



## ASSESSMENT OF “NSONGIDEM” PROGRAMME ON ATLANTIC FM AND ITS IMPLICATION ON REAWAKENING THE HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS OF RESIDENTS IN UYO

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### ABSTRACT

The study which was Assessment of “Nsongidem” programme on Atlantic FM and Its implication on reawakening the health consciousness of Residents in Uyo, seeks to determine the importance of radio to rural dwellers in Uyo as well as examine the effect of this programme on the people. The study which was anchored on the powerful effect model and the agenda setting theory seek to address the role of the media in creating health awareness among the rural communities. In achieving this, the researchers employed the survey design. The population for this study according to Uyo Local Government Council consist of 53,600. Using the Philip Meyer’s standard of sample size selection, a sample size of 381 was chosen for the study. The sampling techniques employed in this study were the cluster sampling technique and the simple random. The study employed questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. From the study it was revealed that consistency to listenership was low even though the programme was considered to be very useful. It was also revealed that the audience perceived radio as a great tool in educating, informing and entertaining the people. The researchers therefore recommend that radio as a broadcasting media should be engaged by both government and non-governmental bodies when dealing with the rural communities.

**Keywords:** Programme, Development, Radio, Health Awakening, Rural.

## Introduction

Since the launch of radio during the world war season, radio broadcasting has made far more impressive progress than other medium of communication towards development at the grass root (Nwankwo & Onyeawuna, 2020). In Africa, despite radio's esteemed values in international communication area, development has been accomplished not by television or newspaper but majorly by radio- Alhassan and Shehu (2018). Radio as explained by Nwankwo and Onyeawuna, (2020) is equally christened as the most effective medium to reach the community people who predominately are illiterate. Nwankwo and Onyeawuna (2020, p.33) say that "throughout Africa, radio is recognized as the least expensive and most effective way of reaching people, particularly the illiterate tribalised-Africans living in the bush." Oketunmbi (2013) outlines that the advantages of radio in the African milieu are perhaps obvious. Radio's cautious attitude towards outsmarting time, distance and cost to stand out as the most needed by listeners cannot to be undermined.

Consequently, Asemah (2012, p. 204) decodes that of all the existing modern means of mass communication, radio has the highest potential for effectiveness in the developing countries. Without doubt, it has the greatest reach having penetrated all the nooks and crannies of these countries. This therefore gives rise to the need to understand the impact of radio health programmes on rural dwellers within Uyo local government area. Among the numerous radio programmes on Atlantic 104.5 FM, the "*Nsongidem*" programme was chosen purposively by the researchers for this study.

Unquestionably, the "*Nsongidem*" health programme broadcast on Atlantic 104.5 FM Uyo is one of the ways for which radio bridges the gap in rural health communication. The programme serves as a platform for creating health awareness. The programme has created a life changing opportunity for the people concerning health issues. Although it is a mixture of English and the local indigenous language, this programme has not only provided the people information on some health tips, it also inform the people of government created opportunities for which they can take advantage of. Furthermore, the programme gives rise to addressing several myths observed by the people and how to tackle such mater. For instance, the tuberculosis sensitization programme was done using the *Nsongidem* platform. Currently, it has been observed that most non-governmental platform make use of this particular programme to advice and create awareness on some sickness and its preventive measures It is against this backdrop, that this study seeks to assess the *Nsongidem*" programme in Atlantic FM and its implication on raising the consciousness on health in Uyo.

## Statement of the problem

Over the years, development in the country, even in the state has virtually been urban centered. This development which has been revolutionary in the cities has posed a lot of problem in the rural areas. Houses, good roads, water, good health facilities, electricity and other social amenities have been regarded as an exclusive need for the urban dwellers. As a result of this the urban regions continue to thrive while the rural dwellers dwindle more and more. The negligence of the rural areas seems to have exposed them to a lot of health hazards that is even detrimental to their development. If this communication gap continue to exist between the urban and rural dwellers then issues patterning health will continue to be a problem because they lack the necessary information to awaken their conscious on health related matters. As a result of this existing gap in communication between the urban and rural dwellers the need to create a programme such as *Nsongidem* by the State broadcasting station (radio) to take care of the needs of the rural dwellers was born. But the question is, has this

programme (Nsongidem) really awakens the consciousness of the rural dwellers as regard health related matters?

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the level of listenership to Atlantic FM Radio?
2. What is the awareness level of resident to “Nsongidem” programme?
3. What is the perception of residents on the quality and relevance of the programme?
4. What is the effect of the programme on awakening the health consciousness among the people?

### **Literature review**

#### **Radio and Health Communication**

Communication is a veritable instrument of contemporary health management. Schiavo (2007) has argued that “the first strategic awareness is disease awareness”, which is usually achieved through communicating relevant aspects of health problems with the target population from the challenges of polio immunization in South East Nigeria, it is therefore germane to look at health campaigns on polio immunization. It makes it possible to educate relevant publics, about serious health issues.

