

1/1 2-22



**Mass
Media**
adult education

ISSUE NO. 47
SPRING 1978

RURAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND
RADIO BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA*

by

Andrew A. Moemeka**

This paper stresses the importance of Rural Community Education and its relevance to development. It then goes on to show why the face-to-face approach to this type of education has not been very efficient in Nigeria, and then suggests the use of the media of mass communication arguing in favour of Radio Broadcasting and suggesting the adoption of Local Radio Strategy.

*The paper has been adapted from the author's M.Sc. thesis on "Local Radio Broadcasting for Rural Community Education: A Proposal for action in Nigeria," Introduction and Chapter 1.

**The author is a lecturer (Mass Media) in the Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. At present, he is the acting Head of the Distance Teaching Department of the Centre.

He holds a B.A. (Hon.) degree in Mass Communication; a Certificate in Educational Broadcasting and an M.Sc. in Educational Studies. He has first-hand knowledge of the problems of broadcasting for rural population, having worked in the Nigerian Languages Section of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation for many years.

Among his other writings on the subject are:

"N.B.C. Nigerian Languages (Igbo) Broadcasts: Audience, Preference, Involvement and Benefits in Lagos" - a B.A. degree Essay;

and

"Mass Media in National Development: The use of Broadcasting for Rural Adult Education" - a paper presented at a UNESCO Conference on Mass Communication Research in West Africa, held in Lagos, Nigeria in 1975.

The problem of rural community education has been one that has been largely neglected in Nigeria. Whenever the concept is mentioned, it is often taken to mean education in the rural areas. And often, the impression is taken that this type of education is already being provided in the form of formal education for the young and some agricultural information and literacy teaching for the adults. But rural education is a wider concept than education in the rural areas. While the latter isolates the factor of education and treats it distinctively from other aspects of life in the rural areas, the former sees education as an inseparable part of the whole spectrum of activities in the rural area - a part which is the motive force that throws light on other activities, inspires action, and directs community and individual activities to successful ends. This is the type of education which enlivens existence and promotes self-actualization of the individual and consequently of the community.

For a long time in the country, the desire to promote this type of education has been felt by both educationists and mass communicators. Both professional bodies have passed resolutions calling for the coordination of all out-of-school educational activities, and for the use of a national broadcasting system for education; especially rural education. In support of such resolutions, the West African Regional Conference on Mass Communication Research held in Lagos in March, 1975 discussed the issue of rural education, using as a basis, a paper presented to it on the need to use radio for rural/adult education. The Conference endorsed the idea that radio is a powerful channel in the task of rural enlightenment in countries with transportation problems and scattered rural population.

It is not that there is no educational broadcasting in Nigeria. Schools broadcasting is one of the services provided by broadcasting organizations in the country. In addition, these broadcasting organizations spend a good part of their air-time on educational broadcasting. But these provisions tend to leave out 'in the cold' the majority of the people of the country - the rural dwellers and the illiterate.

This minimal effect of the existing radio programmes on the lives of the rural population in the Northern part of Nigeria became a matter of concern to the authorities of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

As a result, the University in 1971, created the Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services, dedicated mainly to enlightening the rural population. The Centre has a Mass Media Section, catering through radio broadcasting, for the educational interests of the rural communities. The radio programmes* carry useful information and guidance on such topics as Health, Culture, History, Sanitation, Small Scale business organization, Family Life, Child Care and Home Economics.

For many of these programmes, however, the people are merely passive listeners. There are three reasons for this. First, the base of broadcast is too far from the majority of them to offer sufficient motivation for active involvement. Secondly, there is very little interaction between the providing personnel and the receiving audiences. The third and perhaps most important of the reasons is the absence of guided listening. Rural communities are usually well-knit together. Individual actions, especially on issues requiring changes in established modes of behaviour are the exception and not the rule among them. Individual listening to programmes is therefore not likely to elicit enthusiastic reaction from the rural man. Reinforcement from his neighbour and/or his village head is needed to motivate him to action. This is why some sort of group listening, followed by discussion is necessary for the success of rural education through radio broadcasting.

The underlying thought in this paper is that if broadcasting could change its apathetic attitude towards the rural man and provide the necessary hardware and organizational structures and if education, health, agriculture and development authorities could cooperate to provide the content materials based on actual identification of the needs and purposes of the individuals, groups and communities who live in the rural areas, radio broadcasting would prove an effective medium for rural community education.

With the creation of states in the country, and with each state having its own radio station, the physical base of broadcast will soon be nearer to the people than before. State stations located in State Headquarters will, however, not be near enough to be accessible to many people, especially those living in the rural areas. The chances are therefore that the resources and benefits of these stations will be monopolized by the educated and the city dwellers. If this situation is to be avoided, and if the human and material resources of the rural areas are to be harnessed to processes of development which effectively involve and benefit the majority of the people, then some way has to be found through which relevant and life-improving education can get to the rural man, using the medium of radio which, presumably, reaches every corner of the country.

