

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE TRADITIONAL  
COMMUNICATION METHODS AND MODERN MASS MEDIA  
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES:**

**(A Case Study of Elebele Community)**

By

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## **Dedication**

This research report is dedicated to God Almighty and my dear parents Mr. and Mrs. Dumayam Barayekere for being faithful and supportive throughout my stay in school.

## **Acknowledgement**

I wish to appreciate God Almighty for the grace to successfully complete this work. My appreciation and gratitude also extends to my dear parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dumayam Barayakere for their prayers and support.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study was aimed at examining the traditional communication methods and modern mass media in rural communities, with case study of Elebele Community in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. As a result of the emergence of development and urbanization, there became in existence, alongside each other two systems of communication – the traditional mode of communication which has been in existence since time immemorial and the modern medium of mass communication. Therefore, based on the above situation in hand, it became necessary to find out the roles the modern mass media of communication play in comparison to the traditional modes of communication in the rural areas. The study is significant because it highlights the effectiveness of both traditional and modern media of communication in the rural areas, especially since the study has not been done in this area in the past. Thus, the result of the study reveals the following: the people of Elebele prefer to use the traditional means of communication to the modern one; the educated ones will adapt easily to the modern ways of communication than the uneducated one; the poor ones among the Elebele people prefer to use the traditional modes of communication than the rich ones; and the Elebele people that have electricity in their houses and who use modern media of communication are few to be significant when compared to those people who do not have electricity in their houses and still use the modern media of communication. All these were attributed to a number of factors that were treated exhaustively in the latter part of the study. Conclusively, the study revealed that the modern media of communication is not quite suitable as a means of communication in the rural area, most especially because as a result of its high cost, it is unaffordable to the rural people who are mostly poor, and because most of the people are illiterates, it requires no education for understanding. On the other hand, traditional modes of communication are available to the rural people at no material cost and require no education for understanding. As a result, this has made the traditional mode of communication the most acceptable in the rural areas.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In the days past, in the history of Nigeria, when development, urbanization and civilization have not come to stay, the modes of communication in the country were traditionally oriented, and as such primitive and locally limited.

In those days, traditional institutions and certain animals were sources of information dissemination around and within the communities. Such traditional means, like the use of gongs – both wooden and metal, by town criers, drum and gun shots, local animal horns, masquerades, age grades and the market places were interpersonal or face-to-face communication. Whistling, sign calls, tonal cooing, singing and the use of smoke are also another form of communication in those days. These means had effects on the people as there were few in each community. Though the information does not go far, but reaches only a few who were living together. But with the world moving on faster technological, it led to the advent of more sophisticated medium of communication for easy dissemination of information to a large and heterogeneous audience at the speed of light.

The mass media includes the electronic media which comprises radio, television, and the internet, and the print media which comprises newspapers and magazines. And some of these sophisticated media facilities require more technological applications than others.

The mass media as mentioned earlier are the channels of communication through which messages or information travel over a long distance to reach the receiver or the audience with the aid of technological devices. They are collectively known as the mass communication media which are further divided into two major divisions – the electronic and print media.

The electronic media just as mentioned earlier comprises radio, television, telephone, telex, cinema, telegraph, fax, and the internet. It is the intention of this research to consider the findings only on those aspects of the electronic media that are capable of reaching mass audiences over a long distance at the same time. Hence, throughout this research report, the term “electronic media” would only refer to radio and television otherwise known as broadcast media.

The other part of the major division of the mass media – the print media – also when seen in this research report should be taken as newspapers and magazines. The first of such media communication to exist in Nigeria was a print medium called Iwe Irohin, which was started in 1859 in Abeokuta by a missionary

called Reverend Henry Townsend, an Anglican priest, as a Yoruba newspaper, to portray the Yoruba culture.

With its wide reach and other effects, this modern means of communication which requires less running supersedes the already existing traditional means of communication in the developed towns. While in the rural areas, the traditional means of communication has a greater effect due to low level of development in those areas.

As time went on, it was realized that the rural people need the light for them to participate in national affairs. As a result, the media industry in Nigeria joined in community development by setting up community newspapers to cover and reach the rural dwellers. Such steps have equally been taken by the electronic media. As a result, modern mass media of communication could be found these days are not only in urban cities or developed towns, and also in the rural areas.

This study is therefore aimed at comparing the effectiveness of modern mass media in rural development, their acceptability and problems encountered by them. Elebele community in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, has been chosen as the case study for this research work as it is also a rural community.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem that necessitated this study is that it is observed that there is a low rate of development in Elebele community

because majority of the dwellers make use of traditional mode of communication, which affects the ongoing rural development programmes and campaigns.

Also, it is observed that traditional modes of communication have had their roots long before the development of modern mass media of communication which is supposed to be more effective, but is contrary to the view.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

In carrying out this study, there are purposes to be achieved. The question is, are the means of communication used by indigenes of Elebele traditional or modern oriented? Secondly, do they make use of both means of communication?

Also, the audiences reach of both means of communication needed to be known at the long run and the acceptability of the modern means of communication and the impact, if any, on the rural development are to be taken care of. Finally, this research work aims to find out which media plays a greater role as regards rural development. This study would also attempt to make recommendations on how to improve on the weaker mode which will affect the rural development of Elebele community.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The perception of the effectiveness of the various means of communication varies as a result of the various ways the

audience view them. It is in the light of this, that the following research questions have been formulated for this project work in order to choose relevant data in designing proper statistical treatment and help in examining the result of the study.

1. Do the people of Elebele have any means of communication?
2. Is there any problem of communication in Elebele community?
3. Is there a particular media that is mostly used in Elebele Community?
4. Does the media system accepted have any effect on rural development in Elebele community?

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is not just an academic exercise aimed at obtaining a degree which may or may not be useful to the student depending on the circumstances, but principally to add knowledge to those who seek the truth, creating the opportunity for the implementation of corrective measures in the overall interest of the society.

