UTILITY VALUE OF RADIO FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: APPRAISAL OF RADIO NIGERIA "WATCH 360" PROGRAMME

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examined the utility value of radio in addressing the twin issues of national security and sustainable development in Nigeria. The study focused on "Watch 360", a Radio Nigeria neighbor-hood watch programme created by the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) to promote national security and sustainable development. The objectives of the study were to identify the salient parts of the WATCH 360 radio programme that promote national security and sustainable development; as well as proffer solutions that will enhance the utility value of radio for national security and sustainable development. The researcher utilized the qualitative method of inquiry to appraise the potentials of the programme in fostering national security and sustainable development in the country. The Agenda setting theory provided the theoretical foundation for the study. The study found that the conceptualization, articulation, design and delivery of the programme imbues it with the knack for achieving the desired results. Therefore, it was strongly recommended that in order to achieve optimal benefits of the programme, the management of FRCN should, among others, ensure that its stations all over the country air the programme in their respective stations as well as introduce live streaming and vernacular editions in Nigeria's three major languages (Housa, Ibo and Yoruba) for better reach and greater impact.*

KEYWORDS: utility, value, radio national security, sustainable development, Nigeria, radio Nigeria, watch 360" programme

INTRODUCTION

Despite being in this era of information optimization occasioned by the advent of new media complimenting traditional mass media, a large chunk of Nigeria's population, consisting of the largely illiterate class in the rural settings, are still locked in the dark about government policies and agenda. This kind of situation leaves the country with the tragedy of a good percentage of its populace that neither understand nor appreciate government programmes in a way that will command civic followership and support. Thus, even genuine policies and programmes of government fail to achieve the desired results. A good example is the twin issues of national security and sustainable development.

National security and sustainable development are like nerve cells in the central nervous system of every nation, determining its healthiness or otherwise. Damage to either of them in the anatomy of a nation is capable of dealing a debilitating blow on the wellbeing and ultimate survival of that nation. This explains why nations all over the world recognize in their statutes the need for the delivery of national security and sustainable development to its citizenry as the very essence of good governance. Section 20 of Nigeria's 1999 constitution provides that the state shall protect and improve the environment, safeguard the water, air, land, forest and wild of Nigeria. However, it is worrisome that despite this posturing, government actions do not reflect the letters of the constitution. For instance, contrary to the reassuring impetus of this constitutional declaration, the Nigerian nation is anything but close to the delivery of good governance. Rather, the country is caught in the throes of security challenges that threaten to undermine its sovereignty. Security is critical to the development and growth of any Nation (Lawal & Oluwatoyin, 2011). More than a century since the founding of Nigeria, the country has been battling with the problem of national security despite the huge human, material and natural resources at the disposal of successive governments, a failing that is in direct negation of the principles of sustainable development. Rather than abate, the security situation in the country has been getting worse by the day. The Boko Haram insurgency has remained protracted and intractable; there have been very worrisome reports of killings and maiming by daredevil bandits in the North; incessant herders attacks and kidnappings continue across the country; growing incidents of rape nationwide and the annihilating threat of Covid-19 Pandemic. How much more weight can the nation bear before it buckles?

Essentially, the governance of every nation falls squarely on the shoulders of the three arms of government namely, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. In time, the mass media of communication have come to be acknowledged as the fourth estate of the realm, a term that was first used by Edmund Burke, an 18th century politician, to describe the press sitting in the gallery in the British parliament (Nwabueze, 2014). To Burke, the press was the most powerful of all the four estates. The mass media are as powerful today in Nigeria as they were then, being one of the basic institutions that shape the society (Nwabueze; Ibid). The pertinent question to ask at this point is, how well has the Nigerian mass media played its role of shaping the Nigerian society by ensuring that good governance based on national security and sustainable development is delivered to the people by the government? In answering the question, this paper examined the use of radio, a basic mass media form, in the facilitation of national security and sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper focuses on how "Watch 360", a programme created by (FRCN), Nigeria's foremost and biggest radio organization, can be used in the facilitation of national security and sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem
The security import of radio for security and development purposes was recorded early enough in the titanic mishap of April 14, 1912 when the radio was used to relay security distress calls about the British passenger Liner that sank after hitting an iceberg in mid-Atlantic (Kovarik, 2011).