Rural Community Education for Development**

Rural Community Education entails all activities - social, economic, educational, political and cultural - which touch the lives of the rural population, and knowledge about which is very essential to existence*** and progress. This pervading conception of education arises out of the fact that -

All attempts to change attitude and behaviour involve the educative process, since, in order to change, people must first acquire fresh knowledge, insights and skills.²

Seen in this light, education becomes a prime motivator to action - a nourishing bloodstream that courses through all aspects of rural community development. This type of education is concerned with the creation of an informational climate in which awareness is at its height, aspirations are rationally raised, and willingness to work in order to 'progress' becomes the rule rather than the exception. When this type of education is community oriented, it acquires a base from which it can affect the whole array of social, economic, cultural, artistic and political climate of the community for the development of the community and of the nation. This encompassing view of education finds expression in Hickey's definition of community education as -

A process that concerns itself with everything that affects the well-being of all citizens within a given community (extending its role) from one of traditional concept of teaching children to one of identifying the needs, problems and wants of the community and then assisting in the development (or the identification) of facilities, programmes, staff and leadership³ towards the end of improving the entire community.

This all-pervading education**** has been non-existent in many of Nigeria's rural communities, and on a very low ebb in a few others. But as these communities hold the overwhelming proportion of the nation's population, reaching them with the right type of education is imperative, because no real development can take place without them.

The contention here is that if national economic development is to occur, there must be a social transformation of all the people of the nation, especially the rural population. For this social transformation to happen, however, human resources, available and potential, must be mobilized and difficult human problems must be solved. No nation can become strong if its economy remains substantially at the subsistence level. But economic modernization cannot take place unless the majority of the citizens of the nation are actively and articulately involved in the modernization process. They cannot, however, do this unless they are activated and well-informed, for no man's judgment can be better than the facts available to him. In order to increase the facts on which the rural man can base his judgment, he needs to be educated, for -

The keynote of democracy conceived of as implying each man's right to realize his own potential and to share in the building of his own future is Education - not only education that is accessible to all, but education whose aims and methods have been thought out afresh.⁴

In development education, the educator is more interested in attitude changes, gains in knowledge and skills, enhanced self-image and improved ability to solve problems individually or through group action. This human aspect of development is as important, if not more so, as the tangible economic aspects. If there is no change in people's attitude towards developing their situation, there can be no physical changes. If the change in attitude is merely that of 'wishing' without an accompanying desire to work for physical changes, there can be no economic progress. If modernizing changes are thrust down on the people, they are not likely to realize the full benefits; there will still be the need to educate them on how to make the fullest and best use of the ensuing changes. From whatever angle one looks at it, the human element of development and modernization cannot be neglected without adversely affecting the pace and quality of the over-all development efforts of the nation. In an obvious reference to this all-important human resources element of development, Paul Bertelsen of UNESCO said that -

Very many of the changes needed to enable growth to take place are of a qualitative nature, and important policy decisions are continually called for both at central and local levels; and if people shall not become mere objects of change they must understand what is going on around them, and as far as possible, participate in the decision-making.⁵

The important role of rural education as an essential factor in development is recognized by the government of the Federation, but concrete actions to implement this principle and to give rural education its rightful place as a force for change and for ameliorating individual and group social and economic problems are often lacking. In many cases, this is because development is seen too narrowly in terms of capital and technological inputs, and the crucial potential of the human element is ignored. Although it must be admitted that rural education alone cannot bring about development on a national scale, it is also true that well-balanced social and economic development cannot be achieved without constructive participation of the rural population. This is why the then Federal Nigeria Commissioner for Education, Chief A.Y. Eke, admitted before the 1972 conference of the Nigerian National Council on Adult Education in Kano that -

To build a nation properly we need to train and educate our youth in the right direction. (But) regardless of the magnitude and efficiency of our Formal Education System, the foundation of the new nation would not be well and truly laid unless the parents of our youths are themselves well-informed and appreciative of the blessings of true nationhood.

When it is remembered that more than 80% of the parents of Nigerian children and youths live in the rural areas of the country, then Eke's statement presents a strong case for a vigorous Rural Education programme.

Development comes from the interaction of a complex of inputs of which rural community education is an important element. By such education the rural man becomes an active agent in the improvement of his own and his community's conditions and future. Since development brings change, education has also to prepare the people to understand the inevitable changes taking place around them, and to participate in shaping these changes in suitable ways. Unless this is done, the rural population may fear or even resist development. It is therefore very necessary to enlighten them through the type of education which can develop their creative potentials and make it possible for them to understand and to participate in development. An enlightened citizenry is a great asset to a nation, for world experience has shown substantial correlation between informed mass participation and development.*****The contribution of an enlightened citizenry to development is by far greater than that of an illiterate, uninformed and/or ill-informed body of citizens.

Existing Rural Educational Programmes

As has been noted above, all the governments of the Federation have recognized the need for educating the rural population in order to ensure a well-balanced national development. Each state government has a department of Adult Education and Community Development in the Ministry of Education or of Local Government. Each also has an Extension Services department usually in the Ministry of Agriculture. As was also mentioned above, the present efforts have not been carried out with the concerted determination necessary to ensure widespread improvements or even to get to the very target audiences which most need the services provided by these departments. A very conspicuous problem facing the present efforts is the difficulty of reaching remote villages.