Against the background that there is limited research work on the effective use of traditional modes of communication in combination with the modern form of communication in order to achieve development, the findings of this research would be of

immense importance to government in its plan to develop the rural areas and the people.

The findings of this research work would also be useful to scholars in the field of development communication, as it would give them useful insight that would propel new knowledge and information being added to the field.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study in order to achieve reliable and verifiable results has been limited to Elebele community in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In the course of carrying out this study, the researcher faced a lot of constraints and limitations.

Unavailability of funds and insufficient times did not help matters, as the researcher found it hard, if not impossible to access libraries in other institutions around the country for books and other relevant materials. Even the few libraries visited did not have enough books and materials on the subject area under study.

Although these problems were encountered by the researcher in carrying out this research work, the validity and authenticity of the results obtained are not affected, as the

researcher put in great efforts to source for books and relevant materials from lecturers, others in the field and libraries.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

A term if not properly defined can acquire various meanings for different things and to different people which probably may lead to ambiguity.

In addition, it may lead to issues discussed being misinterpreted and misunderstood. Meanings are in people, not in words and so also do messages get their meanings from the source.

For the purpose of enhancing clarity, the following terms have been defined as they have been used in this research report. The definitions will both be conceptual and operational.

***Effectiveness:*** Conceptual definition – having an impact or change; able to bring about the result intended; to have a sign or touch of something. Operational definition – from the study, it means the impact these media have on the audience in the rural community in Oloibiri.

***Modern:*** Conceptual definition – New; up-to-date; the present or recent times. Operational definition – This means all those modern means of communication like the print and broadcast means

of mass communication e.g. newspapers, magazines, radio and television, etc.

**Mass media:** Conceptual definition – Means of imparting information to influence the idea of enormous number of people. The means can be through radio, television, etc. to a large audience. Operational definition – It means traditional and modern mass media used to reach and disseminate information to the target audience.

**Audience reaches:** Conceptual definition – Availability of the traditional and the modern means of communication to view readers or listeners. Operational definition – Making information reach the people, either through traditional means or modern means of communication.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter takes a survey of related documented work of different authors. Reference is therefore made to certain statements made by experts in their academically researched works that will facilitate the accomplishment of the objectives of the study. The review of related texts also provides a basis on which the whole study stands and also puts the researcher in a better standing to interpret the study perfectly.

The sources of literature for the review of this study are both theoretical and empirical. The theoretical aspect of the review deals with works on the subject of study. While the empirical aspect deals with works already carried out by experts in the field of mass communication.

However, there was no known previous literature that specially dealt on comparing the roles of traditional mode of communication and modern mass media mode of communication. Those who have made effort to discover the role/impact of communication usually overlook that of traditional communication and do justice to modern communication.

One of the few researchers who have done detailed study on traditional communication is Professor Frank Okwu Ugboajah, whose work has been found very useful to this research report.

## **2.2 MODERN MASS MEDIA**

Maturity of the modern mass media of communication in Nigeria is tied with traditionalism and also interrelated with colonialism and history of the Christian religion.

According to Idowu A. Sobowale in his article, "The Historical Development of the Nigerian Press", he said, "the history of the modern mass media in Nigeria will not be complete without the mention of missionaries working in Nigeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They found the first newspaper in the country, Iwe Irohin by an Anglican priest, Reverend Townsend (1859) of the Church Missionary Society (CMS)."

Iwe irohin, according to him, still was however more of a newsletter than a newspaper. He went further to say that in 1863, Robert Campbell, a Jamaican printer and journalist in Lagos, launched what many regarded as the first real newspaper – The Anglo African. Gradually, Africans started publishing their own newspapers – published by Africans.

The first newspapers published by Africans for other Africans were reported in the British colonies of Sierra Leone, Gold Coast (now Ghana) and later Nigeria.

Earlier in this research report, it is mentioned that the modern mass media communication is laced with culturalism and traditionalism. Instances of these include the news in Epie read on Glory FM Bayelsa and NTA Channel 28 Yenagoa which is always preceded by a brief recording of a combination on an Epie drumming and the beating of a metal gong. The drum and the gong are traditionally oriented but have come to be associated with the local news on radio. In Africa, the newspapers, magazines, radio and television may be regarded as the news drums of Africa according to William Hachten in "Muffled Drums" (1971).

The modern news media – the news drums of Africa are still muffled drums especially in the execution of their tasks in the rural areas. This is because the news drums, the print and electronic media alike are still too weak technologically, economically or politically to carry on very far. As a result, the new talking drums do not speak clearly and effectively to the people of Nigeria, especially those in the rural areas (Hachten, 1971).

## **2.3 TELEVISION**

Yetunde Holloway in a television journal article titled "Eradication of Illiteracy in Rural Development", which included television effectiveness in the rural areas, suggested the establishment of viewing centres in the rural areas to help those villages that do not have power supply to have access to television. According to him:

*In the viewing centres, there should be all necessary facilities including television sets, small generating plants that will supply electricity for the television sets and for lighting the halls of the viewing centres. To be effective, the producer must go down to the village and acquaint himself thoroughly with the real rural people and adopt a team approach.*

This is because it is never a one man show and will make rural people feel they are really being taken in on the programme that is really for them.

In developed countries, television as well as radio reached out to persons, families and communities where no other medium of communication penetrates. However, the reverse is the case in developing countries where availability of television sets is mainly limited to the urban areas.

Dr. Olu Makinde in his write-up in a television journal titled "The Role of Television in Rural Development" examines the

prospects and discusses the constraints in introducing television into rural development. According to him, "a great majority of Nigerians who live in rural areas cannot read or write; to them, printed information is not all that useful."

Television when effectively packaged makes better messages than those coded in printed language. Television, he said, can have direct or indirect impact on the rural people.

The direct impact is in the form of educational television geared towards providing basic information, which will enable them (the rural dwellers) to cope with forces of deprivation to find solutions to trappings (that is, to be able to cope with their daily lives).

