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# Indigenous media and rural mobilization for development programmes in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This paper explores the role of indigenous media in rural mobilization for development programmes in Nigeria. It is a position paper which obtained its data through secondary sources such as textbooks and journal articles. The paper is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Indigenous media have been found to be critical components of rural mobilization which empowers rural dwellers to engage in self-actualizing activities in their communities. They are also found to be instrumental to changing the behavioural patterns of rural people towards achieving set development goals. Indigenous media promote awareness and increase active participation of rural people in development programmes. Lack of a unified language system in indigenous communication, lack of official attention from the government and the influence of new media technologies among others have been identified as challenges faced by indigenous media in Nigeria. The paper however, concludes that indigenous media are vital channels for rural mobilization and development in Nigeria. The paper recommended among others that government, policy makers and development stakeholders should deploy indigenous media in rural development programmes for effective mobilization and participation of the rural folks in their development programmes.

**Keywords:** Indigenous Media; Rural Communication; Rural Mobilization; Grassroots Participation; Development.

## 1. Introduction

Every human society has developed its indigenous modes and channels of communication which characterizes its existence, organization and development. These communication modes and channels form the basis upon which the developmental fortunes of communities, especially the rural communities are attained (Essien, 2014). This is because communication is the key to human development and the thread that binds people together. It can be used to keep people thinking about development, to make them recognize and accept the need for development, to mobilize and make them predisposed towards development.

There are divergent media forms and communication approaches in human societies. However, making appropriate choice of media forms that can reach rural populations with development messages that will get them involved in rural development efforts has always been a challenge for development experts due to their varied nature and complexities. In Nigeria for instance, most rural mobilization programmes failed to succeed due to wrong choice of media that are not compatible with the needs and peculiarities of rural dwellers.

Nigeria is characterized by a complex social system with different classes and ethnic configurations with 57% of the country's population dwelling in rural communities. Rural dwellers in Nigeria are marginalized and deprived of the benefits of modern society. They are plagued by illiteracy, poverty and usually have less or no access to modern mass media channels; even where they do, they lack electricity to power them (Owolabi & O'Neil, 2013).

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Thus, communicating with rural dwellers using their indigenous-rural-compatible channels can trigger a build up to solidarity in a common development effort. This, as Akpan (2008: p247) notes is because "the traditional world was, and is still small and tribal. It is a world governed by the group's emotion of the moment, a world of mystery and communal participation, a world where everyone is involved with everyone else." Indigenous media being components of the tribal society are ingrained with endearing appeals to the rural masses and are also endowed with qualities of touching the deepest emotions of the illiterate millions living in the hinterlands.

This justifies why indigenous media channels are used in many developing societies to disseminate messages on development topics such as innovative agricultural techniques, modern health practices, and family planning to rural people. The forms vary from society to society but the purpose remains the same, which is to provide rural dwellers with development information by adopting communication forms that have been accepted in rural villages for generations. Since no development could adequately take place without the rural dwellers being involved, it is obvious that familiar communication channels known to them can affect this change (Ushe, 2013). It is when familiar channels of communication are used to communicate development project that people will be involved in the development processes (Omoha, Iorlaha & Adoyi, 2021).

Indigenous media channels such as town criers, talking drums, wooden gongs, drama, songs, folk tales and many others, have been identified as viable channels of communication for bringing the rural people together to pursue a common grassroots efforts. Confirming the mobilizing force of indigenous media for rural development is Ugande (2007: p112) who notes that, "even where modern media have penetrated isolated areas, the older forms maintain their validity particularly when used to influence attitudes, instigate action and promote change." This is primarily because they reflect the cultural ethos and are closer to the hearts of the common man in rural areas.

Governments of developing countries have used indigenous media channels to mobilize rural dwellers for development purposes. The effective use of indigenous media in rural mobilization for development has been established by scholars such as Mathiyzhagan, Kaur, Ravindhar and Devrani (2015) and Chapke and Bhagat (2015) and many others, who confirmed how indigenous media had been deployed in Family Planning Communication Programme in India and the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh. These are glaring scholarly evidences of the successful role of indigenous media in rural mobilization and development. But how applicable is this situation to Nigeria? How have indigenous media contributed to rural mobilization for development efforts in Nigeria? This forms the thrust of this research paper.