(a) Adult Education: Until quite recently, the conception which the average Nigerian government official had of adult education was a very limited one. To him, Adult Education was just another name for Literacy Classes. And because education was/is generally seen as a

passport to wage employment (which the acquisition of Literacy did not assure), Adult Education was regarded as a waste pipe. Hence very little provision was made for it. In the 1970--74 Development Plan, only 912 million Naira (₦730, million)*****was set aside for Adult Education out of a total educational allocation by all the States in the Federation of 173,621 million Naira (₦138,893 million).⁷ Until 1974, the Federal Government did not consider Adult Education important enough to merit a department under the Federal Service. Happily, it has now appointed an Assistant Adviser on Adult Education, and it is hoped that with this appointment, sufficient attention will be paid to Adult Education matters at the centre.

The present efforts of the State governments in this regard have been merely to organize literacy classes in villages. But such classes are generally handled by teachers of children who have no experience in the teaching of adults. They therefore tend to use the same methods for the adults as they use for children. In addition, the environment under which these classes are held is not usually conducive to adult comfort. When you add the fact that a very low priority is accorded these classes both by the government and by society, it becomes easy to see why the classes do not endure. There are, of course, very few villages where literacy classes do operate at all. One of the reasons for this is that mere literacy, though good, is not very relevant to the daily life of the rural man. If a farmer must, after a hard day's work, forego relaxation in order to attend classes, then the content of study must be such as to affect, for good, his daily life, otherwise he will drop out. And indeed, dropping out has been the case in the few places in the country where literacy classes have been organized. The drop-out rate is so high that it has created a vicious circle. The less attendants there are, the less the government is prepared to vote money. And the less money there is, the poorer will be the provision and standard of teaching, which in turn, lead to more distaste for literacy classes on the part of the rural population.

It is only the universities which have given Adult Education the wider dimension which it deserves. They have rightly seen Adult Education as all activities of an educational nature carried on outside the normal school system. But because of financial and staffing problems, each university has tended (with the possible exception of Ahmadu Bello University) to specialize in certain aspects of Adult Education. Thus Ibadan has concentrated on the training of personnel for adult education work; Ife on extending agricultural improvement methods to rural farmers; Lagos on Continuing Education; and Nsukka on both Continuing Education and Community Development. Ahmadu Bello University has all these aspects in its activities. The combined activities of these universities put together present a wholesome view of Adult Education. And the success they have achieved so far is very commendable. But like the Ministries' activities, the

universities' have also been hampered by the problems of widely scattered communities, and lack of efficient communication system to get to the rural areas. The frustrating nature of the situation has been lamented by the former Director of the Continuing Education Centre of Lagos University, Professor Tugbàyele:

In most of the existing Adult Education programmes, most of those reached are the interested--managers teachers, supervisors, civil servants and the professionals. It is like 'preaching to the converted.' The masses of our people may be regarded as the 'forgotten people.'⁸

This picture is not restricted to purely educational activities, but also extends to educative activities of Social Welfare Services. The welfare divisions of our Ministries concentrate their activities in and around urban areas. Welfare Officers seem to believe that social problems are found only in cities, and that where they do arise at all in villages, there are long-standing traditional methods for dealing with them. This, however, is not completely true, for the social wind from our cities has since been blowing into our villages, leading to family disintegration, alienation, and conflict between the young and the old. Again, the size of the country and the scattered nature of our villages, financial scarcity and lack of transportation and communication facilities, have mostly been blamed for the inability of the Welfare Division to extend its services to the rural areas.

Health Services, unlike Welfare, are fairly widespread in the country. The building of Health Centres in some villages and the presence of dispensers and community nurses in many divisional and district headquarters, have made it possible for a good number of rural villages to reap the benefits of modern medicine. However, many people in the rural areas still have to travel for as long as thirty miles to get to the nearest clinic. And because of this, self-medication is prevalent. The danger of this to health is seen in the problem of resistance to drugs which it causes. The opposite problem to this is the unwillingness of many rural people to take advantage of modern medicine. And as health is one of the areas in which tradition dies hard, there is a very strong need for concerted and sustained educational effort to make the rural population realize the advantages of modern treatment and medication. To do this on a nation-wide scale requires more than the face-to-face approach to education.

(b) Community Development: It may seem superfluous to have such a sub-title in a paper wholly devoted to community development. However, the reason is because in Nigeria there are certain activities specifically designated Community Development. In the country, whenever the term is used or discussed, people tend to concentrate exclusively on the communal self-help efforts made by village or similar small

communities to construct roads, build health centres, town halls and schools, and sink wells. This is the context in which this subtitle is being discussed.

