

MASS MEDIA COVERAGE OF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN NORTHERN
GHANA

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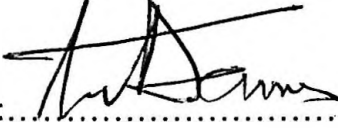
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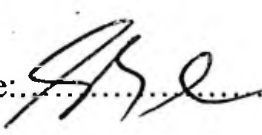
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We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

In Ghana, studies showed that the mass media mostly served elitist audiences since programmes aired were either linguistically inaccessible to rural audiences or were of little relevance to the deprived communities. This study investigated the role the media played in development, especially with regard to its contribution towards placing the development of Northern Ghana on the national agenda. It aimed at assessing the extent to which the national media reported on development issues emanating from Northern Ghana.

Using content analysis of selected radio and television programmes and newspaper publications as well as interviews of media editors and audiences, the study revealed editors' awareness of the fact that there existed inequality in development between the North and South of Ghana and that such a gap had a historical antecedence that needed to be addressed. However, media content showed the lack of attention to the development needs of the North. Not much newspaper space or sufficient airtime was devoted to stories on Northern development. Also, the media covered mainly organized events which were published in hard news fashion rather than researching into development challenges of Northern Ghana.

The study recommended the organization of development reporting workshops for Ghanaian media practitioners and periodic visits of media editors based in the South to Northern Ghana, as well as the establishment of television stations in the North.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Damaris, Derry and the unborn triplets.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGRIMAG	-	Agriculture Magazine
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
BC	-	Before Christ
CBC	-	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CENSUDI	-	Centre for Sustainable Development Initiatives
CHPS	-	Community Health Planning and Services
CIDA	-	Canadian International Development Agency
CSIR	-	Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research
DEPSOCOM	-	Diocesan Department of Social Communication
DFID	-	Department for International Development
ENOWID	-	Economic Opportunities for Women in Development
FASCOM	-	Farmers' Service Centre
FM	-	Frequency Modulation
GBC	-	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GCBS	-	Gold Coast Broadcasting System
GDPC	-	Ghana Development Planning Commission
GIJ	-	Ghana Institute of Journalism
GNA	-	Ghana News Agency
GoG	-	Government of Ghana
GPRS II	-	The Second Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2006 - 2009
GSS	-	Ghana Statistical Service

GTV	-	Ghana Television
HIPC	-	Highly Indebted Poor Country
IFAD	-	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IMCG	-	Independent Media Corporation of Ghana
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
ISODEC	-	Integrated Social Development Centre
LEAP	-	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
MASLOG	-	Micro-Finance and Small Loans Centre
MCA	-	Millennium Challenge Account
MDGs	-	Millennium Development Goals
METRO TV	-	Metropolitan Television
MHz	-	Megahertz
NCA	-	National Communications Authority
NCCE	-	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	-	National Democratic Congress
NDPC	-	National Development Planning Commission
NGO	-	Non-governmental Organization
NLC	-	National Liberation Council
NORPREP	-	Northern Region Poverty Reduction Programme
NPP	-	New Patriotic Party
NRC	-	National Redemption Council
NYEP	-	National Youth Empowerment Programme
ODI	-	Overseas Development Institute

OFY	-	Operation Feed Yourself
PNDC	-	Provisional National Defense Council
PP	-	Progress Party
PRSPs	-	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
Radio GAR	-	Radio Greater Accra Region
RMP	-	Radio Mathematics Project
SADA	-	Savanna Accelerated Development Authority
SITE	-	Satellite International Television Experiment
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UDS	-	University for Development Studies
UHF TV	-	Ultra High Frequency Television
UN	-	United Nations
UNESCAP	-	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	-	United Nations International Children Education Fund
URADEP	-	Upper Regions Development Project
URA RADIO	-	Upper Regions Radio
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development
UWADEP	-	Upper West Agricultural Development Project

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Several scholars have long established that in underdeveloped areas, the mass media, particularly, newspapers and radio, play a crucial role in development (Lerner, 1958; Rogers, 1962; Schramm, 1964; Pool, 1963; Rao, 1963). Lerner (1958), for instance, notes that communication systems are both indicators and agents of social change. According to him, the mass media teach new skills, attitudes and behaviours and are therefore a “mobility multiplier” with the capacity to simultaneously communicate to large groups of people (Lerner, 1958: 82). This is because of the powerful effects of the media in communicating messages and changing attitudes (Gascoigne & Metcalfe, 1997). Communication theorists including Walter Lipmann and Harold D. Lasswell propounded the hypodermic model, portraying the mass media as all powerful sources of influence on audiences (Agee, Emery & Ault, 1985). Lasswell states that “Communication is something someone does to someone else; the communicator, not the consumer or receiver, is the causative person” (quoted in Agee et. al., 1985: 30).

Lasswell enumerates the main functions of communication as follows:

- Collecting and distributing information; Interpreting that information and writing editorials suggesting reactions to it; and
- Educating the public (Agee et. al., 1985)

However, other communication scholars, including Paul Lazarsfeld, Carl I. Hovland and Robert K. Merton, disagree with Lasswell's all-powerful theory of the mass media. They instead propose a minimal-effects theory, arguing that "mass communication ordinarily does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects...but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences" (Agee et. al., 1985: 31). One major proponent of the minimal effects theory, Joseph T. Klapper, admits that though mass communication may not be an all-powerful tool, it is a necessary cause and, in some instances, a sufficient cause of social change (Agee et. al., 1985).

In the context of development, communication aims to stimulate debate and conscientize people for participatory decision-making as well as the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (Razier and Restrepo-Estrada, 1998). In his analysis of the role of communication in the development process, Hornik points out that mass communication could serve as a "low cost loud speaker" for developing countries. Since such countries usually have little money to employ the services of several experts to educate the masses on technological innovations, the mass media become an extension of the experts' voice (Hornik, 1989).

Fabrizio (2007) acknowledged the role of the media in reducing poverty through its ability to raise public awareness and debate, and shift public opinion and political opinion. This could lead to policy change such as the World Bank-

approved and supported Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) developed to deal with poverty in low income countries.

The role of the media in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has also been an area of interest for some researchers (Hatem, 2005). As with most developmental goals and targets, the media are expected to play certain roles to ensure attainment of the MDGs. Media men and women are encouraged to report on one, or all of the following three areas:

- Tracking progress on MDGs: Reporters were expected to develop stories on how countries were performing, which countries were likely to achieve the MDGs and which ones were not, as well as reasons why some countries were performing and others were not up to the task;
- Human Face: Media persons were also expected to report on the consequences of the MDGs to people's daily lives and specify the role of civil society in achieving the MDGs. They were expected to report success stories and achievements towards 2015, and also the key players driving forward change with their activities; and
- Changes needed in achieving the MDGs: Reporters were expected to report on changes needed to meet the 2015 target such as improving public service delivery (including education, health, water and sanitation), engaging communities, empowering women, fostering public-private partnership, among others (Hatem, 2005).

At a 2004 meeting of the bilateral and multilateral development agencies, a decision was arrived at to the effect that:

Communication is fundamental to helping people change the societies in which they live, particularly communication strategies which both inform and amplify the voices of those with most at stake and which address the structural impediments to achieving these goals. However, such strategies remain a low priority on development agendas, undermining [the] achievement of the MDGs (United Nations Development Programme, 2006: 11).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2005) noted that development objectives such as the MDGs can only be effective if they are “publicized, explained and discussed”, and the media, can help in getting the message across. The Commission noted that despite impeding factors affecting media performance in developing countries, the media can still be motivated to contribute to achieving such developmental objectives through continued training and more back-up for African journalists. Alexander (2005) argued that independent information carried by the mass media can help in generating awareness among the people, thus creating the conditions for progress on the MDGs. Deane (2007), on his part, established that the media, aside drawing public attention to development initiatives, are expected to provide an avenue where diverse and opposing perspectives can be aired in ways that can influence and improve public policy.

In recent times, social and mobile media are assuming greater significance in mobilizing communities for development. Social media has been successfully incorporated into the work of major development agencies. For instance, the

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) now employs social media in much of its external communications. In deprived communities, the interaction between social media and community radio has succeeded in addressing the development needs of poverty stricken communities, since such media have proved most effective in achieving social change and empowerment. More importantly, social media plays a significant role in communication for development focusing on youth and equity. Social and mobile media are used to fight corruption and ensure good governance. The success of the Arab Spring in changing dictatorial leader within some Arab countries testifies to this (Braskov, 2012).

History of the print media in Ghana

In recognition of the media's role in promoting development, the colonial government established a newspaper, the *Royal Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer*, in the Gold Coast on Tuesday, April 21, 1822. The paper was launched in Cape Coast by the British to consolidate and extend their sphere of influence and authority in West Africa (Asante, 1996). In December 1947, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah returned from abroad and entered the newspaper industry. He established various newspapers in Accra, Sekondi and Cape Coast which persistently advocated for instant self-governance. Dr. Nkrumah started with the *Accra Evening News*, followed by *the Morning Telegraph* at Sekondi, then *the Daily Mail* at Cape Coast (Smertin, 1987). Besides English, *the Evening*

News was published in various other languages namely, Twi, Ga, Ewe, Fanti, Hausa and French.

By 1993, there were close to 100 publications in Ghana, made up of 36 newspapers, 22 sports weeklies and 35 lotto papers. By 2004, the number of newspapers had fallen to just over 70 consisting of 17 monthlies, 5 bi-monthlies, 4 quarterlies, 30 weekly papers, 10 bi-weeklies and 6 dailies. The decline in the number of papers was for economic reasons. The increased number of papers that came with the liberalization of media space in 1993 sparked competition in the newspaper industry. Many newspapers which could not keep afloat simply collapsed. Between 2004 and 2008, majority of the papers recapitalized and returned to the newsstands. As the newspaper industry blossomed, the number of publications as at 2008, more than quadrupled to over 300 newspapers (including nine dailies) and magazines (Gadzekpo, 2008).

Ghanaian newspapers are largely in English, with very few being published in the local languages. Even in the past, majority of the Ghanaian language newspapers that existed were established by missionaries. Aside the missionaries' contribution to the establishment of local language newspapers, the only other effort in this direction was after the 1930s when papers like *Asenta*, 1935; *Akan Kyerema*, 1948; *Amansuon*, in the 1950s; and *Nkwantabisa* (a paper produced by the Bureau of Ghanaian Languages in the 1970s) were published (Yankah, 2004). In the 1990s, the School of Communication Studies at the University of Ghana also started a community newspaper in Akan called *Wonsuom*. The contribution of such local language papers to the communication

of development messages was not significant owing to low level of literacy in the local languages. Therefore, many local language papers collapsed due to poor patronage.

It is worth noting that the press was established in Ghana to serve a nationalistic agenda, but all the newspapers were in Southern Ghana. Up to independence, no newspaper was set up in Northern Ghana. Even when an attempt was made to publish papers in local languages, no paper was published in a Northern Ghana language.

History of the broadcast media in Ghana

As with the print media, radio broadcast commenced in Accra and was later extended to Kumasi, Sekondi, Koforidua and Cape Coast. Northern Ghana was for a long time without this useful mode of communication. According to Ansah (1985) the colonial government of Governor Sir Arnold Hodson established a radio service in the Gold Coast on July 31, 1935. This took the form of a small wired relay station called ZOY which the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) set up in an Accra private bungalow to relay its programmes to an initial audience of some 300. By the end of 1935, there were 400 subscribers, and by February 1936, 750 homes in Accra could receive the radio signals. Coverage was later extended to Kumasi, Sekondi and Koforidua via rediffusion centers which were set up by the BBC (Twumasi, 1981).

The initial reason for establishing the radio station was to provide information, education and entertainment for Accra residents. Later, Radio ZOY

was used to counter the anti-colonialist propaganda of the nationalist press and to provide information on the efforts of the Gold Coast troops fighting in World War II (Asante, 1996). Ansah (1985: 21) contends that, “radio was to cater for the information, cultural and entertainment needs of the political and educated elite who consisted of European settlers, colonial administrators and the small group of educated Africans”. Koomson (1994) supported this view by recalling that broadcasting was introduced into Ghana to serve the needs of the colonial masters or settler communities. This medium of communication was designed to inform the colonial administrators about news from the metropolis in order to sustain cultural links with the imperial centre and thereby re-affirm colonial authority in pre-independence Ghana (Koomson, 1994). Indeed, World War II propelled the expansion of broadcasting in Ghana since the “Allies” used this medium as a propaganda tool against Nazi Germany.

By 1939, a small 1.3 kW transmitter had been installed in Accra on experimental basis. With the onset of the War, a 5 kW transmitter broadcasting on high frequency was installed to serve the Gold Coast and neighbouring countries. This explains why between July, 1935 and the commencement of World War II, the number of radio subscribers rose from 350 to 4,000. By March 1945, as many as 5,850 people had subscribed to radio. From 1940 to 1942, the broadcasting station was used to broadcast counter-propaganda in French to the neighbouring French colonies. There were also Ewe broadcasts for those in Togo. During the war period, increasing use was made of local languages in broadcasting. In 1953, local languages were given 18 hours of airtime a week. This was, however,

insufficient since English programmes including relays from the BBC were accorded 58 hours a week (Ansah, 1985).

Acting on the recommendations of a commission set up to advise the colonial government on broadcasting issues, the Gold Coast Broadcasting System (GCBS) was established in 1954. This was transformed into a full-fledged Ghana Broadcasting System in September, 1962 and later christened the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). A year prior to GBC's name change (June 1, 1961), Ghana had inaugurated an external broadcasting system beamed on a 100-kilowatt transmitter to link Ghana with the rest of Africa, North America, Europe, Japan and Australia. The programmes were broadcast in Arabic, English, French, Hausa, Portuguese and Swahili (Asante, 1996).

Until 1995, the government-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and its eight regional affiliates were the only broadcast media in the country. GBC consisted of a television service and three radio channels. The GBC radio system included two national short-wave networks – GBC 1 and GBC 2 – and three FM stations namely “Radio GAR” in Greater Accra, URA Radio, a regional FM station in Bolgatanga, and a community FM station in Apam. GBC 1 used to devote 70 hours a week to broadcast in six Ghanaian languages namely Akan (Twi), Dagbani, Ewe, Ga and Hausa, as well as English. The following approximate time allocations were given to the local languages:

Akan	-	16 hours 30 minutes
Ewe	-	13 hours 20 minutes
Ga	-	12 hours 20 minutes

Dagbani	-	10 hours 45 minutes
Nzema	-	9 hours 15 minutes
Hausa	-	6 hours 20 minutes

Though the six languages made a fraction of the 44 languages that were spoken in Ghana at the time, they were understood by 85 percent of the population (Ansah, 1985).

As part of the station's daily schedule, it aired national and international news in English. Specific portions of the news were translated from English into local languages in a predetermined schedule (Windborne, 1999). Historically, GBC 1 has had entertainment, information and educational programmes, including formal classes, as well as development-oriented messages (Ansah, 1994). GBC 2 was a commercial, English-only service offering entertainment, information and some educational programming, including tuition on better usage of the English language. Radio GAR was a commercial FM station whose signals could be heard within the Greater Accra Region and neighbouring regions. This station aired news, public affairs and entertainment programmes mostly in English, with occasional forays into Twi or other languages during call-in shows. The state broadcaster also had an external service which broadcasted in English and French, although its presence on-air fluctuated with GBC's immediate fiscal priorities (Windborne, 1999).

Although the IMF and World Bank pressured former President Rawlings to privatize GBC as part of the Structural Adjustment Programme, he resisted selling off the national broadcast system arguing that a developing country such

as Ghana needs to have some centralized broadcast facility to unify the country and ensure that in an emergency, important information would be available to everyone (Shillington, 1992). In the 1990s, the international lending agencies stepped up the pressure, pushing Ghana and other developing nations to institute “freedom of speech” and provide space for the establishment of media systems that were separate from government control. Thus, in 1993, the Fourth Republican Constitution began the process of liberalizing the media systems. Included in the document were guarantees of freedom of the press and other media along with a National Media Commission that would act as a barrier between the state-owned media and government (Heath, 1998).

As government dragged its feet in issuing licenses for the establishment of privately owned radio stations, a group known as the Independent Media Corporation of Ghana (IMCG), led by Dr. Charles Yves Wereko Brobbey, set out to test the establishment by applying for the registration of a frequency, 96.2 MHz to operate *Radio Eye*. This happened on May 14, 1994. On September 5, 1994, the group sent a reminder to the Frequency Board on the earlier request, and received the response that frequency allocation had been suspended, pending the establishment of the National Communications Authority. Following this, a private station, Otec FM, a Twi language station in Kumasi, was established followed by some stations in Sekondi-Takoradi. The IMCG sent another letter on September 23, 1994 to remind the Frequency Board about some allocations it had made and expressed shock at the turn of events. The group further lodged a complaint with the National Media Commission over the Frequency Board’s

attempt to deny them a basic right. Following the complaint, the Frequency Board wrote to the IMCG to assure the group that their application was under consideration (Heath, 1998).

Nothing happened until November 19, 1994 when Accra residents woke up to hear a new radio station, *Radio Eye*, broadcasting on 96.2 MHz. The station was brutally shut down by security agencies. However, shortly after that, licenses for private media were issued. In 1995, JOY-FM went on air in Accra. By 1998, 45 radio stations had been granted private licenses and 29 were on air. Three commercial UHF TV networks, 14 pay-per-view wireless cable re-broadcast services, and four pay-per-view satellite cable re-broadcast services were also given licenses (Heath, 1998). Since the airwaves were liberalized in 1996, the National Communications Authority has granted licenses to about 24 television stations and 137 FM radio stations to operate in the country (NCA, 2007). An estimated 130 FM stations are on air in addition to four free-on air and four pay-per-view television stations (Gadzekpo, 2008). The dynamic programming mix on the airwaves in Accra has so challenged GBC's monopoly over the audience and advertisers that GBC has been forced to change its approach from a somewhat pedantic and plodding style to more lively broadcasts (Gadzekpo, Karikari, & Yankah, 1996).

After the establishment of radio in the Gold Coast, it took 30 years for the commencement of television. Planning, preparation and training of personnel with the support of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) alone took six years. When on July 31, 1965 Kwame Nkrumah launched television service in the

country, his aim was clear: "... education and edification, the enjoyment and entertainment of our people" (Ansah, 1985: 8). For Ghana's first president, the educational value of television, however, superseded its entertainment content. He stressed the educational value of TV saying:

Ghana's television will be used to supplement our educational programmes and foster a lively interest in the world around us. It will not cater for cheap entertainment nor commercialism. Its paramount object will be education in the broadest and purest sense. Television must assist in the socialist transformation of Ghana (Ansah, 1985: 9).

This vision of Nkrumah explained why from the onset, 80 percent of television programmes in Ghana were produced locally, and very few were packaged entertainment or imported from the west.

Contribution of the media to Ghana's development

After independence, Ghanaian media changed its focus from assisting in the independence struggle to communicating development messages. To this end, the media has initiated programmes aimed at educating farmers on modern methods of farming. As part of an out-of-school mass literacy project, a countrywide radio-based rural education experiment began in 1952 (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1992). Later, radio forums for rural development programmes were particularly successful in increasing farmers' knowledge, enhancing their civic awareness and motivating them to undertake community improvement activities. The rural radio programmes commenced with a pilot project from 1964 – 65 in

the Eastern Region. It was aimed at giving "... farmers or rural people a new incentive to group action ... to stimulate thought and understanding among rural listeners on subjects that will widen their horizons as citizens, and to help them to improve their conditions as farmers" (Ansah, 1985:43). This project was in four phases: printed guides and visual aids were provided, broadcasts were made, followed by organized group discussions and group action. In the course of the project, themes treated included the following:

- Prospects for farmers in the Seven-Year Development Plan;
- Loans and state subsidies to farmers;
- Distribution and marketing of crops and foodstuffs;
- Storage and preservation of perishable crops;
- New agricultural techniques; and
- Preventive medicine and food hygiene.

Aside topics on agriculture, some social issues were also discussed including the dualism of the nuclear and extended family systems, the role of religion in a changing society, and the influence of traditional institutions on educational development. These topics were treated in broadcasts and later discussed in forums (Ansah, 1985). A successful evaluation of the rural radio forums motivated the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) to organize similar projects in various parts of the country aimed at enlightening farmers on new ways of enhancing agricultural productivity. The radio forums worked on the principle of "Listen, Discuss and Act" (Ansah, 1985).

