

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION & MANAGEMENT

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A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

With the development of new communication technologies, the power of mass media has gained greater importance. The media is pivotal in defining what we think, how we look and our social place and issues in the society. Mass media has been significantly influencing the social, cultural, economic, spiritual, political and religious aspects of society as well as personal level thinking, feeling and acting. Media disseminates information and had created the need for revolution in contemporary society. Mass media plays both positive and negative role in the society. In this article an extensive review of literature has been carried on to analyse and to get a good understanding on the role of mass media in rural development. Literature review has been done from various books, journals, published papers etc. These studies have been reviewed and presented in the following manner. Literature review has been collected from both within India and outside India.

KEYWORDS

Communication, Media, Radio, Rural development, TV.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process of sharing meaning and experience between people (Okunna, 1999, p.72). It is an activity or process that entails mutual partaking or exchange of ideas, information, feelings, emotions and reactions (Unoh, 1991 cited in Okoro and Agbo, 2003). Communication is a critical factor for any momentous growth to take place in the society. This explains why Asemah and et al. (2013, p.18) had rightly brought out that information is pivotal to all forms of human activity no matter the field, be it medicine, agriculture, tourism or engineering. Radio, TV or any other forms of media is an necessary medium of communication for achieving development in the rural areas, as issues of development are taken to audience in the form of various programmes and individuals are exposed to happenings in and around their society, either through listening or watching to these programmes. Thus, this paper focuses on the reviews which have examined the role of media in various forms and led to the rural development.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following were the major efforts at research in the subject, which have been referred for the research purpose.

1. Abdulwahab Olanrewaju Issa (2000) emphasized on the usefulness of information and above all, the need for it to be adequately and widely disseminated to all segments of the society. He also discusses on the role of the popular mass-media of information dissemination such as the Radio, Television and Newspaper and has critically examined against the backdrop of the peculiarities that constitute the lots of the rural persons. With this he also brings out the specific role of librarianship as an information profession that could greatly complement those of the other mass-media in the task of proper and adequate dissemination of appropriately needed information to this undeniably indispensable but often neglected segment of our society. It is concluded in the paper that the combined efforts on the parts of these information professionals that the hope to rise above the challenges of information dissemination to these rural dwellers actually lies.
2. Arokoyo (2003) has conducted his study in Nigeria which revealed that although video, radio, and television are the major sources of information for the farmers of this country, in the case of establishing the foundations, it is also possible to use other developed equipment. In Nigeria, the print media have a specific situation in agriculture transferring as well. Television is acknowledged as the most important medium for communicating with the rural populations of developing countries (FAO, 2001).
3. Chinyere Stella Okunna (1992) discusses how communication has become widely accepted all over the developing world as an effective tool for rural development and tries to find out what communication media are used by rural women in Nigeria as sources of development information. He evaluates that this faith in the power of development communication often appears to be misplaced, as development fails to measure up to larger expectations even after huge resources have been invested in development communication. Many of the failures of development communication projects arise from the application of improper development paradigms and communication strategies which overemphasize the mass media as channels of communication in the development process.
4. Clever Maputseni (2006) brings out the importance of media in influencing the development. The research is based on a case study of the radio programme sponsored by an NGO, which is broadcast on national radio, to study the extent of its usefulness for the growth of marginalized farm communities in Zimbabwe. The research findings indicate that radio remains a popular medium with communities and development actors that still see it to be useful in spreading of development messages.
5. Kirk Johnson (2001) has analyzed the role of television in rural life, and the influence it has had on various social, economic and political processes that have been revolutionizing the India villages in recent years. Taking data from two villages in Maharashtra, he discusses the unique characteristics of television that make it an important agent of cultural change by analyzing various social processes that include consumerism, urban modelling, restructuring of human relationships, linguistic hegemony, migration and the emergence of an information underclass. He concluded with a discussion of social change at both the structural as well as psychological levels.
6. Laverack and Dap (2003) has discussed about the use of information by the rural elites of Vietnam. In order to access information, a great percentage of rural elites of Vietnam use single-page publications, posters and radio, and obtaining the necessary information through these media has been accompanied with a great success.
7. Leo O. N. Edegoh and et al. (2013) has discussed about the potential role of radio to inform, educate and entertain its audience, its capacity to break illiteracy barriers as well as its power to penetrate into the remote areas of the rural communities in Nigeria. They have found that a good number of rural women listen to radio and that programmes that interest them most are health related and agricultural programmes. The study recommends the utilisation of radio by government and its agencies for disseminating messages intended for rural people.
8. W.W Manoj Pushpa Kumara Jinadasa (2011), in his paper has brought out that traditional folk-media is a good wealth in effective communication. He also discusses about some key aspects such as the closeness to rural life, credibility, utilization of familiar signs and symbols, community participation, collective