Community Development is undertaken on the basis of aided self-help. This does not mean that the government, by itself, does not construct roads or build schools and health centres in some villages. But such lucky villages are very few and far. The bulk of the others have to fend for themselves by starting a project with the hope that the government will come to their aid to complete it. In other cases, villagers contribute money towards a project, inform the government of how much they have been able to raise, hoping that it will make up the balance and carry out the project on behalf of the village. Again, such villages with strong community spirit to start on improving the conditions of living in their areas are not many. The others just 'sit and wait.'

Activities in the sector of community development will take the form of self-help projects by various communities under the aegis of their local authorities with the state governments providing technical and financial assistance whenever such projects are initiated.....

This restatement by the Federal Government was also a timely warning to individuals who are unwilling to make sacrifices for their community. For even within communities that carry out development projects, there are many people who give money and spend time grudgingly, or who are openly against the idea of contributing towards improving their area. Generally, the impetus for improvement actions comes from a determined minority within the community, who may have been activated by their sons and daughters working in the cities. Many of these wage-earning children also contribute money towards village improvement projects.

Taking the country as a whole, the self-improving activities of these few villages pale into insignificance. And the government knows this, hence the often heard statement that is directed to rural communities: "the government cannot be expected to do everything for every community; communities must make efforts to help themselves." But this statement cannot be expected to motivate people to action. There has to be more contact with the people, more information, better rapport and more education. Those communities which are idle have to be awakened to their responsibilities; the opponents of self-help efforts have to be won over; and villages now helping themselves have to be encouraged. When one thinks of the large area concerned, and the magnitude of the responsibility, the problems of personnel scarcity, and transportation and communication difficulties mentioned earlier loom even larger. These difficulties make it impossible for the department of Community Development in the

Ministries to extend its presence and activities as far afield as it ought to. And yet the development of our rural communities remains a significant factor in the struggle for national development.

(c) Extension Services: Agriculture is the area in which extension services are pronounced in Nigeria. The services include teaching better farming methods, and providing farming equipment and fertilizers for better and more production. Each State Ministry of Agriculture has a department of Extension Services which, generally, is regarded as an important arm of the Ministry. A substantial amount (relatively, that is) is voted every year for these services, and there are Agricultural Extension Officers not only in the headquarters, but also on provincial and divisional levels. Some states do have officers also on the district level.

The activities of these Extension Officers are fairly well-known all over the country. This, however, does not mean that they have been extensively effective. Their message of adopting modern farming techniques has been received in some areas where there has not been very strong traditional farming methods, and by civil servant absentee-farmers, who own large areas of land worked by wage labour.

The bulk of the peasant farmers have remained largely unaffected. There are three main reasons for this:

(i) Even though the department has staff on provincial and divisional levels and sometimes on district level, the number of staff on each level is usually too small for the large number of farmers to attend to. The situation where a junior extension officer in an area with about 1,000 farmer families is expected to be efficient and effective is an impossible one. Usually poorly paid and without transport to go round the area which, in any case, may have only very few passable roads, he invariably settles for those farmers near enough to his station.

(ii) Insufficient staffing has also affected the efficiency of extension services. Because there are not enough staff, little or no background study is conducted before farmers are 'confronted' with the message of new methods, and high yielding crops. Because there is not sufficient time to spare, the overworked extension officer adopts an approach whereby he tries to transcend tradition and routine by handing out new and untried ideas from the outside. The opposite approach of subjecting the existing tradition, routine and practices to test and reason--an approach which Paulo Freire has described as "avoiding the traditionalism of the status quo without falling into technological messianism" becomes hard to follow. And yet true agricultural development requires that new structures and practices emerge from the old ones, based on carefully worked out methods, generated by critical examination of both old and new techniques.

(iii) Finally, the Extension approach to agricultural development is based on the implicit conviction that agricultural extension services can, by themselves, help transform a subsistence economy into a market economy, and at the same time improve the quality of family and community life. This conviction is based on the assumption that the increased income that would inevitably result from improved farming will be used to improve both personal and community life. This may be true if the new methods are adopted; if facilities for evacuation and sale of produce are provided; and if market prices are good enough to create the incentive to increase production. But the first action should be to ensure that the peasants are willing to change and actually do change their old 'unsatisfactory' methods for new 'improved' ones. This is because -

The complex process of rural transformation must begin with changes in the rural people themselves-- in their attitudes toward change, in their aspirations for improvement, and above all, in their perceptions of themselves and of their own inherent power, individually and collectively, to better their condition. The chief motive power for rural development must come from within, though once the people are ready to move, outside help of various kinds in response to their expressed needs may be essential to sustain progress. 10

Unless people are prepared to change, they will not. And in order to induce change in them, they have to be made aware of the difficulties placed on their way to progress by old practices, routine and methods. This means that agricultural modernization has to be preceded by change in attitudes brought about by critical examination of the status quo in relation to the new situation. For the extension services department, this entails more work, more appropriately qualified staff, more contact with peasant farmers, more presence to sustain interest, and the necessity for extension workers to enter into the cultural universe of the peasants. But when one considers, as has already been noted, the problems of shortage of trained manpower, poor transportation and communication links, and the vastness of the area inhabited by the nation's rural farmers, the picture presented is one of an essential task which is almost impossible to handle effectively.