Several other rural radio education experiments included the civic education scheme of 1967 – 72, which was an in-school English teaching project, and an extension education project in the Upper Region. *Tete wo bi* (a heritage programme which focused on oral history), *Womfre yie* (a discussion programme), *Kuaye mu adwene* (hints on farming) and Radio *badwa* (Rural Radio Forum) were all Akan language rural listening programmes with their equivalents in Ewe, Dagbani, Hausa, Ga and Nzema (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1992).

Another example of successful use of communication for rural development in Ghana was a project initiated by the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana for the Swedru area and adjoining districts. The project made use of a combination of radio, newspapers and interpersonal communication to stimulate and support development. The radio aspect of this project, which commenced in 1983, used facilities of a relay station at Swedru to broadcast programmes on agriculture, healthcare, environmental protection, nutrition, sanitation, culture, entertainment and general information in the early mornings and evenings. After about six months of such broadcasts, implementers of the project formed listening clubs known as “Wonsuom” to discuss the broadcasts and provide feedback that was useful in the preparation of subsequent programmes. Eventually, the listening groups became rallying points for community action and development. They organized social and cultural activities in the evenings to reduce the monotony and tedium of rural life (Ansah, 1985).

Again, in 1999, *GBC Radio Two* in collaboration with the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) commenced a programme known as

“Time with CSIR”. Using everyday language, the one hour programme explained science research results to the public. On 10th August, 2001, GBC Radio Two again introduced a series of programmes on the application of science and technology to poverty alleviation (GBC Radio News Editor, 2000).

However, Ansu-Kyeremeh (1992: 117) criticized the style of broadcasting adopted in earlier ‘radio for development’ projects as linear communication systems which contradicted many aspects of village communication. According to him, “The one-way communication, intrinsic to the Ghanaian broadcast format, was incongruous to the interpersonal village communication patterns which characterized village community interaction”. He was of the view that the approach adopted in most broadcasts suited captive and passive audiences like school children since talk-back, back-chat feedback phone-in mechanisms adopted in industrialized societies to make communication more democratic were not available in the Ghanaian setting. Indeed, phone-ins may not have been employed in the radio programmes of the 1950s up to the 1980s, but it is not entirely justified to describe earlier rural radio efforts as either linear communication or mechanistic transfer of knowledge. Certainly, as Ansah (1985) noted, most rural radio programmes were produced within the communities and had instant feedback mechanisms since listeners had opportunities to contribute to such programmes.

Television in Ghana has also made some contribution to rural development. Two science programmes, “Rural Sign-Post” and “Waves and Dew”, were among the earliest *Ghana Television* (GTV) programmes when the

station was inaugurated on 31st July, 1965. While “Rural Sign-Post” was aimed at introducing scientific methods of farming to rural communities, “Waves and Dew” was a programme on fishing and gardening. In the 1970s, another television science programme, “Our Agricultural Front”, was introduced on *GTV*. This programme sought to introduce farmers to the latest scientific and technological discoveries in agriculture, and generating interest in backyard gardening as well as agriculture in support of the “Operation Feed Yourself” campaign. The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Government changed the name of the programme “Our Agricultural Front” to “AGRIMAG”, in 1982. The scope of the programme was also widened to include educating farmers on new agricultural methods, informing viewers on the government’s agricultural policies and getting feedback from farmers to the policy makers and science researchers (GBC Radio News Editor, 2000).

Media presence in Northern Ghana

For Northern Ghana, Upper Region Radio (URA Radio), was the first media presence to be established on 4th June 1986 as part of the Upper Region Agriculture Development Programme (URADEP). The radio station was set up to assist the work of extension officers in disseminating agricultural messages to the farmers. Initially, it broadcast programmes in Gurune, Dagaare and Kusal. English Language was not used except for continuity announcement. Later, Kasem, Sissali and Buli languages were added to the broadcasts. It covered the whole of the Upper East and Upper West Regions and parts of the Northern

Region. Most of the programmes of URA Radio focused on agriculture, culture, education and health. It made extensive use of drama for educational purposes (Alalbilla, 2011).

URA Radio had great impact on the development efforts of the Upper East and West Regions. As the communication component of the URADEP project, URA Radio assisted Agricultural Extension Officers to disseminate messages on improved agricultural practices. This led to increased agricultural production. For instance, URA Radio played an important role in the launch and successful introduction of the Global 2000 agricultural programme that saw increased production of an improved variety of guinea corn within the Upper East and West Regions. Moreover, it brought about integration of diverse ethnic groups within the Upper East and West Regions since through radio people learnt each other's culture through the languages used on air and music. Also, residents of these regions had renewed confidence in themselves since they could now air their views on many issues of local and national significance. Additionally, the Radio provided ordinary people access to information from other parts of the country. The URADEP project imported many radio sets at subsidized prices for farmers. This increased access to radio within the Upper Regions. The Radio made ordinary people realize that they too counted in the scheme of things (Alalbilla, 2011).

After the establishment of URA Radio, it took more than a decade for a second radio station to be established in Northern Ghana. Radio Progress, an offshoot of the Wa Diocesan Department of Social Communication

(DEPSOCOM), began official broadcast on 14th February, 1997. It was registered as a community radio station under a Non-Governmental Organisation, Mass Media for Development. The station was aimed at satisfying the information and communication needs of the people of Upper West Region (Naikuur, 2004). Radio Savanna was established in 1997 through the collaborative effort between the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation and the Non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education to promote adult literacy within the Northern Region. Its programmes are broadcast mainly in Dagbani and Gonja. It covers almost all the Northern Region except Saboba/Chereponi, East Mamprusi and Zabzugu/Tatale districts. Radio Savanna was followed by Radio Upper West, another GBC FM station which resulted from a collaboration between the Upper West Regional Coordinating Council and district assemblies within the Region and GBC. The station went on air on 10th November, 2000.

After the Upper Regional Agricultural Development Project (URADEP) folded up, URA Radio, and later Radio Savanna, continued to be used in support of agricultural extension work. One such project which made extensive use of the two radio stations was a long-term research programme, “Resource degradation in sub-Saharan Africa: policies to support sustainable soil fertility management and soil and water conservation among resource-poor farmers in semi-arid areas”. This was a collaborative effort between the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), United Kingdom and the University for Development Studies, Tamale and funded by the Department for International Development (DFID). At a wrap-up workshop for the programme, there was a major concern about the best way of

disseminating findings of the research to farmers since extension services have proved to be ineffective in this direction.

Eventually, the research team decided to use URA Radio and Radio Savanna for such extension services, using six local languages namely Dagbani and Gonja for Radio Savanna, and Kusaal, Kasem, Gurune and Buli for URA Radio. The programmes were produced in magazine format, featuring drama, topical talk and discussion, interspersed with jingles and traditional music. A skeleton script, prepared by representatives from UDS Faculty of Agricultural Engineering and a local NGO, Trax, was discussed by six acting troupes, who adapted the texts and situations to culturally appropriate forms for each language group. Broadcast three times in each of the selected languages between March and April, 2001, the programme was almost an hour-long and contained information and advice on proper soil and water conservation methods (Chapman, Blench, Kranjac-Berisavljevic and Zakariah, 2003).

The radio broadcasts had significant impact on the land use habits of farmers. Asked how the programmes affected their soil and water conservations strategies, majority of the farmers said though they were aware of the harmful effects of practices such as bush burning, the radio programmes reinforced their decision not to burn the bush. Results of the research also showed that the radio programmes influenced 94 percent of respondents regarding their decisions on whether or not to cut trees on their farms. The research concluded that if similar programmes were transmitted regularly, they could be used as educational tools

especially in the area of agroforestry where farmers lacked knowledge (Chapman et al, 2003).

Critique of the media in rural development

In spite of the findings of Chapman et al (2003), Ansah (1985) and others which showed the media's contribution to the development of Ghana, there is evidence which points at the media's failure to fulfill the development aspirations of Africa. Media researchers have particularly been critical of the mass media's coverage of deprived parts of the country. For instance, Inayatullah (1967) observed that the push for modernization in the developing world, via communication media has proved ineffective in enhancing development. Beltran (1976) corroborated this view. Similarly, Mbindyo (1984) observed that Kenya is heavily dependent on foreign media messages and content much of which is often irrelevant to the needs of majority of the people. It goes on to state that the print media in that country were largely centred in the urban areas and gave coverage to such areas at the expense of rural areas. Such imbalance in media coverage had negative developmental impact for a country where 80 percent of the populace lived in rural areas and engaged in agriculture (Mbindyo, 1984).

Ghana's media have also over the years failed to serve the development interest of deprived parts of the country. Since Ghana attained independence, the media have constantly been criticized for their failure to advance the development agenda of the country. Hatchen (1971: 463), for instance, accused the Ghanaian press for not only failing to provide sufficient useful information but also failing

to give “adequate economic and financial information for government agencies and businesses”. Hachten (1975) again criticized the Ghanaian press for not providing informed and intelligent reports of current issues for the better educated as well as not providing feedback on public opinion. Aborampah and Anokwa (1984:107) noted that in Ghana, “the growth of mass media and its use as exemplified by cinema, have not brought any significant changes in the life of the mass people”.

With the liberalization of the media industry in 1993, many expected a more active participation of the media in development. However, Asante (1999) regretted that little efforts were made by Ghana’s media institutions to accelerate and sustain national development. According to Asante (1999), some scholars are particularly concerned about the media’s failure to promote the development of rural communities. Asante (1999) found that circulation of Ghana’s state owned and most widely read newspapers, *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*, are limited to the major cities to the detriment of rural communities. Similarly, Boafo (1989) suggests that only a small and insignificant number of newspaper copies penetrate rural communities. “The implication is that the village schoolmaster or teacher, the elementary school child, the semi-educated farmer or fisherman and other new literates are, thus, largely excluded from the reach of the print media” (Boafo 1989: 39). Boafo (1989) adds that GBC Radio 2 gives just about an hour of its total broadcast of 104 hours a week to agricultural and health programmes oriented to national development.

Television has even been given a poorer assessment in terms of its contribution to the development of Ghana. Asante (1999) is of the view that television transmission in Ghana only benefits the urban areas and that the programmes are basically entertainment oriented, neglecting the development needs and aspirations of the country. This finding echoes Eilers and Oepen (1991: 296) to the effect that radio and television serve the elitist needs of urban minorities and that the “content of electronic media rarely reflects development problems and needs of the rural majority, which not only lacks access but also the means for contributing to and participation in these media offerings” (Eilers and Oepen 1991: 296). Similarly, Gadzekpo established that:

There is disproportionate coverage of rural, poor and marginalized groups in favour of the more affluent, elite and business/corporate interest groups. It can be argued therefore that by neglecting the majority of its constituents, not only is the media not living up to the expectations of the community in which it operates, it is also denying them of choices in the menu of news that could have been provided (Gadzekpo, 2008: 20).

Gadzekpo (2008: 14) further posited that there is “little systematic, creative and sustained coverage of developmental issues such as poverty” and little attempt is made to draw Ghanaians’ attention to important social issues. Also, marginalized groups, including women and rural communities are often neglected in terms of coverage. African Media Barometer Ghana (2008) has also reported the print media's lack of presence in rural communities. According to the

research, there is no organized system for newspaper distribution in Ghana (Daily Guide, April 20, 2009).

Statement of the problem

Northern Ghana has since the colonial period remained the poorest part of the country due to uneven allocation of resources within the country. The period 1874 – 1957 was the genesis of uneven development between the North and South owing to “policies of colonial development and satellization in which resources were being identified and exploited according to metropolitan needs”. For instance, the construction of railway lines was concentrated along the cocoa growing parts of the country and the coastal areas to facilitate the transportation of cocoa. Northern Ghana was left out of this all-important means of transportation at the time (Songsore, 2003:54).

As a result of high poverty levels in the North, many people migrated to other parts of the country. For instance, as far back as 1948, 5 percent of the indigenes of the Upper Region had migrated outside Northern Ghana (Songsore, 2003). The economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s as well as the Economic Recovery Programmes and Structural Adjustment Programmes which followed the crisis did little to improve the plight of the North. Owing to uneven allocation of resources in favour of mining and cocoa growing areas of the South as well as industrial core regions, Northern Ghana was excluded from the renewed growth stimulus which such programmes aimed at igniting. By virtue of the fact that Northern Ghana was not the producer of either major export crops or

minerals nor was it an industrial region, the area suffered much of the economic hardships of the Economic Recovery Programme and the Structural Adjustment Programmes (Songsore, 2003).

Consequently, in the 1990s, though poverty declined in Northern Ghana, the rate of decline was slower than other parts of the country. In 1991/92 when the poverty line was 370.89 Ghana cedis per annum, 73 percent of residents within the Rural Savannah fell below the poverty line. Table 1 gives a comparative analysis of the poverty situation in Northern Ghana for the 1998/99 and 2005/2006 financial years.

It is worth noting that the contribution of Rural Savannah to total poverty in Ghana has been increasing over the years from 33 percent in 1991/92 to 37 percent in 1998/99 to 60 percent in 2005/06, as evidenced in Table 1. In 2005/06, the highest incidence of poverty was in the Upper West Region with an increase from 84 percent in 1998/99 to 88 percent in 2005/06. This stands in sharp contrast to the Eastern Region where only 15 percent of the population lives below the poverty line (GSS, 2007). Again, within the rural parts of Northern Ghana, close to 60 percent were classified as extremely poor with an increasing trend from 58 percent in 1991/92 to 59 percent in 1998/99. Though the number of extreme poor people declined to 45 percent in 2005/06, Rural Savannah still leads in the incidence of extremely poor people against the background of the fact that Accra has just 5 percent, Urban Forest 3 percent while Urban Coastal 2 percent of extremely poor people (GSS, 2007).

Table 1: Poverty by location

Location	GLSS3 – 1998/99 (%)		GLSS3 – 2005/06 (%)	
	Poverty incidence	Contribution to total poverty	Poverty incidence	Contribution to total poverty
Accra	4.4	1.3	10.6	4.4
Urban Coastal	31.0	4.6	5.5	1.1
Urban Forest	18.2	5.4	6.9	3.5
Urban Savannah	43.0	5.2	27.6	5.2
Rural Coastal	45.6	16.7	24.0	9.2
Rural Forest	38.0	30.1	27.7	27.2
Rural Savannah	70.0	36.6	60.1	49.3
All Ghana	39.5	100.0	28.5	100.0

Poverty Line = ₵3,708,900

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2007

Also, since independence, inadequate health facilities and health professionals have been the bane of healthcare delivery in the three regions of the North. Between 2001 and 2004, the highest number of patients per doctor was recorded within the Northern Region. In 2004, the ratio was 81,338 patients to a doctor as against the national average of 17,733. Indeed, Greater Accra had 6,550 patients per doctor the same year. With the paucity of health professionals and facilities, it was not surprising that fewer people have access to health services. Between 2001 and 2003, the three regions of the North recorded the least antenatal care coverage with Northern Region trailing the pack with as low as 2.9

percent by 2003, as compared to the Ashanti Region which recorded 17.8 percent of antenatal care registrants (GSS, 2007). Again, the nutritional status of Northern children has remained poor over the years. For instance, in 2003, Northern Region recorded the highest number of both severe stunted (21.8%) and stunted children (48.8%). Upper West (34.1%) and Upper East (31.7%) followed in child stunting as against Greater Accra which had 13.9% of stunted children (GSS, 2007).

Upper East has the poorest access to primary education (61.9%) followed by Upper West Region (67.1%). The Report mentioned sparse population distribution, poverty and general deprivation in Northern Ghana as reasons for the poor access to primary education. At the secondary education level, the disparities are even greater. While the national average for access to secondary education is 43.3 percent that of the three regions of the North is 15.5 percent (GSS, 2007).

Poor access to education explains the low literacy rates within Northern Ghana. While Greater Accra has an illiteracy rate of 18.4 percent, Ashanti Region, (35%) and Eastern Region (36.4%), Upper East, Northern and Upper West regions have 76.5 percent, 76.2 percent and 73.4 percent respectively (GSS, 2007). Perhaps one reason for the high illiteracy is the low school attendance recorded in that part of Ghana. For the age groups 6 – 11 and 12 – 15, school attendance averaged as high as 70 percent in Ghana. Northern Ghana, on the other hand, had only 30 percent average attendance with the exception of the under 15 male population for Northern Region which was as high as 63.3 percent possibly resulting from the influence of Tamale which has become a cosmopolitan centre.

The gaps in school attendance between the North and South persist at the senior secondary and tertiary levels (Songsore, 2003).

School enrolment also remains lower in rural savannah compared to other parts of the country. Table 2 shows the disparities in school enrolment between the Rural Savannah and the Rural Forest areas.

Table 2: North – South disparities in basic school enrolment

Location	1991/92		1998/99		2005/06	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Rural Forest (%)	85	85	91	91	95	95
Rural Savannah (%)	51	46	66	61	62	61

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2007

While boys enrolment in Rural Savannah increased in 1991/92 and 1998/99, it reduced in the 2005/06 academic year. Girls enrolment in the Rural Savannah increased from 1991/92 and 1998/99 but remained unchanged in 2005/06.

At the secondary level, the North – South disparities in school enrolment were perpetuated. For the rural savannah, boys enrolment has been dwindling from 26 percent in 1991/92, through 25 percent in 1998/99 to 18 percent in 2005/06. This again contrast with enrolment figures for boys in rural forest secondary schools where 44 percent entered school in 1991/92, 43 percent in 1998/99 and 45 percent in 2005/06 (GSS, 2007).

With the low enrolment of both boys and girls as well as lack of infrastructure and personnel in schools, any wonder that quality education has eluded Northern Ghana over the years? For instance, Northern Region was ranked last in Basic Education Certificate Examination for the 2005/06 academic year. Between 2001 and 2004, Northern and Upper East Regions have always occupied the last two slots on the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) performance table, as evidenced in Table 3.

Table 3: SSSCE results for Northern and Upper East Regions

Region	2001	2002	2003
Northern (%)	81	24.5	23
Upper East (%)	21	26	29
National Average (%)	41	46	47

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2006

By 2005, the situation had changed a little with Upper East beating Brong Ahafo Region to the eighth place out of the ten regions. Northern Region remained at the bottom with 32.9 percent against a national average pass of 58.7 percent (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2006). The continued poor performance of students who hail from Northern Ghana has mainly been attributed to insufficient qualified teachers in deprived parts of the area, poor supervision and inadequate learning facilities.

Succeeding post-independence governments initiated several interventions to bridge the development gap between Northern Ghana and the rest of the

country. One major intervention in education was free education for pupils of Northern Ghana which was introduced by Ghana's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. This intervention led to the training of several scholars and professionals with undergraduate, graduate and doctorate degrees who have made significant contributions to the country's development. Free education has also led to some improvement in school attendance, retention and performance within Northern Ghana (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2012).

Aside interventions in education, succeeding governments have made interventions aimed at improving the economic status of residents of Northern Ghana. The Government of Ghana, with funding from the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), implemented URADEP and the Upper West Agricultural Development Project (UWADEP) aimed at improving food security and increasing the incomes of smallholder farmers. The projects were quite successful in boosting agriculture in Upper East and West Regions by rehabilitating of dams, training farmers on modern farming methods, marketing and processing farm produce, as well as improving the rearing of livestock. The projects succeeded in promoting income-generating activities through the supply of rural financial services and providing rural infrastructure comprising of rural road rehabilitation and the construction of hand-dug wells to provide drinking water (<http://www.ifad.org>, 2012).

Similarly, the Northern Region Poverty Reduction Programme (NORPREP) was implemented to enhance the economic well-being of residents of Northern Region. The programme, which commenced on 30th January, 2004,

was aimed at improving the livelihoods and living conditions of poor rural communities with emphasis on women and vulnerable groups. NORPREP has benefited about 372,000 rural households or three million people living in these households. It led to the construction of roads leading to farm gates and feeder roads linking some deprived communities. The programme also assisted, with credit, peasant farmers and women engaged in processing of farm produce as well as traders. Additionally, it has improved the capacity of decentralised local government, civil society and community organisations to better respond to the needs of the poorest strata of the rural population (<http://www.ghanaweb.com>).

A more recent intervention introduced by the Government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) is the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA). SADA was introduced to accelerate the socio-economic development of the Savannah belt through strategic investment in resource development. It aims at attaining a “Forested North” by 2030 where agricultural production would be modernised and oriented towards a larger market. The initiative targets six areas of intervention:

- Development of a comprehensive regional and ecological strategy;
- A model for the modernisation of agriculture;
- Development of strategic infrastructure;
- Strong linkage between Northern Savannah and the Sahelian countries;
- A vigorous private sector initiative that strengthens existing private operators; and

- Active support for Civil Society Organizations and NGOs (<http://www.modernghana.com>, 2012).