Although Health Communication Campaign entails the use of communicative strategies to inform and influence individual, decision to accept such programme or initiatives is dependent on individual or community at large. According to Pubmed (2006) a health communication campaign is the act and technique to informing, influencing and motivating individuals, institutions and public audiences about important health issues through strategic and targeted communication efforts.

### **Empirical review**

In a study by Alhassan and Shehu (2018) on “Community Radio in Promoting Agriculture in the town of Shika, Findings from this study revealed that radio has immensely contributed to agricultural development of Shika community especially in the area of application of modern farming methods leading to reduction in farming expenditure and increase in productivity. The study suggests the use of similar programmes in other local languages to promote grass root development. Also, Agric Panorama should involve opinion/traditional leaders at grass root level to build confidence on the part of the farmers.

Another study by Wali (2018) investigates broadcast media and rural mobilization and its influence on Ebola awareness campaign in Nigeria. The study which adopted a phenomenological ontology and focus group and single one to-one interview approaches to collect data from residents in a single local government in South region of Nigeria showed that four key themes: Language usage; the misconception of message content; expertise of Journalist and science journalism; and rural media participation influence participants’ experiences of broadcast media awareness campaign on Ebola disease in rural communities. But, language and rural media participation strategies were mostly employed by broadcast media professional for Ebola campaign awareness.

Huizies (2007) on community radio and development it was revealed that community radio remains a crucial component of the global media environment. It contributes immensely to the social and economic development of the entire society and provides alternative media for listeners, active community participation and is now becoming the largest talent feeder to both the public and

commercial broadcasters. With the increasing concentration of the ownership of mass media, the role of community radio becomes important in the defence of unprejudiced access to information and the “strengthening of a people driven participatory democracy.

In another study conducted by Hiremanth on the use of electronic media among rural students in (2014), in his findings, he records that 35.75% of respondents affirmed that, they used their cell phone audio storage capability of the device to record lectures. And 60.60% of the respondents said that they used cell to access the mobile radio to be able to get information on what is going on in the world. Only 29.69% of the total respondents have computer knowledge and 29.09% of them have joined computer basic class. Whereas, FM band radio is accessed by less of 10.30% of the respondents. An important agent of rural development services, majority of 61.21% of the respondents opined that electronic media (72.72% said TV) has found wide inroads into their rural life-styles and is the most potential condition for rural development in modern days.

This empirical research clearly states that at present day situation the respondents- the youths are active and vibrant participators in using electronic media for development. On the basis of the above facts, thus, these electronic media are ubiquitous. They have become a phenomenon and the adolescents find it to be a necessity in one’s life. This type of youth mentality can lead to positive as well as negative effects on their culture.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is framed on the powerful effect model and the agenda setting theory. The powerful-effect Model developed by Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann in 1973 is the model guiding this study and it is hinged on the perception that the mass media has a significant effect on a large number of people. This model can therefore be used to spur people in the state to embrace the various health schemes being implemented by the state government and non-governmental bodies in order to achieve its goal of educating and enlightening the people on health matters. Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann (1973) was the first to present this model (Anaeto et al, 2008).

The Powerful-Effect Model is given utmost priority in this study because it clearly elucidates how radio as a mass media medium via specially designed programme can enhance the development of health programmes and schemes. The radio programming works to overcome indifference of the targeted audience towards health related issues. It also projects relevant themes to stress its message of embracing quality living conditions and healthy lifestyle.

### **Agenda Setting Theory**

Agenda Setting Theory of the press as posited by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw between 1972/1973 also serves as a framework for this study. The proponents of this theory are of the opinion that the press ascribed to any given issue tend to be proportionate to any amount given to the same issue in the media. It is assumed that the media set their agenda for general discussion. The media may not always determine what we think, but what we think about. Although, the general public has a right to think what they want to think, but surprisingly they tend to think most of those things the media highlight as important.

Agenda setting theory comes from a specific perspective because it predicts that if people are exposed to the same media, they will place importance on the same issues. According to Chaff and Berger’s(1997) criteria cited by Anaeto et al(2008)for scientific theories, agenda setting theory is a good theory for the following reasons: It has explanatory power; it explains why most people prioritize the same issue as important. It has predictive power; it predicts that if people are exposed

to the same media, they will feel the same issues are important. It is parsimonious because it is not complex, and easy to understand, serving as spring board for further research.

## Methodology

The research design employed in this study was the survey. According to Population Stat (2020), a world statistical data platform, Uyo which serves as the state capital is made up of thirty-one villages. From the thirty one, ten villages were selected. The ten selected villages were picked based on their distance away from the main town. These villages can be said to be the rural part of the Uyo community. These communities according to Uyo Local Government Council made a total of 53,600 and this served as the population size for the study.

Using the Philip Meyer’s standard of sample size selection, a sample size of 381 was chosen for the study. The sampling technique employed in this study was the cluster sampling technique and the simple random. The cluster sampling technique enabled the researcher to properly divide the respondent into units based on their villages while the simple random technique was used for the selection of the individuals. The study employed questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. The questionnaire consisted of a closed-ended question which was analysed using the frequency distribution table.

