

LISTENERS' PERCEPTION OF "COMMUNITY VOICES" OF REDEMPTION FM 101.5 ON
DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS OF AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

Radio has over the years proven to be an effective medium of mass communication and as well, a powerful tool used in ensuring the development of nations. The success of radio in facilitating attitude and behavioural changes has been tied to the medium's affordability quality and its ability to transcend the boundary of space and time and also leap across illiteracy barriers. However, the effectiveness of the medium in aiding the development of societies depends not solely on its inherent qualities, but also on how it is used and the purpose it is used for in terms of programme content. This study examined listeners' perception of Community Voices Programme on Redemption FM 101.5 in developing rural areas in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study included finding out listeners' awareness of Community Voices programme on Redemption FM 101.5; ascertaining the programme's influence in the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State and; determining how listeners participation in the programme contributes to the development of rural areas in the state. The study adopted the survey research design where 384 respondents were drawn as sample size from the population of 7,200,000. The development media theory and the participatory development theory formed the framework for this study. Findings from the study revealed that Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributes to the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State. Also, it was revealed that audience perception influences participation in the programme thereby fostering participatory development in the state. The study concludes among many other things that Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 plays a crucial role in the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State; listeners participation in the programme points to the adoption of a development pattern suitable for rural development which is anchored on self-reliance and people participation. Based on these findings, the study recommended that radio stations in Akwa Ibom State should introduce more programmes aimed at the betterment of livelihood of the rural people; that radio programmes for rural development should consistently discourse topics affecting the rural people and as well follow up on the pressing development needs of rural areas until goals are achieved.

KEY WORDS:

Listeners, Perception, Community Voices, Redemption FM, Rural Area, Development, Akwa Ibom State

INTRODUCTION

The reciprocal effect of the mass media points to the interactive relationship between the media and the subject being covered. When a person or an event gets media attention, it influences the way the person acts or the way the event functions. Media coverage often increases self-consciousness, which affects our actions. Affirming this notion, Dominick (2010) and Abdul (2016) agree that the mass media constitute both the “cause” and “effect” of development where “cause” is the mass media programme in terms of disseminated media message and “effect” is the response to the stimuli of messages. However, Abdul (2016) avers that although the mass media play a powerful role in the development of any society, it cannot be viewed as an active change agent since it only act as a mirror or reflection of the society.

Broadcast media messages have been known to influence the opinion, attitude and even behavioural patterns of audiences. Radio, which is an essential medium of mass communication, has over the years proven to be a powerful tool in ensuring development of countries. Some scholars, while appraising the role of radio in development, hold a similar view that its effectiveness depends not only on its intrinsic qualities, but more importantly on how it is used and for what purposes it is used. Radio has been identified as the most effective medium of mass communication because of its ability to transcend the boundary of space and time, and also leap across illiteracy barriers. Its programmed contents when skillfully crafted and broadcast, brings about effective communication with the mass audience. Lateef (2022) asserts that radio promotes economic development, stimulates political participation and arouses national consciousness and unity among listeners.

According to Anaeto & Anaeto (2010), development is a widely participatory process of social change in a society intended to bring about social and material advancement for the majority of people through gaining greater control over their environment. Rural development is therefore a subset and an important aspect of national development. The rural area refers to the countryside with serene atmosphere and a fervor of cultural and traditional outlook that cannot be obtained, seen or felt in the hustle and bustle of city life (Anaeto & Anaeto, 2010).

Adaobi (2012) avers that development cannot occur without communication; thus, radio being a medium of mass communication serves as the channel for the broadcast of marketing information especially in the development of rural areas. Radio engages in development communication—the use of programme contents in reporting, publicizing and promoting development at all levels in the society.

The increasing availability of new media technologies like mobile and smart phones have also made it possible for listeners to constantly participate in the development of the various communities through radio interactive programmes for development. With such penetration the people can report their needs, as well as contribute to the advancement of various rural areas. Although there exist different kinds of such radio programmes broadcasted across the seventeen (17) radio stations operating in Akwa Ibom state, rural areas in the state are still bedeviled with enormous developmental challenges, leading to the questions of how effective radio interactive programmes for development like the “Community Voices”

programme on Redemption FM 101.5, are in meeting the development needs and aspirations of the citizens.