- presentation, utilization of past experience, plot and the subjects from their own life and the minimum media literacy for folk-media which are related to the communication for rural community development in Srilanka. In this article he points out that communicating a message through entertainment was the practices of this model for which Folk songs, ritual performances, drumming and all other folk communication were used creatively. Finally he has analysed the effect or the influence of the communication using two methods as the live observation analysis and later impact analysis.
9. Mudasiru Olalere Yusuf and et al. emphasized in their study the perception of rural women on the impact of mass media on their social, economic, and political development. The data collected, using a researcher-developed interview guide from 144 rural women belonging to Kwara State, Nigeria, were analysed using percentages, means, and chi-square statistics. Findings revealed that the most of the women in the rural areas had access to the media and agreed that these were effective in their social, economic and political development. No significant difference was established between the literate and the illiterate and between farmers and traders who are rural women in their perception of the effect of mass media on their development.
 10. Muhammad Irfan and et al. (2006) in their study based out of Lahore district of Pakistan points out the role of mass media in the dissemination of agricultural technologies among farmers. Here the agricultural production is comparatively lower than that of many other countries of the world. Even within the country there is a big gap between average and potential yields of various agricultural crops which clearly indicates that the available technologies, if adopted by farmers according to the recommendations, can enhance agricultural production considerably. Therefore, there is a dire need to apply science and technology in the field of agriculture and to achieve this objective; the extension agencies are disseminating new technologies through different means including mass media. A random sampling technique was used for selecting sample with a total sample size of 120 respondents. A vast majority of the respondents did not listen / watch agricultural radio/TV broadcasts frequently or occasionally. With regard to effectiveness, the respondents ranked TV, radio and print media as 1st, 2nd and 3rd, respectively.
 11. Dr Nabi Bux Jumani (2009) discusses in his paper the role of information media with specific reference to rural development to bring about a change in the quality of the life of rural people in Pakistan. The utility of radio as a media of information transfer for assisting in rural development has been established worldwide and there are several ways in which the technology of communication media can be used to further the education. The important use of broadcast media is their contribution to the educational system; in both formal and non-formal education and also has brought out how effectively a radio could be used in rural development.
 12. Omolade Obukohwo Sanni (2013) examined the influence of broadcast economic programmes in rural communities in terms of economic knowledge, training and management using a survey method among Ijede community in Ikorodu local Government area, Lagos state and Ikereku community in Akinyele local government area, Oyo state, Nigeria. The study was based in development media theory, uses and gratification theory and agenda setting theory. The study finds that respondents get enlightened through information disseminated in the economic programmes aired by radio and television thereby improving their standard of living, economic standard and development in their communities and concludes that informative attributes of broadcast economic programmes improve their awareness in terms of economic knowledge, training and management.
 13. Osakue Stevenson Omoera (2010) examined the effectiveness of the broadcast media, specifically radio and television in creating and disseminating family planning information on matters of number and spacing of children in rural Nigeria, using Ebelle community in Igueben Local Government Area of Edo State as a study case using a survey questionnaire method. The study revealed that radio and television, through certain programmes, have helped in the dissemination of relevant information on family planning in rural settings just as they have purportedly done in urban centres in Nigeria. Hence, the paper recommended that the broadcast media should be massively deployed to disseminate significant messages on issues such as contraceptive alternatives, distended family size, female genital mutilation, "area boys" cultism in the streets, sexually transmitted infections, malnutrition, among others, that have the potentials of destroying family hood. Eventually, the redress of these challenges would redound to the cohesion and progress of the average rural family in Nigeria.
 14. Osunkunle, Oluyinka O aims to evaluate the role of community radios in bringing about development in the rural areas of Limpopo Province in South Africa by a case study method and analyse the contributions of "Radio Turf" station and some other radio stations by evaluating their programming and communication strategies towards ensuring development in their communities. To have a clear understanding of the activities and impact of Radio Turf, he has used theoretical analysis and focus groups interviews to tackle identified research problems and has also evaluated the station's programmes and its impact on the communities.
