EXAMINING THE NTA AND AIT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBILITY IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the impact of television as an instrument of economic development in Delta State and, how economic development programmes have impacted on the development of Delta people and society, through television involving AIT and NTA specifically. To achieve this objective, the researchers adopted survey research method to gather necessary data using four hundred (400) respondents but only three hundred and seventy four (374) copies of questionnaire were retrieved from respondents. To this end, the researchers self-administered copies of questionnaire to obtain primary data. The result showed that television is an important instrument of economic development and the audience prefer using the private owned medium (AIT) in accessing economic development programmes. Television has played a great role in promoting economic development in Delta State through AIT and NTA and these development programmes aired regularly in the broadcast stations have influenced development in the State which in turn has helped to improve the lives of people. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Development Agencies and the Government should use more of television contents to promote economic development programmes in line with media function anchored on the Development theory of the press.
Key Words: NTA, AIT, Economic, Economic Development, Responsibility and Delta State.

Introduction

The economic, political and social development of television and radio were not supported by any system of the mass media network before the introduction of television and radio in Nigeria. In the past, oral and face-to-face communications were the methods used in communication. However, through new communication media, very large steps have been taken in the mass dissemination and sharing of information to the Nigerian people. These new communication media have helped to better our lives with radio and television being the most effective.

In the development process of a country, the mass media plays a very crucial role. It is seen as the medium of communication with the ability of reaching diverse audience at the same time with uniform message. They cover all manners of issues/discussions, economic, political, social messages, etc. (Soola, 2004).

The media perform three major social functions to the public, these include, education, information and entertainment. This is also appropriate to the economic development pursuit of the country. In order to undertake certain processes of economic development, the media inform

development agencies, leaders of society and society in general of the weight and necessity to partake in educating, informing and entertaining the public (Aniebona, 2005).

Television is a special platform used to improve and combine picture, sound and motion to the general public and goes a long way in compelling them to accept what they view. The amount of time audience spend watching television has been one of the existing issues often discussed about television and it seems to be more-stronger than other channels of communication due to its audio-visual quality. Individuals in the society rely solely on television for latest updates and developments during crisis, disaster, pandemic, etc. which could lead to economic non-development in a country.

AIT which is one of the television stations to be considered in this study performs its duty on Free to Air stations in twenty-four states of Nigeria, and it is the largest private network. AIT operational headquarters is located in Abuja, and also broadcast via satellite. NTA which is another television station of analysis in this study is owned and managed by the Nigerian government with stations in different parts of the country.

Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)

Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is owned and managed by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It has the widest accessibility with stations in all states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja; and Asaba, the Delta State capital. NTA is viewed as a mouthpiece of the government. It has enjoyed ownership of the Nigerian airspace for a long time until the deregulation of the airwave in 1992. Currently, the NTA has over 101 stations in State capitals and towns of Nigeria as at 2021.

Africa Independent Television (AIT)

Africa Independent Television (AIT) came into private broadcasting after Galaxy Television in 1994. The station is owned by late high Chief Raymond Dokpesi of Daar Communications. It has a vast spread to some parts of the country, including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Its headquarters is in Lagos. AIT is also located in Delta State, and by the virtuous of its cable satellite transmission, AIT signals can now been received anywhere in Nigeria, including Asaba and elsewhere in Delta.

These stations strive in various ways to organize and broadcast various economic development programmes, such as *Kakaaki, Goodmornig Show* and *Politics Today* which help in enlightening viewers about economic development in different parts of Delta State. It is against this background that this study examined the role of broadcast programmes on economic development within the area of study.

Statement of the Problem

Television is a vehicle for social change and a prior condition for sustainable development intervention.Television is seen as an attractive method used to promote economic development and prevent socio-economic problems (Wallack, 1981). Information is a pilot of development but can only become worthy if it could be accessed (Herselman, 2006). People who reside in undeveloped areas or villages require adequate information about economic development programmes from the media to enable them gather information, learn and communicate with others, understand their economy and the economic growth of their nation, and television has the potential to deliver on all these. There is the need, therefore, to conduct a research in order to

examine the role of television's (specifically, AIT and NTA broadcast stations') economic development programmes in promoting economic development in Delta State.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out how economic development programmes aired by AIT and NTA influence development of Delta State.