Over the years, governments and other security conscious groups have continued to use the radio for different security purposes. Nigeria's political history is replete with evidences of radio broadcasts aimed at addressing security challenges of coup de'tats, civil unrest and rising criminality in society in a bid to stabilize societal peace and growth.

As Nigeria continues to experience security challenges in the mould of insurgencies, banditry, ritual killings, kidnap and rape cases etc. that threaten national security and sustainable development, one wonders at the continued relevance of the radio as a veritable medium and one of the means through which national security and sustainable development can be attained in Nigeria. This is the problem that this study addresses though the appraisal of the content and delivery of Radio Nigeria's security watch programme, WATCH 360.

Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study were to;
1. Ascertain the continued relevance of radio as a medium for the propagation of the ideals of national security and sustainable development.
2. Identify the salient aspects of the WATCH 360 radio programme that promotes national security and sustainable development.
3. Proffer solutions that will enhance the utility value of radio for national security and sustainable development.

Theoretical Explanation
The subject matter of this study derives its relevance from the theoretical framework of the Agenda setting theory. Proposed by Maxwell Mc Combs and Donald Shaw in 1976, the theory stipulates that the median may not tell us what to think, but they divert our mind to what to think about (Pate, in Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2013). In other words, agenda setting is the process through which the median create awareness and salience about public issues and by so doing, elevate them to the public consciousness and agenda. This theory is very relevant to this topic because, by projecting the issues in the public domain, all stakeholders will be sensitized and galvanized to seek lasting solutions to the twin challenges of National security and sustainable national development.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Radio as a Form of Mass Media
Before we situate Radio as a form of mass media, it is germane that we first understand the concept of mass media. Dennis McQuail's characterization of the mass media in his 1969 book, TOWARDS A SOCIOLOGY OF MASS COMMUNICATION, is commonly used as a framework for the study of mass media (Danesi, 2009). In the book, McQuail identifies the following as the main features of mass media: they usually require formal complex organization; they are directed towards large audiences; they are public and their content is open to everyone; audiences are heterogeneous; they establish simultaneous contact with a large number of people who live at a

distance from each other; the relationship between media personalities and audience members is mediated (i.e non direct) and the audience is part of a mass culture.

Simply put, the mass media are organs of mass communication which are used for the simultaneous dissemination of information to a large audience that is heterogeneous, anonymous and scattered in nature. These organs include newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television and now the internet. The radio possesses all the characteristic features of the mass media. Much more, the Radio functions in society like other forms of mass media and even more. One of the enduring values of radio that places it as a preferred medium over other mass media is its ability to be used even as people do things such as walking, driving, cooking, working etc (Kovarik, 2011). Besides, Radio is seen as the most cost effective means of providing information and a voice to all members of society including illiterate and marginalized sections on a wide range of issues, national security and sustainable development issues inclusive. In playing this role, the radio performs the agenda setting function of pitch forking government policies and programmes such as National Security and Sustainable Development to the front burner of public awareness, consciousness and discourse necessary for policy success.

National Security and Insecurity in Nigeria
National security is a broad concept which deals with the responsibility of the state to preserve the safety of its citizens at home and abroad and the preservation of the integrity of the borders and assets of the country, including the physical assets such as infrastructure and the economy as well as the intangible assets such as national prestige and the political ability to project power and authority" (Akinfekeye, 2008). Invariably, insecurity in every sense is a direct negation of the concept and true letter of national security. Talking about national security in today's Nigeria immediately conjures the fearful face of Boko Haram, the dreaded Islamic sect and harbinger of insecurity, whose name has become synonymous with serial bombing in Nigeria. The activities of Boko Haram insurgents have become a source of worry and concern not just for Nigeria but for the international community as well. This situation has become more compounded with the growing notoriety and equally worrisome activities of bandits in the North; incidents of fulani herders attacks, rape cases and spates of kidnappings across the country and the annihilating threat of the coronavirus pandemic. Nigeria's National Security is presently facing serious challenges to the point that her corporate existence as a united entity is under serious threat. The feeling of insecurity among the people is so palpable that many now murmur in the streets that if soldiers are unable to protect them from the lingering security crises, they would resort to self-help. Truth be told, this self-help process has already begun. Examples of such outfits according to a This day report of January 13, 2020 as exemplified by the Amotekun security initiative in the West. Evidently, Nigeria's security has been long compromised. The citizens live in fear; infrastructure worth billions of Naira are being destroyed; there is hardly anything left of our National integrity even as the political ability to project power and authority appears lacking in the country's political leadership.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Nigeria's National Security problems have spurned over the years, threatening the Nation's ability to develop itself, promote its cherished values and legimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its people. Therefore, to escape the vicious circle of Nigeria's security problems and the dangers they portend for sustainable national development, the Nigerian nation must begin to see national security and sustainable development in the definition of Annan (2000) which states that;