Statement of the Problem

Sustainable rural development is vital to the economic, social and environmental viability of every nation. In many developing nations, the rural dwellers account for the largest part of the population. The International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD (2024) reports that out of an estimated global population of 8.2 billion people, 45 percent of these people live in the rural areas of developing countries and are disproportionately poor. In Nigeria, the rural areas constitute about 80 percent of the entire population (Adaobi, 2012).

The situation above underscores the importance of developing the rural areas in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria at large. Investing in the rural people provides a long-term solution to so many problems facing our country today, ranging from hunger to poverty, youth unemployment, forced migration, among others; all of which have deep roots in rural areas; and can be significantly improved through inclusive rural development.

However, inclusive rural development cannot be said to take place without effective communication channeled towards it. In Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria and many other developing nations at large, it is quite notable that rural communities are largely faced with many of such challenges mentioned in the paragraph above. These areas are largely bereft of environmental protection, rural infrastructure, health and education which are all critical to sustainable rural development and the enhancement of national well-being.

In Akwa Ibom State, there exist numerous media channels, some of which are committed to the development needs and aspirations of the rural people, one of such channels is the radio. There exists a total of seventeen (17) radio stations operating in different cities across the state (Wikipedia, 2024); with a good number of these radio stations committed to relaying interactive programmes for rural development across the state. With this in place, it is expected that development will be triggered in rural areas across the state. It is against this backdrop that this study sets out to empirically determine listeners' perception of "Community Voices" of Redemption FM 101.5 on driving development in rural areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to;

- i. find out Listeners' awareness of Community Voices programme on Redemption FM 101.5;
- ii. find out listeners' perception of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 in the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State; and
- iii. determine how listeners' participation in Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributes to the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent are radio listeners in Akwa Ibom State aware of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5?
- ii. How do listeners perceive Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 in the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State?
- iii. How has listeners participation in Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributed to development rural areas in Akwa Ibom State?

Literature Review

Concept of Development: The Paradigm Shift

The old dominant paradigm of development viewed the concept purely in terms of economic growth. Oluwadamilare (2018) maintains that through the late 1960s until about the 1970s, the definitions of development centered on the Gross National Product (GNP) or, per capita income of the total population. Affirming this, Soola (2002) maintains that development was perceived in purely quantitative terms—Gross National Product (GNP), per capita income, high technology, mass production, urbanization and massive investment in mass media infrastructure, among other factors. This classification was recommended as the panacea for the deficiency and suffering resulting from underdevelopment. In line with this, Salawu (2008) states that the general assumption was based on the benefits of economic advancement concentrated in the metropolitan centers; and believed to eventually trickle down to the rural areas.

However, Oluwadamilare (2018) avers that the old or dominant paradigm of development represents the Western model, designed and packaged as a ‘development-made-simple’ remedy for the perceived backwardness of the underdeveloped nations of the world. However, African countries have been cautioned on imitating the patterns of development of the industrialized countries, rather, they should adopt development patterns suited to African indigenous traditional and cultural which is anchored on self-reliance, people participation and faith in people’s ability to learn and change.

The new model recognizes the peoples’ values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions and their societal needs as components in development. The new paradigm shifts emphasis of development goals towards:

- i. Equality of the distribution of socio-economic benefits, information, resources, wealth, etc.;
- ii. popular participation in self-development planning and execution, usually accompanied by the decentralization of these activities to the village level;
- iii. self-reliance and independence in development with an emphasis upon the potential of local resource; and
- iv. integration of traditional system with modern system, so that modernization is a synchronization of old and new ideas, with the exact mixture somewhat different in each locale.

Development must therefore permeate the entire spectrum and strata of rural community, touching on the lives of the poorest of the poor, lifting them up from the abyss of poverty, ignorance, disease, squalor, human rights abuses, and similar deprivations (Oluwadamilare, 2018).

Rural Development

Rural development was traditionally centered on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry. However, changes in global production networks and increased urbanization have changed the character of rural areas. Increasingly, rural tourism, niche manufacturers, and recreation have replaced resource extraction and agriculture as dominant economic drivers (Ward and Brown, 2009). The need for rural communities to approach development from a wider perspective has created more focus on a broad range of development goals.