2. To determine the level of exposure to economic development programmes aired by AIT and NTA among residents in Delta State.

Research Questions

From the objectives above, the following research questions were set;

1. How do economic development programmes aired by AIT and NTA influence development in Delta State?
2. What is the level of exposure of residents to economic development programmes aired by AIT and NTA?

Review of Literature and Theoretical underpinning

Development covers a wide scope of human endeavours. Its definition is continuously changing. The past years, professionals and researchers came up with different definitions for the term "development". Asemah (2011) sees development as a changing process in the character, social framework and rapidity of economic poverty and inequality. It is a multifaceted process in human society. It means higher skills and capacity, innovativeness, self-discipline, great freedom, responsibility and material welfare at the individual level. The state of the society is attached to the achievement of any of these features. Development is involved with the creation of opportunities for the achievement of human potential. To achieve these human potential and for humans to function properly in society, certain basic needs must be met, they include; provision of food, shelter, job opportunities and the eradication of all manners of inequality that could lead to poverty (Roodney, 2005).

In agreement with Asemah's definition of development that development has a significant influence on members of the society because it offers a lot of opportunities for the people by providing the basic necessities of life, Sharpley (2002) describes development as a philosophy, a process; a plan guiding the process; and the outcome of the process is the achievement of desired goals. As a philosophical concept, it shows how the desirable future state of a society might prosper and will influence the formation of development policies. It is the classification of individual status in the society, the availability of essential utilities such as water, shelter, food, health and transportation facilities, sewage as well as the position of a nation's resources in the world. In line with the aforementioned definition as it however relates to the current state of Delta State, the present government has provided transportation facilities at cheaper rates to aid transportation in this era of subsidy removal and the media have found a way to include initiatives as such as this in their programming.

Development, according to the Society for International Development (2021), is seen as a process that brings about growth, positive change and progress. The major aim of development is

to increase the level and quality of life of the masses and the increment of income and job opportunities without destroying the resources of the environment.

The Concept of Economic Development

The concept of economic development generally refers to the sustained and collaborative actions of policy makers and communities which help to improve the standard of living and economic health of an area or people. Economic Development refers to the quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy which involves multiple areas such as development of infrastructures, individual capital, environmental sustainability, health, safety and other initiatives. It is worthy to note that, economic development is different from economic growth. Economic Development is a policy intervention which aims at improving the economic and social welfare of people, while economic growth is a phenomenon of productivity and increase in the market (World Bank Report, 2005).

However, the above definitions of economic development are in support of the study because, the government and other development agencies ensure and promote the standard of living and social well-being of the people directly and indirectly through the provision of good roads, schools, markets, job opportunities, safety measures in order to bring about the desired transformation and economic development to the State. These initiatives are amplified by the media through their economic development programmes (Kediehor, 2018). For example, AAIT and NTA economic development programmes, such as *Kakaaki* and *Good Morning Nigeria* respectively are programmes that enable the people to become aware of the current happenings and developments in the State. Such programmes mobilize the people and set public agenda.

The Medium of Television

Television is an important channel of communication in the 21st century. It performs several functions including, information, education, entertainment and persuasion. Television has the advantage of making use of vision for mass communication unlike other communication medium. Television programmes remains a key tool for attracting audience and deciding the viability of a station (Kediehor & Jimoh, 2021). Through television programmes, the public becomes aware of the economic state of the nation. Through television contents the public gain knowledge about the government and non-governmental organization's development programmes like skills acquisition, empowerment programmes and job opportunities (Signorielli, 2003).