In relation to nation states, Alemoh (2017) sees sustainable development as the attainment of development goals by a country which would stand the test of time by serving the interest of both the present and future generations of the citizens.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Sustainable development has been severally defined over the years by scholars and relevant agencies. Asemah (2011) defines sustainable development as the process of maximising the use of available resources in order to ensure the longterm wellbeing of present and future beneficiaries human security is far for more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential.

However, the most frequently quoted definition is the one from, OUR COMMON FUTURE, also known as the Brundtland Report. The 1987 report by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defines Sustainable Development (SD) as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations. The basic pillars of the report are socio-economic development and environmental protection at the local national, regional and global levels. Embedded in this definition are two key concepts namely:

- The concept of needs, in particular, the essential needs of the worlds' poor, to which overriding priority should be given.
- The idea of limitation imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environments ability to meet present and future needs.

Broadly speaking, sustainable development is a systems approach to growth and development and to manage natural, produced and social capital for the welfare of their own and future generations. One of the obvious emphasis of SD is the need to see the world as a system that connects world citizens in space and time such that the security challenges in Nigeria affects the global community just as the effects of challenges today will affect the socio-economic and political fortunes of future generations of Nigerians. Gboyega (2003) captures development as an idea that embodies all attempt to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in national wellbeing of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future. It also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. Furthermore, it

seeks to impose personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances. A look at the indices of development vis a vis the reality of the Nigerian experience would show that Nigeria is hard up in delivering even the basics of life like food sufficiency, healthcare, security, electricity, water, education etc. It is this failing on the part of government to provide the basics for its citizens that Professor Wole Soyinka is credited to have described the present generation of Nigerians as "a wasted generation". How a generation that cannot fend for herself, can fend for the sustenance of future generations remains a rhetorical puzzle. Ironically, Nigeria is not without development plans. As Aremu (2003) put it, Nigeria seems the only country where virtually all notions and models of development plans have been experimented without success. According to Ogwumike (1995), two years after independence, the first National Development Plan was formulated between 1962 and 1968; the fourth plan was 1981 to 1985; the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP); Vision 2010; the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); vision 2020, SURE-P, and a host of others including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) programmes to which the Nigeria is subsumed. Unfortunately, these development strategies have failed to yield positive results.

The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil resulted in the adoption by more than 178 Nations of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Principle 8 of this declaration states that to achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, states should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies. Principle 10 advocates that states shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. This mandate of making information widely available is the main point of this paper. Pate, in Nwabueze (2011) affirms that the media are crucial in the achievement of society wide objectives, be it in the area of social, health, infrastructural, political, educational, security or sustainable development. The mass media constitutes one of the most important institutions of socialization and infact, the major cultural industry responsible for the distribution of ideas in the Nigerian society.

One of the enduring values of radio that places it as a preferred medium over other mass media is its ability to be used even as people do things such as walking, driving, cooking, working etc. (Kovarik, 2011). Beside, radio is seen as the most cost effective means of providing information and a voice to all members of society including the illiterate and marginalized sections on a wide range of issues, national security and sustainable development issues inclusive.