 15. Dr. D. Puthira Prathap and Dr. K. A. Ponnusamy (2006) in their study experimentally examines the effectiveness of mass media viz., radio, television, print and internet in influencing the symbolic adoption behaviour of rural women on rabbit farming technologies with a sample of 144 rural women belonging to self-help groups of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, India. Their results indicated that all the four mass media formats were effective enough in persuading the respondents to mentally adopt the technologies. It was also found that there existed significant differences in the effectiveness of the four channels in 'recommended breeds' and 'feeding' technologies and the radio-exposed group had differed significantly from the other three groups in terms of symbolic adoption and have identified radio as the most effective and better medium.
 16. Rao RL, Krishnamurthy B and Ganesamoorthi S. (2003) discusses on the impact of media on the position of women in society and their development. Communication in rural areas in a country like India is a necessary and vital process and paves way for modernization and social change. Studies have found that nearly 40 per cent of farm women either read newspaper or have them read by someone else. In an agricultural country like India, having differing development themes for rural women, the best approach for those who want to reach the rural women would be to use a blend of the print, broadcast and multimedia approach to gain the advantages.
 17. Saad Ullah Khan (2010), discusses on the role of community radio which has proved to be one of the best medium of communication at the grass-root level as it can easily cover a wider range of area as well as diversified audience in a vast country like India. Indian government is spending million of rupees in the name of rural development, but still it's not getting the desired results as one of the foremost reasons is the communication gap between government devised policies and common masses as people largely remain ignorant regarding them for which a firm communication policy will prove crucial. According to this policy, local community media should be promoted in order to enhance community development, at least at grass root level.
 18. Shweta Upadhyay and et al. (2011) in their study investigated media utilization, preferences and prospect for use in nutrition education service delivery in three villages of Uttarakhand State. A total of 223 women respondents in the age group of 18-45 years were selected using a random sampling technique and used Questionnaires/Interview schedules. Media possession data showed that the TV was most commonly possessed and used media whereas print media was found to be less popular compared to electronic media. They have also brought out that effectiveness for information dissemination was the major reasons for TV usage/ preference. The study also revealed that media preferences in descending order were: television, radio, poster, calendar, lecture, audiocassettes, booklets, charts and newspaper. Finally it was recommended that development agencies should take advantage of women's preferences to ensure best possible effect of various food and nutrition related extension programmes.
 19. Stephen Ocheni and Basil C. Nwankwo (2012) critically evaluates that news for reporters focus more on the negative things and give least attention to any good news about the rural communities in Nigeria which has resulted in the increase of rural poverty and has not effectively exposed the appalling conditions under which the rural dwellers live in. The study finally concluded by observing that the trend should be reversed immediately and that the news reporters in Nigeria should show more devotion in the coverage of events in the rural areas so as to make the government know and understand the plights of the rural dwellers for effective public policy-making to reduce the present level of rural poverty and reverse the current rise in rural-urban migration in the country.
 20. Vandana Kumari (2011) conducted her study in the Mirzapur village with a sample of 60 respondents. Her study was based on a household survey using a schedule and personal interview and adopted purposive sampling method to find the "Impact of television programmes on rural women". Thus from the study it was concluded that rural women are an important part of our country. Because of their busy schedule they have no time to watch television and therefore it does not impact on the life of rural masses especially the women.

CONCLUSION

With the pervasiveness of mass media, human beings do not live in information vacuum; rather, they are part of the complex communicational network which influences their views and interactions with the world (Serban, 2004). With this it is clear that mass media plays a pivotal role in rural development. Although there is enough research literature on the role of mass media on rural development, most of the studies have been done to study the role of information dissemination which has created both a positive and a negative impact on the society. The present study makes an attempt to investigate the upper-handed role of mass media on rural development.

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