Television is the primary socialization agent in the society. One of its major duties is the spread of educational programmes concerned with the economic development of a society or state in order to keep members of the society informed about the society's economic growth and economic development. Television programmes/contents have played great role in enhancing economic development in Delta State through the different economic development programmes aired on NTA and AIT broadcast stations such as, *Kakaaki, Money Line with Nancy*, *Good Morning Nigeria, Agric Transformation, Global Views Africa*, and so on. These television programmes help to inform, educate and enlighten the audience about the society's economic growth. They create awareness about various government, non-government and development agencies empowerment programmes, skills acquisition programmes and different job

opportunities available from government and private sectors. The impact of these programmes on the citizenry is worthy of investigation.

Impact of Television on Economic Development

The Broadcast Media have contributed greatly to economic development of the nation. Since 1993 till date, private sectors and the media industries have provided different jobs opportunities through television programmes they broadcast to the public. Investments in the industry and job opportunities have increased over the years. Norris (2000) is of the position that for many years, television has been part of the development process and through its use, it has responded to new ways in economic development and technological changes. From his position, it therefore, shows that, sponsorship, viewership and listenership are some of the merits of the use of television to support or aid economic development.

The economic impact of the broadcast media goes beyond investments in the industry; it has also increased labour productivity. Other departments in the broadcast media have been affected positively; the advertising agencies have also witnessed growth based on the great number of commercials aired in various radio and television stations. This however, has brought about further job opportunities for graduates of related fields. Revenue obtainable from the distribution of locally produced programmes to other countries is another economic development impact of broadcast media. Just as NTA and AIT broadcast foreign programmes, the distribution of their locally produced programmes to other sister African countries can be carried out in order to increase the revenue of the broadcast stations. This could become a vital source of revenue to the Government and private owned operators.

AIT Economic Development Programmes: a Review

Money Line with Nancy, an AIT broadcast station programme, presented by Chief Nancy Illoh-Nnaji, a Nigerian journalist. The programme educates audience and enables them to understand the economic policies of the State, business trends, financial analysis through the easiest forms. *Kakaaki* (The African Voice) on AIT, is a breakfast programme that reflects on issues that concerns the African continent and provides facts about Africa and Africans which includes news, business news, entertainment, sports and practically everything about Africa. *Kakaaki* is aired from Monday-Friday at 6:00am daily.

The *Big Show* is a programme aired on AIT 8am news. It basically focuses on the economy. It provides accurate information about current happenings on the economic development of the society to the public. It airs news immediately it breaks and provides a comprehensive analysis of business, politics and entertainment.

Focus Nigeria is an AIT discussion programme on issues about political and economic development of Nigeria. It is aired every weekday from 10am to 11am daily. In the programme, politicians are invited to discuss on critical and current issues/happenings affecting Nigeria, from politics to other subject matters that affect the common Nigerian in the country. The programme was anchored by Prince Gbenga Aruleba until when he was dismissed.

NTA and AIT Economic Development Programmes

Good Morning Nigeria on NTA is a breakfast programme. It gives concrete facts about the State and the Nation's economy. It also airs essential/crucial programmes about the economic development of the State. *Business Express* is a programme which covers main topics about entertainment and business. *Delta today* is an NTA's programme which provides discussions about the development of Delta State and her people. *Agric Transformation* is an agricultural programme aired on NTA about documentary and discussions on agriculture. The programme is organized by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in order to promote agribusiness, captivate private sector investment in agriculture, improve local agricultural produce, enhance rural infrastructures and motivates Nigerians to partake in agricultural transformation initiatives. Programmes such as *Global Influence*, *What Matters*, and *Against All Odds*, have one economic development content or another. Several economic development agencies such as Governmental Development Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO); Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC); Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC); Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation; Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission; Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN); to mention just a few have sponsored contents on NTA and AIT to promote economic development in Nigeria, and Delta State in Particular.

These Agencies work together with NTA and AIT in order to produce programmes about the economic happenings/issues of the Society. That is, it plays the advocacy role and these agencies provide solutions to those issues. These Programmes serve as the content of the society and advocates on behalf of the masses. The programmes also help to improve the communities and lives of the masses. Also, the masses become aware of the provisions made by the development agencies.