One fact that has consistently come up in the discussion so far is this: that the existing face-to-face approach to raising the standard of life of the country's rural population, and increasing their contribution to national development has not been very effective. It has left the target audiences barely touched because of shortage of qualified staff, the dispersal nature of the rural communities, lack of transport facilities, and poor communication. To continue to depend on this approach therefore would amount to postponing indefinitely the problems of rural community development and the involvement of the rural population in national development. But we cannot afford to ignore this rural population

which constitutes the larger part of the nation's human resources. Therefore there is urgent need to work out a new approach for raising their awareness and involving them in the nation's social, cultural, economic and political endeavours. The need for this new approach has been succinctly put by Schramm when he said of the developing countries that -

They require the active and informed cooperation of their village people as well as their city people. Their human resources are indispensable. Therefore they are going to have to speed the flow of information, offer education where it has never been offered before, teach literacy and technical skills very widely. This is the only way they can arouse and prepare their populace to climb the economic mountains. And the only way they can do it and keep the time table they have in mind is to make full use of modern communication.¹¹

The Alternative

For want of a better heading, this section is sub-titled "The Alternative." Actually, it is not intended to argue that the face-to-face approach to taking education to the rural areas is, in itself, bad and therefore should be abandoned. Rather it is to say that, in spite of its personal contact advantages, it has been made largely ineffective by the many difficulties that militate against its success. This being so, what is required is something to supplement it - something that can offset its difficulties without losing its advantages. The argument here is that the mass media can do that. If mobilization for development is to reach every corner of the country with its widely scattered, low-density rural population comprising mainly illiterates, the media of mass communication must be utilized. This mobilization starts with information, that is, provision of facts to 'open the eyes' of the people. As Schramm has noted -

The populace must have information about national development; their attention must be focused on the need for change, the opportunities inviting change, the methods and means of change; and, if possible, their aspirations for themselves and their country must be raised.¹²

The mass media has the potential to disseminate this information. The media, especially radio, not only reach people on a large scale and reach areas otherwise inaccessible, but also they can serve as a direct instrument of education. In the service of community development, they are agents of social change because they help in the community's transition to new customs and practices, which in turn leads to changes in attitudes, beliefs, skills and social norms, without which there can be no substantial community development. The

mass media can create new perspectives which clear the ground for improved new skills and better education. This is enlisting the human factor which is indispensable for economic development. The feeling or realization among the citizenry of being part of a developing economy is a very valuable incentive to a country's social and economic progress. The media can educate the people; it can accelerate the social transformation required for socio-economic development; and therefore it can spread and smoothen the arduous task of mobilizing human resources behind the nation's development efforts.

Development has often been described as the degree to which a society has control over its environment--social, economic, cultural and political. In the developed world, considerable amount of control has been achieved over the environment but yet, the resources of the mass media are still being used to increase and consolidate the gains already made. In the developing countries, some progress is being made. In these efforts, communication plays a key role, since people have to be made aware of problems before they can ever think of solving them; made aware of facilities before they can come to want to use them. To generate this awareness on a national scale in a country like Nigeria with a population of over sixty million and a land area of over 356,000 square miles, the media of mass communication are a key necessity. The knowledge--the information--necessary to stimulate action towards change is disseminated quickest and widest through the media. The media, therefore, can be, if properly directed, an agent of development--an agent of change. This is what development communication is about. It attempts to bring about favourable attitudes towards change and to lead the individual towards a change of behaviour and to participate in the new situation. This is Education, and it could be about vocation, politics, health, culture or agriculture, to mention only a few.

The media approach to rural community education has been tried in some countries in Africa.¹³ The results of these attempts show that the difficulties of the traditional face-to-face approach are not completely insurmountable. Ghana's rural broadcasting with its Radio Rural Forum; Tanzania's Civic Education through Radio Study Group; and Ivory Coast's INADES (African Institute for Social and Economic Development), as well as Colombia's Accion Cultural Popular, among others, have all shown that the mass media can, to a large extent, offset many of the disadvantages of the face-to-face approach, while at the same time making the best use of its advantages.

The media approach has enabled literacy barriers to be crossed, and distance to be eliminated; it has made the services of the few experts available to everyone, for through the media, one teacher can 'teach a whole nation.' In addition, the media approach has helped to remove the problem of 'dragging' people out of their homes and/or familiar surroundings to attend classes. Furthermore, the use of the media has

greatly helped to reduce the occurrence of one of the pitfalls in out-of-school education--the inability of many experts to operate successfully at the project level.*****

The problem that arises when a decision to use the media in rural community education has been made is the choice of the 'right' medium or media. On this depends whether or not the target audience is, in the first instance, reached. On it too, depends, to a large extent, whether the individuals concerned will make the initial effort of granting their attention. If a medium, the ownership of which is restricted to the urban areas is used, the target rural audiences will be missed out. If a medium the target audience cannot utilize is used, the whole effort will be wasted. By right medium, therefore, is meant that which is not just physically available to the people, but also which is capable of being used by them. These factors of availability and usability are very basic to the use of the media in rural education. The three most popular media--radio, television and print--are available in different degrees in Nigeria, and are used by different socio-economic groups in varying degrees.