In spite of these interventions, Northern Ghana remains the most deprived part of the country, requiring much support to speed up development of the area. The mass media could play significant roles towards reversing the educational and developmental disparities between the North and South of Ghana. However, there is evidence to suggest that Northern Ghana has not been accorded much media attention. For instance, Asante (1999) revealed that two leading northern Ghanaian languages were least used in the Ghanaian media. While Akan was accorded 10.9 percent airtime, Ewe 9.2 percent airtime, Ga 8.1 percent airtime and Nzema 6.4 percent, Dagbani got 4.9 percent airtime on the national broadcast stations. No language from either the Upper East or Upper West Regions was used in either GTV or GBC Radio broadcasts.

This means that indigenes of the two regions who could not understand either English Language or any of the local languages spoken on radio and television had no access to information from the state broadcaster. In recent times, *GTV* broadcasts news in the local languages. However, the news is the same summarized translations of national and world news that Ansah (1979) was worried about. Also, only one northern language, Dagbani, was used for such broadcasts.

It was not until 1985 that a World Bank sponsored development programme, URADEP, started radio broadcast within the Upper Regions of Ghana. Prior to the establishment of this radio station, there was hardly any

modern means of communication in the North, namely radio, television, internet or telecommunication. The government-controlled GBC located in Accra broadcast mainly in English and few selected Ghanaian languages which were not understood by majority of Northerners. More so, broadcast messages hardly reached some parts of the North. Newspapers are also published in Accra and owing to poor transportation system and bad roads, arrived in the area several days late. Moreover, since majority of the population was illiterate, printed news could not meet their information and education needs. Until recently, telecommunication facilities were also absent, thereby creating a communication vacuum in the area (Naaikuur, 2004).

However, little research has focused on the media's contribution to the development of Northern Ghana. Instead, an appreciable volume of research work has examined the content of the Ghanaian media to determine the value of news items on democracy and development. Ansah (1993) used Kwame Nkrumah's writings and pronouncements as primary source material to analyze his concept of the place and function of the media in the kind of society Nkrumah tried to build in Ghana. Twumasi (1981) examined social class and newspaper coverage in Ghana while Obeng-Quaidoo (1984) studied media habits of Ghanaian youth, and Bofo (1989) evaluated the impact of the control mechanism on Ghana's press performance during the first two years of the revolutionary government of Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings.

Omari (1987) and Andoh (1993), on the other hand, have reported very low coverage of science news in the Ghanaian media. Again, Asante (1996)

looked at the media – government relationship vis-à-vis national development in Ghana from independence to 1992. Both the National Media Commission and the Centre for Democratic Development have also done extensive media monitoring of political coverage. However, few studies have directly linked media coverage to specific development issues as a means of analyzing the media's role in the development process. Fewer studies still have focused on media coverage of rural news especially coverage of Ghana's most deprived area – the Savanna regions of Ghana. Thus, there is no scientific basis for assessing the contribution of the media to the development of Ghana's poorest regions.

It is important, therefore, to investigate the type of development issues which the national media focuses on and the amount of coverage that is devoted to the North. It is equally significant to establish the amount of news hole from the North, which concentrates on development issues and the style of reportage that the media adopts in communicating development issues from the North. Such investigation will establish whether the Ghanaian media plays positive or negative roles in the development of Ghana and the Savanna regions in particular. The problem for investigation, therefore, is why there appear to be inadequate media coverage of development issues on the Savanna regions of Ghana.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to assess the role the media plays in highlighting the development agenda of Northern Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Assess the level of prominence which the national media accords development issues emanating from Northern Ghana with respect to the economy in general and specifically agriculture, education, gender, local governance and water and sanitation;
- Establish the style of coverage which the national media employs in covering development issues from the Northern Ghana;
- Understand the perceptions of media consumers and editors about Northern Ghana's development; and
- Make recommendations aimed at enhancing the media's role in speeding up the development of deprived parts of Ghana, especially the Northern parts of the country.

Research questions

The study sought answers to the following questions:

- What level of prominence does the national media accord development issues emanating from Northern Ghana with respect to the economy in general and specifically agriculture, education, local governance, gender and water and sanitation?
- What style of coverage does the national media employ in covering development issues from Northern Ghana?
- What are the perceptions of media consumers and editors about Northern Ghana's development?
- How can the media's role be enhanced in speeding up the development of

Significance of the study

From the immediate post-World War II period to contemporary time, debate has raged regarding mass media effects on audiences and by extension, their role in positively changing the attitudes of such audiences. However, much of the analyses done on Ghanaian media have been rather narrow in the issues selected for study. For instance, Twumasi (1981) examined only social class and newspaper coverage in Ghana. Ansah (1993) used the writings and pronouncements of Ghana's first President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as primary source material to analyze the kind of society Nkrumah tried to build in Ghana. Gadzekpo (2008), on the other hand, looked at media coverage of political activities. Asante (1999) was, perhaps, the most comprehensive study of media content with a focus on development issues covered in the media.

Unlike Asante (1999), which concentrated on development issues within the wider Ghanaian context, the present research focuses on Northern Ghana in view of the peculiar historical antecedents which accounted for the area's underdevelopment. In essence, the study analysed media coverage of development issues within rural areas.

Much of research on development communication has focused either on the source of messages, the channels of communication used in sending messages, the recipients of messages or feedback received from such messages. Studies which paid attention to message content have done so without taking into

consideration the relationship between the source of messages, actors within the message delivery process (media persons), the message content, recipients of messages and feedback on the messages. In recognition of the integrated nature of development communication, and the fact that only a comprehensive study of all elements within the communication process leads to a firm grasp of the contribution of communication to development, this research studied all elements in the information-sharing process.

Also, researches into development journalism including Twumasi (1981), Ansah (1990) and Asante (1999) appear to be informed by only the participatory development theory. In analyzing the effectiveness of the Ghanaian media in communicating development messages, this study draws largely on tenets of development as espoused in endogenous development, sustainable development and participatory development approaches. It thus expands the definition of advocacy journalism to include journalism that encourages the extensive use of and dependence on local resources particularly labour, material and technical skills in development efforts.

Results of this study will come in handy for Government, donor agencies and other development planners which are interested in using the media for development purposes. Media gatekeepers will also benefit from a research that mirrors the effect of their editorial judgment on the development of Ghana's rural poor. Businesses which advertise on the mainstream media need information on the reach, penetration and programming of the various media organizations. Results from the study could offer advertisers the programme schedule of state-

owned and some private media organizations and specific programmes that are of benefit to Northerners.

The study outcome would be a useful guide to policy makers and implementers such as the Ministry of Information, the National Media Commission and the National Communications Authority (NCA) in their policy formulation and implementation. The Information Ministry and the National Media Commission should be interested in establishing the role that state-owned media particularly *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times* and the *GBC* are playing towards assisting in the development of deprived communities. This will, hopefully, inform debate regarding the continued relevance of the state-broadcaster, *GBC*, and assist government to take a decision on its privatization or otherwise. The National Media Commission could, from findings of this research, be informed on the extent to which the media is using its constitutionally guaranteed freedoms to promote the development of vulnerable communities. The NCA, on the other hand, should benefit from a study which details the contribution of Ghana's leading broadcast station, *GBC*, to development of the rural poor. The study may inform the NCA on parts of the country which most urgently require radio and television frequencies for development purposes, and embolden the Ghana Community Radio Network's advocacy for the allocation of more frequencies towards the establishment of community radio stations.

Scope of the study

The study focused on three regions of Northern Ghana, namely Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. This is an area which covers 97,702 square kilometers of Ghana's total land area, with a total population of 4,177,798. Majority of residents of the area are peasant farmers (GSS, 2011).

This research, which covered a pre-national election and a post-national election period, from 1st July, 2008 to 30th June, 2009, analyzed the contents of both state-owned and privately-owned newspapers and broadcast media for stories which have developmental bearing on Northern Ghana. However, to gain the perspectives of newspaper readers on media coverage of the study area selected, audiences within Ghana's major cities namely, Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi – were interviewed. Data was also gathered from 4 newspaper editors and 3 broadcast station editors selected from a total of 28 television station editors, 228 radio station station editors (NCA, 2012) and more than 300 newspaper editors (Gadzekpo, 2008).

The conclusions and generalizations of the study would, therefore, be applicable to coverage of Ghana's deprived communities by state-owned and privately-owned Ghanaian media, as well as media in other parts of the world which have similar characteristics.

Definition of terms

- **Hard News** – These are news items which are direct reports of events

or functions which journalists cover without researching further to explore issues discussed during such events or undertaking investigations into information obtained from the event coverage. They usually would not question pronouncements of the news makers. They instead carry the information as presented by news makers who are usually politicians and other persons in positions of thrust;

- Features – Unlike hard news, features are detailed accounts of events or happenings resulting from painstaking research and investigation. Such stories go beyond pronouncements at news conferences, press releases and other such events to dig deeper into the actions and inactions of officialdom, the struggles of ordinary people and presents eye-opening perspectives aimed at improving political, economic and social systems;
- News Commentaries – News commentaries constitute opinions of private individuals aired on either radio or television related to issues of public interest. Such views do not usually constitute opinions of the media networks on which the views are expressed;
- Editorials – These are usually views of print media houses on issues of public interest. They do not constitute opinions of any private individual;
- Story Enhancement – An important indicator of the importance that a media house attached a particular story, enhancement has to do with the replay on radio or television of the actual voice of a newsmaker, or the accompaniment of a newspaper story with a photograph or some other illustration to emphasize the content of the story;

- Actuality – This is a replay of the actual voice of a newsmaker or eyewitness to an event;
- Salience – This refers to the length of a story or the amount of newspaper space devoted to a particular story;
- Prominence – For the broadcast media, the level of prominence attached to a story depends on whether it is accorded headline news or not. When a news story makes the headlines, it gets more audience attention than when it is aired as non-headline news. With regards to the print media, prominence relates to the page on which a story is placed. Stories on the front page of newspapers are more attention-grabbing than those buried in other pages of the paper;
- Balance of news – This relates to whether news items are reported in favourable, unfavourable or neutral style;
- Favourable reportage – This is positive development news, including the initiation of projects or activities that have a potential of bettering the living conditions of residents of Northern Ghana. It also includes the presentation of development challenges in a manner that does not demoralize residents of the North, but instead motivates them to tackle such challenges;
- Unfavourable reportage – Presentation of development challenges in a manner that makes the people look helpless in confronting such challenges; and

- Neutral reportage – News reports which neither motivate Northerners nor demoralize them from participating in development.

Organisation of the study

The study is made up of nine chapters. Chapter one gives a general background to the study and also introduces the problem that was investigated. It further presents the objectives, research questions, significance of the study as well as the scope and limitations of study before ending with operational definitions of relevance to the research work. Chapter two examines development from various theoretical and contextual perspectives. It begins with a historical overview of development before focusing on the varying interpretations of development.

In Chapter three, the thesis conceptualizes development communication. The chapter discusses the theory of development communication and its allied theory of participatory development communication. Much attention is paid to the modernization theory of development communication. The chapter also addresses the concepts of development journalism and advocacy journalism.

Chapter four delves into mass media and development. It commences with a historical overview of the media's role in development before focusing on mass media and political participation as well as the role of radio in development. Again, much attention is paid to biased media coverage of Africa and other ethnic minorities. As part of chapter four, the relevance of indigenous communication for development is looked at.

Chapter five describes the methodology of the study. It commences with a description of the study area followed by the research design, the research philosophy and profile of selected media houses. The Chapter further describes the study population, sampling procedures, data collections methods, issues of reliability and validity, as well as procedures for measurement and analysis of data.

Chapter six presents the types of development issues from Northern Ghana which are addressed by the media. It concentrates on how stories on agriculture, education, health, economy in general, local governance and gender issues emanating from Northern Ghana are reported in the media. In Chapter seven, the study turns its attention to the style of media coverage of Northern Ghana, with particular emphasis on the amount of news hole from Northern Ghana, thematic areas covered by the media, type of reportage, level of importance attached to news from Northern Ghana.

Chapter eight looks at the perceptions of editors and newspaper readers on media coverage of Northern Ghana. It begins with the background of respondents to the study before discussing the views of editors and newspaper readers on the disparity in development between the North and South of Ghana as well as the role of the media in development of Northern Ghana. The need for greater media presence in Northern Ghana, causes of Northern Ghana's underdevelopment and challenges to media coverage of Northern Ghana are also explored.

The last chapter of the study, nine, summarizes the conceptual framework, methodology and results of the research. It also draws conclusions based on the

study, makes recommendations towards improved media coverage of Northern Ghana and gives suggestions to promote further research into the media's contributions towards developing deprived areas such as Northern Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This chapter discusses the origins of development and various development paradigms which have evolved overtime. It evaluates dominant theoretical perspectives like the modernization and dependency approaches to development. Additionally, rural development and endogenous development are briefly examined.

Historical overview of development

Literature on development can be traced to the works of 18th Century philosophers, political economists and social scientists. However, the widespread use of “development” as conceptual framework for a number of individual, institutional, national and international changes was a post Second World War phenomenon (Mowlana, 1973). Since development became popularized, there has been much debate stemming from varying perceptions about how a nation can initiate and facilitate change. In the 1940s and especially in the 1950s and the 1960s, the term “development” became synonymous with growth, modernization, change, democracy, productivity, industrialization and other similar western historical changes. The term development was popularized first by American

scholars and policy-makers and soon introduced into Europe and the less industrialized countries of the world (Mowlana, 1973). It subsequently became a major issue in international organizations despite the fact that its meaning was rather nebulous and controversial (Mowlana, 1973).

Soon after the term development was introduced, it became a convenient term on which a number of otherwise diversified research interests now converged. In the United States, development studies expanded as a result of a number of scholarly projects in the areas of politics, economics, culture, anthropology, rural sociology, international relations and international communication. One study actually found that communication and development was the most studied area with a number of communication-oriented researches dealing with international problems (Mowlana, 1973). By the early 1960s, development as a field of academic and social inquiry had experienced exponential growth under the influence of the dominant paradigm, modernization, which placed emphasis on economic, technological, and institutional factors.

The meaning of development

“Development” as a concept was introduced by Ibn Khaldun, an Islamic social thinker. Regarded by some as the founder of sociology and demography, Ibn Khaldun used the term *ilm-al-Umran* to describe a new science and development of society, namely sociology. His work with this new science was, basically, a paradigm and methodology of sociology. The notion of development was used to

consider the basic cause of historical evolution which could be found in the economic and social structures of societies (Khalidun, 1967).

For about two centuries, Ibn Khaldun's work remained the single most comprehensive analysis of societal development and social organization. Beginning in the 17th and continuing into 20th centuries, European philosophers, social thinkers, economists and sociologists paid particular attention to the broad notion of development in terms of the transformation from rural, communal, agrarian society to the urban, rational, contractual and industrial nation state system. Whereas Simmel (1950) linked development to rural communities becoming urbanized, Comte (1896) emphasized static societies, representing the underdeveloped ones, as against dynamic societies which are the developed places. Both Weber (1947) and Durkheim (1933) advanced a more detailed as well as an optimistic view of societal development arguing that the division of labour and societal relationships are the bases of organic solidarity in modern society.

The process of societal development as an economic activity was studied by Smith (1937), Ricardo (1951) and Marx (1959), followed by a host of other economic thinkers such as Robert Owen and Pierre Joseph Proudhon. Whereas the mercantilists of the 15th and 16th centuries acted on the basis of pragmatic notions of capital formation and wealth creation, the classical liberals translated these notions into classical political economy, advocating the accumulation of capital as the basis for economic expansion and consequently societal development. It was Karl Marx who transcended the thinking of both the utopian socialists and the classical liberal economists, devising a theory which synthesizes economics and

politics into an overall theory of societal development based on dialectical materialism and class struggle (Mowlana, 1985).

Though development was prominent in the work of 18th century scholars, from the turn of this century until the end of the Second World War, development as an all-encompassing concept of social change and growth was not systematically used in the literature except in discussions of economic and industrial growth and measurement. Yet western theories of human development, both liberal democratic and Marxist, proceeded from a shared assumption that the development of societies require that modern economic and social organizations replace traditional structures.

Firmly adopted in Europe and North America and diffused among the elites of the less-industrialized countries, this assumption included, among other things, industrialization in the economy, secularization in thought and personality, and modernization modeled on some variation of capitalism, socialism, liberalism, communism, reform or revolution. In most instances, development implied westernization or Europeanization (Lerner, 1958; Schramm, 1964; Rogers 1962, 1969). With the increased popularity of the term development during the early decades of World War II, the description of the majority of the world's population and societies as "backward" was gradually replaced by the more respectable adjectives "underdeveloped" and "developing".

Most economists of the 1950s assumed that industrialization was essential for development and concentrated on factors that trigger industrialization. Two approaches to industrialization emerged during this period. The first approach

aimed at stimulating industrial growth. It was a dualist approach in which the traditional economy was seen as a competing alternative with imports designed with industrial productivity in mind. The second approach proposed mobilizing the traditional sector of the economy to the task of industrialization. The sense here was that the poorest people living in rural areas were a potential and badly needed labour force. The economic policy then was to harness the traditional and underdeveloped sectors for the process of growth and industrialization instead importing western technology (Bryant & White, 1982).

Studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s pointed at some shortcomings of the earlier model of development. Economists examined evidence about the actual cause of growth and found some uneven results. It emerged that while economic indices particularly the gross national product, showed growth of some economies, majority of the people in those countries became poorer owing to income inequalities. It was established that the poor were getting poorer in some countries than they had been at the beginning of the push for growth. Thus, economists realized how wrong it was to assume that newly generated wealth will automatically trickle down to the poor. A new hypothesis was then proposed to the effect that inequality would follow the course of an inverted U. Consequently, as growth proceeded, inequality would first increase before declining.

The rise in inequality would initially occur because some groups would begin to exploit new opportunities more fully than others. This would lead to a decline in the average income of the very poor in absolute and relative terms. Overtime when other groups enter the wage economy, inequality would gradually

decline. This thinking fed into the definition of development by economists of the 1970s who saw the phenomenon in terms of equitable distribution of wealth. This new thinking on development emerged after the economists had gathered evidence to the effect that redistribution of wealth was possible without sacrificing growth. The World Bank was one of the key proponents of equity after it had commissioned research which resulted in a publication titled, *Redistribution with Growth* (Bryant and White, 1982).

Since the 1970s, Western development aid and all facets of the process, including communication, have been challenged. Many large and expensive projects promoting social change have failed to help their intended recipients, or have resulted in even worsened conditions for them. Development's primary focus on economic growth has ignored other crucial, yet non-material aspects of human need. Also, economic development aid has contributed to much corruption and large gaps between wealthy elite and the masses in Third World countries. This led to criticisms that earlier definitions of development had connotations of gender bias, ethnocentrism and even racism (Melkote and Steeves, 2006).

By the 1980s, economists such as William Loehr and John Powelson were questioning the U Shape model of development and citing evidence to support the 1950s model of development. They produced results which indicated that political and structural factors were key influences on inequality including the ability of the poor to take advantage of economic development. They also questioned the extent to which fiscal policies are progressive and the distributional impact of various substantive policies such as education and agriculture (Bryant and White, 1982).

William Loehr and John Powelson were returning to the modernization theory of development which other economists had rejected. This shows the dominance of modernization paradigm in development research. The fact that it is still widely adopted by many developing countries, including Ghana in their attempt to better the lives of their citizens shows that modernization, as a development perspective, will remain relevant.

Modernization theory

Some scholars categorize development theories into two main approaches: modernization, based on models of liberal capitalism and assumptions of Western superiority, and dependency or underdevelopment, based on neo-Marxist interpretations of the balance of resources, labour and economics in the global scheme of things. Isbister (1995) further separates Marxism from the dependency theory of the neo-Marxists because of its more literal interpretation of Marx and the assumption that an internal class struggle within individual countries must occur in the national journey toward development. More often, theorists gloss over the differences between the Marxists and neo-Marxists, focusing instead on a third approach that is based on a synthesis of modernism and underdevelopment theory (Harrison, 1988), or a dissatisfaction with both (Mowlana & Wilson, 1990). Among these are many feminist writers who put women's development issues into a separate category (Hay & Stichter, 1984). Some are also of the thinking that communities should be able to determine for

themselves how much and what kinds of development are appropriate (Chambers, 1997; Tehranian, 1994).