Rural development, Asemah (2011) notes, is used to denote the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighbourhoods, countryside and remote villages. It is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas, often relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas (Ward and Brown, 2009). Asemah, Anum & Edegoh (2013) present rural development as a process of socio-economic change, involving the transformation of agrarian society, in order to reach a common set of development goals, based on the capacities and the needs of the people. To Asemah, Anum & Edegoh (2013), rural development is a strategy that is designed to improve the economic and social conditions of a specific group of people—the rural people. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest, among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. Rural development in general, is used to denote the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in rural areas, countryside and remote villages. Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) see rural development as interventions aimed at improved productivity, increased employment/incomes for the target groups, as well as, minimum acceptable levels of food, shelter, education, health and housing.

Rural development involves programmes aimed at the social and economic development of the rural area. These programmes are usually executed using the bottom-up approaches, PRA- Participatory Rural Appraisal, RRA- Rapid Rural Appraisal, Working With People (WWP), among others (Ward and Brown, 2009). Education, entrepreneurship, physical infrastructure, and social infrastructure all play an important role in developing rural areas. Rural development is characterized by its emphasis on locally produced economic development strategies. It aims at finding ways to improve rural lives with the participation of rural people themselves, so as to meet the required needs of rural communities. As such, rural people themselves have to participate in their sustainable rural development.

The purpose of rural development as put forward by Asema (2011) are:

- i.** Improved quality and standard of life for rural people;
- ii.** provision of social facilities such as good roads, electricity and regular power supply;
- iii.** stimulate economic activities and growth in the community;

- iv. enhance the food production capacity of the rural farmers to make food easily available'
- v. to promote and ensure productive employment for rural dwellers
- vi. to provide facilities for education and promote literacy programmes; and
- vii. to improve the economic conditions of the rural dwellers and thus, reduce the disparities between the rural and urban dwellers.

Rural Development Efforts in Nigeria

Rural development is a subset and an important part of national development. In Nigeria for instance, Simwa (2022) reports that since the 1960s various governmental strategies have been implemented to foster the development of the rural areas. He further asserts that subsequent governments have implemented different policies in an attempt to develop the rural areas and alleviate the poverty rate that has become a prominent decadence in such areas. The first National Development plan spanned between the years 1962–1968, with agriculture being the major priority. The major objective was developing and expanding the production and export of cash crops. But this plan only provided 42% of the capital budget to Agriculture. In 1970, the second national development plan was launched by General Yakubu Gowon and it lasted until 1974. Its focus was on balancing the difference between rural and urban development while making an attempt to rectify some of the shortcomings that trailed the first development plan. The Third National Development plan spanned between 1975 and 1980. It made bigger and more ambitious investment programmes in various projects than the previous two. Coupled with several macroeconomic projections

Among the enacted agricultural and rural development programmes in Nigeria according to Lawal-Adebowale (2022) were:

- i. Agricultural development programmes
- ii. Agricultural support services
- iii. Rural infrastructure development programme
- iv. Agricultural-based financial support services
- v. Structural adjustment programme
- vi. Mass mobilization for socio-economic development
- vii. Human capacity development and empowerment scheme
- viii. Poverty alleviation programmes
- ix. Rural development funds

Radio for Rural Development

Radio programme targeted at rural development serve as sources of cultural, political, health, agricultural, educational and enlightenment for the rural people, guiding them towards self-actualization and national development. The use of radio in rural areas have been reported to bring about positive behavioural change. Yusuf (2016) avers that much of the failure that attends government mass-oriented programme are traceable to the fact that policy makers at the national level fail to utilize this powerful and credible medium to drive home their programme.

Radio has over the years contributed to the development of both rural and urban areas. Abdul (2016) views radio as the medium of mass communication by which people of the Third World can be influenced. Also, scholars like Akinfeleye (2008); Dominick (2010) and Abdul (2016) are of the agreement that, radio being a mass communication medium constitutes both “cause” and “effect” of development where “cause” is the mass media programme in terms of broadcast media messages and “effects” is the response to the stimuli of messages.