(a) Television: Nigeria has six television stations, one owned by the Federal Government and the others separately owned by five State governments. Recently, however, the Federal Government took over all the existing stations which have now gone colour.***** Viewership of television programmes in the country is, in any case, restricted. Television set ownership is at present wholly concentrated in the urban areas, and totals only 53,000.¹⁴ This is an insignificant number for a population of over 60 million. It is too small a number to make the medium a profitable one for a nation-wide educational purpose. And when it is realized that there is hardly any television set in the rural communities, the use of the medium for rural community education becomes questionable.

Three States: Bendel, Kaduna and Kano, have tried to use the medium for rural education, by providing sets and power plants, installed in public viewing centres, in villages. The attempt faced three problems. There was the problem of getting well-trained operators to ensure that the sets were not badly handled; there was the problem of maintenance of the sets to ensure continued service; and there was the larger problems of finding the money to provide enough sets to go round all the villages. In Bendel, about one-tenth of the villages got public sets. But many of these sets have since gone out of order and have remained so for about two years now. Kaduna--four million in population--has been able to provide only seventeen sets to viewing centres. And Kano with a population of six million about 80% of whom live in the rural areas, has only nine viewing centres.

In these attempts, finance has been the chief limiting factor, followed by scarcity of trained personnel. A television receiver

costs roughly ten times as much as a good powerful radio receiver. Its maintenance is higher and more complicated. Furthermore, television transmitters, studios and production cost more. To make a good television programme takes more personnel and more skilled training and costs as much as ten times a comparable radio programme. All these go to show that the television, in spite of its advantages of audio and visual characteristics, and its ability to involve the "total" person, cannot be a feasible and an economical medium for rural community education at this stage of Nigeria's economic development. Until the standard of life in the rural areas has increased, electricity supply has got to them, and a good number of the rural people are in a position to buy their own television sets, the use of the medium for rural community education will not assure the wide applicability which mass education demands.

(b) Print Media: Printed materials have an enduring characteristic which neither radio nor television has. But in the field of rural community education, the print media are almost completely ruled out. But for the occasional use of pictorial posters and the use of literate interpreters their use would have been completely ruled out. Thus to start the campaign to educate the rural communities, the print media cannot but be sparingly used. Until the rural people are able to read and write and make use of these skills in effective communication, they cannot use the print media effectively. The use of interpreters cannot be heavily depended upon. In addition, the postal system in the country is such that the use of the print media is sure to encounter demoralizing delays. If the rural communities are not to be disheartened, the use of a medium or of media which would involve postal activities and transportation, both of which are very inefficient in the country, should not be encouraged.

(c) Radio: As we have seen, the television cannot, for economic reasons, be profitably used for rural community education in Nigeria at present. The print media, too, cannot be used on any extensive scale either, at least, not until the target audience is literate enough to be able to read and write intelligibly. We are therefore left with the radio, which is the only medium that, hopefully, reaches every corner of the country.

Radio is cheap; it is widely owned. A recent nation-wide set count puts the number of radio sets in the country at three million.¹⁵ This number does not include small transistors many of which are owned in the very remote areas of the country. It also does not include car radios. This is probably why World Radio and T.V. Handbook, 1975 puts the total number of radio sets in Nigeria at five million. Radio also beats distances and has an immediacy characteristic. Messages can get to the farthest parts of the country just as the event is happening; innovators can be guided all over the country just as they are trying out a new technique. Furthermore, radio beats literacy barriers. One does not need to know how to read and write before one

can listen to and learn from radio. Message content can easily be delivered in native languages. In addition, radio is individualistic and so has that personal touch that lends urgency to change. For associating a message with a known and/or respected individual, gives that message a very good chance of being accepted. On the other hand, radio is also a populist medium, thus enhancing the chances of getting educational messages across to a very wide segment of the rural population. More importantly, radio is the only medium of mass communication with which the rural communities are familiar. The appropriateness of radio for rural education has been underlined in many UNESCO reports including the one on India's Rural Radio Forum in which it was stated that -

In the developing countries, the greater part of the people live on the land, are frequently isolated by illiteracy and lack of transport. Effective communication with rural people and their active participation in the life of their country are essential for developing society. Radio broadcasting, when skillfully used, has proved to be the most effective medium of communication with these far-flung populations.¹⁶

This is not to say that radio is the simple solution to communication problems connected with the education of rural communities. In comparison with television and the print media, it has consistently proved the most feasible in poor and highly illiterate communities. But the problems which its use encounters should not be under-estimated. Radio has inherent disabilities, and its use in education faces certain difficulties. There is the technical problem of transmitter coverage and the quality of reception signals, which are two of the reasons why this thesis is recommending the establishment of local radio stations. There are also the planning problems of appropriate human and adequate financial resources, and production problems of quality and suitability of content materials. There is the difficulty of choosing the appropriate programme strategy to adopt. And there are the organizational problems of coordination between, and the do-it-alone approaches followed by, broadcasters, educators and institutional agencies responsible for education. Perhaps, one self-made limiting factor to the success of radio in education generally is the usual 'shot-in-the-dark' approach to programming which leaves the target audience 'forgotten' while programmes are being planned; 'remembered' just before the programmes go on the air; and 'forgotten' again as soon as the programmes have been broadcast. This problem raises the issues of feedback, interaction, and proximity of stations and producers to the consuming audience--issues which are basic to this thesis and to which the British Broadcasting Corporation's Local Radio System provides some answers.