## 1.1. Conceptual Clarifications

### 1.1.1. Indigenous Media

The concept of indigenous media has been given different nomenclatures by different scholars in development communication. Ugboaja (1985) refers to them as "oramedia", meaning that the media are couched in oral cultures that send messages orally. Akpabio (2003) refers to them as "indigene media", meaning that the media are indigenous to the people. Hatchten (1971) calls them "informal channels of communication" meaning that the media are very unlike the "formal media" such as radio, television, newspaper, motion picture, magazine, etc. Ansa-Kyereme (1998) refers to them as "communal media" to illustrate the fact that the media are communally owned rather than belong to individuals (Ugande, 2007).

Various definitions have been advanced by scholars on the concept of indigenous media. According to Kalu, Okidi, Chidi-Kalu and Unagha (2020), indigenous media are organized processes of production and exchange of information managed by rural communities. This definition of indigenous media is from the communal perspective which believes that rural people have control of the media and the message production and dissemination process. Chile (2012) also sees indigenous media as a form of communication that employs vocal, verbal, musical and visual art forms, which have been transmitted to a society or group of societies from one generation to another. This scholar is of the conviction that, these media channels are ancestral in nature and are ingrained in the communication patterns of a society which are transferable from one generation to another. However, an elaborate definition of indigenous (traditional) media has been given by Ugande (2010: p110) as:

> The product of the interplay between a traditional community's customs and conflicts, harmony and strife, cultural convergences and divergences, culture-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 and similar abstractions and artifacts which encompass a people's factual symbolic and cosmological existence from birth to death and even beyond.

This definition takes a holistic look at the concept of indigenous communication taking into consideration the broad horizon of indigenous channels of communication. We have been made to understand that, indigenous media embraces story-telling, drama/theatre, puppetry, songs and dance, festivals, dirges, mime and many other channels to pass information across to rural dwellers. Thus, indigenous media are rural-oriented communication channels which utilize oral, dramatic, symbolic and coded forms to pass development messages in rural settings which are transferable from generation to generation.

### 1.1.2. Rural Mobilization

Rural mobilization can be defined as the process of bringing rural people together to create awareness of and demand for a particular development programme, and to promote participation of the rural poor in development activities for sustainability and self-reliance. It involves bringing people from different parts of the community to share a common development goal and actively participate in both identifying needs and being part of the community's solution. According to Akpor (2013), rural mobilization can be seen as a process whereby rural people can be sensitized to pursue a social change goal or objective for themselves.

In the context of this paper, rural mobilization entails deploying traditional media forms to motivate rural people through awareness creation to enable them undertake appropriate actions to solve the problems confronting them. Rural mobilization is the cornerstone of participatory approaches in rural development programmes. In rural development efforts, there is strong focus on communities taking a lead role in development activities rather than just being the receivers of development services.

### 1.1.3. Development

The concept of development as used in contemporary literature is polysemic in meaning. However, Emmanuel (2018: p. 229) sees development as "change towards patterns of society that allow better realization of human values, that allow a society greater control over its environment and over its political destiny, and that enables its individuals to gain increased control over themselves". This implies that development should be targeted at improving human conditions through poverty alleviation, job creation, as well as empowering them to have total control of their wellbeing. Development can be seen as any communication effort that is geared towards improving the living conditions of rural dwellers. The use of traditional communication channels to disseminate messages that are capable of engendering wider participation in rural development efforts is what development entails.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the framework of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Uses and Gratifications Theory was propounded by prominent communication scholars, Professor Jay Blumler and Sociologist Elihu Katz in the 1970s. The theory seeks to explain why people use media and what they use them for. The theory is based on the assumption that: media audiences play an active role in selecting a medium, as well as interpreting, and integrating it into their lives; different types of media compete against each other and against other sources of gratifications for viewers' attention; the medium that provides the most satisfaction (gratification) for a media content consumer will be used more often than the other types (Folarin, 2002). Put differently, Uses and Gratifications puts the role of linking needs gratifications and media selection clearly on the side of audience members. The theory believes that people's needs influence what media they would choose, how they use certain media and what gratifications they derive from the media.

Uses and Gratifications theory emphasizes motives and self-perceived needs of audience members. It believes that different people can use the same media message in different ways. The same media content may gratify different needs for different individuals. There is no one way that people use media. Contrarily, there are as many reasons for using the media as there are media users (Chile, 2012). Though, a mass media oriented theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory can also be applied to other media such as indigenous media channels and their contents.

