it could combine different kinds of information. But it has also been proved that in many rural areas people have no accessibility and approach to get current information especially farmers in the third world countries like India, Bangladesh and Pakistan (Upadhyay, Kumar, Raghuvanshi & Singh, 2011).

Overview of Government Agricultural Policies in Nigeria

The period 1970 – 1986 witnessed a great decline in agriculture, which was largely due to intensive oil (petroleum) exploitation, and the lack of interest in supporting agriculture by the government. The strong decline in domestic agricultural production reduced the country to a growing dependency on imported foodstuffs. In the wake of the major food crisis in the country in 1976, such programs like "Operation Feed the Nation" (1976 - 1979) and "Green Revolution" (1979 - 1983) were setup. These programs focused on strengthening agricultural production, providing subsidized inputs, community development, and access to credit. However, they were implemented without a transparent framework to structure action, and the successive governments did little at ensuring continuity. The enactment of the land use Act in 1978 marked a historic turning point for land use management in the country. This situation was reversed in 1987 with the Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs), that sought to reduce the national economy's dependency on oil and promote the private sector as the engine driver of the economy. Thus, in 1998, the Nigerian government once again turned its attention to the agricultural sector by adopting an agricultural policy that had the objective, among others, of ensuring food security for the population through the development of local production.

Thus, the Federal Government of Nigeria has embarked on agricultural development strategies and policies aimed at producing enough food for its teaming population. If the people in a country are not properly fed, the act of governance becomes

quite a big problem. The government in addition made provision for self-sufficiency in which, the government as a matter of necessity, consciously embarked on programs and policies to raise productivity. In addition to the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), the following establishments were targeted at improved agriculture:

1. Operation Feed the Nation (OFN).
2. River Basin Authority.
3. Integrated Rural Development Program.
4. National Accelerated for Food Production Scheme.
5. The establishment of Agricultural and Co-operative Banks.
6. Green Revolution Program (GR) among others.

The objectives of these programs include the following:

1. Attainment of self-reliance and self-sufficiency in the production of food requirements.
2. Promotion of a linkage between agriculture and other sectors of the economy.
3. Equitable and reasonable level of distribution of income among food producers and the maintenance of good nutritional standards.
4. Revamping of Agricultural sector so as to generate employment opportunities.

These programs have served as a strategic framework for the attainment of sustainable agricultural development environment. For instance, since the publication of the document "Agriculture in Nigeria: The New Policy Thrust" in 2001, the government has been able to assign the agricultural sector an ambitious role in its strategic planning frameworks. The strategic document for reducing poverty in Nigeria, "National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy" (NEEDS II 2008 - 2011) emphasizes an economy driven by the private sector, while president Musa Yaradua's "7-point agenda", is a framework economic reform in the country. Adopted in May 2007, they are the medium-term policy documents intended to help the country in achieving the Millennium Development Goals as well as the "Vision 2020" plan. NEEDS (2014).

The strategic frameworks in NEEDS II and the 7-point agenda have been translated into short-to-

medium-term programs. The federal ministries of agriculture and water resources have drawn up a "5-point agenda" for agriculture, a detailed roadmap of steps to be implemented to attain the objectives listed for agriculture in the 7-point agenda. The Olusegun Obasanjo's government also launched the presidential initiatives in 1999 for seven agricultural products (cassava, rice, vegetable oil, sugar, livestock, cultivated trees and dry grains). The aim of these initiatives is not only to boost Nigeria's agricultural exports by taking advantage of preferential agreements in the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the economic partnership agreements between the European Union and the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific countries but also to make the most of the potential regional market made up of neighboring countries. Although these measures have shown that investment in the agricultural sector can have concrete results in terms of increasing domestic production, their overall outcomes have been mixed and the only intensification of production segment has been taken into account, ignoring the downstream segments of the value chain (such as product processing). NEEDS (2014).

Support for agricultural inputs has been a central element of Nigerian agricultural policy since the 1950s. This support consists primarily of distributing public subsidies so that farmers can easily acquire inputs (fertilizer, improved seeds, and phytosanitary products). These levels of federal subsidies have followed a spiky path, with highs and lows, and methods of implementation have been highly variable. In addition to federal subsidies, each state allocates its own subsidies for fertilizer. These vary greatly from one state to another in both amounts (50 to 150kg per farmer) and subsidization rates (from 10% to 50%). Even so, many farmers still find it difficult to obtain good-quality inputs at an affordable price and at the time they are needed. The federal and state governments are yet to set up an effective regulation and monitoring system to address quality issues and the diversion of subsidized inputs to outside the country. NEEDS (2014).