Asemah (2011) avers that of all the mass media generally available to Africans, radio has proven to be the most widespread, accessible and because of its special qualities; a major force in bringing about development in the lives of the people. Issues of development are aired to the audience in the form of various programme, thereby exposing individuals to happenings in and around their society by only listening to broadcast programme (Asemah, Anum & Edegoh, 2013). Radio is easily accessible and affordable, easily understood and accepted. It does not demand any complexity in broadcasting or listening. It can be used or listened to anytime and anywhere. The unique nature of radio is such that it appears to be one medium of mass communication that everyone can easily identify with (Asemah et al, 2013). Asemah (2011) states that radiobrings stimulus and competitions within families, thereby, grooming people who will contribute positively to the process of development.

Yusuf (2016) affirms that radio, if well managed and fully operated provides continuous flow of educational information on all aspects that affect the lives of rural communities and also arouse their awareness with a view to changing what is detrimental to their lives. Radio has certain advantages in localizing the rural development effort. It is a relatively inexpensive medium when compared with television. Radion allows for creating local stations that serve a relatively limited area with homogenous language, culture and interests. Radio programme reinforce local values threatened by dominant groups anxious to develop a marginal area or group. Local stations, broadcasting in local languages, contribute to the solution of local problems and provide a voice for their audiences through a more appropriate feedback mechanism.

Radio proves a powerful tool in assisting in the development process of countries. However, its effectiveness, McAnany (1973) notes, depends not only on its intrinsic qualities but more importantly on how it is used and for what purposes it is used. Asemah, Anum & Edegoh (2013), assert that communication role in authentic rural development is that of providing access to information from the urban areas where modern ideas would be diffused to rural sectors, thus, motivating and mobilizing the rural populace to accept and react favourably to those new ideas. Radio helps to achieve development, both in the rural and urban areas, as issues of development are aired to the audience in the form of various programme and individuals are exposed to happenings in and around their society, through listening to programme. Radio has therefore been found to be one of the most effective media of transforming an under-developed society to a developed polity.

In Nigeria, radio stations have been used to relay special programme aimed at promoting rural development, a good example is the Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5.

Perception and Radio Listenership

According to Amodu (2006), perception is how we gather and interpret information from the world around us. Since we constantly gather and interpret information from our environment, perception, simply has to do with exposure, attention and interpretation. The perception process includes the selection of stimuli passing through our perceptual filters, which are organized into our existing structures and patterns, and are then interpreted based on previous experiences. What a person perceives depends not only on the energy charges transmitted from the physical world through his sense organs, but also on his experiences. His expectations or wants is used to seeing some things more than others; hence, the less information he gets, the more he supplies from his expectations, needs and habit. Perception is selective, organizational, interpretative and defensive. Anaeto, Onabajo & Osife (2008) identifies two types of influences on individuals' perception:

- i. **Structural Influence:** this comes from the physical aspects of the stimuli to which we are being exposed
- ii. **Functional Influence:** these are the psychological factors that influence perception, thus introducing some subjectivity into the process.

Radio broadcast audience are referred to as listeners. They are the individuals for which radio programme as well as messages are planned, produced and delivered. Consequently, they are the reason for the existence and sustenance of every broadcast organization across the globe (Apata & Azeez, 2019). Ajaebgu, Akintayo & Akinjiyan (2015) note that majority of the population listen to radio regularly especially adults and young ones; with many them becoming loyal to their favourite stations, tuning on to them for a long period of time. Listeners use and relate to radio in a very different way compared to other media. This is because radio audiences are made up of people who are different from each other in a diverse way, some of which could be politically, economically, culturally, educationally, psychologically, religiously, intellectually, etc. The wide diversity in backgrounds, behaviours, attitudes, skills and opinion; Sale, Bappayo & Abubakar (2018) note, makes audience's perception of radio messages different.

Radio listeners often perceive and interpret radio messages they receive to produce a meaningful experience of the world around them. Perception is the interpretation attached to cognitions. Sale, Bappayo & Abubakar (2018) describe perception as the identification, arrangement and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment. They further opine that perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world.