As indigenous media channels continue to provide rural dwellers with a wide array of media forms with development messages, rural dwellers select from the gamut of channels the one that satisfies their information needs on rural development. Because indigenous media are rural based, and more compatible with the rural people in terms of language, it is believed that rural dwellers would opt for these local media channels that serve them better with rural development messages. It is based on this rationale that this theory finds relevance in and applicability to this paper.

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1. Nature and Forms of Indigenous Media in Nigeria

Indigenous media are ancestral and cultural in nature. They are communication forms or modes which have been transmitted from one generation to another and had being in existence before the arrival of contemporary mass media (Kargbo, 2022). These media channels are ingrained in the indigenous culture, produced and consumed by the grassroots members of the society. The "traditional" media system according to Wilson (1997) is a dynamic, multimedia, multi-channel system which is authoritative, credible, definitive, time-honoured, transactional, customary and ubiquitous, as well as integrative, low-cost and non-alienating, adaptable and popular. These unique attributes of indigenous media have made them to become so dear to rural people because of the confidence and trust they have in their contents and custodians.

Indigenous media manifest in different forms and they also vary from one community to another. Isika, Assay and Scotland (2021) identifies symbols, codes, oral tradition, interpersonal relations, mythology, oral literature, such as poetry, storytelling or narratives, proverbs, folktales, masquerade rites, music, drama dance and customs as forms of indigenous media. In the realm of traditional system of communication, Africans in general and Nigerians in particular are known to have their own communication channels through which they reach out to their own mass audiences. These communication channels as Chukwu and Anorue (2019) note, would include billows of smoke; the cry of the village town crier well armed with his gong; the sound of the talking drums located at a heart of a community; the sonorous flutes which could be heard meters away if not miles; the age grade system for exchanges among community members of the same age bracket and the oral narratives for instruction and entertainment.

However, an elaborate classification of "traditional" media forms was carried out by Wilson (1987). The scholar divided traditional (indigenous) media forms of communication found in Nigeria into ten classes as follows:

- **Idiophones**: These are instruments capable of producing sound themselves (self-sounding instruments). The sound originates from the material from which the instruments are made and they could be shaken, struck, pricked, pulled or pressed with the feet. Examples include wood lock, wooden drum, bell, gong, and rattle.
- **Membranophones:** These are traditional media forms which produce sound through vibration of membranes. They are produced from animal skins which have been made into communication instruments. To produce the sound, the instrument is struck or beaten with bare hand or stick. Like mass communication, membranophones can educate, entertain and inform.
- **Aerophones:** These are instruments which produce sound as a result of the vibration of a column of air which is forced through a kind of pipe. Examples of such media include flutes, whistle, reed pipes, horns and trumpets.
- **Symbolography:** These are symbolic representations or writings. This is the sending of messages using graphic representations to convey a message which is understood within the context of a known social event and an accompanying verbal message. It is a descriptive representational means of conveying meaning. An example is the use of fresh unfolding palm frond usually with greenish colour. The shapes of the palm fronds convey meaning to the users of such media form.
- **Signals:** These are the physical representations of message. Many ancient signals are still being used today to convey messages. Some of these signals include fire, smoke, gunshots, canon shots, and drumbeats. These signals are used to draw the attention of rural dwellers to important communal functions or convey a message signifying the death or burial of an illustrious person.
- **Objectifies:** These are media presented in concrete forms whose significance is confined to specific societies only or may be universal through their traditional association with specific contextual meanings. These include charcoal, kola nuts, white pigeon or fowl, feather, white egg, cowries, sculptures, drawings, pictures, the tender unopened bud of the palm frond among others.
- **Colour Schemes:** This is the use of colour or its combination in a design to convey a message or meaning. Colour uses the advantage of pictorial communication by combining the speed of its impact and freedom from linguistic boundaries to achieve instant and effective communication. Important colours used to communicate meanings among the Tiv speaking tribe of Benue State are black (mourning state), red (danger), white (purity; it can also signify mourning), green (life), and yellow (spiritual). Understanding the psychology of colours makes communication easier when they are used. This is important because the meaning of colours vary from one society to another.
- **Music:** Musical entertainment groups sing songs that criticize or praise happenings in the society. Names of those in the picture may be mentioned or described with the intent of passing a message to the society. Grapevines relating events of projects that are being planned for the community may be captured as a way

keeping the people abreast of societal happenings. Such musical groups are viable channels of rural information.