The indirect impact is in educating the urban people about their rural counterparts so as to appreciate their ways of life and plan for their better future.

Dr. Makinde's view on constraints of effective application in the rural areas for the rural people is divided into four groups, namely:

1. Political constraint
2. Financial constraint
3. Social constraint
4. Technical constraint

### **2.3.1 POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS**

The government gives television little recognition in the budget. It is considered a luxury; hence, it comes up under miscellaneous expenditure. Even with little recognition, it is expected to generate most of its fund through commercials. The big question then is, who pays for the commercial programmes – the rich in the urban areas or the poor in the rural areas? This is where the problem of the rural man begins and coupled with the fact that the villagers are scattered far away from the studio of the television station.

### **2.3.2 FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS**

The present financial situation of the country does not give room for the purchase of new television equipment, e.g. transmitters, because they are capital intensive. The few surviving television equipment are overused and old fashioned, and can be serviced to produce programmes within the city. They cannot get to villages in faraway places because they are obsolete. It is more difficult for the rural people because the costs of television, even the black and white models are so high that they are beyond the reach of the average rural dwellers. Some states in Nigeria however have taken up the idea and suggestions of Yetunde Holloway to set up television viewing centres. Such states include Kano, Plateau, Ondo, Oyo, and Lagos States. But

unfortunately, the equipment in these viewing centres developed faults with time and the high cost of maintenance and spare parts drove them into permanent closure.

### **2.3.3 SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS**

Dr. Olu Makinde's observations on the effectiveness of television and viewing centres on the rural people shows that male adults are not interested in the programmes. It is only the teenagers and few educated adults that have time to spend at the viewing centres even when the programmes are shown at a time when the farmers would be back at their homes.

### **2.3.4 TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS**

Makinde observed that people who are not professionals work in the television houses. As a result, these television houses lack technical know-how. This brings about the production of programmes, which are not well suited for the rural audiences, hence the effect is lost.

Dr. Olu Makinde went further to make recommendations for effective television. The recommendations include:

- a. To improve the quality of life of the rural people – rural development.
- b. The government should give more priority to television and where the money is made available, standardized equipment should be bought based on the advice of technical experts.

- c. More viewing centres should be built by local and state governments where well trained officials should be placed to guide rural people to acquire more television literacy.

## **2.4 RADIO**

Radio is the most popular medium in Nigeria (even in rural areas). This is because radio can be used with or without electricity supply. Statistics have shown that 85% of households in Nigeria own radio sets. The villagers depend so much on radio as the bearer of the news and as instructors. The common sights in the villages where farmers are seen working with their radio sets turned on and kept by their sides in the farms. Again, cattle rearers (mostly the males) are seen with their radio sets on or strapped to their bicycles as they ride along their roads, can attest to the above fact.

In Africa, the radio is the modern mass medium which can be used to penetrate deep into the hinterlands. Radio is particularly very useful in mass education because it capitalizes on Africa's great oral tradition and does not require literacy in assimilation of its messages. Radio has the greatest audience since it does reach the hinterlands. In the 1983 elections, Barkin Zuwo created the mobile radio station which he used to penetrate the hinterlands to canvass for votes which made him win the

elections to be the then Kano State governor. Hence, we can see that the role of radio in social/mass mobilization.

## **2.5 NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES**

The newspaper and magazine are not very popular in Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular especially in rural areas. This is because newspapers and magazines require one to be literate for him/her to understand its messages.

Again, the fact that there exists a large level of illiteracy among the rural people, made the print media like newspapers and magazines to be of little importance to the rural people. The print media are still very much urban-based. According William Hatcher in his book, "Muffled Drums", "newspapers are read by those few interested literate Africans are able to buy or borrow a copy and who are fortunate enough to live in a place, usually the capital urban areas, where newspapers are available. The same can be said of magazines."

However, there have been cases of attempts at establishing community newspapers in the rural areas of Nigeria. Most of these community newspapers have been reported to have survived for very short times. Some of these community newspapers include Ogene, The Rural Star, Udoka, The Mirror and Abiola's Community Concord, which remarkably enough was published in English Language.

Another thing worthy of taking note of is that these community-based newspapers are based in one or the other of the Nigerian urban centres, most especially in Lagos and other state capitals. While the masses for which the newspapers are meant for are neglected. Therefore, there is the need for the operational bases of these community newspapers to be changed, in order to cater for the intended audience – the rural people.

## **2.6 VIDEOTAPES/COMPACT DISCS**

Modern mass media in this study also include the use of videotape. Recently produced video sets are compact and portable. But so far, these video systems have not become widely used in Nigerian rural communities.

Segun Oduko in a television journal titled, "Television and Films in the Villages", made recommendations for the use of video in the villages. Segun who is a lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, suggested that:

*The local government of the rural areas of the country should establish viewing centres in strategic locations which they should adequately maintain. Each viewing centre should have an electric generator.*

This recommendation is in line with that of Yetunde Holloway, which has been examined earlier in this study.

Videotapes/compact discs on agriculture, family welfare, health, home economics, and small scale technology should be shown to the villagers at these viewing centres, and they would be willing to watch these programmes because of their novelty and interest. Therefore, the use of videotapes should be encouraged in the rural areas to help spread vital information among the rural dwellers.