Listeners tend to pay attention to information or situation that is salient. Saliency is the degree to which something attracts our attention in a particular context. The thing attracting our attention can be abstract, like a concept, or concrete, like an object. The degree of saliency depends on three features which are: things that are visually or aurally stimulating; things that meet our needs or interests; and lastly, our expectations affect what we find salient.

Methodology

The research method used for this study was the survey. This method studies both large and small population by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover relative importance, incidence, distribution and interrelationships of certain variables (Ufot, 2016).

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised residents of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. According to the National Population Commission figures of 2006 projected to 2023, the population of Akwa Ibom stands at 7,200,000. Thus, the population for the study was 7,200,000.

Sample Size

The study adopted the Philip Meyer's recommendation for selecting sample size as adapted by Okon, Mboho & Umoren (2023). With the population of Akwa Ibom State standing at 7,200,000 as at 2023; Meyer recommends that a sample size of 384 be used.

Sampling Procedure

The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents from the three Senatorial Districts of Akwa Ibom State. The state is made up of 31 local government areas with Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District having nine local government areas; Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District having 10 local government areas while Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District has 12 local government areas. Using a simple proportion, a total of 112 respondents representing 29% were polled from Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial Districts; from Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, 123 respondents representing 32% of the population were selected while 149 respondents representing 38% of the population were polled from Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.

The study adopted the purposive sample to select respondents who listen to "Community Voices" programme on Redemption FM 101.5; with a fair understanding of the concept of rural development. Idiong, Idiong & Udokah (2018) assert that purposive sampling technique is most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain where knowledgeable experts are involved.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The structured questionnaire constituted close-ended questions designed to elicit information from the respondents. The design took cognizance of the fact that, the respondents may not have enough time to express their opinion in writing, hence, a closed-ended questionnaire format. The questionnaire had questions divided into two sections. Section 'A' had five (5) questions which bordered on respondents' personal data, while second part (section B) with twenty (20) questions interrogated the core issues of the research using a five-point Likert Scale.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data were computed and analyzed in tables using simple percentages and weighted mean score (WMS) based on a five-point Likert Scale. The responses were weighted as

follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5points; Agree (A) = 4points; Undecided (U) = 3points; Disagree (D) = 2points; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1point. From the computation, WMS is 3.0 (5+4+3+2+1÷5). The mean score of 3.00 was used as the basis for decision on the responses to each item. Any mean score which is equal to or more than 3.00 is positive and accepted while any mean score that is less than 3.00 is considered negative and rejected. Also, the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Coefficient.

Results

A total of 384 copies the questionnaire was issued out to the respondents, out of the 384 copies of the questionnaire that were administered, 365 were completed correctly and returned while 19 copies could not be retrieved. The return rate was 95%, thus, computation was done on the basis of 365 returned copies of the questionnaire.

National Diploma (ND) and National Certificate of Education (NCE) were 87 respondents representing 24%. A total of 147 respondents accounting for 40% were holders of First Degree and above.

**Table 1:
 Respondents’ level of awareness of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 in Akwa Ibom State**

Item	Questionnaire Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	N	WMS	Decision
6	I am aware of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5	152	122	9	51	32	1,201	365	3.2	Positive/ Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2024

The data on Table 6 shows a positive weighted mean score of 3.2 on the level of awareness of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5. This indicates that radio listeners in Akwa Ibom State are aware of the programme “Community Voices” broadcasted on Redemption FM 101.5

Table 2: Respondents’ opinions on whether or not Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 affect rural areas development in Akwa Ibom State

Item	Questionnaire Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	N	WMS	Decision
7	I perceive that Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributes to the development of rural areas in AKS	110	188		46	21	1,415	365	3.8	Positive/ Accepted
8	Community Voices of	93	194	12	39	27	1,382	365	3.7	Positive/

	Redemption FM 101.5 has contributed to improved quality and standard of living in rural areas of AKS									Accepted
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Source: Field Survey 2024