- **Extra-mundane:** This is the mode of communication between the living and the dead, the supernatural or supreme being. It includes incantations, spiritual chants, libations, invocations, rituals, prayers, sacrifice, and trance. Rural societies in Nigeria believe so much in the powers of their gods or ancestral spirits and they consult them whenever there is confusion, evil or calamity in the community. They are also good sources of information in rural settings. Ineji (2012) notes that extra-mundane can be described as a two- way communication, because there is constant feedback between the living and spiritual being. Wilson (1987) explains that naturally, in African tradition people appease their ancestral spirits in daily prayers and sacrifices, because it is believed that through such activities causes of misfortunes or disaster can be ascertained and averted.

- **Symbolic Display:** The communicative significance of these traditional media modes vary from one culture to another. They may also have universal connotations across cultures. They include smiling, sticking out the tongue, expression of anger, disgust, happiness and fear, the way we walk or sit, gestures we use, voice qualities and facial expressions.

Ahamafule (2013) believes that African communication systems through their various forms have sustained the rural people over the years. He explains that before the arrival of our colonial masters, the rural populace never experienced underdevelopment. This, as he reiterates was because whatever they needed to make their lives meaningful was available for them within the environment. Chukwu and Anorue (2019) are of the view that these ancestral modes of communication are still in existence in rural communities in Nigeria where there is still the gap to be bridge by the new media and its numerous devices. This implies that indigenous media system have been instrumental to rural development from time immemorial, and it is hoped that the tempo of development will be sustained even with the advent of modern means of communication.

## 3.2. Role of Indigenous Media in Rural Mobilization for Development

In every society of human existence, participation of people who are part of the system in development programmes is key to achieving success. A well planned development programme will not see the light of the day if the people involved are not adequately mobilized. Therefore, true rural development cannot be successfully attained if the target rural poor are alienated from being active participants in the programme. Since a vast population of Nigeria are living in the rural areas, there is need to adopt effective local/rural communication strategies that will reach them and sensitize them on development issues. Rural communication must focus on the target audience' need for change, raise their aspirations and provide the channel through which the grassroots people can discuss policies and plans that can lead to constructive and intelligent participation in development activities.

Traditional media channels as Wilson (1997) notes are potent tools for grassroots mobilization and development of rural areas because they serve as viable source of socio-cultural, health and political transmission and adaptation thereby helping the masses to attain point of self-actualization through songs, instruction, and theatre performance. It is this potency of indigenous media to empower the grassroots to enable them actualize a better life that prompts Akpor (2013: p. 23) to contend that, "no self sustaining development can take place in Nigeria without the masses of our people being effectively mobilized, genuinely motivated and properly organized for productive activity within the context of freedom, orderly progress and social justice." Therefore, activating the consciousness of the rural people in any development efforts is the best approach in any meaningful development programme.

Indigenous media system of communication provides horizontal communication approaches to sensitize and empower people at the grassroots level towards attaining national development and consciousness. They have been utilized in rural intervention programmes such as improved agricultural practices, natural resource and environmental management, health behavioural and attitudinal changes and many others. In periods of health risks, indigenous media serve as outlets for intervening in modifying health behaviours of the rural people by creating awareness and mobilizing the public for prevention and corrective actions. Newer conceptions of development such as self-help, grassroots participation and two-way communication have made these media channels prominent in rural mobilization.

Through the use of indigenous media channels such as horns or trumpet and drama, several rural development programmes have received wide participation of the rural dwellers. Horns have been used in rural communities of Nigeria especially among the Tiv tribe of Benue State to mobilize people for rural development projects such as sanitations, farming activities and security alerts and other communal functions. Idoko (2011) also explains that the role of drama in rural communities is beyond the limits of entertainment. According to him, drama plays a central role in creating awareness and sensitizing members of the community on environmental sanitation and other rural

development projects. Because it is indigenous to the people, the communicative values of community drama are embedded in its language which is widely understood by members of such community.