Conclusively, it can be said that modern mass media in Nigeria are still very much urban-based. Michael Imarachi Egbon is in agreement with this too, based on his article, "Origin and Development of Television Broadcasting in Nigeria". He wrote:

*About 75% of the populace live in the countryside, where the majority have no access to the television medium at all; either because of lack of electricity or money to purchase it.*

There are a lot of difficulties that must be resolved if the modern broadcast medium is to reach the remote areas. A Russian journalist Vladimir Kokoska, highlights these difficulties, and also made recommendations for more effective broadcast media in rural areas in his article "Broadcasting in Rural Areas of Africa". Some of these recommendations include:

1. The fact that more than three-quarters of the country's inhabitants live in rural areas, outside the cities.

2. The majorities are illiterate and hence the print media have little effect. For this reason, the broadcast media seems to be better suited.
3. Vladimir Kokoska also went further to suggest that another difficult thing is as a result of Africa being in the tropics, and their thermometer reading can be very high. As a result, the broadcasting equipment in Africa were based mainly on the experiences of developed countries. This claim however, has not yet been found to be true. This is because presently, the broadcasting media are equipped with modern facilities, which have helped in no small measure to facilitate the dissemination of information, and thus, the geographical point of view Africa has.

From a geographical point of view, Africa has an important shortcoming. The population is scattered over huge territories and at the same time is concentrated in important places such as rivers and lakes. Villages tend to be separated from each other and will use a dialect different from the local language. These facts posed a serious problem to the development of the broadcast media in African villages. This is one of the suggestions put forward on why approaches used in the developing countries cannot be used in the African villages. Often, even people from neighbouring villages will have difficulties understanding each other. This on the other hand, is not with developed countries because they have a common language (lingua franca).

Kokoska also went further to make suggestions for effective broadcasting in the rural areas thus:

1. The technical patterns of the mass communication media in any society should be linked to the predominant characteristics of its listeners, and majority are placed on the broadcast media – radio and television.
2. Kokoska also suggested that developing only large-scale transmitters would be a great mistake. Rather, small-scale transmitters seem suitable for rural areas to cover only specific territories.

Such small transmitters have the advantage of being simple to service and maintain.

Africa has not gotten enough trained personnel yet to service and maintain the large-scale and complex transmitters.

Another important advantage of the small scale transmitters is their low cost/price.

Though modern mass media audience is small, they are important to Africans because it can help speed up the process of development and national integration, and bring the continent a fuller participation in the modern world.

## **2.7 TRADITIONAL MODES OF COMMUNICATION**

The traditional mode of communication can also be referred to as Oramedia – a name coined by the late Professor Frank Okwu Ugboajah, in his article, “What is Oramedia?”

According to him:

*They may be defined as functional and utilitarian. Their most important purpose is to provide teaching and initiation with the object of impacting traditional aesthetic, historical, technical, social, ethical and religious values.*

Frank Ugboajah went further to say that Oramedia or folk media are grounded on indigenous culture, produced and consumed by members of a group. They reinforced the values of the group. They are visible cultural features, often strictly conventional by which social relationship and a world view is maintained and defined. They take on many forms and are rich in symbolism. One can perhaps look at folk media as group media, but it is better to regard them as interpersonal media, speaking to the common man in his language, idiom and dealing with direct relevance to his situation. They provide a legal code of conduct, which rest on stories and proverbs generated through the spoken word. They also play other roles in the village society such as mobilizing people’s awareness of their own history, magnifying past events and evoking deeds of illustrious

ancestors. Thus, they tend to unite people and give them cohesion by way of ideas and emotions.

He went further to point out that the Oramedia or folk media have been described as being simple in form and generally available to all at no material cost. They can be in public domain and anonymous in origin. There might be little differentiation between their producers and their consumers.

### **2.7.1 CONTEMPORARY USE OF FOLK MEDIA IN AFRICAN COMMUNITIES**

Here, we are going to examine the various ways that the traditional media have been used in the village societies in Africa and their effectiveness.

Traditional media have been used consistently to promote the sense of nationhood in Africa despite the low priority given to them in official circles.

One observes at once that the formal (modern) mass media become of little use immediately information reaches the traditional authority usually represented by a king or a chief or council of elders in some areas.

Communication from that point takes a diffusion approach and is dominated by the informal (oral) media – the Oramedia. And these are the traditional media represented by a network of lower chiefs, age grades, the market place, market women's

organizations, traditional priests, household heads, village teachers and schools, churches, and of course town criers. The king or chief meets with the lower chiefs to discuss village development affairs. The lower chiefs in turn meet with the age grades, traditional priest, stall heads, village teachers, etc. to relay the decisions they had taken with the kings and chiefs. These meetings are announced by the town criers. These groups – age grades, traditional priests, etc. see to the further dissemination and execution of the decisions, the town criers are not left out, they also do all the announcements. This takes place late at night or very early in the morning when everybody will be in their homes.

The other group helps in further dissemination of the information through meeting others like in common places as markets, churches, visits to each other's homes and meeting each other along the road. This is face-to-face or interpersonal communication. They spend a few minutes making sure that all is going well in the other person's family, in the real spirit of being their brother's keeper and not what Westerners may see as wasting of time or poking nose in other people's affairs. During this time, they exchange gossips and necessary information. In this kind of society, people are never in a hurry.

It is purely a traditional society, where everyone knows about every other person in the community, because of the close

network relationship that binds such a group together in a strong concerning way.

### **2.7.2 ROLE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA**

Ugboajah's assessment is that the folk media (i.e. the traditional mode of communication) plays a greater role. Traditional media linked to belief systems have been found effective as tools in development programmes of government.

As entertainment, they can attract and hold the interest of large number of people. As oral media in local language, they can involve the poorest group and classes who are often left out of development activities because of illiteracy or lack of understanding of the English or French languages. As dramatic representation of local problems, they can provide a codification reality, which can be used by participants in analyzing their situation. And as collective expressions and communal activities, they create the contexts for cooperative rather than individual thinking and action and the possibility for peer learning.

Frank Ugboajah concluded by saying, "the reason why folk media mostly found in oral cultures are effective is because they cannot be separated from the culture in whose context they are significant."