Modernization theory came into being with the technological fascination and economic successes of the West just after World War II. As the embers of war died down, a Cold War between the Soviets and West began. President Harry Truman, having fashioned a comprehensive aid package to help Western Europe recover from the ravages of the war, saw the political advantage of financial aid to poorer countries. His aid program was designed to ensure the loyalty of Third World leaders with cash and technical assistance from the US. This aid came in the guise of development and with many strings attached. Western style of development was therefore introduced to the Third World (Chambers, 1997).

Early proponents of modernization theory saw a clear dichotomy between traditional and modern societies (Lerner, 1958). Traditional society, rooted in rural lifestyle, was considered fatalistic and superstitious. People were assumed to take on roles and repeat their daily tasks just as their ancestors had done. With no challenges to the way things had always been done, and hence, no innovation. Lerner (1958) equated modernization with westernization and suggested that development consisted of the following components:

- A core of mobile individuals whose psychological orientation made it easier to accept rapid changes in their personal lives and the overall social system.
- An omnipotent mass media system that reinforced and accelerated societal

and individual change by disseminating the new ideas and attitudes conducive to development, and

- The correlations between the important indices of urbanization, literacy, media exposure, and economic and political participation to establish a modern Western-type society.

Power within traditional societies was inherited and decentralized; people were focused on the practical and the present (Rostow, 1960). Modern society, on the other hand, was represented by an increasingly urban social structure full of individuals who could accept new ideas and focus on things other than those of immediate relevance, including the future. Modern individuals were seen as rational (as opposed to superstitious), with a strong belief in humanity's ability to control the world, and thus, a feeling of more control over their own lives. In modern societies, the theorists believed, people are more empathetic toward one another and more likely to be democratic (Inkeles & Smith, 1974). Even after its heydays in the 1950s and 60s, modernization theory continued the push to change the mind-set of people within traditional societies through the influence of particularly enlightened members of societies who are referred to as change agents, or the modernizing elite. Modernism assumed that people in traditional societies are part of a coherent nation-state, and that economics are closely intertwined with culture (Harrison, 1988). Rostow's (1960) prediction that societies moving toward modernity would become increasingly urban, with their government making investments in transportation, mass communication, and education to assist capital expansion continued to inform modernization theories.

Although his conceptions were challenged somewhat over the years, Lerner's (1958) vision of mass media as a major part of modernization continued to be seen as the vehicle to help diffuse new ideas and attitudes.

The importance of individual entrepreneurship and innovation stood in exact opposition to the socialist models of the Soviet Union, China or Cuba, and in many cases, to the values of many traditional societies. Critics pointed to the cultural biases inherent in modernist theory: the assumption that the Western model of life was ideal, the linearity and monochromatic vision of progress, and a modernizing elite, as evidence that modernization theory was not appropriate for all societies. The elites had proven themselves capable of creating repressive regimes in the name of modernization in Latin America, Asia and Africa (Harrison, 1988). Indeed, increased industrialization, as prescribed by modernism, did not lead to democracy and economic benefits for all, but in many cases to authoritarian rule and an increase in the gap between rich and poor on national and international levels (Agunga, 1997; Mowlana & Wilson, 1990). For many in the Third World, the assumption that tradition was inherently backward was deeply offensive. Modernization theory could neither explain the Islamic revolution in Iran which was based on a brotherhood of Muslims rather than weaknesses within the nation-state, nor could it explain the socialist revolutions which based their loyalty on a concept of international solidarity among workers rather than identity with the nation-state (Mowlana, 1990).

One often-criticized aspect of modernization theory was that development organisations, generally foreign staffed and based, felt they were the most

knowledgeable and capable development actors. This notion derives from the idea that development is a process of teaching impoverished groups the wisdom of the rich. This led to a situation where Third World countries, in their journey toward development, became dependent on the developed nations for human and material support. To enable Third World nations reassert themselves and take charge of their own destinies, the dependency theorists emerged.

Dependency theory

Another group of economists whose works have come to the fore in development theory are the dependency theorists. They contend that Third World countries are made dependent, often under the guise of development, upon the developed countries. One means of achieving this dependency is through the transformation of the middle class within third world countries to the comprador bourgeois class which makes them look outside to the west for leadership and assistance rather than seeking solutions within their own countries.

As far as the dependency theorists are concerned, many countries are underdeveloped rather than developing owing to external factors including adverse terms of trade which most third world countries suffer from. This school of thought argues that international forces work to create structures of poverty which are nothing but institutions that respond to the priorities of the industrial world to reinforce the poverty and dependence of the third world. The political consequence of this economic analysis was that the benefits of growth do not spread throughout the economy as the classical economists postulated. Second, As a result of

conflicting interests in every society, those with power use growth to promote their own interests. Thus, terms of trade, production choices, and patterns of investment all strengthen the interests of certain groups in society at the expense of others (Bryant and White, 1982).

Other development thinkers concentrated on the human and ethical dimensions of development. Goulet (1971:24), one of the main proponents of the humanists approach to development, emphasized on the impact of underdevelopment on the human condition:

Underdevelopment is shocking; the squalor, disease, unnecessary deaths, and hopelessness of it all! ...The most empathetic observer can speak objectively about underdevelopment. This unique culture shock comes to one as he is initiated to the emotions which prevail in the "culture of poverty" ... [The] prevalent emotion of underdevelopment is a sense of personal and societal impotence in the face of disease and death, of confusion and ignorance as one gropes to understand change, of servility toward men whose decisions govern the course of events, of hopelessness before hunger and natural catastrophe. Chronic poverty is a cruel kind of hell and one cannot understand how cruel that hell is merely by gazing upon poverty as an object.

Viewed from this perspective, development is defined as liberation from poverty and from a stunted view of oneself. The humanists posited that development entails enhancing one's self-esteem and ability to make choices about the future. Todaro (1977) builds on the position of Denis Goulet and arrived at

some core values of development. First, there is the question of life sustenance which is the ability to provide basic necessities including food, shelter, health and protection. Second, self-esteem, which refers to a person's sense of worth and self-respect as well as the ability to avoid being used as a tool by others for their own ends. Third, development entails freedom from servitude.

The core values formulated by Todaro (1977) are particularly relevant for rural communities in their drive towards development. For such communities, development must entail emancipation from alienating material conditions of life and from social servitudes of men to nature, ignorance, other men, misery, institutions, and dogmatic beliefs. This is the view of advocates of rural development.

Rural development

Boakye-Yiadom (2004) refers to rural settlements as localities with less than 5,000 people. He asserted that widespread disparities exist between urban and rural areas, bringing to the fore the need for governments and development partners to address the imbalances in development. For him, urban dwellers rely mainly on the provision of services within the non-agricultural sector to earn their living while rural dwellers depend on agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing as their means of sustenance. Peil (1992) added that the livelihood of rural dwellers is determined directly or indirectly by the exploitation of the soils and natural resources in their environment and that major activities like agriculture,

forestry, straw weaving, cotton spinning and other indigenous services are life sustaining ventures for rural people.

Rural and urban centres can also be contrasted in the manner in which they earn and spend cash. Whereas urban populations rely heavily on cash to access food, water, sanitation, employment and garbage disposal, rural community dwellers depend to a large extent on self provisioning since they have fewer avenues for earning cash. Against the background of the deprivation within which rural people live, Peil (1992) defined rural development as series of integrated measures aimed at enhancing the productive capacity and living standards of people in developing societies who live outside the urban centres. Thus, rural development is attained through undertaking specific activities which have the potential of reducing income disparities between urban and rural populations. This objective is achieved through the creation of opportunities in rural settings meant to improve sustainable livelihoods and equity in investments (Ghana Development Planning Commission, 2004).

The mass media has an essential role to play in rural development and for narrowing income disparities between urban centres and rural areas. However, many researchers have complained about the media's failure to assist in the development efforts of rural communities. For instance, White (2008:7) complained that there is still a "huge communication gap between the modernized elite sector and the vast majority of those who live on peasant farming, the informal economy or on the verge of survival". According to him, rural Africa is denied information from the wealth of newspapers, magazines and broadcasting

facilities which exist in modernized societies of Africa. For White (2008) agricultural extension services and health education services have offices in the regional and district towns. However, little of their research information gets to the local communities, leaving such communities with no option but to continue relying on their local, indigenous knowledge and forms of communication.

Endogenous development

Rural development is only possible where traditional values, social and economic activities, skills and talents are fully explored. This thinking gave rise to the theory of endogenous development or development from within which entails the improvement of native knowledge, native skills and native technology. It is essential to harness the knowledge, skills and technologies of rural communities to meet their development needs.

Endogenous development is people-centred since it stresses on each country having the free choice to chart its path to development rather than external bodies determining another country's destiny. With endogenous development, each country determines its development options on the basis of internal possibilities, perceived needs and the efforts of its people to facilitate progress (Fekade, 1994).

To ensure sustainability of endogenous development, Fekade (1994) identified six endogenous strategies for adoption by developing countries. To begin with, developing countries need to empower their peoples to enable them participate fully in development programmes. Also, there should be equity or

fairness in the distribution of resources as well as equality before the law. Additionally, there ought to be extensive use of and dependence on local resources including labour, material resources and technical skills. Furthermore, a concerted effort must be made to strengthen local institutions like chieftaincy, family systems, clans and community-based organizations to enable them act as catalysts to community development. Finally, he advocates for the development of appropriate technology; technology that is useful and sustainable within the social and cultural environment of the user communities. This means that the technology must be locally based and capable of being used by majority of people to solve their day-to-day socio-economic and cultural challenges.

Rural Northern Ghana can develop along the prescriptions of endogenous development thinkers. To facilitate such development, however, the mass media must re-orient the thinking of residents of the North and policy makers away from dependency on external sources of support to focusing on self-help initiatives. The mass media ought to conscientize Northern communities and policy makers to search within their cultural practices for solutions to conflicts and other socio-economic challenges. The present study attempts to assess the extent to which the mass media is performing this critical duty of conscientizing Northerners and policy makers on the right paths to development.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Introduction

This chapter traces the evolution of theoretical perspectives on development communications and the concept of development journalism from their origins to present day scholarly debates on the role of the journalist who seeks to use information to attain speedy development. These perspectives tie in closely with the modernization theory of development communication which serves as the theoretical basis for this study.

Theory of development communication

Like modernism itself, the practice of development communication goes back as far as the 1940s. However, the concept was popularized after World War Two to solve developmental problems brought about by the War. Early communications theorists like Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner argued that radio and television could be employed in the world's most disadvantaged countries to bring about dramatic progress. The researchers based their high expectations upon the apparent success of World War II propaganda which was possible mainly through academia and Hollywood. Development communication as a theoretical framework became popularized in the second half of the twentieth

century. The works of Lerner (1958), Schramm (1964) and Rogers (1962, 1969) brought to the fore the need for communication to serve the development needs of Third World Countries.

Various definitions have over the years been offered for development communication. Rajasundaram (1981: 17) defines the concept as “the discipline and practice of communication in the context of developing countries”, while Quebral (1973: 25) refers to it as “the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater economic and social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential”.

Childere (1985), on the other hand, coined the term communication support for development, which he defines as: “The art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential” (Childere, 1985: 198). McPhail (2009) believes that development communication is: “... the process of intervening in a systematic or strategic manner with either media (print, radio, telephony, video, and the Internet), or education (training, literacy, schooling) for the purpose of positive social change. The change could be economic, personal, as in spiritual, social, cultural, or political” (McPhail, 2009: 3).

Since the 1940s and running into 1970s, three main categories of approaches have dominated scholarly works within the fields of communication

and development. There was the utilitarian or cost-benefit approach to communication and development which was popularized in the 1940s. It examines the relationship between communication technology and development policies. This approach attempts to analyze the relationship between the cost of investing in technology for development and the benefits that might be gained from such an investment. From the 1960s research interest in the use of communication technology for development purposes has risen considerably as many countries are faced with the difficult decision of how to employ modern technology for development while minimizing the negative effect of technology use on indigenous culture (Mowlana, 1979).

The second approach to communication and development is the causal approach which corresponds to the theoretical perspectives of Daniel Lerner, Everett Hagen, David McClelland and other scholars who are associated with the modernization school. Lerner (1958) suggested that a series of institutional developments lead to self-sustaining growth and modernization which consists of urbanization, literacy, extension of the mass media, higher per capita income and political participation. Lerner posited that growth in one of these areas stimulates growth in the others, ultimately moving society towards modernization. He viewed the key factors to modernization as physical, social, and psychological mobilities which are facilitated by the mass media, acting as agents of change. Lerner was convinced that access to the mass media is a precondition for participation in modern society and that the mass media directly affect personal attitudes and behaviours.

The third school of thought on communication and development is the structural approach, which is also known as the political economy or cultural approach. This is a more recent exposition which examines the infrastructure of the world communication system to determine whether it impedes or promotes development on all levels. It informs the call for a new economic order and the debate over a new world information and communication order to attain greater balance in the structure of communication between the Third World and the more advanced countries. For adherents of this approach, such balance is essential if development is to be attained economically, politically, socially and culturally. However, it does not only deal with questions of the political economy of information, but also with a set of cultural and social indicators which are relevant to communication and society in general (Schiller, 1984; Mattelart, 1983; Mowlana, 1979; Hamelink, 1983 and Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974).

Scholarly, professional and policy debate over the past five decades has also come up with three main models of communication and development. There is the Marxist or socialist model which regards communication as part of the political system and ideology as well as an integral part of the development process. The Marxist / socialist model emphasizes propaganda, organization, mobilization and self-criticism as the essential and primary functions of communication channels, especially the mass media. This model also considers a high level of interpersonal and group communication, especially through the political party apparatus as a prerequisite to the formation and implementation of development plans and strategies. This theoretical model assumes that awareness,

social change and revolution results in media participation, a situation where the masses take part in the production and distribution of cultural messages. In this respect, communication is aimed at generating awareness and mobilizing people toward political change leading to economic and social development. Political leaders including Lenin and Mao Zedong as well as Marxist and neo-Marxist scholars regard communication as an instrument of action or social liberation (Siegelaub, 1971).

The Marxist model aside, there are also the monistic or participatory models which emerged out of the inadequacies of the Marxist and liberal models. This model, also known as emancipatory model is both revolutionary, humanistic and a spiritual movement which calls for equality and balance in the international system. Advocates of this model view development within specific cultural values. They believe that change must not proceed in ignorance of the cultural, religious and traditional core values of the system since awareness of the core value and belief systems encourages people to become agents of their own development. In respect of the role of communication in the development process, this school of thought posits that both inter and intra personal communication should be employed by development planners. They also emphasize the importance of traditional channels of communication as well as modern technology in a people's effort at enhancing development (Freire, 1968 and Mowlana, 1985).

From the various critical viewpoints, some schools of thought have also emerged on the subject of using communication for development purposes.

Childere (1985) suggests that development communications can be broken down into six different schools of thought. These are the Bretton Woods paradigm, the Latin American, Indian, Los Baños, African, and the participatory development communication schools. The Bretton Woods paradigm of development communication emerged after World War II when there was a dire need for a Marshall Plan for development which led to the establishment of Bretton Woods institutions namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1944. Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, and Everett Rogers were the main proponents of the Bretton Woods School. For his pioneering work on subject, Rogers is often referred to as "father of development communication". These pioneer advocates of the theory proposed wholesale transplant of development onto indigenous and uncivilized societies. Scholars of this paradigm associated communication with the modernization perspective of development. To them, communication is a persuasive tool used for sending messages in order to advance the modernization process. They argued that communication comes in the form of market research assisting in decisions regarding development goals and selling development ideas and associated technologies to target audiences (Mowlana, 1985).

Latin American researchers especially Luis Ramiro Beltran and Alfonso Gumucio Dagron criticized the Bretton Woods model as one which placed the problem of underdevelopment squarely at the feet of underdeveloped nations without taking into account the role powerful nations in perpetuating poverty in least developed countries. The Latin American researchers further critiqued Bretton Wood's assumption that Western models of industrial capitalism are

appropriate for the development of countries the world over. As a result of this, many Bretton Woods funded projects for development communication failed to address the real underlying problems, including lack of access to land, agricultural credits and fair market price of products in poor countries (Mowlana, 1985).

Advocates of the Bretton Woods School had a rethink of the model following failure of many development projects in the 1960s and criticisms of the top-down approach to communication. Thus, in the mid-1970s, the United Nations popularised the term communication support. The World Bank interprets communication support as, “planned information and education aimed at motivating a group of people to participate in development projects or to ensure that the projects make an overall positive contribution to development (Childere, 1985: 199).

Communication support does not only refer to mass media-based communication but interpersonal communication. Childere (1985) explains that communication support works best at creating the human environment necessary for development to succeed. This concept of communication changes people’s indifference, ignorance or opposition to a project to enthusiasm and action. At a 1975 United Nations sponsored conference on communication policies for developing countries, an eight-point goals for communication support was drawn up as follows:

- Communication should determine the needs of people and give political expression to those needs. This role assumes that communication would serve as an effective feedback to development planners and policy makers;

- Communication must provide horizontal and vertical linkages among citizens and between them and their leaders;
- Communications support is expected to provide communities with the mechanisms for cultural preservation;
- It must raise awareness for development projects;
- This form of communication must build positive attitude to speed up development;
- Communication support should help provide relevant information;
- It must support economic development through industrial linkages; and
- It has to provide support for specific development projects and social services including healthcare delivery, agriculture and sanitation (Childere 1985).

Currently, the World Bank sees development communication as the "integration of strategic communication in development projects" based on a clear understanding of indigenous realities (Childere 1985).

The Latin American School of development communication goes as far back as the 1940s when Colombia's Radio Sutatenza and Bolivia's Radios Mineras used participatory and educational rural radio approaches to empowering the marginalised. They have been acclaimed as the earliest models for participatory broadcasting efforts in the world. Paulo Freire's theories of critical pedagogy and Miguel Sabido's enter-educate method were popularised in the 1960s and emerged as important elements of the Latin American development communication scene. Other researchers who have contributed to this school

include Juan Diaz Bordenave, Luis Ramiro Beltran, and Alfonso Gumucio Dagron (Childere 1985).

India's efforts at development communication also took the form of rural radio broadcasts in the 1940s. Indigenous languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and Kannada were employed in such broadcasts. In the 1950s, the country intensified its efforts at using communication to accelerate community development projects which were initiated by the union government. Guided by the socialistic ideals which formed the basis of the country's constitution, the first generation of politicians started massive developmental programmes throughout the country, and employed field publicity to educate the largely non-literate population (Childere 1985).

The publicity used by the government took the form of interpersonal communication as well as the use of radio for mass education. Universities, especially agricultural universities, and other educational institutions as well as international organizations under the UN umbrella experimented with development communications and built upon the theory. Development communications is particularly useful for India since more than 600 million people are rural dwellers who largely depend on agriculture for their subsistence. Moreover, poverty levels in the country remain very high. Thus, many Indians need support from the government which often assists its citizens with development messages. Aside the traditional modes of communication, the government organized Public Information Campaigns and public shows in remote areas where information on social and developmental schemes was given.

Seminars and workshops were also held to educate farmers. For children, government organized competitions and entertainment shows during which messages are shared with them (Mowlana, 1985).

In the Philippines, the systematic study and practice of development communication began in the 1970s with the pioneering work of Nora C. Quebral, who, in 1972 coined the term "Development Communication." No wonder that in certain academic circles, Quebral is recognized as the "Mother" of Development Communication (Mowlana, 1985).

The African school of development communication emerged out of the continent's post-colonial and communist movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Development communication in Anglophone Africa involved the use of radio and theatre for community education, adult literacy, health and agricultural education. Meanwhile, radio was being developed as a means of promoting rural development in Francophone Africa, with sponsorship from the Bretton Woods institutions (Mowlana, 1985).

As a result of various criticisms of the modernization theory of development communication as well as a new thinking to the effect that communication can only serve the development needs of people where the beneficiary community members are involved in formulating developmental plans, the concept of participatory development communication emerged.

Participatory development communication

Participatory development communication works on the premise that participation is central to any effective use of communication in the development process, since “it is through participation that sustainable social changes can be achieved”. Participatory development itself is the involvement of beneficiary communities in taking decisions that affect their lives. Participation requires that beneficiaries express their views and take suggestions and requests that can be integrated into development programmes (Okunna, 1995: 618). According to him, the concept of participation in development has been in use since the 1930s.

Paolo Freire is perhaps the most renowned proponent of the concept of participatory communication. Thomas (1993) says Paolo Freire’s philosophy of education and his orientation toward participation are based on the notion that the historical vocation of human beings is to be free from the shackles of material and psychological oppression. Paolo Freire also advocated for beneficiaries of development projects to be involved in the entire process of planning and executing such projects.