The data presented on Table 7 above shows a positive weighted mean score of 3.8 on respondents’ perception of Community Voices of Redemption on driving development in rural areas in Akwa Ibom State. Also, respondents’ opinions on the contribution of Community Voices to the quality and standard of living in rural areas recorded a positive weighted mean score of 3.7. Summarily, listeners’ responses on Table 7 here reveal that interactive radio programme for rural development; Community Voices on Redemption FM 101.5 contributes to the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: Respondents’ opinions on whether or not listeners’ participation in Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributes to the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom

Item	Questionnaire Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	N	WMS	Decision
16	Listeners’ Participation on Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 has fostered participatory rural development in AKS	176	105	2	50	32	1,442	365	3.9	Positive/ Accepted

State

Source: Field Survey 2024

The data in Table 8 indicates a positive weighted mean score of 3.9 on whether or not listeners’ participation in Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributes to the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State. This indicates that listeners’ participation on Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 brings about participatory rural development in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings is presented as follows:

Research question 1: To what extent are radio listeners in Akwa Ibom State aware of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5?

The data on Table 6 above shows a positive weighted mean score of 3.2 on the level of awareness of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 by listeners in Akwa Ibom State. The implication of this finding indicates that Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 is

popular programme among listeners in Akwa Ibom. This result corroborates earlier assertions that of all the mass media generally available to Africans, radio has proven to be the most widespread and accessible medium (Asemah, 2011); majority of the population listen to radio regularly especially adults and young ones; with many them becoming loyal to their favourite stations, tuning on to them for a long period of time (Ajaebgu, Akintayo & Akinjiyan, 2015).

Research question 2: How do listeners perceive Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 in the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State?

The data presented on Table 7 above shows a positive weighted mean score of 3.8 on respondents' perception of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 on driving development in rural areas in Akwa Ibom State. Also, respondents' opinions on the contribution of Community Voices to the quality and standard of living in rural areas recorded a positive weighted mean score of 3.7. The implication of this finding indicates that Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributes to rural area development in Akwa Ibom State. This result supports earlier studies that the perception process includes the selection of stimuli passing through our perceptual filters, which are organized into our existing structures and patterns, and are then interpreted based on previous experiences (Amodu, 2006). The finding further corroborates earlier assertion that radio plays a crucial role in achieving positive attitudinal change in the populace (Asema, Anum & Edegoh, 2013); and can be more effectively used in disseminating messages that will impact positively on national development (Akoja, 2016).

Research question 3: How has listeners participation in Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributed to development rural areas in Akwa Ibom State?

The data in Table 8 indicates a positive weighted mean score of 3.9 on whether or not listeners' participation in Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 contributes to the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State. This indicates that listeners' participation on Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 brings about participatory rural development in Akwa Ibom State. This finding corroborates earlier assertion that development is a widely participatory process of social change in a society intended to bring about social and material advancement for the majority of people through gaining greater control over their environment. (Anaeto & Anaeto, 2010). The result further corroborates the assertion of Akpan (2012) where he argued that centralized development decision making, often involving city-based 'experts', is generally too detached from local contextual realities. It is frequently encumbered by a 'planning arrogance, where technocrats think they know best what is in the interest of people at the grassroots levels.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is hereby inferred that Community Voices an interactive radio programme for rural development on Redemption FM 101.5 plays a crucial role in the development of rural areas in Akwa Ibom State, yet shouldn't be relied upon as a total change agent because it only act as a mirror or reflection of the society; and that listeners participation in this programme points to the adoption of a development pattern

suitable for community development which is anchored on self-reliance and people participation, than relying on the centralized development approach which often involves city-based 'experts' making development decisions at the center for the rural people. The study also concludes that audience perception of Community Voices of Redemption FM 101.5 in a positive light point to the significant role the programme plays in ensuring the development of local communities across the state, thus building goodwill in the minds of the listener.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Radio stations in Akwa Ibom State should introduce more programmes aimed at the betterment of livelihood of the rural people, with more emphasis on development indicators such as: human capital, health, water supply, good road network, among other key sectors lacking in the rural areas across the state.
- ii. Radio programmes for rural development should consistently discourse topics affecting the rural people and as well follow up on the pressing development needs of rural areas until goals are achieved. By achieving results, the programme will build goodwill in the minds of listeners; this will in turn translate to increased and continuous listenership and participation by audience members.

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