Obviously, economic development through NTA and AIT broadcast stations have performed well in its roles but has numerous challenges in relation to objective media reporting in order to achieve economic development. Challenges arising from brown envelope syndrome, influence of media owners and control, stringent media laws and journalists' hazards are to mention but a few of the challenges encountered by the media in Nigeria.

Theoretical Underpinning

The study is anchored on the Development Media Theory because it aids media support for an existing government and attempts to bring about socio-economic development. This means that the media must continue to assist the government until a Nation's economic and social development is well-established. It also states that the media should be involved in development by agenda setting for Government and Society in general. It helps to present the areas that need development by the Government. This study is anchored on the Development Media Theory which is one of the normative theories of the press and seeks to explain how the mass media carry out its operations in society. This theory was propounded by McQuail in 1987. It was put forward as a means of paying for the imbalance in the development and information flow. The Development Media Theory is essential to the study in the sense that, it places emphasis on using

the media for development purposes. The media can be used to change the attitudes of people in regards to the economic policies of Government through its persuasive power.

Research Methodology

The study adopted the survey method which gives room for questionnaire to collect data from the population of the study. Selected residents of Delta State were considered to obtain their views on the subject matter of the study. Survey method was adopted because it provides empirical results from the selected respondents as well as its capacity to help delineate, explain and predict the phenomenon being studied by the researchers.

The population of the study is based on the projection method multiplied by three which is derived from the National Population Commission (2006). Hence, the population of Asaba and environs; Warri and environs; Ughelli, Agbor, Sapele and environs, and Udu is 2.8 million. The population for this study are the consumers of media content and was chosen puposively due to its closeness to the researchers' location and accessibility to the NTA and AIT programme contents. Using Taro Yamane's sample size formula, sample size of the study was calculated to be 400, and copies of the questionnaire were distributed and retrieved physically. To ensure validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was put to pilot test to remove any error. Data collected were presented in tables with rows and columns, and analysed using percentages. The researcher administered a total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire from which 374 copies were retrieved. 26 copies of the questionnaire either got lost or were wrongly filled. Therefore, the data analysis was based on the 374 copies of the questionnaire left.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Respondents exposure to television

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	374	100
No	0	0
Total	**374**	**100**

Table 2: Showing respondents' view on whether television is an important instrument of economic development in Delta State.

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	156	41.7
Agree	172	46
Disagree	38	10.2
Strongly disagree	8	2.1
Total	**374**	**100**

Table 3: The broadcast medium best effective for accessing development programmes in Delta State

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Public Owned Medium (NTA)	93	24.9
Private Owned Medium (AIT)	281	75.1
Total	**374**	**100**

The data in the table one show that all 374 respondents representing 100% are exposed to television. This shows that the entire population of the study are exposed to television. The data in the table two show that 156 respondents (41.7%) strongly agree that television is an instrument of economic development in Delta State, 172 respondents (46%) agree on the view, 38 respondents (10.2%) disagree on the view, while 8 respondents representing 2.1% strongly disagree on the issue. It therefore means that, a significant percentage of the population agreed that television is an important instrument of economic development in Delta State.

The data in table three show that 93 respondents representing 24.9% prefer using the public owned medium (NTA) for accessing economic development programmes in Delta State while, 281 respondents representing 75.1% prefer using the private owned medium (AIT). This implies that a higher number of the population agreed in totality that using a private owned medium is best effective for accessing economic development programmes in Delta State.

Table 4: Respondents Response on whether NTA and AIT economic development programmes have influenced development in Delta State

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	43	11.5
Agree	305	81.6
Disagree	22	5.9
Strongly disagree	4	1
Total	**374**	**100**

Table 5: Respondents level of exposure to NTA and AIT economic development programmes

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	63	16.8
High	210	56.2
Average	88	23.5

Below average	13	3.5
Total	**374**	**100**

Table 6: Showing respondents' opinion on whether television has promoted economic development programmes through NTA and AIT stations

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	358	95.7
No	16	4.3
Total	**374**	**100**

The data in table four show 43 respondents (11.5%) strongly agree that NTA and AIT economic development programmes have influenced development in Delta State, 305 respondents representing 81.6% agree on the issue, 22 respondents (5.9%) disagree, while 4 respondents representing 1% strongly disagree on the issue. It shows that a large number of respondents agreed that NTA and AIT economic development programmes have greatly influenced development is Delta State.