This philosophy is reflected in Freire’s (1970) argument that all individuals have the capacity for reflecting, abstract thinking, conceptualizing, taking decisions, choosing alternatives and planning social change. Thomas (1993: 51) quotes Freire as explaining that “authentic participation leads to a freeing, it is an emancipatory experience resulting in actual liberation” Freire disapproved of the kind of educational system, which is based on the premise that knowledge is a finished product, rather than something to be discovered in a

dialogue encounter (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1997, Thomas, 1993). Friere contended that when knowledge is package by exogenous sources and doled out to poor communities, it does not benefit the recipients (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1997).

Communication scholars have drawn parallels between Freire's participatory development concept and participatory communication. Thomas (1993) observed that although Freire never really linked his analysis to the use of any particular medium, it is implicit in his writing that communication, in order to be effective, has to be participatory, dialogic and reciprocal. In fact, the entire enterprise of participatory communication projects, from the organisation and production of community radio in Latin America, Australia and parts of African and Aisa, through the practice of popular theatre in Brazil, Chile, Jamaica, south African, India and the Philippines utilized Freire's perspective (Thomas, 1993:51).

Similarly, Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada found a direct link between communication and true participation. They pointed out that the two concepts are two sides of the same coin. They posit that "before people of a community can participate, they must have appropriate information, and they must follow a communication process to reach a perception of the local situation and of the options for improvement" (Frazer and Restrepo-Estrada, 1998:48). The main essence of participatory communication is to inform people and in so doing enable them to contribute their points of view, reach consensus, and carry out an agreed change or development action together (Servaes, 1995; Thomas, 1993). For participatory communication to achieve its objective, the appropriate

communication channels must be employed. The mass media have proven to be effective channels for communicating messages.

The micro and communal nature of community participation in the development process require a shift from the big to small and participatory community media. This is what Kasoma describes as “co-equal little media centred government-with-people communication”, in preference to the “top-down, big media-centred, government to people communication” (Soola 1995:28). Communication in this regard is never uni-directional, or a unilinear flow of information, but a dynamic, transitional and experience-sharing process which cannot be dichotomized into a “superior or active, super-thinker sender”, on the one hand, and a “subordinate passive-ignorant receiver”, on the other (Soola, 1995:29). Keune and Sinha, on their part, assert that the idea of “who talks back” is as important as “who talks to” in the context of development communication. Thus, for development communication to be effective, development planners must move from the tradition of “government-say-so-communication” to a system of communication interaction and discussion between source and receiver.

In this respect, Keune and Sinha recommend that national governments structure both the software and hardware of communication to guard against the situation where support for development is left entirely in the hands of media managers who are part of the total development planning process. This new media perspective is only possible with a reorientation of communicators. Keune and Sinha stress the need for media personnel to assume new roles as rural dwellers in

order to understand the social processes that go on in the rural areas. Okunna (1995) buttresses this point by asserting that the participatory nature of interpersonal and group media gives the rural people an active and important role in their own development.

Hornik (1989), similarly, argues against the use of a single communication medium for development purposes. Development projects for which only one medium is used to reach target audiences face multiple problems. The medium may not reach some parts of the audience or some that are reached may have problems of comprehension. Even where the messages are understood, recipients may not use the channel as a stimulus to change. Hornik (1989) says that support for his proposition comes from the diffusion theory. According to him, scholars of the diffusion of innovation theory have argued persuasively that the adoption of new behaviour be viewed as a multiple process.

Like Hornik (1989), scholars of the modernization theory of development also base their theoretical assumptions on the theory of diffusion of innovations.

Modernization theory of development communication

The present study is modeled around the modernization theory of development communication which has gained currency in Third World communication practice and research. The earliest theoretical models on media effects conceptualized the impact of the mass media on individuals as direct, powerful and uniform. The apparent success of propaganda during World War I and the Spanish – American War at the turn of the 19th Century during which

exaggerated reports from the newspapers played key roles in the outcomes of the wars, reinforced the view of powerful media effects. In the 1920s, the addition of new media of mass communication including film and radio as well as the growth of advertising in the United States gave more impetus to research into strong and uniform media effects. During the period between the two World wars, the mass media was viewed as powerful instruments that could be successfully used to manipulate people's opinions and attitudes and thereby their behaviours in a relatively short period of time.

Studies into the role of the mass media, mainly radio, in the process of development gathered pace after the World War II. Lerner (1958) was one of the pioneering efforts in this direction. He focused on the role of the mass media in conveying actions and models needed to allow economic gains by agrarian societies. Following Lerner's efforts, Rostow (1960) detailed the economic path to modernization of poor nations. This economic path consisted of five stages namely, traditional society, establishing the preconditions for take-off such as political stability, sustained economic growth, maturity stage and modernization as witnessed by mass consumption and high rates of gross domestic product. Moving from the traditional stage to the modern stage required change of attitudes, new work habits and progressive economic models. Such altered attitudes were to be effected by the application of various mass media messages.

Two years after Rostow's work, Lerner (1962) propounded the theory of diffusion of innovations in which he focused on how opinion leaders were influential in the adoption process concerning new and better work habits among

rural poor particularly farmers. A year after Lerner, Lucien Pye edited an influential book titled, *Communication and Political Development*. Pye (1963) regarded the communication process as a major factor for any successful movement toward a democratic society. Then came Schramm (1964) proposing that the mass media could lead directly to economic improvement across poorer regions of the world. He discouraged traditional ways of doing things especially in the agricultural sector while encouraging modern methods of productivity. The mass media was seen as the vehicles for conveying modern technology to the poor audiences.

As espoused by the socio-economic theories of Max Weber, MacClelland and Hagen, the modernization model of development communications underlined the importance of economic growth through industrialization, capital-intensive technology, top-down structure of authority with economists in charge, and a certain attitude and mindset among individuals. This theory emphasizes the role of the economic elite in development as well as the need for factors of information, knowledge and innovation. The liberal/capitalist models of development are also based on the fundamental concepts of individual freedom, universal rights of suffrage, popular sovereignty, free marketplace of ideas and commodities and separation of legislative, judicial and executive powers with the media becoming the Fourth Estate. Democracy is identified with individual liberty, popular participation, private ownership of the means of production and distribution as well as freedom of enterprise (Lerner, 1958 and Schramm, 1964).

For the modernists, the mass media play special functions in the development process. Not only do the media expose individuals to new people, ideas and attitudes, they also accelerate the process of modernization. People in the Third World countries could expand their empathy by exposure to the mass media which showed them new places, behaviour and cultures. Indeed, the mass media had the potential of "... blowing the winds of modernization into isolated traditional communities and replacing the structure of life, values, and behavior there with ones seen in the modern Western society" (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 115). In Lerner's model, mass media were both an index and agent of modernization. Social change itself occurred in three phases: urbanization, literacy and mass media consumption. For Lerner (1957), mass media flourished only in societies that were modernized, thereby making them indices of modernization. In effect, there was a close reciprocal relationship between literacy and mass media exposure. The literate developed the media which in turn accelerated the spread of literacy. These developments, in turn, triggered a rise in political participation as found in advanced Western societies (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 115).

The western experience cited by Lerner (1957) was that psychic mobility begins when someone travels physically. The mass media accelerated the process of psychic and even physical mobility. Third World countries could expand their empathy by exposure to the mass media which showed them new places, behaviours and cultures. The mass media had the potential of "blowing the winds of modernization into isolated traditional communities" and replacing the

structure of life, values and behavior with the lifestyles of modern Western societies (Melkote and Steeves, 2006).

Rao (1963) also argued that communication was a major factor in the development process. He studied two villages in India, Kothooru, a village on the verge of modernization, and Pathooru, an isolated village which was steeped in traditionalism. Rao posited that the construction of a new road to Kothooru from a nearby city commenced the process of modernization since the new road brought with it new people and ideas as well as introducing the mass media while allowing the villagers to visit urban centres. The new information which came with interacting with people opened up the people's minds to expect and demand change. The new ideas and innovations were first available to the elite before trickling down to others. While Lerner (1958) referred to communication as a harbinger of new ideas from outside, Rao felt that new communication helped to smooth out the transition from a traditional to a modern community. He stated that the availability of new information to the people at the top and its eventual and autonomous trickle down to others in the lower levels of the hierarchy increased empathy, opened up new opportunities and led to a general breakdown of the traditional society (Rao, 1963).

In keeping with the findings of Lerner (1958), Schramm (1964) established that the modernization of industrial or agricultural sectors in developing nations required the mobilization of human resources. He stated: "The task of the media of information and the "new media" of education is to speed up and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development,

and, in particular, to speed and smooth the task of mobilizing human resources behind the national effort” (Schramm 1964: 27).

In his very influential book, *Mass Media and National Development*, Schramm observed, “villages are drowsing in their traditional patterns of life ... the urge to develop economically and socially usually comes from seeing how well-developed countries or the more fortunate people live”, and the mass media functioned as a “bridge to a wider world” (Schramm 1964: 41 – 42). The media were assigned the task of preparing developing nations for rapid social change by establishing a climate of modernization (Rogers 1976c). Lerner was of the view that the process of modernization began when something “stimulates the peasant to want to be a freeholding farmer, the farmer’s son to want to learn reading so he can work in the town, the farmer’s wife to stop bearing children, the farmer’s daughter to want to wear a dress and to do her hair” (Lerner, 1963: 348).

In an attempt to reduce the gap between nations with high concentration of mass media and those with low concentration of the media, UNESCO even suggested a minimum standard for mass media availability in the Third World countries. The verdict of Lerner, Rao, Schramm and other communication researchers of the 1950s and 1960s was that information was the missing link in the development chain of Third World countries since the quality of information available and its wide dissemination was a key factor in the pace of development. Adequate mass media outlets and information acted as a spur to education, commerce and a chain of other related development activities.

The concept of village education by radio developed out of the modernization paradigm of development communication. Researchers hypothesized that enormous rural education and development could only be accelerated in less industrialized societies through the application of western media systems, especially radio (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1992).

Criticisms of the modernization theory of development communications

In the 1970s, communication researchers began criticizing the earlier models of development communication. Some critics were of the view that the modernization approach, in conformity with the bullet theory of communication, conceptualized the mass media as having direct and powerful effects on receivers in developing countries. However, the notion of an all-powerful mass media acting on defenseless receivers was researched into in the 1940s and 1950s in the United States and found to be erroneous and consequently discounted. Critics of the modernization approach argued that a discarded theory was used in analyzing the effects of the mass media in developing countries. Scholars of development communication were split between those who regarded communication as “an organizational delivery system versus those who view communication more broadly, as inseparable from culture and from all facets of social change” (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 37 – 38).

Modernism’s reliance on mass communication was based on the idea that new ideas would be diffused through the media and absorbed by the target population who would, in turn, be convinced by the “great multiplier” (mass

communication) to change their behavior (Lerner, 1958). When it became clear that people were not becoming modernized as quickly as expected, Rogers (1976) criticized the assumptions that culture and behaviour could be changed by a diffusion of new ideas and called for a two-way communication system whereby governments not only spoke to their subjects, but made use of existing organizations in local communities to speak with and listen to the people.

Communicators who held critical perspectives to development also regarded development communication as a process of consensus building and resistance to western ideological exploitation. Many scholars have been critical of the development models as being applicable to the west, and the communication models as being western and unresponsive to the needs and circumstances of developing countries. Such critics contend that the Aristotelian concepts which stresses on only four components of communication namely the communicator, the message, the receiver and the objective were used by the west in analysing development phenomena in developing countries. Critics saw the Aristotelian model as being subject to media manipulation since it paid little attention to the cultural and social structure in which the communication system operates (Melkote and Steeves, 2001).

Again, many critics, especially those of Third World Countries, felt that these early approaches were erroneous in assuming that obstacles to development were rooted in developing countries, not as products of international relationships. Modernization was also equated to westernization, which was regarded as a necessary prerequisite to meeting human needs. Again, development was seen by

the early theorists as a top-down process, whereby centralized mass media could bring about widespread changes. No wonder that producers of development-oriented media did not have the audience in mind when producing their messages. This meant that they failed to establish whether the audience could receive their messages. This was particularly significant since television penetration in developing countries was minimal and radio penetration in the early days of development communication was light. Producers of such messages also failed to find out whether audiences would understand their messages since some countries have many indigenous languages and dialects. Again, the early theorists were not in a position to determine whether their audiences would act upon the messages, more so as the messages were based on a propaganda model and often distrusted by the audiences (Paterson, 2008).

Rogers (1969: 96) found on one of his visits to a village that “the only radio in the village, owned by the president of the village council, was tuned to music rather than to news of the outside world”. Even when villagers chose to listen to development programmes, they may not comprehend the content of such programmes owing in part to the absence of programming in all major dialects or languages as well as irrelevant content of messages due to the urban control of media production in developing countries (Eapen, 1975). Also, while the media were successful in raising people’s aspirations, Third World governments were not capable of satisfying the new wants resulting in what Lerner (1958) refers to as a revolution of rising expectations. Again, in most developing countries, the mass media in their present form are unsuited to the development tasks the

modernists expect them to perform. In some instances, the media's ability to perform such development roles is even waning (Eapen, 1975).

As a result of such erroneous assumptions, many projects which development communications were meant to support, chalked little success. This led to the proposition of new paradigms of development communications in the 1970s and 1980s. One such development paradigm was proposed by the dependency theorists. The movement saw mass communication in a different light from the modernists, but communication was nevertheless important. Concepts such as cultural imperialism, free flow of information, and a New World Information and Communication Order which would put more resources into information produced by and about the developing world placed mass communication in the center of their world systems analysis (Eapen, 1975).

Within the dependency paradigm, Servaes (1983: 10) separates communication analyses into two basic perspectives: actor-oriented and structure-oriented. Actor-oriented perspective assumes that human beings and countries act individually. The structure-oriented perspective, on the other hand, believes that "societies are the structures of interaction between the actors". The actor-oriented approach allows for reform while the structure-oriented perspective demands a more radical, structural change. Servaes argues for the structure-oriented approach since, "It is not the way people communicate that determines social structures, rather it is social structures that determine the way people communicate" (Servaes, 1983: 11).

Past theories of communication for development, whether based on modernist principles or those of world systems analysis, never addressed questions of democracy with individual countries nor the conflicting interests of groups within those countries. Also neglected were issues of broadcasting and democracy, or broadcasting and its relationship to internal conflicts. Using Mexico's Zapatista rebels as an example, Hallin (1998) showed that specific interest groups within countries could use new communication technologies to their own advantage while opposing the power structure of the nation. The Zapatistas successfully used the Internet to argue their case to the larger world over the heads of the Mexican government thus underlining the importance of universal access to broadcast and other communication technologies.

Studies on modernization theory of development communication

In spite of criticisms against the modernization theory of development communication, various studies have shown remarkable successes of using different communication techniques for development purposes. One of the foremost researches into the use of the mass media under the modernization approach was the experimental Radio Mathematics Project (RMP), which produced radio lessons to act as surrogate teachers. The programme evaluation on student learning concluded that at all grade levels, students understood topics delivered on radio better than students in traditional schools, and that the radio lessons helped rural students overcome the performance deficit they showed

compared to urban students. Also, students of all abilities showed significant learning gains after radio mathematics lessons (Friend, Searle and Suppes, 1980).

One popular approach to development communication is social marketing, which often employs entertainment education. Social marketing uses the principles of advertising to create mass media campaigns, particularly for health communication. Health educators have found that a variety of techniques using mass media to introduce and reinforce new ideas can be useful. Windborne (1999) identified nine characteristics that make enter-education successful. It has to be pervasive, relying on a variety of media, popular, so that people will seek it out and enjoy it, and personal, allowing the audience to feel personally connected with characters. According to Windborne (1999), enter-education also needs to be participatory as in participants singing, dancing, or engaging in sports, writing fan mail or identifying with characters. Additionally, the programme must be passionate, stirring the emotions of the listeners, and persuasive by showing the consequences of foolish actions. It is also practical, since it uses existing vehicles and known actors for programs and themes that are common to the target population. Producers need also make sure that the production is profitable by securing sponsorship before going ahead with the plans.

Indeed, as far back as 1975, the Mexican network, *Televisa*, broadcasted the first “entertainment-education” soap opera to a measure of success. Called “Ven Conmigo” (Come with me), the programme promoted a government-sponsored adult literacy programme. Development themes treated in such shows included family planning, women’s rights, responsible parenthood, and adolescent

sexual education (Nariman, 1993). *Telesecundaria* is another example of how educational programmes were successfully broadcast in Mexico. At the earlier stages of these programmes, a regular teacher delivered lectures through a television set installed in classrooms. Books and workbooks were provided to follow the television programme with exercises, revisions, applications and formative evaluations. The programme was revised in 1995 whereby satellite was deployed to beam the programme throughout with a wider range of styles of delivery. The programme enabled schools to deliver the same secondary school curriculum offered in traditional schools (De Moura Castro, Wolff and Garcia, 1999).

Aside television, radio has also been extensively used as an educational tool. Radio is often used to solve a variety of problems within Third World countries especially to combat HIV/Aids. According to Tufte (2004), the use of entertainment-education to address health-related issues ranging from blood pressure, smoking and vaccine promotion to family planning and HIV/Aids prevention is on the rise. The result is a growing volume of media products, especially radio and television soap operas which are produced specifically to educate audiences.

In Nepal, panel data from a population-based survey were collected between 1994 and 1999 to evaluate the impact of radio drama serial among couples of reproductive age. Data from 1,442 women were used to assess changes in couples' family planning decision-making. The data was also used to identify predictors of spousal communication and family planning use in relation to

programme exposure (Sharan and Valente, 2002). Another study which produced data to support the use of radio for developmental campaigns was a study carried out by Vaughan, Regis and St. Catherine (2000) in St. Lucia. The study examined the impact of an entertainment-education radio soap opera, *Apwe Plezi*, which was broadcasted from February, 1996 to September, 1998. The programme promoted family planning, HIV prevention and other social development themes. Results of the study showed that compared to non-listeners, regular listeners were more likely to trust family planning workers and preferred a significantly lower number of children.

Tanzania presents one of the best African examples of the successful application of radio for health education. In 1993, a radio soap opera entitled, "Twende na Wakati" (Let's Go with the Times) commenced in Tanzania. The programmes were created for a dual purpose: to inform the population about the different ways to deal with the Aids problem and also educate the public about family planning techniques. Characters in the soap opera were designed to have specific effects on the people who tuned into the production and each circumstance these characters were depicted in was geared towards relating them to the general Tanzanian population and making the audience see reality in the soap operas. The programme was also successful in ameliorating the problem of population explosion in Tanzania (Vaughan, Regis and St. Catherine, 2000).

Vaughan, Regis and St. Catherine (2000: 81) stated the effects of the programme as follows:

“a reduction in the number of sexual partners by both men and women, and increased condom adoption. The radio soap opera influenced these behavioural variables through certain intervening variables, including (1) self-perception of risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, (2) self-efficacy with respect to preventing HIV/AIDS; (3) interpersonal communication about HIV/AIDS, and (4) identification with, and role modeling of the primary characters in the radio soap opera”.

Similar to the Tanzanian health education programmes, Mozambique was also successful at employing radio for developmental purposes. Over 18 months between 1997 and 1998, the Population Services International embarked on a targeted radio campaign in Mozambique to promote behavior change for the prevention of sexually transmittable diseases and HIV/AIDS. The campaign consisted of a series of nine radio spots developed to stimulate risk reduction among specific groups identified by the project. The spots were then translated into the ten most common local languages in Mozambique. By the end of the radio campaign, the spots had aired more than 10,000 programmes. Among those exposed to the radio campaign, 97.2 percent reported intent to change their sexual behavior compared to 62.8 percent of those who were not exposed to the campaign (Karlyn, 2001).

In Ghana, the electronic media have for many decades been used in support of development projects. Since 1935, when the British used the air waves to reach the colonists, GBC has been a source of news, information, entertainment and education. However, electronic media usage was maximized in 1964 when

Ghana was selected by UNESCO as an experimental training site for using rural radio to facilitate development (Head, 1974). Radio and television are also used to convey information to women as well as to other selected groups, including farmers, fishermen, and school children. A number of studies have been done that include radio campaigns and their effectiveness, even though for many of those studies, radio was only an incidental variable.