"WATCH 360", National Security and Sustainable Development in Nigeria.
The salient point of Principal 10 FRCN was established to act as the mouth piece of government in transmission of government information, policies and programmes to the generality of the people. This explains why the corporation established the domestic radio network known as Radio Nigeria and the Voice of Nigeria International Radio Service to cater for the international audience. Hence, the establishment of Radio Nigeria is a direct fulfillment of the mandate to create public

awareness and encourage public participation in government programmes and policies. "WATCH 360" is a neighborhood watch security programme on the Radio Nigeria FM Networks with the mandate of uplifting the people and uniting the nation (FRCN2013). The programme was founded on the philosophy that, security is the first order of the state without which there can be no peace, no law and order and no national development. It goes on to assert that security is the duty of all Nigerians who must take their destiny in their hands, determined to face the future with confidence, discipline, patriotism and demonstrable honesty. Interestingly, this philosophical thinking behind the creation of "WATCH 360" is in tandem with certain scholarly submission that National Security is everybody's business and the responsibility of every citizen. (Akinfeleye, 2008).

When president De Gaulle of France asked President J.F. Kennedy of USA, how he can control his country if he does not control television (Orhewere and Kur, 2004) he was referring to the media dictum that, whoever controls the media controls the mind. This much is evident in the specific objectives for which the "WATCH 360" programme of Radio Nigeria was created which include: to focus on the role of citizens, the various arms of government and the relevant security agencies in ensuring a safe and secure Nigeria; to focus on security challenges facing the Nation and proffer solutions; to raise awareness and educate people on community watch and surveillance to ensure a safe and secure environment; to encourage relevant security agencies, departments and NGOs to take action on the peace and security of Nigeria and to promote peaceful co-existence (FRCN, 2013).

From the foregoing, it is deduceable that the programme content of "WATCH 360" is richly laced with educative and informative materials that are deliberately designed to inculcate national security values in the citizens that are relevant for sustainable development in Nigeria. This explains why the target audience of "WATCH 360" is non-discriminatorily directed at everybody. The programme was packaged as a 30 minutes magazine programme to be broadcast at 5:30pm every Sunday to the nooks and crannies of Nigeria, the programme is divided into two segments namely, the news segment and the interview segment. While the news segment is pre-occupied with bringing the audience information on security happenings around the country, the interview segment features resource persons who provide information on security, promote peace, security consciousness and proffer solutions to the security challenges in the country. Targeted resource persons include personnel of various security agencies, security experts and persons with relevant knowledge, experience and information on security.

As stated earlier in the paper, the importance of this programme in addressing Nigeria's national security challenges at this point cannot be overemphasized. Nigeria's national security at the moment is standing on clay feet just as her developmental programmes are in shambles. This calls for serious measures to address the challenges. A programme like "WATCH 360" offers a veritable communication channel to facilitate peace building mechanism, national integration and sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

According to media history, radio played a major role in the titanic disaster of April 14, 1912 when the British passenger liner sank after hitting an iceberg in mid-Altantic (Kovarik, 2011). More than a century after, radio remains relevant for monitoring distress signals and making distress calls in security situations. This is especially so for tailor-made, purpose-driven programmes like "WATCH 360", which is modeled to solve Nigeria's specific security problems like Boko-Haram insurgency; banditary in the North; illegal oil bunkering activities in the Niger Delta Region; growing incidents of rape cases, kidnappings and ritual killings across the country; the annihilating threat of covid-19 pandemic and other strains of security challenges confronting the Nigerian nation. To succeed in the delivery of its mandate, "WATCH 360" deserves government and public support. Afterall, there can be no sustainable development where there is no national security (FRCN, 2013).

Recommendations

To maximize the benefits of the FRCN "WATCH 360" programme for National security and sustainable development, the paper recommends as follows:

One, that the authorities of FRCN should consider remodeling the programme to a live streaming broadcast to engender greater public participation through phone-in device.

Two, that the FRCN management should also introduce a repeat, recorded version of the programme to achieve improved frequency of broadcast and wider reach.

Three, the FRCN programme should encourage greater grassroot participation by introducing local language editions in at least Nigeria's three major languages (Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba) to accommodate the largely illiterate population.

Four, that security resource persons should support the programme by making themselves available for the programme in the interest of National Security. The bottle neck of clearance from superior officers before security/personnel/guests can appear on the programme should be eschewed in the name of national interest.

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