The idea of traditional agricultural practices in Nigeria has been in existence for quite a long time. The practice entails the traditional and predominant method of clearing farm land through bush burning. In the words of Medugu (2009).

The use of firewood as cooking energy source has recently gained prominence, because of the high cost and non-availability of other cleaner sources such as natural gas. These activities increase the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere trapping heat and causing global warming, climate change and sea level rise.

"Prior to independence, traditional agriculture accounted for the bulk of Nigeria's export". Whoever in contemporary times, traditional agricultural practice according to Garba (2006), has "led to the deforestation of the aspects and theoretical propositions. This gap, Garba further observes, reflects a socio-technological schizophrenia in developing countries, where societies are caught between their own values and traditions and the slogans of modernity and development". Embarking on massive agricultural development campaigns without providing links to the whole social system has not worked, and this has limited the effectiveness of development communication.

Nigeria's Implementation of Agricultural Development Policies

A review of policies and schemes reveals that successive governments have demonstrated varying levels of commitments to agricultural development. This accounts for the uncoordinated and stunted growth in this sector of the Nigerian economy. One major problem that has become the bane of this policy is the lack of continuity associated with International Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Studies of government programs. The effect of this on agricultural development has been far-reaching.

Successive governments in Nigeria came in with new programs, schemes and institutions, which in most cases do not represent continuity of the existing ones. Policies are therefore abandoned midway, in most cases, before their effects become manifested. A corollary to the above is the uncoordinated manner in which agricultural programs and schemes have been handled. Nsi (1993) laments "Policies are pronounced and institutions set up that are in most cases either the negation of existing facility, or a duplication of it". A cursory look at the institutions referred above shows duplication and overlapping of functions

and activities in the operations of most of them. It is therefore clear that there are issues of inconsistent policies and lack of will in policy implementation that would need to be addressed. These two issues are negatively reinforced by intermittent change in government, resulting in lack of continuity. Overall, even with the proliferation of institutions, programs and schemes, the impact on ordinary farmers is visible and thus has serious negative effect on agricultural output and outlook in recent times. There are also problems at the micro (individual) level that borders on the management off arms, sources of finance, supervision, etc.

In Nigeria, farmers are the most impoverished and backward of all professionals or businessmen. This is not the case in the developed countries where farmers are among the richest and most successful entrepreneurs. In addition, the level of extension services are yet to succeed in meaningfully changing the orientation of an average farmer, especially where there is a conflict of culture and tradition. Furthermore, the medium scale farmers are compelled to contend with serious issues of management, financing, preservation and weather. These are part of the problems that lent themselves for urgent resolution in the early years of the current administration This Day (2010).

Reports from a recent World Meteorological Organization (WMO) (2014) shows,

"Rainfall in the semi-arid and sub-humid regions of Nigeria is highly variable and undependable, and influences agricultural productivity. Farming practices are gradually developing as a response to such climatic changes. And any changes in the current climate would further encourage risks to agricultural productivity and the survival of the large populations in Nigeria and West Africa at large".

In addition, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, detailed many future risks of climate change on agriculture. In Nigeria, for instance, the area suitable for agriculture, the length of the growing season and yield potential, are expected to decrease. It suggests several adaptation strategies to fight the projected climate changes, including changing varieties, more efficient water use, altering the timing or allocation of cropping activities, improving the effectiveness of pests, disease and weed management practices,

and the reduction of production risks. When these are widely adopted, they could yield substantial effects and fight negative impacts from climatic change and take advantage of the positive impacts. An integrated approach to planning and implementing the climate change adaptation-strategies in agriculture could help both the planners and the rural farmers to deal effectively with the projected impacts.

Several socio-economic obstacles appear to bedevil agricultural development in Nigeria. In the words of Abbah (2000), they include:

- i. Lack of the basic statistical data and knowledge of the socio-economic background, the environment, the resources and the management capacities within the traditional production systems.
- ii. Rapid population growth, which in addition to associated socio-economic pressures, has outmoded the traditional farming systems that made the economic viability no longer to be appreciated.
- iii. The complexity of traditional agricultural production systems, the competition between the subsystems and non-farm components, and the farmers' interests in diversification, etc.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This Study is Anchored on the Development Media Theory

The development theory is one out of the six normative theories of the press which seeks to address the imbalance in development and information flow of third world countries and provide solutions to the technological problems facing them. The theory came into being as the outcome of the recognition that the press or media in developing countries, have greater and wider responsibilities to their society beyond the traditional, universally recognized role of the media (Salau, 2006 in Jibrin, 2012). The theory was propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987.