Technical and Resources problems are basically financial. And it is a common knowledge in adult education circles that lack of

finance for rural education is world-wide. The late Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Dr. Rene Maheu, had occasion to lament that -

I was given money to advance science; I was given money to save the Abu Simbul temple in Egypt; but when I speak of illiteracy programme the industrialised nations are not interested. They prefer to change the subject.

This trend is very evident in Nigeria. Over the years, the total financial allocation to adult education has never exceeded six percent of the total education budget. And while State governments were struggling to beat one another in the establishment of television networks (a luxury enjoyed by only the elite) there was hardly any serious action to improve the existing radio networks (a service which the common man can enjoy and learn from) so that reception could be clearer and/or coverage widened, or to provide free or subsidized radio sets for the rural population.

It is noteworthy, however, that the Federal Government has now come out in a big way to improve the technical quality of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. With a vote of ₦24 million (£19 million)¹⁸ it will be possible for the corporation to install new and powerful transmitters to improve the quality of its radio signal. This is a commendable effort for it will ensure that radio informational and/or educational messages will be received all over the country largely free from technical distortions. But the result of this technical improvement will be minimal on the rural population unless more airtime is allotted for broadcasting to them; more opportunity is provided for their participation in programmes; and more relevant and meaningful programmes are produced. All these can hardly be effectively done from centralized radio stations.

At present, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation uses nine major Nigerian languages - Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Edo, Efik, Tiv, and Ijaw - in broadcasting to the rural population. Broadcast in each language totals two hours a week, that is, 18 hours for all. But the Corporation broadcasts for about 130 hours a week. This means that a total of 112 hours a week is being used for broadcasting in English, that is, to about 20% of the population, while only 18 hours is used for broadcasting to the remaining 80% who do not understand English and are mostly in the rural areas of the country.¹⁹ This is anything but commendable.

The overall amount of airtime allotted for broadcasting to the rural and illiterate population increases, however, if one adds the activities of the state stations of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, and those of the state-owned broadcasting corporations. These have specific programmes in Sanitation, Health, Agriculture, Self-help,

and Culture directed to the rural areas. The broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria, popularly known as Radio Television, Kaduna, does even more than that. It has a policy of broadcasting in Hausa language, which is the Lingua Franca in the North, almost every programme broadcast in English. In addition, it is responsible for transmitting Farming Improvement programmes of the Institute of Agricultural Research, and Public Enlightenment programmes of the Adult Education and General Extension Services Unit, both of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. These programmes specifically made to suit local rural communities are broadcast almost every day of the week.

In spite of the increase in airtime spent in broadcasting to the population, however, it is still far below that used for broadcasting in English. And when one realizes that those who benefit from English programmes, taking the country as a whole, are just one quarter of those who benefit from rural programmes, the disparity becomes very disturbing. Added to this is the fact that in most of these programmes, the rural target audiences are mere on-lookers, waiting for what the 'experts' have to say next. There is virtually no interaction between the producers and the consumers, and feedback, if any, is very minimal. The result is that many of the programmes, especially those thought up in broadcasting houses, have very little or no effect on the rural population because they are not based on the expressed and considered needs of the listening audiences.

Even though the authorities are aware that the present situation of educational programmes for the rural population is not encouraging, not much is being done to improve the situation. In spite of the fact that it is generally recognized that the country cannot really hope for national development and modernization without a serious attempt at educating the rural population who constitute about 80% of the nation's human resources, and whose education therefore is a crucial factor in national development, all serious development efforts are directed to the cities. This lop-sided approach to development has long cried for change. There is very urgent need to change; an urgent need to carry the rural areas along in the development race. In addition to the maintenance of a conducive political climate, the provision of necessary amenities and the ordering of a benefitting economic balance between the urban and the rural areas, there is also an urgent need to 'develop' the rural man himself through education--basic literacy, functional literacy, vocational training, civic and political awareness, better health practices, improved farming methods, and an articulate understanding of the environment and how it can be manipulated to advantage.

The assumption here is that radio is the best and quickest medium to take this education to the rural man. The question that follows from this assumption then is: how, using this medium and the resources available, can the best results be obtained? The answer to this question lies in identifying an appropriate programme strategy

to be adopted and ways and means of producing good quality and suitable/relevant programmes; finding a workable system of cooperation and coordination among agencies; and interaction between producers of programmes and their consuming audiences.