Another writer, a senior lecturer in communication in the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Ikechukwu E. Nwosu in his

article titled, "An Overview of the Relationship between Communication and Rural/National Development" (1990) defined traditional or oramedia form of communication as:

The product of the interplay between a traditional community's custom and conflicts, harmony and strife, cultural convergences and divergences, cultural-specific tangibles and intangibles, interpersonal relations, symbols and codes and oral traditions which include mythology, oral literature (poetry, story telling, proverbs), masquerades, witchcraft, rites, rituals, music, dance, drama, costumes, similar abstractions and artifacts which encompass a people's fiction, symbolic and cosmological existence from birth to death and even beyond death.

Based on the above definition by Dr. Nwosu, one may see that traditional or oramedia communication is also effective because they are part and parcel of the people and the people understand its mode of communication too well. Moreover, they do not need to be literate before they can use this medium of communication. This is because the traditional medium of communication speaks to the people in their own language, the way they can understand.

Finally, the traditional or oramedia way of communication can also be said to be effective because it is simple in form and generally available to all at no material cost. At least, it can be afforded by all and sundry, the poor and the rich, the literate and

the illiterate. One does not have to wait for a friend or neighbour to buy a copy of a newspaper before he can borrow it to read.

### **2.7.3 THE VARIOUS CHANNELS OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION**

The various channels available in the traditional mass media of communication include gongs, town criers, talking drums, villages squares, schools, churches, masquerades, family visits, marriages, circumcision ceremonies, village festivals, harvests, market places, age grades, gun shots, animal horns, whistling, sign calls, singing and of course the use of certain animals.

All these are used to disseminate information in one way or the other in the rural communication setting.

The channels of communication available in the traditional media can be categorized into two broad headings – the traditional media and the interpersonal communication.

### **2.7.4 THE TRADITIONAL MEDIA**

This refers to the various traditional media of communication that reaches out to the entire community – every part of it. It may not be at the same time, but it is sure, the same message.

1. Town crier: It is otherwise referred to as the gong man. He is the village “broadcaster” of messages. This is because he carries the message from the chief to the villagers. This is

usually done late at night or very early in the morning when everybody is at home. The town crier beats the gong to attract the attention of the villagers, to compel them to listen to his message. The voices of the crier sing out loud and clear, traveling to all parts of the village as he moves on so that everybody hears.

2. Gong: The gong is equally used to disseminate information. It is beaten by the town crier. The gong is of two types – the wooden and metal gongs. The gong is used to attract the attention of villagers so that the information to be disseminated will be passed on with the audience's full attention.
3. Talking Drums: These are used by the villagers to convey information to fellow villagers. Different sounds of the talking drum signify different things, such as death of somebody or dance.
4. Gunshots: The gunshot also announces death too and the arrival of a great person or event.
5. Schools and Churches: These are organizations through which information, news, ideas or opinions are exchanged. At the church, announcements are made providing the people with necessary information. Similarly, at school, the children are told things they are expected to do after school, like sanitation in the villages, the children are also given

messages which they convey to their parents at home. In these ways, communication takes place.

6. Masquerades: This is another system of communication. Different types of masquerades appear to signify different things and represent different occasions. Some signify the beginning of the masquerade week, some the burial ceremony of important persons, while others signify different feasts/ceremonies.
7. Singing, Marriage and Circumcision: Different sounds describe different occasions. Singing can be heard during marriage ceremonies, circumcision feast, birth of a child, naming ceremony of a child, thanksgiving ceremony, even taking of titles. The sound of singing as a means of communication tells the villagers that there is a happy event taking place in the village and tells the type of event.
8. Festivals: These are crowd pullers, just as shows are attracting town dwellers and people from outside town and from all walks of life, dialect and religious beliefs. Such events are diverse in contents as in audience and the heterogeneity and anonymity of characters present on indirect mass communication.
9. Harvests: It symbolizes the time of abundant food, this means the time of abundant blessings from God or from gods as the case may be, by providing them with food to quench their hunger.

10. Animal Horns or Flutes: Though the use of animal horns is rare, but it is not completely out of use. It can still be found in some parts of the country, especially in Western part of Nigeria. In those areas where the animal horn is used, it is rarely blown and is blown only in time of emergency. Whenever it happens to be blown, the villagers know that there is an emergency occurring and they assemble at the village square for further information.
11. Age grade: The age grade and other social clubs form another medium through which traditional mass communication takes place in rural areas. Members of the age grades or social clubs pass round or disseminate any piece of information that needs to get to the members of the community. They do this by going from house to house, informing members; they can also go to the market place or village square where there is usually a gathering of large number of people and pass the information to them. They can equally take the message to the churches or schools for dissemination to their members.
12. Animals: Finally, under the traditional mass media comes the use of certain animals for communication. The owl for instance conveys certain information to the people. The owl is regarded as a bad omen, so when it hoots continuously during the night, superstition has it that

somebody is dead or will die by morning. However, this has not been proved to rightly true.

## **2.8 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

The most common system of communication in the traditional setting is the man or face-to-face communication, which is otherwise known as interpersonal communication. With this system of communication, people obtain necessary information they need to know about things that are happening in their community as well as in neighbouring villages.

Face to face communication provides maximum immediate feedback, but runs the risk of being adulterated or distorted as it moves from one individual or another.

In the face to face communication, people can meet at the village square, along the road, at the market or visit each other at home.

The easiest way of explaining interpersonal communication is a situation where Obiene's mother sends her to Aworabhi's mother to tell her that the next morning; they will be leaving for the long distant big market at the first cockcrow. Or to the ladies who stop each other on their way to the farm or to the market respectively. During this time, they will catch up on the news about each other's family and news on the community and its environs.

Let us look at the avenues available for interpersonal communication in any village or community.

1. Village square: This is where the villagers meet during their relaxation time to talk and gossip with each other. During this time, they discuss virtually everything ranging from family, local politics, land disputes, economic situation, their neighbouring towns or the country at large.
2. Family visits: This involves a situation where for example Obiene's mother visits Aworabhi's mother and together they gossip, by so doing, they exchange information – with this, interpersonal communication takes place.
3. Market place: These are veritable communication found in Africa. When the villagers meet at the market place, they exchange and update themselves with the latest information or news (current affairs). Market places in Africa are not just where people go to buy and sell, but are diffusion points for important social interaction (Ugboajah, 1979). Vogues are copied from market places. They also constitute places of censure. The market places in the framework of their commercial function remain powerful sources of news, opinions and rumours.