According to him, there is need for a more positive version of media theory which focuses on national developmental goals as well as the need for autonomy and solidarity with other nations in a similar situation. In the same vein, Dominick (2002) posits that developmental journalism entails finding ways to wake abstract stories about

commodity pricing, agriculture, educational goods and other issues under-standable to readers.

The major assumptions of this theory include; Media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy, freedom of the media should be open to economic priorities and development needs of the society, the media should give priority in their content to national culture and languages. The media should give priority in news and information to link with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally or politically. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks. In the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict media operation, and devices and direct control can be justified.

This theory arose out of the concern to describe and prescribe the norms of journalism practice in the developing world, as the earlier four normative theories of the press by Seiber, Peterson and Schram's (1956) authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and soviet communist have limited application and potential benefits for these developing countries. The normative element of this emerging development theory 'are' especially, opposed to dependency and foreign domination and to arbitrary authoritarianism. They are positive uses of the media in national development, for the autonomy and cultural identity of the particular national society.

The development media theory was postulated by Dennis McQuail to favor grassroots involvement and participative communication (McQuail, 1987). According to the basic assumption of the theory that media should adopt and carry out development task, part of the ways this can be achieved is through involvement in the process of development and through community broadcasting, where developmental issues can be brought closer to the people to propel societal and subsequently national development.

The justification for the use of this theory lies in the fact that Nigeria is a developing country that needs her media more for participation toward development and social change like agricultural revolution as already achieved in Western countries. Furthermore, public attitude towards

development of virtually all the sectors of community; socially, economically, and politically is the bedrock for the adoption of the theory for this study. So, the Development Media theory would help this work to analyze the factors that influence the effectiveness of the mass media in the promotion of commercial agriculture.

Conclusion

Agricultural development the world over is evolving and changing for the better in many aspects of mechanized farming, improved seedlings to strategic marketing of farm output widely propagated by the media. Indigenous language programs in the media will bring about the democratic and grassroots participation most especially amongst farmers in development process as it offers the greatest access to the vast majority of our people, unprivileged and marginalized. The media helps in promoting cultural identity. Communication can help to design projects that take into account the perception and capacities of the intended beneficiaries, thereby gaining their participation; it shifts emphasis from 'Top-down' approaches to Bottom-up approaches, it brings about participation of (rural) people in situation analysis, development planning, management and decision-making.

Secondly, development communication can help to mobilize people for development action and promote better co-ordination and linkages. It can spread knowledge of mutually decided proposals, it can spread knowledge of successful development experience, it can ensure that people are informationally linked to each other, and to sources of learning and education, and to sources of planning and decision-making. It can organize and manage system to promote exchange of information horizontally and vertically.

Lastly, communication can be vitally useful in improving the reach and impact of training and extension in rural areas, whether in training of extension agents and other development agents in the field, or in the passing of information to rural people. Harold, (1984) said that development communication is consistent with values central to development including personal or social transformation, purposefulness, participation, responsibility, education (content wise and presentation wise), practicality etc.

"The development media is said to be social transformation and development. The fulfillment of basic needs, such that the individual becomes an active partner and not a mere object of communication, the variety of messages exchanged increased the extent and quality of sole representation or participation in communication is augmented" (De Beer, 2002 p. 46).

Recommendation

The mass media in Nigeria should improve the quality of its program content to include more agricultural developmental programs as well as other developmental programs in their schedule. They should adopt ways of involving the audience in agricultural programs that are of concern to them to enable them participate and to improve yield.

Based on the foregoing findings, conclusions and implication of the study, the media have a great task of encouraging farmers in the areas of commercial agriculture, away from the old forms of farming. This is based on the assumption that the effectiveness of a development program lies in its audience's access to information and participation.

The researcher therefore, recommends that audience (farmers) should be given enough encouragement, avenue to participate and allowed to give feedback to agricultural developmental programs disseminated by the media. The media should be more creative with regards to exploring modern forms of communication in developmental programs. In addition technological advancements has now afforded consumers to become the producers of their own content, hence the need for the media to enhance their activities towards developmental programs for nation building.

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