Songs or oral poetry also have a very special role in communicating information of rural development value to the people. Songs play a significant role in information dissemination, especially in rural areas where they tend to replace the press and even radio (Ugande, 2007). Governments at all level are concerned about how information regarding their programmes can reach the public at large. The realization of the public attraction to songs has made governments to use oral singers for the enlightenment of the public on such programmes such as farming methods, census, literacy campaign, cultural revival and self-help projects.

Songs by Tiv oral Poet Tarker Golozo on agricultural development had tremendous influence on farming methods and participation of Tiv people in agriculture, as well as their participate in the National population census of that period. Recently, political songs of Mikel Mfater Kaha (El-Stuffy) on political trends in Tiv land are informative, educative and persuasive enough to engender political participation in Benue State and Nigeria at large. According Ugande (2007) folk singers consider themselves as development communicators who utilize the resources of their environment to pass development messages to their communities using popular entertainment media as carriers of such messages with the aim of stirring emotions in a desired direction.

## 3.3. Indigenous Media and Rural Development in Nigeria

The process of rural development is always people driven and it is all about providing what the rural masses need to enable them make a living and be comfortable in the society. Indigenous media have been used as instruments of awareness creation, attitudinal change, opinion and behavioural change campaigns in the rural areas of Nigeria. This attitudinal change by the rural dwellers towards rural health issues such as polio, immunization, HV/AIDS, Lassa fever, and many others has the potency of engendering positive rural health. Ugande (2007) notes that due to the relevance of indigenous media, they are often used for social purposes as a support to rural health programmes as well as in relation to all initiatives where conscious involvement of the rural populace is felt necessary. The productivity of rural dwellers is significantly determined by how healthy they are to engage in productive development ventures thereby justifying the popular axiom which says "health is wealth."

In Nigeria, age groups such as Ogboni, Egbe, Egungun, Oro, Agemo, Dagboulu- meet periodically to discuss village development affairs according to priorities set by the village authority. The age groups also teach the young villagers the norms of society to inculcate good values that can lead to development (Ugboaja, 1982). In the Tiv speaking area of Benue state, the Council of Chiefs holds meetings periodically at kindred levels to discuss development issues affecting their communities. The Tiv Traditional Council (the Ijir Tamen), which is the supreme traditional authority of the land is also instrumental to influencing development in the area.

Indigenous communication forms such as drama and songs have contributed immensely to promoting agricultural development in Nigeria as they mobilize rural dwellers towards adopting innovative farming practices. Arulmanikandan and Shubham (2022) point out that, the deployment of indigenous media for certain development programmes like family planning education, HIV/AIDs, etc., has proved to be a better and more advantageous participatory approach for rural development. The adoption of new farming methods can lead to higher agricultural productivity and in extension, poverty reduction in the rural areas. This would go a long way in boosting their per capita income as well as grow the rural economy. When poverty and hunger are addressed in the rural communities of Nigeria through indigenous communication approaches, the standard of living of the rural people will also improve.

Indigenous media channels such as theatre, drama and village square meetings have been used to banish ignorance, misinformation and dogmas that had affected the growth of rural communities. Through rural enlightenment campaigns on environmental issues such as sanitation, pollution, illicit fishing methods and erosion control measures among others, rural dwellers have become conscious of the ecological consequences of indulging in such acts. Indigenous media in this context, played an educational role to enable rural dwellers conform to social norms. By so doing, they have also contributed to environmental protection for rural safety and development.

Indigenous media forms have also promoted political participation and civic consciousness among rural dwellers. Political songs have the persuasive power of changing voter apathy, encouraging voter registration and voting patterns of electorates in Nigeria. In Benue State for instance, traditional songs of Mikel Mfater Kaha (El-Stuffy) and Gabon Akuhwe are couched in mass mobilization appeals that have contributed immensely to political participation and peaceful elections in Benue State and beyond. Indigenous media are political mobilization tools in the rural areas of Nigeria thereby contributing to political development in no mean measure. The song and drama division of the

government of India uses songs and others indigenous media modes to spread awareness on a number of social issues like AIDS, polio, immunization, agriculture, hygiene and nutrition which are key variables of development in any society (Mathiyazhagan, et al., 2015).

According to Wilson (1987) traditional communication gives expression to cultural and other activities of the different parts of rural communities. Through festivals for example, wide aspects of a cultural system are exposed to other cultures and greater understanding and appreciation of differences takes place. Through this, cross-fertilization takes place and the society and mankind in general becomes better off. The cultural norms and values of other societies are exchanged and integrated for social good.