The only radio broadcasting strategy which appears to satisfy these conditions is Local Radio Broadcasting with its emphasis on local base, agencies' cooperation in and coordination of rural educational activities and rural audiences' participation in programme planning and execution. The strategy offers opportunities for producers to live among the people and so to understand local conditions and situations. It also ensures direct interaction between programme producers and their listening audiences. This is what examples of local radio broadcasting from Britain and Canada have shown.

FOOTNOTES

- 1
Moemeka, A. "Mass Media in National Development: Use of Broadcasting for Rural/Adult Education, West African Regional Conference on Mass Communication Research" Dept. of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Nigeria, 1975.
- 2
Lowe, J. The Education of Adults: a World Perspective, p. 23, UNESCO Press, Paris and OISE, Toronto, 1975.
- 3
Hickey, H. Curt Van Voorhees and Associated. The Role of the School in Community Education, p. 36, Pendel Publishing Co., Michigan, 1969. Quoted by C. LeTarte and J. Minzey in Community Education: From Program to Process, p. 17, Pendel Publishing Co., Michigan, 1973.
- 4
Faure, E. et al, Learning to Be: The World of Education, Today and Tomorrow, UNESCO, Paris, 1972.
- 5
Bertelsen, "Problems of Priorities in Adult Education," in C.G. Widstrand (ed) Development and Adult Education in Africa, Uppsala, 1965.
- 6
Eke, A. "A New Perspective on the Role of Adult Education in Nigeria over the Next Ten Years," in Adult Education in Nigeria: The Next Ten Years, p. 32, NNCAE Secretariat, Ibadan, 1972.
- 7
Tugbiyele, E.A., "The Need for a Good Philosophy of Education" in Adult Education in Nigeria: The Next Ten Years, p. 39, NNCAE Secretariat, Ibadan, 1972.

- 8
Tugbiyele, E.A. "The Role of Radio in Adult Education," in *New Nigeria*, p. 20, July 25, 1973.
- 9
Federal Government of Nigeria, 3rd National Development Plan 1975-80, p. 320, Cabinet Office, Lagos.
- 10
Coombs, P. and M. Ahmed, Attacking Rural Poverty: How Non-formal Education Can Help, p. 25.
- 11
Schramm, W., Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in the Developing Countries. Standard University Press, 1964.
- 12
Schramm, W., Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in Developing Countries, p. 125.
- 13
Dodds, T. Multi-Media Approach to Rural Education: Case Studies, International Extension College, Broadsheet on Distance Learning, No. 1, London 1972.
- 14
Commonwealth Secretariat, New Media in Education in the Commonwealth, p. 133, Marlborough House, London, 1974.
- 15
Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria, Unpublished Set Count, 1975.
- 16
UNESCO, Reports and Papers on Mass Communication No. 48, p. i (Preface), Paris, 1965.
- 17
Maheu, R., A Statement made in an address to journalists at a seminar in Paris, October, 1974.
- 18
Federal Republic of Nigeria, 3d National Development Plan, 1975-80, quoted in *N.B.C. New.*, p. 14, April/June 1975.
- 19
Moemeka, A., "N.B.C. Igbo Language Programmes: Audience, Preferences, Involvement and Benefits in Lagos." p. iv; Unpublished B.A. degree dissertation, University of Lagos, June 1972.

*The Extension, Research & Liaison Services of the University's Institute of Agricultural Research has long been engaged in the use of radio for Agricultural Extension education. A study of this activity was the topic of an M.S. thesis in the University's Faculty of Agriculture.

**The importance of education is discussed here almost in isolation, but not to underestimate the equally important factors of conducive political climate, mutually beneficial economic order between the urban and the rural areas, and the provision of enabling amenities.

***To 'exist' is more than to 'live' because it is more than being in the world. It is, in addition, to be with the world, that is, to be aware of what is happening and to be willing and capable of participating in order to affect the run of events, instead of merely waiting to be affected as happens when one merely 'lives.'

****Education as a result of constant exposure to information on various aspects of human endeavour. The cities and urban areas are surfeit with such educational information from the radio, the television and from the newspapers, and from the very fact of their proximity to centres of modernizing activities.

*****The rate of economic development in the world invariably follows the rate of public enlightenment. Those nations with high percentage of well-informed citizens are the developed nations. In countries with low-level of literacy and consumption of developmental information, potential economic resources are yet to be harnessed, and the economy is low.

*****Nigerian currency is denoted by two denominations - Naira (N) and Kobo (k). The exchange rate at the time of writing was N 1 = 80 pence sterling.

*****Subject experts are known to be generally unable to come down to the level of target audiences with low-level or no education. Under a face-to-face situation, they usually teach or lecture from notes jotted down, often confusing rather than informing their listeners. But if the media are used, the experts have to put down in writing everything they want to say. This ensures that the communication expert sees the script and brings its content down to the level of the target audience. It also ensures presentation in the form most suitable to the particular set of listeners concerned.

*****Four new stations were under construction by the time of the take-over.