Table six shows that 358 respondents representing 95.7% were of the opinion that television has promoted economic development programmes, while only one respondent of 0.2% strongly disagree on the programmes through NTA and AIT Stations while the other respondents (4.3%) disagree.

Table 7: Development agencies and practitioners effectively depend on television programme to advance economic development in Delta State.

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	71	19
Agree	292	78.1
Disagree	10	2.7
Strongly disagree	1	0.2
Total	**374**	**100**

The data in table seven reveals that 71 respondents representing 19% strongly agree that development agencies and practitioners can effectively depend on television to advance economic development in Delta State, 292 respondents representing 78.1% agree, 10 respondents (2.7%) disagree.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study show that television is an instrument of economic development in Delta State. Over 87 percent of the total respondents are in the affirmative that television is an

instrument of economic development. The findings answered research question one of the study and significantly reinforced the view of Development Media Theory on which the study is anchored. The theory states that, the media should always partner the government in the nation's drive for economic and social development to be achieved. The media should assist in disclosing key areas that need development in the state through its programmes, contents and messages.

The data in table 4 shows that more than 340 respondents representing over 90 percent of the total respondents aligned with the fact that the broadcast media especially television influences development. The media achieved this through their programming. It therefore, signifies that a higher percentage of the respondents agreed that NTA and AIT economic development programmes have greatly influenced development in Delta State through its programmes/contents on television. (Kediehor, 2019) maintains that the broadcast media have the potential to significantly instigate or promote development in any society where development is urgently needed, and his position is in line with the findings of this study.

The results of the analyses of the data in table five show that the level of exposure to economic development programmes is quite high, with over 80 percent in affirmation. Certainly, the media always find a way through news reports, current affairs, documentaries and drama programmes of bringing economic development programmes to the audience. This implies that a higher number of the population are highly exposed to the NTA and AIT for economic development programmes especially as presented by the Delta State Government and other development agencies operating in the State on issues concerning agriculture, skills acquisition and loan schemes that impact on the economy of the people.

The results of the analyses of the data in table six reveals that 358 respondents representing 95.7% accepted that television has promoted economic development programmes through NTA and AIT broadcast stations, while 16 respondents representing 4.3% disagreed. This means that the television through its economic development contents/programmes on NTA and AIT broadcast stations have greatly promoted economic development in Delta State. This finding is also in tune with the development media theory where it stresses that the media should be used as a supporting tool for the government by carrying out programmes that will result in development in the state and behavioural change of the people through the persuasive function of the media. The appealing nature of television, its capacity to demonstrate complex economic realities and accessibility have continued to make the television medium a forefront medium for promotion of economic development not only in Delta State, but Nigeria and elsewhere.

Conclusion

It is necessary to conclude that television which is an important tool for the dissemination of information is also an important instrument of economic development in Delta State because it acts as a link between the development agencies, government and the society as a whole, following its development programmes/messages on television. Also, residents of Delta State mostly use private owned medium (AIT) to access economic development programmes due to its accuracy and objectivity.

Further, NTA and AIT's economic development programmes have highly influenced development in Delta State through the different development programmes aired in the stations

like *Kakaaki, Good Morning Nigeria, The Big Show, Money Line with Nancy* and the *Daily Development Thrive* programmes on AIT in which Delta State's development thrive has featured in several occasions. Also, majority of the residents in the State are highly exposed to NTA and AIT economic development programmes.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. The government and other leaders should be informed about the usage of television programmes in enhancing economic development projects so as to keep the people regularly informed on any issue connected to the development of the State.

2. The broadcast media (especially NTA and AIT) should produce more economic development programmes in order to assist in boosting economic development of the State and help to create further awareness of certain opportunities available for the public.
3. Development agencies should use the broadcast media to disseminate credible information, news, education and entertainment about economic development in Delta State in particular, and the entire country at large.

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