For instance, Brydon and Legge (1996), in a study of Structural Adjustment, the program of Action to Mitigate the Social Impacts of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) and the Economic Opportunities for Women in Development (ENOWID), found that the Ghanaian government's use of radio was more effective as an information tool than was newspaper. Those who had heard of PAMSCAD named radio as their source of information. In a similar study, Bosompra (1989) examined the effectiveness of Ghanaian health information campaigns designed to inform and encourage changed behaviour with regard to cholera, immunization, oral rehydration therapy, and AIDS. In a survey of two rural villages, he found that respondents relied almost equally on conversation with family and friends on one hand and radio on the other, for information on the selected health topics. Again, Dolphyne (1987) believes that media, together with public discussion, were responsible for raising consciousness about the plight of women in Ghanaian societies. During the International Decade for Women, the Ghanaian government used radio and television as well as public lectures and symposia in English and local languages to intensify dialogue on the roles of women and men in society.

Some scholars have criticized the communication models and systems used for development projects. For instance, Ansu-Kyeremeh (1997) is highly critical of organized radio listening groups. Based on an ethnographic study of six villages in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana author argues that groups formed specifically to listen to radio were redundant in communities where people were already members of groups that performed other tasks in society. He believes that communicating development projects relied too much on broadcast media and too little on the existing indigenous communication networks that had been in place for many years and were culturally familiar within the communities. Ansu-Kyeremeh is also critical of media campaigns for family planning and health education because of their one-way communication flow and lack of allowance for listener feedback.

Gumucio Dagon, Alfonso, Tufte & Thomas (2006) blames the failure of much donor support to developing countries on the donors' lack of understanding of how communication works in the development process. According to him, most development managers and their organizations equate communication with information, or the dissemination of information as a public relations gimmick or for visibility. Thus, the decisions about communication in development programmes are often made by development managers who have little knowledge of the process of communication rather than communication experts. Gumucio Dagon et al (2006) referred, specifically, to HIV/AIDS campaigns in developing countries for which the communication strategies are usually similar to strategies which have been used successfully in North America or Europe, regardless of the

culture, knowledge and traditions of beneficiary African countries. He argued that the use of the mass media as development support for programmes in Third World countries is a carbon copy of what pertains in more developed countries. Gumucio Dagron et al (2006) stressed that the mass media are less important communication tools in Africa as compared to the North.

Relevance of the modernization theory of development communication

Though widely criticized and indeed rejected by many Third World communication scholars, the modernization theory of development communications is quite suitable for the present study for two main reasons. First, in Ghana, like other Third World Countries, development programmes, are financed by international donors. Such donor-assisted programmes continue to be modeled along the thinking of the modernization theory, and emphasize the rejection of traditional socio-cultural norms in order to achieve development (Nath, 2000). Therefore, in keeping with earlier studies, the present research analyzes development issues in the mass media from the point of view of the modernists. For purposes of this study, Northern Ghana is regarded as an underdeveloped area which is still adhering to traditional ways of existence. In this context, the mass media are seen as powerful forces with the ability to draw the people out of their traditional lifestyles to modernity. Analysis of media content will be undertaken to determine the extent to which Ghana's Fourth Estate of the realm is performing its mandate of bringing modernity to the doorsteps of deprived communities.

Second, most communication practice and scholarship in the Third World development literature are consistent with the modernization theory which argues that at both the macro and micro levels, communication is viewed as a product and reinforcer of economic growth and development. This probably explains why majority of the Ghanaian media are operating in tandem with the modernization or liberal / capitalist model of development communications, which espouses freedom of speech. The media of mass communication, in this context, is also regarded as the Fourth Estate of the realm. Selection of the modernization theory for the present study is therefore in keeping with current media philosophy and practice in Ghana. This is significant since any analysis of media content is only appropriate in so far as it is conducted in conformity with the media's own philosophical orientation. After all, media philosophy informs its practice.

Conceptual framework

This study is modeled around the concept of development journalism. As far back as 1918, Lenin had laid the ground rules for development journalism when he declared to Russian press: "Less political babbling. Less intellectualising. Get closer to life. More attention to how the masses of workers and peasants are building something new in their day-to-day work" (Kunczik, 1992: 84). Arguments regarding the role of journalism in developing countries can be traced to the 1960s. Leading such debates were nationalists leaders like Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere who all established newspapers to facilitate the struggle for independence for their respective countries. Having attained

independence, these leaders carved a new role for journalism: "... shaping national identities and overcoming tribal, particularist structures to promote national cohesion" (Kunczik, 1992: 85).

The term development journalism, however, was first coined and introduced to international discussion at the Philippine University of Los Banos around 1967 to refer to the reportage of national and international events in a constructive and positive manner to facilitate development. The focus of this style of reportage is not as much on day-to-day events as on long term development processes. This style of journalism was related to the concept of development as advanced by the North South Commission to the effect that development is not just about the transition from poverty to material prosperity but relates to notions of human dignity, security, justice and equality (Kunczik, 1992). Quebral (1975), one of the brains behind this concept, assigned development journalism the task of emancipating deprived groups including the urban poor, the rural poor and women as well as assisting them to actively participate in the political processes that determine their destinies.

In Fleury (2008) view, development journalism is all about good journalism and good journalists. He argued that the development journalist is one who is industrious enough to look beyond the polished news releases and briefings put out by well endowed foreign organizations, and curious enough to find local sources of expertise. Such a journalist must be brave enough to present home-grown solutions to pressing development problems.

The concept of development journalism became essential as a result of the realization by some communication experts that western models of journalism do not suit the developmental aspirations of development countries. Thus, proponents of development journalism tried to “cut the umbilical cord with Western communication scholarship”. According to Valanilam (1979:33), development journalism is “journalism relating to the projects and programmes launched in an economically backward country to provide certain minimum living standards to its people” (Valanilam, 1979 cited in Kunczik, 1992: 83).

Aggarwal (1979, 1981), on the other hand, noted that a journalist covering the development beat is duty bound, and expected to “critically examine, evaluate and report on the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference between its impact on the people as claimed by the government and as it actually is (cited in Dare, 2000:164). Aggarawal’s description of development journalism emphasized the watchdog role of the press. Based on his submission, journalists are expected to develop a detailed analytic report on any development project. They are also required to localize the contents of their reports by explaining to the readers, the relevance of such projects to individual specific needs and how the project can help mould his/her life for the better. The journalist is expected to monitor the implementation of the planned project and report if such project is actually being implemented or not. Also, he or she is expected to enlighten the public on the actual impact of the project. He should be able to

report if the project can achieve what the governments or the initiator of such projects claimed (Dare, 2000).

Smith (2008) agrees with Aggarwal's exposition to the effect that this type of development journalism also looks at proposed government projects to improve conditions in the country, and analyzes whether or not they will be effective. He added that the journalist may come up with proposed solutions and suggest ways in which projects can be implemented. According to Smith (2008), this type of development journalism encourages a cooperative effort between citizens of the nation and the outside world.

Based on the definitions of development journalism, two basic types of development journalism, "investigative" and "benevolent-authoritarian journalism", were identified. Built on the assumption that there is freedom of the press, the investigative form of development journalism does a critical re-appraisal and evaluation of development projects to determine their usefulness. For authors who doubt the effectiveness of democracy in the development efforts of developing countries, the authoritarian-benevolent style of development journalism is favoured. This style of journalism entails the selective manipulation of information for the welfare of the public (Kunczik, 1992). Similarly, Smith (2008) identified two types of development journalism. According to him, the first is a new school of journalism which came to the fore in the 1960s. This type of development journalism is similar to investigative reporting, but it focuses on conditions in developing nations and ways to improve them. It also documents the conditions within a country so that the larger world can understand them. Thus,

journalists who practice this type of journalism travel to remote areas to report on happenings there. This type of journalism acts as a tool for social justice, speaking for the voiceless, looking at the strengths and weaknesses of a country and in so doing identifying ways in which the nation can be helped. It also serves as a tool for empowerment (Smith, 2008). Additionally, development journalism focuses on the needs of the poor, deprived and marginalized and ensures their effective participation in developmental planning. It advocates the interests of the marginalized in place of the views of the policy makers and the government (Namra, 2004).

Namra (2004) also stressed that the mass media are best suited for carrying out health campaigns such as anti-Aids campaigns, sharing information about new discoveries and inventions or communicating information that is important for civil society. Indeed no modern society can claim adherence to democracy, social and economic justice, national integration, social discipline and economic progress without the active and oriented help of the mass media. A communication system ought to ensure that rural populations are consistently kept informed about latest and relevant information and serve as a forum for articulating the views of the rural folk. Informing and giving voice to the rural people will ensure that a country is not divided into information rich and information poor regions (Namra, 2004).

The second type of development journalism identified by Smith (2008) is similar to the “benevolent-authoritarian journalism” of earlier research. This type of journalism is controlled by the government of the nation involved and serves as

a powerful tool for local education and empowerment but also as a means of suppressing information and restricting journalists. This entails the use of journalism as a propaganda tool, a dangerous weapon in the hands of the dictatorial leader. In such situations, citizens are taught that the news is a reliable and useful source of information (Smith, 2008). Namra (2004) laments that rather than journalism becoming development journalism in the sense of standing up for the marginalized, it has become 'envelopment' journalism, a situation where journalists merely publish press releases after collecting envelopes from influential persons.

Smith (2008) recommended that journalists offer leadership, build role-models and promote new norms and practices instead of simply mirroring events and processes. For him, development journalism should be able to indulge in campaigns and at the same time keep its integrity and independence intact. According to him journalists must come up with problems of the communities they cover, especially those related to education, population, employment or health. Also, the work of credible organisations could be publicized in series so that people know whom to contact if they want to help or need help. The media could also do a 'state-situation-action' series, whereby they assess a state, inform the people about statistics related to population, literacy, NGOs etc and suggest an action plan which can be used as a benchmark for government accountability (Smith, 2008).

This study has analysed the mass media content to establish whether news coverage of Northern Ghana represents "political babbling" and

“intellectualizing” or whether journalists actually get closer to issues regarding people’s well-being, and pay more “attention to how the masses of workers and peasants are building something new in their day-to-day work” (Kunczik, 1992: 84).

The main variables of the concept of development journalism which informs this study are:

- Constructive and positive reportage to facilitate development:- This goes without saying that news stories that focus on this style of reportage should concentrate less on day-to-day events and give priority to long term development issues. Such news items must also focus on development activities which lead towards progress in the lives of Northern Ghanaians rather than stories which catalogue the people’s development challenges;
- Media stories must also be aimed at conscientizing residents of Northern Ghana and assisting them to actively participate in the political processes that will determine their destinies. Specifically, stories must analyze political, economic and environmental issues to enable Northern audiences appreciate such issues better and make informed political and economic decisions;
- Media reports should look beyond press conferences and polished news releases from government and political actors and find local sources of expertise, as in residents of Northern Ghana, both educated and uneducated, who have expertise and knowledge in development challenges confronting the area;

- News reports need also present home-grown solutions to pressing development problems, as against merely presenting challenges without proffering solutions, or merely proposing international donor or government support to alleviate the plight of Northerners. Journalists must think outside the box in coming up with indogenous knowledge and value systems that can alleviate people's plight;
- Also, media stories must critically examine and evaluate the relevance of a development project to the needs of residents of Northern Ghana, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference between a project's impact on people as claimed by government officials and as it actually is. Thus, beyond reporting the commissioning of projects by government, journalists must publish follow-up stories to assess the impact of projects on the lives of Northerners; and
- An analysis of media content will also be focused on the extent to which the mass media advocates for the interests of the marginalized in place of the views of the policy makers and the government.

Where development journalism as practiced in the mainstream media fails in providing the information needed for the development of deprived communities, a more radical approach to development communication, advocacy journalism, might prove more useful in addressing the information needs of such communities.

Advocacy journalism

Advocacy journalism refers to reportage aimed at promoting a specific political or social cause. It is that genre of journalism which, unlike propaganda, is fact-based, but supports a specific point of view on an issue. Advocacy journalists usually focus on stories dealing with corporate business practices, government policies, political corruption, and social issues. This style of journalism, which gained popularity in the United States of America during the second half of the 20th century, contrasts with earlier journalistic practice of objectivity. Thus, most advocacy journalists reject the objectivity of the mainstream press as practically impossible (http://journalism.wikia.com/wiki.com/wiki/Advocacy_journalism).

Berman (2004) argued that the long held journalistic practice of objectivity and neutrality are antiquated principles which are no longer universally observed. According to her, advocacy journalism will be the single most crucial element which ensures change in the world. She stated that when writing news stories, there will always be some form of implicit bias, whether political, personal, or metaphysical, intentional or subconscious. For Berman (2004), this is not necessarily a rejection of the existence of an objective reality, merely a statement about journalists' inability to report in a value-free fashion. Advocacy journalists argue that media sources claiming to be free of bias often advance certain political ideas which are disguised in a so-called objective viewpoint. They contend that the mainstream media reinforce majority-held ideas, marginalizing dissent and retarding political and cultural discourse. The critics

propose that it is better to make biases explicit, with the intention of promoting transparency and self-awareness that better serves media consumers. Advocacy journalists also assume that their audiences will share their biases or will at least be conscious of such prejudices while evaluating what are supposed to be well-researched and persuasive arguments (Berman, 2004)).

For Careless (2000), advocacy journals which are also referred to as alternative publications, have a declared bias, a publicly acknowledged editorial point of view, and are unambiguous regarding their editorial position even on their masthead. According to Careless (2000), in cases when the mainstream media ignores, trivializes or seriously distorts happenings within a community, such a community needs its own media. In the view of Careless when a group of people are never quoted or are quoted inaccurately, if they are stereotyped or misinformation is spread about them, then they need their own face and voice.

However, being an advocate journalist is not the same as being an activist. In spite of the fact that a cause may be dear to a journalist's heart, there are lines which should never be crossed by a professional journalist. Advocacy journalism is not about shouting slogans and clichés or ranting and raving about a certain cause of action. Such an approach would not educate or persuade anyone since most people will find the journalist boring and repetitive. This way, the advocate journalist will fail in offering the public the most current information they need to engage in effective debate in the public domain. Advocate journalism concerns itself with articulating complex issues clearly and carefully. Indeed, the advocacy journalist should practice the same skills as any journalist. Such a journalist

should not fabricate or falsify, engage in propaganda or suppress vital facts, otherwise he or she will destroy the credibility of both himself or herself as a working journalist, and the cause being fought for. Advocacy journalism is about having the humility to listen carefully and accurately to those one is fighting for, rather than arrogantly assuming that one knows what the critical issues are (Careless, 2000).

Advancing arguments for the establishment of advocacy journals, Careless (2000) stated that most mainstream media have vested interest on issues related to development and cannot be trusted to advance the cause of the disadvantaged in society who desperately need more social services. According to her, the disadvantaged community believes that a journal advocating on their behalf understands their needs. That aside, the whole story is not often being told in the major media. Since society is made up of various communities of varying interests and the mass media aims at the whole pool, such media skims the surface of or totally ignores the needs of smaller communities. The advocacy media is targeted at a smaller audience and can delve deeper into the concerns of marginalized communities. Again, editors of the advocacy media assume their readers are also reading mainstream publications. Therefore, advocacy media often try to answer, clarify, balance or refute unfair publications in the mainstream media (Berman, 2004).

However, journalists who practice mainstream reportage equate advocacy journalism with bad journalism. According to them, lack of objectivity in reportage is a serious breach of journalistic canons and standards giving rise to

rumour mongering, yellow journalism, sensationalism or other ethically flawed reportage. Some fear the activities of advocacy journalists will be harmful to the reputation of the mainstream press as an objective and reliable source of information. Another concern is that indiscriminating readers will accept the opinions advanced by advocacy journalists as if such views were objective and representative, becoming unknowingly and perhaps dangerously misinformed as a result.

CHAPTER FOUR

MASS MEDIA AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the mass media's contribution to development with a focus on the Ghanaian media's contribution to the country's progress. The chapter further undertakes a critical appraisal of literature on factors which influence media men and women's coverage of particular events, geographical areas or social groupings to the disadvantage of other interest groups.

Historical overview of mass media in development

Historians recognize Africa's leading role in much of the discoveries in communication. It was in Africa that the main separation between sender and receiver of messages through cave paintings started. This landmark discovery was followed by the art of writing through hieroglyphical systematic abstraction in ancient pharaonic Egypt. Again, the Egyptians and later the Ashantis started the first relay of coded signals over considerable distances using "talking" drums and a sophisticated telegraphic language (Habib Sy, 1994). With the advent of Western and Arab civilizations in Africa, the continent ceded to other continents, its leadership role in world communications. Europe later introduced its communication systems to Africa to serve its selfish interests. Empire

Broadcasting Service introduced radio to British-ruled Africa, with the first wired radio distribution system being introduced in Accra in 1935. In French Colonial Africa, the Societe de Radiodiffusion de la France d'Outre mer carried out an elitist and repressive approach to radio broadcasting. A worse scenario played out within the Portuguese territories, with regards to the state of radio broadcasting (Habib Sy, 1994).

Europe commenced this aggressive attempt to control worldwide message dissemination after several scholars had found that the mass media, particularly, newspapers and radio, play crucial roles in development (Lerner 1958; Rogers 1962; Schramm 1964; 1963; Rao 1963). Lerner (1958), for instance, noted that communication systems are both indicators and agents of social change. According to him, the mass media teach new skills, attitudes and behaviours and are therefore a “mobility multiplier” with the capacity to simultaneously communicate to large groups of people (Lerner, 1958: 82). Mobility, the capacity to move across time and places, could be experienced either directly or indirectly through the media since the media act as mobility multipliers. This goes without saying that the spreading of attitudes and behaviour favourable to social change should be the major task of the mass media in development (Lerner, 1958). Daniel Lerner suggested that:

... the mass media are distinct indices of the participant society, and flourish only when the masses have sufficient skills in literacy, sufficient motivation to share borrowed experiences and sufficient cash to consume the medicated product – that the mass media are a major instruments of

social change which make indispensable imprint to the Psycho-Political life of a traditional society via the minds and hearts of its people” (Lerner, 1958 cited in Akinfeleye, 2008:59).

Daniel Lerner’s findings were supported by Lucian Pye and Wilbur Schramm’s research. Pye (1963) posited that the media are amplifying factors in society which inform people about happenings in and around them. Schramm (1964) was equally positive about the role of communication in the development process. He was of the view that in the course of national development, the mass media are agents of social change. The media are expected to motivate people to adopt new customs and practices, and in some cases, different social relationships. Such changes in behaviour are preceded by changes in attitudes, beliefs, skills and social norms. Schramm (1964) argued that:

“... the structure of communication reflects the structure and development of any society. The size of the communication activities, the development of mass media and their audience, the transfer of the individual communication roles of traditional society to organizations, the stretching out and multiplicity of society, the ownership of mass media facilities, the purposeful development, use and misuse of the mass media – these reflect the political development and philosophy of the society ... the content of the mass media at any given time reflects the value pattern of the society. The pattern of communication networks, which determines who shares it with whom, reflects the homogeneity of the culture and geography within a society” (Schramm, 1964 cited in Akinfeleye, 2008:58).

Schramm (1964) is also of the view that the mass media can bring about free and adequate flow of information to create awareness regarding the potentials of society as well as add fuel to dissatisfaction and desire for change. In Schramm's words:

Perhaps the most general way to describe what ... increased flow of information does in a nation is to say that it provides a climate for national development. It makes the expert knowledge available where it is needed, and provides a forum for discussion, leadership and decision making (Schramm 1964, cited in Daramola, 2008: 76).

Schramm (1964) emphasized on the role of information in national development. First, he believed that information has a watchman function whereby at the onset of development the watchman is required to survey the wider landscape. Second, information has a policy function since a developing country must spread its essential decision-making more widely. This ensures the active participation of its people and enables the people to support modernity and change their lives and beliefs accordingly. Third, information has a teaching function. Anytime development is progressing satisfactorily, everyone involved in the process learns. In the process of development, every sector of society has new skills to learn – agriculture, mechanical and electronic, health and literacy (Schramm, 1964).

Lerner (1957), Pye (1963) and Schramm (1964) based their analyses of communication effects on the hypodermic model propounded by communication theorists, including Walter Lipmann and Harold D. Lasswell. This model portrays

the mass media as all powerful sources of influence on audiences (Agee et al, 1985). Lasswell states that “Communication is something someone does to someone else; the communicator, not the consumer or receiver, is the causative person” (quoted in Agee et. al., 1985: 30).

Lasswell’s hypodermic model of the mass media was subsequently criticized by other communication scholars, including Paul Lazarsfeld, Carl I. Hovland and Robert K. Merton. They instead proposed a minimal-effects theory, arguing that “mass communication ordinarily does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects...but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences” (Agee et. al., 1985: 31). One major proponent of the minimal effects theory, Joseph T. Klapper, admits that though mass communication may not be an all-powerful tool, it is a necessary cause and, in some instances, a sufficient cause of social change (Agee et. al.,: 1985).