### 3.4. Challenges of Indigenous Media in Rural Societies

Despite the importance of indigenous media to the rural communities of Nigeria, one cannot deny the fact that they do not have challenges which are trying to relegate them to oblivion in this modern age of technological advancements. Indigenous media like other communication and information media have their weaknesses and limitations in time and space. They are particularly deficient in simultaneous dissemination of information about developmental issues across wide and geographical dispersed population (Kalu et al., 2020). In most rural communities of Nigeria, only a small number of indigenous communication media are still functional, as their survival is dangerously threatened by the penetration of modern communication systems in the hinterlands.

The manifestation of the 'Global Village' theory of Marshal McLuhan is a challenge to indigenous media. We now have the new communication culture of electronic age that enslaves Nigerians especially the youths, to become addicts to the modern media technologies (Osho, 2010). Many people have turned away from cultural modes of communication to become willing slaves of information and communication technologies. Their addiction to ICTs has blurred their cultural imaginations thereby sacrificing their values system on the altar of modernization.

A lot of African languages are going into extinction because of the adoption of the language of our colonial masters as official language. Nigeria adopts English as the official language as part of the colonial heritage and this threatens the over 250 indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria. This has adversely affected the development of indigenous languages in Nigeria which are widely used in rural communication. Osho (2010) who decries this unfortunate trend also notes that, when the language of a people is taken away, the whole of its culture is eroded.

Another key challenge pointed out by Wilson (1987) is the absence of an appropriate language that is generally accepted and understood that can be used in traditional modes of communication. Since most Nigerian societies have one language or another as a medium of general expression along with many other (indigenous) languages, it is difficult to categorize the system using acceptable linguistic codes. In this context, strangers in the communities would be alienated from the rural communication system due to language barrier.

On his part, Anibueze (2012) contends that the problem of African communication is rooted in the village communities where groups perceived to be connected with the extra-mundane are labeled as cultists or secret societies. Such individual members are feared, stigmatized and in most cases, ex-communicated in rural communities as agents of anti-Christ. This has discouraged many rural dwellers from seeking help from the gods. In most Nigerian rural settings, villagers go to the gods for assistance in the implementation of rural projects. For instance, villagers in most rural communities approach the gods to hold or release rain for an important rural development programme to be executed. If the custodians of such tradition are stigmatized for relating with their ancestors, traditional communication system would not serve its purpose to society.

 Lack of patronage of indigenous media by the government and policy makers has affected its place of importance in rural communication. It is evident that the central authority in Nigeria undermines the traditional communication system in its information dissemination process, thereby leading to misinterpretation of information in the rural areas (Aziken & Emeni, 2010). Nigerian government places much premium on the use of mass media channels for rural development programmes at the expense of indigenous media system that are rural – oriented and ancestral in nature.

## 4. Conclusion

This paper concludes that indigenous media are potent tools for rural mobilization which enable rural dwellers to actively participate in the development of their communities. Indigenous media are rural people's rallying point to get information about development issues such as health, agricultural development, education and many others to enable them key into the programmes. The paper also concludes that indigenous media have immensely influenced

development at the grassroots in Nigeria through their viability in disseminating behavioural change messages which are aimed at reorienting the rural folks towards adopting the best practices that would engender rural development in their communities. The contribution of indigenous media in rural health promotional campaigns and political participation at the grassroots is efficacious enough to engender development, since health they say is wealth and participation as key to the actualization of progress. The paper further submits that, indigenous media are constrained by some challenges which have limited their popularity and effectiveness in rural mobilization and development efforts.

## 4.1. Recommendations

Considering the important role indigenous media play in rural mobilization and development in Nigeria, this paper advanced the following recommendations:

- Government, policy makers and development stakeholders should make it a priority to deploy indigenous media in rural development programmes for effective mobilization and participation of the rural folks in their development programmes.
- Since indigenous media have proved to be catalysts to rural development in Nigeria, government and development experts should propose a National Indigenous Media Policy, where approaches to how best to utilize indigenous media forms for rural development purposes can be discussed. This will go a long way to accord indigenous media its rightful place of importance in rural development efforts.

## Compliance with ethical standards

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The authors wish to attest and affirm that they know of no conflicts of interest in the authorship of this research.

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