Conclusively, the traditional modes of communication are equally good communication systems and should be developed further by

communicators, policy makers and researchers alike for a more effective communication.

## **2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Every academic exercise is guided by a theory or set of theories and this research work is no exception. In order to effectively carry out this research work, the development media theory will be adopted.

The mass media and other forms of communication are referred to as the untiring engine of development that consistently relates with the change agent from the conceptual stage of a project to its conclusion. The development media theory according to Nwabueze (2005) is based on the perspectives and perception of the press as a powerful instrument that can be used to achieve positive development in any society.

According to McQuail (1987), the media should carry out positive development task in line with national established policies, freedom of the press should be open to restriction according to economic priorities and developmental needs of society. Development in any society can only be achieved if the people participate in the process of development and this can be achieved through the best combination of the available means of communication. And this is what the development media theory postulates.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will focus on the research design, population of the study, the sample population, sampling technique, and the instrument of data collection. Also the method of data collection as well as the method of data analysis will be presented in this section of this research report.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this study, the survey method of research design will be used. According to Earl Barbie (1977), survey research is probably the best method available to the social scientist who is interested in collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population too large to be observed directly. Survey research is mainly used in studies that have individuals as units of analysis.

In addition to this, the survey research studies people in their natural settings, without including any artificial conditions.

Such a study like this involves the selection of a scientific sample from the population, construction and administration of a

well structured questionnaire to the sample to measure what a complete representation of the larger population will be.

The scientific method is a very important empirical method of establishing and validating facts based on observation and data collected (Osuala, 1982).

### **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE POPULATION**

The population in this study was that of Elebele Community in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. It is made up of 5 compounds and has an estimated population of 20,000 people. A sample population size of 150 respondents was chosen at random. 30 respondents each were selected at random from the five (5) compounds in Elebele, namely, Aworabhi, Jokori, Amangala, Obiene and Igbogbo, which amounted to the 150 respondents used in this research.

### **3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

A total of 150 respondents were used in this study, and were randomly selected. The researcher was sensitive to the two important qualities of research information, validity and reliability.

To ensure valid and reliable information, the sample size was made representative for generalization or projection of the result to the larger population.

Thus, the sampling technique used in the study is the simple random sampling technique. However, while sampling, the researcher considered the personal differences such as age, sex, marital status, income level, and educational level.

### **3.5 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

Apart from the data collected from books (secondary), it was evident from the nature of the study, that primary data was predominantly required. Hence, the use of the questionnaires as the method of collecting primary data was adopted. To this effect, the researcher distributed 150 well-constructed 25-item questionnaires to the randomly selected respondents.

Also, a mini tape recorder was used to collect the responses from the respondents. The responses were recorded in a small cartridge and later replayed to fill in the questionnaires. This was for those who, by not only being unable to read and write, could not fill in the questionnaires by themselves. The tape recorder was equally used to make the work easier for the researcher.

### **3.6 MEASURING INSTRUMENT**

The measuring instrument in this study was the questionnaire, which was carefully well-constructed and structured. A lot of questions were asked on the research topic, they included demographic questions such as age, sex, income, and other questions on the method and facilities used in modern

and traditional media, as well as other questions relating to the two media systems. These questions were asked in the form of open and close-ended questions, and the questionnaires were administered to the 150 sampled respondents.

The use of the questionnaires has been considered most appropriate for the collection of data in social science researches. These are actually some reasons for choosing the questionnaire approach.

Secondly, it guarantees as much practicable uniformity of answers from the respondents. Thirdly, it makes the questions to be related since one question leads to the preceding question (Stanford and Robert, 1971).

The questionnaire approach is considered a very reliable way of getting primary data from respondents. This is because respondents are allowed to answer the questions contained in the questionnaires out of their personal experiences and knowledge.

### **3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

For easy management and accuracy, the researcher adopted the "simple percentage" statistical technique of data analysis in analyzing and interpreting the data collected in the study. The reason was because of the percentage's known nature of simplicity, accuracy and clarity. Moreover, it was a legitimate way of analyzing data.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The data collected from the administered questionnaires is presented in frequency tables and simple percentages. These data came from the responses gathered from respondents. They will be analyzed and presented.

A total of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were filled and returned. A face to face questionnaire administration technique was adopted by the researcher. This yields a very good result on the spot.

This chapter is specially intended to analyze and interpret the data collected with the questionnaires for the study beginning with the audience characteristics.

#### **4.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

The analysis of data collected from the one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires would be presented in this section of the research report.

The data were analyzed using the simple percentage method of data analysis and presented in titled frequency tables.

**TABLE 4.1**  
*Sex distribution of respondents*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	75	50%
Female	75	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Data 2021*

From the table above, the sample population is made up of 75 males representing 50% of the total respondents, while the remaining 75 respondents or 50% are females.

**TABLE 4.2**  
*Age distribution of respondents*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
20 – 30	40	26.7%
31 – 40	60	40%
41 and above	50	33.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Data 2021*

From the results of responses on Table 4.2, it is observed that 40 respondents or 26.7% of the total respondents fall into the 20 – 30 years age category, 60 respondents or 40% of the total respondents are between the ages of 31 – 40 years, while 50 respondents or 33.3% of the total population are in the age category of 41 and above.

**TABLE 4.1**  
*Marital status of respondents*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Married	90	60%
Unmarried	60	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Data 2021*

The sample population from the table is shown to be made up of 90 persons representing 60% of the total respondents, while the unmarried persons are 60 or 40% of the sample population.