Based on the minimal effects theory of the media, Joseph Klapper reviewed the findings of Lerner (1958) and others which suggested a strong mass communication effects on people’s attitudes. Klapper (1960) came up with five main conclusions. First, he argued that mass communication does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects. Rather, mass communication function among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences. Among the factors which affect the media’s ability to change audience attitudes and behaviours is the selectivity of exposure, perception and retention of media messages.

Through the process of selective exposure, perception and retention, a person tends to expose himself, either consciously or otherwise to information which agrees with his existing attitudes and beliefs. If exposed to unsympathetic messages, the individual fails to perceive them or may distort such messages to fit his view. Audiences tend to forget unsympathetic messages more readily than messages which are in consonance with their predisposition. Also, the group to which an individual belongs influences his reception of persuasive messages. The desire to retain membership of a group deters individuals from changing their attitudes and behaviours. Again, opinion leaders mediate the influence of mass communication through reinforcement of the opinions of their followers by emphasizing favourable facts and using their influence to discredit unfavourable information (Klapper, 1960).

Klapper's second observation was that reinforcement or constancy of opinion is the most common effect of mass communication. Mediating factors diminish the persuasive power of mass communication to the extent that the media become contributory agents rather than the sole causes in the process of reinforcing existing attitudes and beliefs. According to Klapper (1960), minor shifts in opinion held by an individual can occur but only when the selective processes are not operating or when the change is within the leeway allowed by group norms. The minimal opinion shifts may also occur when the individual is confused because the person holds conflicting views simultaneously. For Klapper (1960), major shifts in attitude and behaviour, especially those with which the individual's ego is involved, are exceptionally resistant to change.

The third argument of Klapper is that when mass communication affects change in attitudes or opinions, it may be as a result of the fact that the mediating factors are not operating at all because the issue might be new and unrelated to existing attitudes or opinion clusters. Fourthly, Klapper observed that there are certain residual situations when mass communication appears to produce direct effects in serving what he referred to as certain “psycho-physical functions”. Finally, he posited that the efficacy of mass communication in any situation is affected by various aspects of the media, the message and the communication situation. These include source credibility, trustworthiness, prestige, message believability, media timeliness and the communication environment. This means that the total communication situation is crucial in determining the effect of communication on audiences (Klapper, 1960).

The earlier communication researchers erroneously used communication interchangeably with the mass media. When they outlined the role of communication in the development process, they argued on the basis of the mass media’s contribution to development. By disregarding the potential of interpersonal communication and indigenous forms of communication, Lerner, Schramm and others presented a rather myopic and jaundiced view of message dissemination. Even some scholars who followed the classical theorists in the 1970s and 1980s were rather slow in recognizing the developmental value of forms of communication other than the mass media.

Merrill (1971) stated that the media contributes to national development through the creation of awareness of the potentialities for development,

dissatisfaction and a desire for change and a heightened sense of collective power among the people. On the other hand, the media can create stability or disruption of society, instill in the people realistic goals or create extravagant expectations.

Hornik (1989) identified several roles played by communication in the development process. According to them, communication acts as a low-cost loudspeaker. They cited instances in Guatemala where the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored radio broadcasts from agricultural extension agents to subsistence farmers to offer the later information about agricultural methods and practices in order to encourage increased yields. Communication technology can also act as an institutional catalyst. In the 1960s, El Salvador implemented an instructional television system with international funding agencies to teach newly enrolled students and their recently retrained teachers. The television programmes were the catalysts to educational reforms in that country. For one thing, the television's attractiveness mobilized sufficient political momentum to overcome the inertia of the educational bureaucracy.

Besides, Hornik (1989) argued that communication technology acts as accelerator of interaction. The point here is that information from distant places can easily be made available with the use of communications technology. Again, communication acts as legitimator or motivator. This is a status conferral function of the mass media which implies that anything published on the media must be important and vice versa. Communication for feedback is another role assigned to the mass media in the process of development. Here, it is assumed that communication technology can be used to magnify the ability of the mass of the

population to speak to the central institutions which affect them. This can take the form of feedback such as letters to the editor. In Senegal's Radio Dissoo programme, the letters-to-the-editor notion was transferred to a broadcast medium with 70% of broadcast materials taking the form of viewpoints, complaints and questions from rural audiences.

There is yet the communication as a magnifier of dependency or integration role assigned to the media. Obviously, communication reinforces the links between participants, even though such participants may interpret the effect of that interaction differently. While some interpret the interaction as integration of cultures, others view it as increased dependency of a minority culture on a superior one (Hornik (1989).

William Hocking identified five requirements that societies expect of the mass media:

- a common carrier of ideas;
- a representative picture of the society;
- truth and meaning of the news;
- full access to developmental information; and
- clarification of the goals of the society (Cited in Akinfeleye, 2008:60).

In the context of Africa, Zeigler and Asante (1992: 38) corroborated earlier research to the effect that: "the use of the media in national development in African nations is perhaps valid". In recognition of the media's role in promoting development, African states have since the early 1990s restructured their broadcasting institutions and services. After many years of state control and

media monopoly, many African citizens advocated for media liberalization. Human rights movements led moves for liberalization of the national public service systems to ensure genuine pluralism and attention to social development as well as national unity (Ansah, 1991; Karikari, 1994; Koomson, 1995). In advocating for liberalization of the media, Africans were also looking at the role that the media plays in democracy, particularly in promoting political participation.

The mass media and political participation

Governance is an essential aspect of development. Therefore, the media's role in development is often judged by its contribution to democracy and ensuring that ordinary citizens have a say in how they should be governed.

The role of the mass media in the governance process has long been established. A former United States President, Thomas Jefferson, is reported to have said: "... if it were left for me to decide whether we should have a government without the mass media or the mass media without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to choose the latter" (Jefferson, 1963). President Jefferson's famous statement was made in recognition of the fact that the media are essential for fostering transparency and accountability to enhance democratic governance. Without the media, public officers will have little desire to subject themselves to scrutiny. James Madison who is the architect of the first Amendment of the US constitution said of free speech: "A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power that knowledge gives. A

popular Government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both (Quoted in Yankah, 2004).

Both Akinfeleye (2008) and Yankah (2004) also agree that the media are seen as the mediating factors in a democratic setting. They are not only regarded as the Fourth Estate of the Realm but as essential social forces that help to lubricate the engine room of democracy. The media do not only monitor governance and hold government accountable to the people; they are required to check and balance, watchdog and gate-keep the doors for sustainable democracy in terms of information flow, direction and intensity. Added to this is the fact that the media is duty-bound to expose corrupt acts (Akinfeleye, 2008). For Yankah (2004), the media are responsible for fostering transparency and accountability.

As tools for national development, the media should give representative, unbiased and accurate picture of the aspirations and socio-philosophical foundation of the society in which they operate. The media must also act as educators by clarifying development ideas towards which society must drive (Akinfeleye, 2008).

In recognition of the essential role of the media in national development, many nations the world over often make provision for operation of the Fourth Estate of the Realm. For instance, Chapter Two, Sections 22 and 39 (i) and (ii) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution outlines the responsibilities of the media in monitoring governance, media ownership and the right to freedom of expression and the press. In specific terms, Section 22, titled "Obligations of the Mass Media" states: "The Press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media

shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people” (Quoted in Akinfeleye, 2008:5).

Similarly, in the Fourth Republican Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, the whole of Chapter 12, Articles 162 – 171, is devoted to the freedom and independence of the media. Article 162 provides that subject to the Constitution and any other law not inconsistent with the Constitution, there shall be no censorship in Ghana. Editors and publishers of newspapers and other institutions of the mass media should not be subject to control or interference by government nor should they be penalized or harassed for their editorial opinions, views or the content of their publications. More significantly, Article 162 (3) grants the media the unfettered freedom to operate: “There shall be no impediment to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment of a newspaper, radio or other media of mass communication or information”.

An essential aspect of democracy is stakeholder participation in making, monitoring and reviewing policies and decisions that affect their lives (Gyimah Boadi, 2001; cited in Yankah, 2004). Accessibility of a medium of communication makes it possible for effective consultation. Prah (2001) also observed: “If all transactions of politics and government are undertaken in languages which the overwhelming majorities do not understand, one hardly needs to impose censorship, because the majority are excluded from

understanding and participating in the political culture (Prah, 2001; cited in Yankah, 2004:2).

Graves (2007) expressed the need for the media to provide reliable sources that citizens can trust to meet their needs for trustworthy information about issues that affect their daily lives. For him, developing an appropriate media strategy can create accelerated sustainable democratic and economic development. He observed that the media can enhance democratic development by giving voice to the people, acting as a balance and watchdog to potential government misconduct, promoting transparency and reducing corruption by providing a window into the inner workings of the government. The media promotes economic development by providing economic information to the citizenry and enabling them to make better informed choices on economic matters. The media is also expected to educate the public on issues relating to health, the environment, women, children and minorities.

There is ample evidence to the effect that information flow through the liberalized media has expedited major policy interventions in local development. For instance, research has revealed that India has not had any major famines since independence owing to the activities of that country's media organizations. Government allocation of relief spending during natural disasters has been greater in states with higher newspaper circulation since easy media access makes it possible to quickly galvanize opinion and develop collective voices, thereby attracting the attention of policy makers and leading to expedited response to local grievances. In this particular case, it has been established that assistance to

communities hit by famine arrived faster in areas which have access to local language media. On the other hand, it was found that China's lack of democracy and freedom of information was regarded as the major reason why it was hit by major famines in 1958 and 1961, leading to the demise of millions of people (Prah 2002; cited by Yankah, 2004).

Among the media of mass communication, radio has emerged as one of the leading sources of information for development of rural communities.

Radio and development

As an area with very high levels of illiteracy, the print media is not appropriate for communicating development messages to residents of Northern Ghana. Television ownership in that part of the country is also low making TV an inappropriate mass communication medium for most residents. As the most assessable mass medium which could use local languages to share messages with both literate and non-literate communities, radio is recommended for development communication within the Savanna regions of Ghana. This justifies an evaluation of earlier research into radio's role in development.

As far back as 1935, researchers had already discovered the effectiveness of radio in creating national unity to enhance nation-building. Cantril and Allport (1935: 20) recognized this unifying role of radio as follows:

“When a million or more people hear the same subject matter, the same arguments and appeals, the same music and humour, when their attention is held in the same way and at the same time to the same stimuli, it is

psychologically inevitable that they should acquire in the same degree common interests, common tastes and common attitudes. In short, it seem to be the nature of radio to encourage people to think and feel alike”.

Ansah (1985) posited that with limited resources available for formal education, radio is seen by governments of many developing countries as a means of supplementing both formal and non-formal education. According to him, education for development takes three main forms, “open broadcasting in which regular information and developmental messages are routinely sent out without any organized follow-up; it can also take the radio forum or listening group approach ... the third form is the campaign which can take either or a combination of the two approaches but stretching over a short period of time and dealing with a specific topic like family planning...” (Ansah, 1985: 46).

Using these approaches, several African countries have successfully used radio for communicating development messages. The “Radio Educative Rurale” (RER) project of Senegal, based in the groundnut-producing areas of Thies, Diourbel and Sine-Salourm was particularly successful. Inaugurated in December 1968, 70 percent of its programmes were recorded in the field with the people sharing their experiences, raising delicate issues and often asking embarrassing questions directly into the microphone. So successful was this project that it was hailed as a genuine two-way collaborative communication channel in which the broadcaster became only a kind of intermediary. A peasant farmer summed up the essence of the project thus: “as far as we are concerned ... the educational radio

broadcasts take the place of our deputy (that is to say, parliamentarian), because they do for us what he should be doing for us” (Ansah, 1985: 47).

Indeed, in multi-ethnic societies, especially within Africa, radio is called upon to promote social and political integration to ensure national cohesion. In particular, the absence of radio and television would have left African countries vulnerable to narrow communal and ethnic self-centredness (Karikari, 1994). Similarly, Ansah (1994: 16) referred to the ability of radio to “weld and distil these local, ethnic cultures into a single, homogenous national culture over a period”. Kunzick (1984) affirmed this when he attested to the fact that the mass media are essential for propagating symbols and information capable of forging national cultural self-identity and self-confidence. He argued, however, that a mass resort to listening to only foreign programmes could have the effect of destroying national cultural self-identity and self-confidence.

Though Karikari (1994), recognized the effectiveness of interpersonal methods of communication in bringing crucial information to rural people, he stated that the success of development projects in agriculture, public or community health and other sectors of development is usually largely credited to the electronic media which usually brings to the attention of the world in good time for solutions, incidence of epidemics, disasters and other calamities. Ansah (1994) concurs that in many African countries, radio is not only used for supplementing formal education but also for functional social education. Radio has been extensively employed for promotional campaigns in areas such as

agriculture, health, nutrition, civic education, environmental protection and family planning among other programmes.

Habib Sy (1994) noted that radio is a very effective medium for scientific education, political enlightenment and socio-cultural progress. Additionally, radio can be used to empower the disenfranchised through the utilization of national languages and their promotion as official languages. For Rosalynde Ainslie, the focus of broadcasting is changing from its entertainment role which Europeans attributed to the medium, to the educational function of radio (Ainslie, 1966).

Some also wonder, for instance, how people in a country would synchronize their watches and clocks but for radio and television. Indeed, appropriate determination of time has historically been one of the major roles of broadcast media (Karikari, 1994). Equally significant is the fact that the media contribute to culture, entertainment and leisure. Indeed, entertainment and leisure constitute an essential measure of a people's standard of living. As Karikari (1994:4) explains: "... It could be a woeful experience for a people in a country if they were deprived of first-hand experience of the spectacle from an Olympiad, a world soccer final, a regional athletics encounter, even the exploits of their own sportsmen in the city".

Karikari (1994) also pointed at the use of the mass media for promoting local art and cultural creativity, as in the works of storytellers, folksingers, dramatists, comedians and other performing artists. The promotional drive of the media enhances economic activity and incomes:

“Business is doomed to shrink where channels for advertising are blank, where channels for information about consumers’ needs and manufacturers’ and sellers’ responsibilities are blocked, or terribly impaired. Without Radio /Television broadcasting today a country is rendered vulnerable to impediments to development, much as human beings would be to famine if they lost their knowledge and tools of food production” (Karikari, 1994: 5).

Indeed, Karikari (1994) established that there is ineffective and inadequate usage of radio in Africa, as a tool for promoting social change through education. Karikari’s view of the educational role of the media is in line with the finding of Obeng-Quaidoo (1992) who indicated that the value of radio as the most economical instrument over other technologies of instruction is a universal concept.

In a report issued at the end of a 1993 national conference on the privatization of radio and television broadcasting organized by the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, participants made several observations about the essence of the broadcast media to national development. They observed that for the illiterate rural dwellers, radio is the most popular of the media of mass communication as well as the most accessible in terms of content and language used. The participants also noted that radio and television pluralism has greater impact on cultural development. According to participants at the national conference, media pluralism facilitates the communication of development messages including literacy programmes, schools broadcasts, health

or agriculture programming as well as the promotion of public education on constitutional matters to sensitize public opinion on issues of democracy and human rights (Karikari, 1994).

Karikari (1994), however, cautioned against a mere pluralism of numbers since the media terrain could, in that case, be occupied by only those with the wherewithal to invest. The result of this could be monopoly of the media networks by few entrepreneurs or a handful of sectarian organizations. The profit motive might induce media investors to scramble for urban stations and formulate their programmes to suit the taste of advertisers who finance the stations. Thus, the rural areas and economically disadvantaged groups would be deprived of the media.

While acknowledging the contribution of radio to national development, Karikari (1994) wondered whether media plurality would be sufficiently beneficial to rural dwellers and other marginalized groups. He quizzed:

“Can, or will the new [radio] stations move beyond confining political debate among the urban (and “traditional”) elite? Can they broaden social discussion to include women’s issues over and above the traditional women’s programmes on home management? Will peasants, the working classes, the media-marginalized in society be part of broadcasting pluralism? When some measure of concern is shown for the marginalized, can programming on new stations minimize the traditional didactic role of the well-known “rural radio,” always teaching and preaching, and provide

space for these social groups to express their realities by determining programme content and format?" (Karikari, 1994:7).

In an earlier study, Karikari had expressed similar fears about the possibility of commercial interests taking control of a pluralistic media to the extent that the media would become the preserve of the elite and influential foreign interests. He wondered whether the peasantry and the mass of the poor rural dwellers would be part of a pluralistic media, and whether the content of the media would be pluralistic enough to respond to the needs of lower social classes (Karikari, 1993). Prior to this study, Ansah (1993) had found that centralization of radio makes it difficult for linguistic, cultural and religious minorities to access this useful medium. He called for decentralization of the airwaves to ensure greater access by minorities and other interest groups.

Karikari (1994) supported state establishment of localized FM stations with decentralized management and programming, public participation in decision making regarding the establishment of the station, provided that access to the stations is not monopolized by ruling political parties. However, local FM stations are rather limited in geographical coverage and the "tendency to foster communal narrowness would be strengthened where audiences have access to only or mostly FM-only receiver sets which cannot pick up distant short-wave signals". The potential harmful effect of this situation is worsened where the local FM stations produce programmes which are so narrowly-tailored that audiences are overtime cut off from larger national or global issues (Karikari, 1994: 10).

More recently, Akinfeleye (2008) stressed the need for the mass media to focus on coverage of less developed areas. According to him, 80 percent of Nigerian population lives in rural areas isolated from the centre of government. For him, the only way of achieving meaningful development for Nigeria is through the establishment of the mass media at the grassroots level in order to foster national integration. He lamented that only views of urban communities are represented in the media and that when less privileged persons are referred to in the media, it is usually in connection with some anti-social or sensational acts. He criticized the practice whereby the content of the mass media is designed for the benefit of urban communities.

One means of addressing the concerns of Karikari (1994), Ansah (1993), Akinfeleye (2008) and other media researchers who advocate for decentralization of African media systems to the benefit of deprived communities was through the establishment of community radio stations, which is the subject of the next section.

Community radio concept

Since the 1980s, there has been a significant shift in the view of communication as a one-way, top-bottom process, towards regarding it as a participatory process that leads to effective social change and development. Communication for development has changed from technology transfer, adoption and diffusion processes which were all one-way, top-down communication techniques to participatory processes. Currently, bottom-up, grassroots communication is becoming fashionable among development communicators.

This explains the growing popularity of community radio which has been defined as: "... radio that is about, for, by and of a specific, marginalized community whose ownership and management is representative of that community, which pursues a participatory social agenda and which is non-profit, non-partisan and non-sectarian" (Ghana Community Radio Network, 2003).

Community radio is usually owned by members of the community. This implies that the community members who are usually motivated by community consciousness and willingness to pool resources, agree that they want their own radio station in order to advance their community interests. In this case "the facilities of a community radio are almost invariably owned by the community through a trust, foundation, cooperative or some similar vehicle (Fraiser and Estrada, 2001:17). Community radios are usually non-profit making in character in order to prevent the station getting overwhelmed with commercials and losing their community service orientation. For Price-Davies and Tacchi (2001: 8), "The non-profit distributing aspect of community radio is essential to ensure that stations maintain their difference from commercial radio services and broaden choice in local radio listening". This means that there are no individual owners since the community collectively owns the station and decides collectively how to use its excess resources (Boni and Mensah, 1998).

Since such a station is usually owned by the people, it is also managed by the people through their elected representatives. The democratic management of a community radio station implies first and foremost the "transparent exercise of power within a structure that guarantees the broadest possible form of public

accountability (Fairchild, 2001: 93). This implies that the community should elect the board of management of community radio periodically and there should not be monopoly over the positions or portfolios. Access and participation are significant principles of community radio. Access implies the availability of broadcasting services to all citizens while participation means that members of the community are actively engaged in planning and management of the station as well as providing workers for the station (Fraiser and Estrada, 2001).

Boni and Mensah (1998) proposes some participatory structures for community radio stations. According to them, such a station must have a volunteer group drawn from the community to plan programming, production, news gathering, assisting management and contributing towards policy-making of the station. The participatory nature of the station also means that open-forums are held monthly or bi-monthly for the station's management to report on its activities and receive feedback from the community members. It is also mandatory that Annual General Meetings are convened where reports are presented to community members and officers are elected to steer the affairs of the station (Boni and Mensah, 1998).