## Data presentation and analysis

The data gathered for this study was analysed along with the application of descriptive and analysis. The researchers were able to retrieve 367 (96%) copies of questionnaire for the analysis while 14 (4%) were invalid. The data generated will be presented in a simple percentage table as illustrated below:

### Data Analysis of respondent response

S/N	Responses	Options	No of respondent	Percentage(%)
1.	<b>Audience listenership to Atlantic FM programme</b>	Often	186	50.68
		Very often	87	23.71
		Sometimes	45	12.26
		Never	49	13.35
		<b>Total</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100</b>
2.	<b>Audience awareness of “Nsongidem” programme</b>	Yes	258	70.30
		No	37	10.08
		Can’t say	72	19.62
		<b>Total</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100</b>
3.	<b>Audience perception of “Nsongidem” content quality</b>	Very useful	152	41.42
		Useful	123	33.51
		Not useful	68	18.53
		Can’t decide	24	6.54
		<b>Total</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100</b>
4.	<b>Level of listenership of</b>	Always	142	38.69

	<b>“Nsongidem” programme</b>	Sometimes	136	37.06
		Never	89	24.25
		<b>Total</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100</b>
5.	<b>Positive effect of “Nsongidem” programme on resident Uyo</b>	Agree	162	44.14
		Strongly Agree	113	30.80
		Disagree	81	22.07
		Strongly Disagree	11	2.99
		<b>Total</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** *Field survey, 2020*

The above study was an assessment of Atlantic FM radio programme Nsongidem on reawakening the health conscious among the ruralites in Uyo Local Government. A summary of the data analysis is given below.

The table above analyses respondents’ responses on the basic claims and assumptions of this study. 50.68% of the respondents listen to radio programmes. This implies that they have a fair knowledgeable and can provide necessary information on the subject of the study. On the other hand, majority of the audience agreed that radio as a broadcast media is very useful. What this connotes is that this medium has been greatly accepted by a large number of the rural community and can therefore serve as a tool for education, information and communication with rural dwellers.

In addition, where a total of 258 of the respondent declared they are aware of the Atlantic FM programme “Nsongidem”, a total of 74.93% considered the programme to be very useful. However, in response to audience listenership of the programme only 38.69% of the respondent showed a level of consistency in listenership. Despite this inconsistency in listenership a total of 74.94% of the respondent agreed the content of the programme has a positive effect on them.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Level of listenership to Atlantic FM**

In response to the audience listenership to Atlantic radio, it was discovered that a total of 74.39% of the respondents listen to this station. This agrees with Gagare (2017) in his study on the impact of radio broadcasting in achieving development in rural areas, which was of the opinion that the media role in rural development is greatly dependent on the audience exposure to such media. This is in line with the Agenda setting theory function of the media where the media creates programmes bearing specific objectives. The result of this is that the audience places certain importance on what correlates with their goals.

### **Awareness and listenership level of resident to “Nsongidem” programme**

Findings revealed that 70.30% of the respondents in Uyo are aware of the programme *Nsongidem* on Atlantic FM. However, it was discovered that in respond to consistency to listening only 142 (38.69%) of the respondent said they listen to it often. This study goes in line with that of Akpabio (2000) whose findings acknowledges that electronic media plays a positive and relevant role in audience engagement. However it contradicts Anaeto (2007) who opined that media comes from a

specific perspective because it predicts that if people are exposed to the same media, they will place importance on the same issues.

### **Audience perception of “Nsongidem” content quality**

The effect of media on rural dwellers cannot be overemphasised. In the words of Punbed (2006) radio is quintessentially meant for rural audience. Considering the powerful-effect model is that elucidates how radio as a mass media medium via specially designed programme can enhance the development of health programmes and schemes, this study from the research result it was discovered about 152(41.42%) and 123(33.51%) of the respondent consider the Nsongidem programme content to be very useful and useful to them. This therefore indicates that this program to an extent has addressed the needs of the people.

### **Effect of the programme on health reawakening among the people of Uyo**

In accordance to the research data, the program Nsongidem was considered to hold a positive effect on the respondent. What this connotes is that the people of the Uyo community are pleased with the contents of the Nsongidem programme. Hence the media which has a powerful effect through its programme in turn has greatly affected their life. This is in agreement to Akinfenwa (2018) who stated that radio programming enlightens and helps in the creation of a common ground for individual engagement.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Based on the research carried out in this study, radio programming has proven to be an authentic tool in rural development and health schemes promotion in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The study which was an assessment of “Nsongidem” programme on Atlantic FM and its implication on health awakening in Uyo, seek to determine the importance of radio to rural dwellers in Uyo as well as examine the effect of this programme on the people. From the research it was discovered that consistency to listenership was low even though the programme was considered to be very useful. To this end, the study recommends the following:

1. Radio stations should regularly create innovative ways to keep the audience engaged to their programmes
2. Programmes should be made to include both English and local dialect to captivate the rural dwellers
3. The government and non-governmental bodies should engage the use of the radio medium for broadcasting health schemes

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