**TABLE 4.4**  
*Occupation of respondents*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Farmers	40	26.6%
Housewives	30	20%
Civil servants	15	10%
Businessmen	25	16.7%
Students	25	16.7%
Unemployed	15	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Data 2021*

As regards occupation, Table 4.4 shows that 40 respondents or 26.6% of the total respondents are farmers, 30 respondents or 20% are housewives, 15 respondents or 10% are civil servants, 25 respondents or 16.7% of the sample population are businessmen, 25 respondents or 16.7% are students, while the remaining 15 respondents or 10% are unemployed.

**TABLE 4.5*****Educational distribution of respondents***

<b><i>Response</i></b>	<b><i>Frequency</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>
FSLC	40	26.6%
SSCE	40	26.6%
Others	20	13.4%
None of the above	50	33.4%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>150</i></b>	<b><i>100%</i></b>

*Source: Survey Data 2021*

Table 4.5 shows that 40 respondents representing 26.6% of the total respondents have their First School Leaving Certificates, 40 respondents or 26.6% possess Senior School Certificates, 20 respondents or 13.3% have other educational qualifications not mentioned in the questionnaire, while the remaining 50 respondents or 33.3% have no education qualification.

**TABLE 4.6*****Medium preference of respondents***

<b><i>Response</i></b>	<b><i>Frequency</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>
Traditional medium	90	60%
Modern medium	60	40%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>150</i></b>	<b><i>100%</i></b>

*Source: Survey Data 2021*

From the above table, 90 respondents representing 60% of the total respondents prefer the use of the traditional and local means of communication, while the remaining 60 respondents or 40% of the sample population prefer the use of the modern means of mass communication. Thus, it is observed that the traditional means of communication is preferred to the modern means of communication by people of Elebele.

**TABLE 4.7**

*Media adaptation of respondents*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Traditional medium	60	40%
Modern medium	90	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Data 2021*

Generally, it is observed from the above table that the majority of the people (90 out of 150) use the modern medium more.

### **4.3 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

From the analysis of data, it can be seen that the people of Elebele actually prefer local ways of communication to modern ways. Findings from the study show that this is largely due to the fact that majority of the people are illiterates with very low or without any education. They are ignorant of the importance of the world news, and therefore are not concerned with such news. They are contented with local information – the town criers and opinion leaders.

As a result of illiteracy, they do not understand the modern media very well, making it impossible for them to decode the messages, hence the reason for this resulted to their embracing the local medium which they can decode its message easily.

Furthermore, the high preference of the local ways of communication to the modern ways by the people of Elebele can equally be attributed to the fact that the local media are part and parcel of their way of life. This simple fact can be buttressed by an extract from Dr. Ikechukwu E. Nwosu's definition of traditional or oral medium form of communication from his book, "Mass Communication and National Development" (1990) which went thus; "...which encompasses a people's factual, symbolic and cosmological existence from birth to death and even beyond death." So, because the people were born into this kind of communication system, they will find it difficult to make use of another kind of communication, especially one which is foreign and alien to them.

There is need however to point out that the few people of Elebele who use the modern medium use mostly the radio because radio has a feature of portability and communicates in their local dialect. Thus, the farmers especially have the tendency of carrying radio to their farms and the others can carry it around as they do their daily work. Above all, the radio can be used without electricity; in which case, the battery substitutes it. As a result, the radio becomes a constant companion to them. Also the few educated people in Elebele make use of the newspaper once in a while; it is due to inadequate circulation of newspapers to their areas. More so, the newspaper's high cost contributes to it, as it is not easily affordable.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 SUMMARY**

This summary is based on the results of the study, and according to the results of the study, we can conclude thus:

1. That the people of Elebele will prefer the traditional means of communication to the modern ones. This could be attributed to a number of factors, among which is the high level of illiteracy among the people, which prevents them from understanding the modern media and also due to the fact that the local media are part and parcel of their way of life (Nwosu, 1990). This does not mean that there are no educated people that use modern media. The fact is that they are few.
2. The educated one will adapt easily to modern ways of communication than uneducated ones. This could be attributed to increase in acceptance and enlightenment, which goes with education. As a result, the educated ones know the importance of both local and world news – they seek these information from modern media, which carries them. Their education here plays a big role towards helping

them to adapt to modern media. Lack of time and interest causes some few educated ones not to adapt to the modern medium of mass communication. The lack of interest is mainly because local programmes are not mainly given space in the modern media schedule. Hence there is urgent need for those in charge to take appropriate steps to bridge the gap.

3. The poor ones among the Elebele people will prefer to use the traditional medium of communication than the rich ones. This is due to the high cost of modern media equipments such as television and radio, even newspapers and magazines.
4. The hike in their prices these days make them more out of reach for low income earners. Also the poor ones find it difficult to pay electricity bills in the case of electronic media. As a result, they resort to the local media, since it can be obtained at no cost. It is even unfortunate that the very rich ones that can obtain modern media equipments are very few in Elebele Community.
5. Finally, Elebele people that have electricity supply in their houses and as well use modern mass media equipment are few to be significant when compared to those who do not have electricity supply, but still use modern communication equipment. But the findings show that all those who do not have electricity and still use the modern communication

equipment only make use of radio. This is because radio can be used with the aid of battery.

6. From the study, we gather that the rural dwellers encounter a number of problems in using the modern media. These problems can be summarized thus: 75% say the newspaper is not easily accessible, 60% say that the modern media is very expensive and 25% say that they do not have the modern equipment.
7. From the data, 5% say that the reception of the modern media communication is very poor in their area.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

From these, we can conclude that the modern mass media are not quite suitable as a means of communication in the rural areas. At present, it is more affordable by the people in urban areas who have the basic infrastructural amenities in their areas, and who are mostly educated and as such, are aware of the importance of news.

The result of this study also indicates that modern mass media are not involving the local audience extensively in their programmes.

This could be because programmes meant for the rural people are prepared, packaged and sent down to the rural areas, and in the context, it reflects the lives of urban areas where it is prepared. There is the need to overcome this so as to have

programmes of the rural people prepared by the localized media personnel in their context, reflecting the rural setting and problems peculiar to them. This will enable a two-way flow of communication through feedback process, thereby making communication effective.

The findings also show that radio is used more in the rural areas especially by farmers, mainly because of its portability. Therefore, agricultural programmes should be included more in radio programmes scheduling than other media in order to help farmers improve on their farming and farm produce.

Finally, the research result shows that modern media, especially the television is not popular in the rural areas. The primary reason for this is the lack of electricity supply in the rural areas and the inability to afford electric generating sets. This could also be as a result of fact that majority of television programmes are being packaged in English and other foreign languages. Majority of the rural people are illiterates and hence, the television holds no appeal or interest for them because they cannot understand most of the programmes.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

After careful consideration of the findings of this research report, the following recommendations have been put forward by the researcher.

- Programmes that are meant for the rural audience should be designed, prepared and packaged by someone with an insight of how the rural populace thinks, so that the programmes would not have an urban tone.
- Programmes packaged for the rural audience should be presented in the local dialects of the people for easy comprehension and understanding. This would also sustain the necessary interest and attention of the rural audience.
- Government should provide electricity in order to encourage the use of the electronic media in rural communities.
- Agricultural programmes should be included more in radio programmes scheduling than other media in order to help farmers improve on their farming and farm produce.
- Programmes meant for the rural people are prepared, packaged and sent down to the rural areas, and in the context, it reflects the lives of urban areas where it is prepared. There is the need to overcome this so as to have programmes of the rural people prepared by the localized media personnel in their context, reflecting the rural setting and problems peculiar to them. This will enable a two-way flow of communication through feedback process, thereby making communication effective.
- Modern media of communication should endeavour to involve the rural populace more in their programming.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Based on the study and its findings, the following recommendations are made for students of mass communication and other communication who would want to undertake further studies on this or related topics. The policy makers are not left out.

1. Because the traditional system of communication is more effective in rural areas in Nigeria, "the role of those rural communications in rural/national development in Nigeria" will be of great importance.
2. Study on the level of message storage, retrieval and explicability among oramedia forms will also be of interest.
3. The cause of unfriendly attitude towards traditional communication system by educated people should be viewed.
4. Another recommendation is to find the ways of demystifying, popularizing, protecting and integrating the oramedia forms of communication for development purposes.
5. An in-depth study of problems encountered by rural people in using traditional communication should be done.
6. Finally, the nature of communication development when oramedia is used alongside with modern communication media should be studied bearing in mind that Lycia Pye in

his book, "Communication and Political Development" (1974), wrote:

The press and radio could have profound influence in changing the ways of life of the people only if they are fully supported by the informal, social channels of communication, which are intimately related to basic social process. Rapid national development calls for coordination and reinforcing both the impersonal mass media and the more personal, face-to-face pattern of social communication.

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## **APPENDIX**

Bayelsa State Polytechnic, Aleibiri,  
Department of Mass Communication,  
School of Commerce and MGT,  
P.M.B. 168, Bayelsa State.  
21<sup>st</sup> October, 2021.

Dear Respondent,

### **LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

I am a National Diploma (ND) student of the Department of Mass Communication of the Bayelsa State Polytechnic, Aleibiri, Bayelsa State.

I am conducting a research study on the topic "An Examination of the Traditional Methods and Modern Mass Media in Elebele Community". It is a condition for the completion of the academic programme for the award of National Diploma (ND).

I shall be honoured if you sincerely fill in the questionnaire which is for the purpose of this research. It is purely an academic exercise and it is guaranteed that all information supplied will be treated with utmost confidence. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Dumayam, Unity Barayekere  
**(Research Student)**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Please kindly supply the following information by ticking the appropriate boxes provided and also a brief answer where necessary.

1. Sex:

Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age:

20 – 30 [ ] 31 – 40 [ ]  
41 – 50 [ ] 51 & above [ ]

3. Marital status:

Married [ ] Single [ ]

4. Occupation:

.....

5. Monthly income:

Below N1,000 [ ] N1,001-N5,000 [ ]  
N5,001-N12,000 [ ] Above N12,000 [ ]

6. Level of education:

No education [ ] Primary-Secondary [ ]  
University & above [ ]

7. Which of these do you have?

Television	[ ]	Radio	[ ]
Video machine	[ ]	None	[ ]

8. Do you receive national news?

Yes	[ ]	No	[ ]
-----	-----	----	-----

9. If no, why?

.....  
.....

10. If yes, which media do you make use of?

Radio	[ ]	Video machine	[ ]
Local medium	[ ]		

11. Which medium do you use in receiving local information on what happens in your town/village?

Television	[ ]	Radio	[ ]
Newspaper	[ ]	Magazine	[ ]

12. Do you have electricity supply or electric generating set?

Yes	[ ]	No	[ ]
-----	-----	----	-----

13. How often do you read newspapers/magazines?

Always [ ] Rarely [ ]

Not at all [ ]

14. How often do you watch television?

Always [ ] Rarely [ ]

Not at all [ ]

15. How often do you listen to radio?

Always [ ] Rarely [ ]

Not at all [ ]

16. Do you prefer your local ways of receiving information to modern ways?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Don't know [ ]

17. If yes, why?

.....  
.....

18. If no, why?

.....  
.....

19. Judging with the people you know, which category of people adapt easily to the modern ways of communication?

Not educated [ ] Primary, Secondary [ ]

Higher education [ ] No idea [ ]

20. Give reasons for your answer in question 19.

.....  
.....

21. Which category of people do you think will prefer traditional medium of communication to modern medium of communication?

The rich [ ] The poor [ ]

No idea [ ] None of the above [ ]

22. Give reasons for your answer.

.....  
.....

23. What problems do you encounter in using modern media of communication?

.....  
.....  
.....