Community radio plays a significant role in the development process. Beyond giving reasons why certain development programmes are being undertaken, the radio offers community members forums to discuss the challenges of development and advance possible solutions to such challenges. Through the radio, community members define the type of development they want as well as how to achieve such development. This helps community members to be

participants in the development process. Additionally, community radio mobilizes community members to fully participate in development initiatives and strategies that result in better lives for them. The radio does this by informing and educating people on health, agriculture, education, environmental, human rights, political and civic rights issues (Berrigan, 1979).

Another important role of community radio stations is that they highlight and encourage positive cultural values while dissuading negative values. In Ghana, all community radio stations have weekly programmes during which they challenge negative customs like female genital mutilation, obnoxious widowhood rights and abuses of the dowry system while promoting positive values (Naaikuur, 2004). It is also worth noting that community radios build social capital by bringing different groupings within the community together to learn to trust one another. This enables them have high morale and stresses the community loyalty rather than group loyalty. The radio also connects community members to outside organizations and government establishments to speed up development (Fraiser and Estrada, 2001).

Community radio prides itself with giving voice to the voiceless. For instance, Democratic Radio in Cape Town, South Africa, has a weekly programme on disability and democracy. The producer of the programme, himself a disabled person, makes information on national policy issues available to disabled people (Hawkey, 2003). In an attempt to articulate the voices of women and children, community radio stations have been established in some countries exclusively for these marginalized groups of people. In Senegal, *Radio Gune Yi* is

a children only station established by PLAN International to assist in the fight for children's rights (Balezas, 2004).

Studies have shown that radio is a double-edged sword. In spite of its potential for development, radio could undermine development and actually bring about destruction. This realization becomes necessary in an attempt to assess the media's contributions to the development of Northern Ghana.

Negative impact of the mass media

Afreh (1994) expressed worry that in the absence of effective regulation of the Ghanaian media and the unfettered freedoms accorded them, broadcasting organizations could become engines of fraud, indecency, excessive violence, or spew out programmes of bad taste and low standards. Television is undoubtedly the most powerful medium for influencing audience behaviours. Indeed, recent technological developments have caused worry for some nations since with satellite television there is no way of protecting television programmes from direct broadcast satellites. Not only does spill-over of programmes from western television stations to African audiences threaten the receiving countries' culture, integrity and security. Television commercials of one country may also create desire for foreign goods and provide unfair competition to local African industries. This may disrupt national plans for orderly social and economic development. One major concern of satellite television's cross-continental influence is its threat to the security of African nations (Akpan, 2008).

Ghana's political class, civil society and the general public have over the years been expressing concerns about the performance of the media. George Aggudey, a 2004 Convention People's Party presidential candidate served notice that if elected, he would bring back the outlawed Criminal Libel Law in Ghana. Also, a New Patriotic Party Minister, infuriated at media infractions against the presidency, threatened on an FM station in 2006 to clampdown on radio stations which "abuse" the presidency. It is, however, worth noting that some of the more than 60 complaints lodged against the media at the National Media Commission between 2006 and 2007, were made by ordinary persons and not the political elite. In some cases, such complaints came from pro-media organizations like the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and the Catholic Church (Gadzekpo, 2008).

A survey commissioned by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference Advocacy for Good Governance Project also "blamed media practitioners for not using their tools to promote good governance in the country". Respondents to the survey accused some social commentators on both radio and television programmes as well as phone-in contributors to media discussions of "creating unhealthy conflict situation" (Gadzekpo, 2008: 4). Dissatisfaction with media performance has led to calls for some form of restrictions to media freedoms. For instance, in 2004, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) proposed a ban on FM phone-in programmes during the 2004 election campaigns.

Media infractions against politicians and ordinary people call into question the gate-keeping role of editors, and, sometimes, their news selection judgments.

The news selection process

Media coverage of development issues has to do with editorial judgement, which is also influenced, in part, by time-tested research into factors which media gatekeepers take into consideration in selecting news items for publication. Thus, for a proper appreciation of how the mass media covers development issues from Northern Ghana, one has to have a firm understanding of the news selection process.

Media gatekeepers wield considerable influence on public perceptions of what is important or unessential in society. This is a result of the fact that editors and reporters decide what to feature in the media and what not to publish for public consumption. What editors prioritize in their papers and on the airwaves eventually sets the agenda for national discourse. This explains why the news selection process adopted by editors is often of concern to development communicators. Ansah (1990) raised questions of whether different people perceive news in the same manner and whether editors apply the same standards in determining what is news irrespective of the milieu in which they operate.

The determination of what constitutes news is crucial to understanding why editors select certain stories for publication, while other stories end up in the trash can. Decisions regarding what constitute news usually take into account traditional journalistic considerations such as personality of people involved, impact of the events and the readers' interests. Traber (1985) indicated that events are reported on only when they are considered to be of some interest to media audiences. The critical question then arises as to how editors determine which

even on other pages unless they are involved in some unusual or bizarre event, it is because the society does not accord them much importance and therefore their normal activities are not newsworthy". Rather than universally applying these western constructs of news, news values should be determined within specific historical, political and social contexts.

In this regard, Mencher (1984: 72) describes news as "information people need in order to make rational decisions about their lives". Setting an agenda of news coverage for African journalists, Ansah (1990) felt that African journalists have a responsibility to forge national unity by communicating national symbols and avoiding the type of coverage that lays emphasis on local or tribal loyalties. This was not to say that cases of tribal conflicts ought not to be reported on. Conflicts could be reported on in a style that proposes ways of averting future recurrence. The objective of using the media to forge national unity is only possible through the avoidance of episodic or spot news in preference for analytical news that put particular events in perspective (Ansah, 1990).

More so, news about development is important in stimulating further development. Development news entails reports both on how to achieve specific development objectives and actual achievements like new schools, hospitals, bridges and roads. A significant aspect of such news should show how projects were accomplished so as to give others inspiration. This calls for an emphasis on processes rather than specific events, "how things happened rather than the mere fact that they happened" (Ansah, 1990: 34). Ansah (1990: 35) concludes that:

are unconsciously built into journalists' news judgment. According to him, values like ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism, moderatism, social order and national leadership are hardly explicit but can be found in various types of news stories over a long period of time (Gans, 1979).

In conformity with Gans' position, a United States network journalist, David Brinkley, who was asked for his definition of news responded, "News is what I say it is" (Campbell, 1995: 12). This may not just be a pompous reflection of news elitism but a true description of the way in which journalists work. Several factors influence the slant that journalists put to their stories. News values, newsroom social forces, journalism education, deadline pressure are some of the factors which contribute to subjectivity of news (Campbell, 1995).

Some researchers have tried explaining causes of bias by blaming the nature of television news which makes it particularly susceptible to myth-making. By their nature, television news stories are brief, with quick sound bites. Stories considered worthy of coverage are the ones that can best be told with pictures such as fire stories, news conferences, crime stories and handcuffed criminal suspects. The brevity of the stories calls for the simplest explanations of events. This often means ignoring the complexities that tend to surround many stories (Campbell, 1995). Epstein (1973: 180) further proposed that the production of television news can dictate a predetermined understanding of stories that strips them of truth: "The entire process of reconstructing stories tends to fulfill preconceived expectations about how various events occur". Yet other aspects of

the journalistic process also call for a commonsense approach which denies news of the truth.

“Commonsense is typically represented in the familiar person-on-the-street interview. Someone, selected not for expertise but for ordinariness, is asked to voice an opinion about a newsworthy event or issue. When presented in the context of a news narrative, such interviews take on the ambience of consensus. A single interview subject often stands in for a larger community of ... viewers. Consequently, in stories presenting controversies, a lone interview or sound bite often determines which of the competing definitions of the situation is perceived as “correct”, as common sense” (Campbell, 1991a: 116).

In his study of TV network news and weekly news magazine coverage, Gans (1979) observed, “News supports the social order of public, business, and professional, upper-middle-class, middle-aged, and white male sectors of society”. He cited the “enduring values” of this social class as ethnocentrism, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism and moderation, values which are propagated through news coverage. Critical theorists are of the view that the media give privilege to the voices of powerful individuals while marginalizing those of the powerless. This often happens either owing to the ownership structure of the media, prohibitive costs of market entry, advertising pressure and commodification of news or more diffuse cultural processes informing journalists socialization, news production processes or ideological orientation of the media. A study stated: “Access [to the media] is structured and hierarchical to the extent

that powerful groups and individuals have privileged and routine entry into the news itself and to the manner and means of its production” (Cottle, 2000).

Prior to Cottle (2000), Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts (1978) had actually established that the practical pressures of constantly working against the clock and the professional demands of impartiality and objectivity combine to produce a systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged positions. The authors maintained that the news media reproduce the voices of the powerful who become the “primary definers” of events. Such powerful voices end up commanding the discursive field and setting the terms of the debate. Worse still, the voices of the powerful are translated into the public idioms of different newspapers which in turn invest such voices with “popular force and resonance” (Hall et al., 1978: 61).

Having conducted an interview with news producers, Gans (1979) concluded that access to the media was based on a number of factors. Not least among these factors was news source’s ability to provide incentives, the amount of power the source wields, the source’s ability to provide suitable information and the source’s geographic as well as social proximity to the journalists. Gans was in no doubt that official sources had the upper hand in gaining the attention of the news media.

Besides, editorial accountability can affect objectivity in coverage since it calls into question decisions, practices and roles that influence and determine what is fit to publish. The routine work and everyday activities of journalists, their operational practices, are governed by certain values that are not always clear to

contended that in a developing country, framing fails to empower citizens to take actions required to address their challenges.

Another level of bias is that promoted by either corporate or individual economic interests. The media as a utilitarian organisation aims at providing services for financial ends. At the same time, the media is a normative organisation which aims at advancing some values or achieving a valued condition based on the commitment of its participants (McQuail, 2005). The media, in different parts of the world, especially in developing nations where the operational environment makes the attainment of the economic role more complex, faces a dilemma of successfully performing the dual and conflicting role of making profit while performing social services. For Day (2000: 227), the unrestrained profit motive of the media is a "parasitical practice" that puts self-interest above any sense of social responsibility. He added: "The media are profit centered and as such can be expected to adopt marketing strategies similar to other economic institutions. But, when commercial pressures jeopardize journalistic standards, then serious ethical questions must be addressed".

As a business organization, the press is faced with the challenge of breaking even and being financially strong enough to be independent and withstand both internal and external influences which have always been the bane of professionalism in media practice. Financial independence is sine-qua-non for any media institution which can stand the test of time and uphold the ethics of the profession. On the other hand, as an institution bestowed with the responsibility of protecting public interest, the media strives to be socially responsible by fighting

the cause of the people (Agbanu, 2009). McQuail (1983), however, observed that whether by design or not, the media is widely expected to serve the public interest or general welfare. As a result of this expectation, the media is not the same as any other business or service industry but carries out some tasks which contribute to the wider and longer term benefit of society as a whole over and above its own organisational goals.

Agbanu (2009), however, argued that commercialisation of news in Nigeria has diminished the public interest angle of news reportage and replaced it with profit considerations in news gathering. According to him, commercialization of news comes in two different forms. The first is institutional or corporate commercialisation while the second is individual commercialisation. At the corporate level, official charges are placed on news items while at the individual level, reporters in different guises collect money or any other forms of inducement before they report issues or events. Agbanu (2009) traced the genesis of corporate or institutional news commercialisation in Nigeria to the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme by the government of Ibrahim Babangida. The policy was a clarion call on both individuals and organisations to imbibe the spirit of self reliance and reduce dependence on government if they were to survive the prevailing unfriendly economy.

With dwindling revenue, it became clear that some of the media houses would close shop if they maintained the status quo and operated purely in the public interest. They looked for survival strategies, one of which was news commercialisation. The phenomenon of news commercialisation makes it

mandatory for news sources to pay some prices in whichever guise before they can gain access to the media. With this development, events and issues which would not have attracted media attention become major news items as long as someone can foot the bill. Conversely, those which ordinarily would have been the major news if the traditional criteria for news judgement are followed are either relegated to the background or ignored completely (Agbanu, 2009).

Suleiman (2002: 60-61) concurs with studies to the effect that the quality of Nigerian journalism has suffered from the nation's economic downturn:

“The most damaging consequence of distress in the Nigerian media has been the effect on ethics and professionalism, which have suffered abuse. In several cases, some journalists faced with the burden of survival have been hard put to resist the temptation to accept gratification that they are exposed to. The attendant consequences have been to either outrightly misrepresent facts, close their eyes to glaring cases of illegalities or rationalise same in a bid to favour the party from which money was obtained”.

The result of news commercialization is that the time-tested principles of journalism particularly objectivity, fairness and balance are sacrificed. Also, the situation affects the reporters' choice and selection of news worthy events. Little efforts and concern are paid to independent work or investigative stories as they add nothing to the reporters' pockets. Interviews take pride of place in news casts and adorn the pages of publications. This is because, in the spirit of African

hospitality, an interviewee is bound to say "Thank you" to the reporter after an interview (Suleiman 2002:61).

Gadzekpo (2008) supported earlier studies on the fact that there is no professional accountability within the Ghanaian media. Media men and women practice "soli", a situation where they either collect monies from highly placed individuals or organizations to either kill a damaging story or project the positive side of an otherwise ordinary situation. Equally reprehensible is the fact of tabloidization. Here, audiences "are condescended to and given content calculated to sell and boost ratings and readership and not useful information" (Gadzekpo, 2008: 1).

Carrington and Nelson (2002) also established that financial pressures often push news organisations towards rescuers who assure them of solvency, but also exert a heavy price in terms of their independence. Financially weak media in fragile democracies are particularly vulnerable to absorption by a narrow set of political or economic interests that are inclined to operate the news organisations not as self-sustaining businesses, but as propaganda units. According to Carrington and Nelson (2002: 226):

"Worsening economic pressures often push news organisations to seek a safe harbour which can mean turning to politicians or special interests for support. They do this, however, at the expense of their editorial independence, because the rescuers, rather than investing in the long term profitability of the news concerns, look for the short-term gains of owning a propaganda arm that they can commandeer into advancing

their political or economic interests. Indeed, the paper or broadcaster might be chalking up losses in its own business, but if it is helping to swing an election or lock in desired legislative or regulatory advantage, the proprietor would likely conclude that the media unit had earned its keep”.

Also, advertisers capitalize on the difficult economic situation to inject their influence in the newsroom. Itule and Anderson (2003: 432) lamented that as a result, “the line between advertising and news becomes less clear every day”.

For monetary considerations, journalists pay more attention to businesses and politicians to the detriment of ordinary people. Ogan and Fair (1984) conducted a study of newspapers in eight developing countries and found a high defense to government sources. Their findings showed that most of the stories published were event-oriented rather than process oriented. In the same vein, the researchers found that human sources were consulted more frequently than were documents in most of the stories. Their findings thus imply that media professionals in those developing countries are not committed to development journalism since they hardly bother to investigate the issues, rather they rely on what the individuals they interviewed said as fact. The implication of this is that several developmental needs of the people may not be identified for such need or developmental goal to be reported (Oso, 2002).

Kayode (2009) also showed that the Nigerian media did not do much to educate, enlighten or motivate the public towards the need to achieve the MDG goals. The study, which examined media coverage of development issues in

predetermined roles. Cottle asserted that the news sources "can actively mobilize and contest the script in ways that are not always textually prefigured or entirely determined in advance". Contrary to Cottle's position, however, a keen analysis of the news process easily brings to light social performances which are enacted. Indeed, much news making is ritualistic. The journalist conceives a story in his/her head and goes out to look for the kind of sources who will confirm the already pre-conceived story. Journalists may even drop sources who disproves a position they may hold. Contrary to journalistic claims of fairness and objectivity, McQuail (2005) cites various biased attitudes exhibited by journalists in news coverage. Such biases, include explicit argument and compilation of evidence favouring one point of view; a tendentious use of facts and comments without any explicit statements of preference; the use of language which colours an otherwise factual report and omission of points favouring one side. Several other content analyses have concluded that rather than the detached observers that media persons claim to be, the media actively help to construct the world.

Much of the research in international news flow has focused on control of news, factors which influence news selection and those attributes that affect news content. Most of such studies either follow the gatekeeper perspective which asserts that news selection is based on criteria set by journalists gatekeepers, or the logistical perspective which involves using economic, social, political or geographic characteristics of a nation to predict the amount of coverage one country receives in the media of another. Literature on international news flow points at three main deciders of international news coverage namely cultural

proximity, geographic proximity and power status (Swain, 2003). Some gatekeeper judgments of foreign news are based on an event's perceived cultural relevance. The degree of influence that culture has on coverage is a function of the dissimilarity or distance between the cultures involved. Ethnocentrism can increase the strength of the distance factor in a nation's news coverage.

Some studies which concentrated on the causes of the unfair western media coverage of Third World countries suggest that restrictive information gathering conditions within Third World countries is partly to blame for the lapses in news reportage. Difficulty in accessing news is often compounded by official intervention and controls over the news gathering process. Also, high cost and technical problems in the news gathering process are often blamed for the one-sided news flow. Other causes of deficiencies in Third World reportage include limitations of airtime and programme structures which do not permit continuity in Third World coverage, too thin a network of correspondents and ethno-centred choice of news and news propagation (Swain, 2003).

Biased coverage of Africa

Indeed, western media coverage of African countries is regarded as more biased than coverage of other Third World countries. The African Presidential Archives and Research Center undertook a study titled "A Survey of American Media Coverage of African Democracies: 1994 – 2004". The study analyzed the content of five leading United States print media stories on fourteen African countries including Ghana and revealed that a whopping 773 (28%) articles out of

themselves. Western media often focus on sensational news, political upheaval, pestilence, natural disasters and famine while ignoring positive breakthroughs. The dominant image of Africa in the western media is a continent fraught with political upheaval, economic decay, corruption and human rights abuses. Western reporters are often criticized for failing to provide a social, political or economic context of news. Journalists are accused of failing to explain the historical antecedents of Africa's current problems. It has also been established that since the dawn of perestroika in the 1980s, elite media have used democratization rhetoric to modernize, westernize and encourage capitalism in Africa (Swain, 2003).

Such criticisms led to advocacy for greater emphasis on the use of indigenous communication to provide the information needed for the development of African countries.

Indigenous communication and development

Weaknesses identified in the use of the mass media for development purposes, not least among them journalists' biased coverage of events, led to an increased focus on indigenous forms of communication. Indeed, since the 1970s when critical theory emerged to challenge the hitherto famous functionalist theories of development communication, there have been widespread efforts at finding alternative pathways to development. In Asia, Fuglesang (1979, 1984) conducted studies into establishing the significance of natural communication modes among members of rural communities. Wang and Dissanayake (1984)

conducted a similar study. Kidd (1984) also conducted a comparative analysis of the performing arts in education for development.

In Africa, Doob (1961) work was one of the earliest attempts at surveying traditional forms of communication. More than a decade later, Opubor (1975) assessed the effectiveness of theatrical forms of communication. The same year, Fiofori (1975) researched into the use of storytelling for education and development. After this study, it took nearly a decade for Kidd (1984) to research into popular theatre, specifically the folk theatre, *Laedza Batanani* as an experiment in non-formal education in Botswana. Shortly after Kidd's study, Ugboajah (1985) conducted a survey of the structures, characteristics and uses of the indigenous media in Africa. The potential of indigenous resources for promoting primary health care in West Africa is the subject delved into by Riley (1990).

The educative role of indigenous media has long been established. Bame (1975a) undertook a study which showed that concert party plays were ranked first from a group of both Western and indigenous media, as the most important media source for their information about family planning. Fiofori (1975) found that indigenous communication is not only an inexpensive means of spreading information in rural communities, it also shortens the time span that could be a hindrance for people who needed the information and provides a convenient means of communication. Ugboajah (1985c: 167) established that such media are effective in providing teaching and initiation with the aim of imparting traditional aesthetic, historical, technical, social, ethical and religious values.

Kyeremeh, 2005: 18). Other publications including Ansah (1985) and Ripley (1978) were lectures or essays. Also, much of the academic work in the area of indigenous communication centred on the deficiencies of western mass media systems within the African setting. Such studies hardly delved into the strengths of indigenous communication systems.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This methodology chapter of the thesis covers the profile of the study area, Research Design, Research Philosophy, Profile of Selected Media Houses, Study Population, Sampling Procedures, Sources of Data, Data Collection Instruments, Pre-Testing of Instruments, Reliability and Validity, Data Collection/Field Work, Data Processing and Analysis and Field Work Challenges.

Profile of study area

References to Northern Ghana, especially when it relates to the allocation of development projects by central government, often result in debates about which specific parts of Ghana qualify to be called the North. For purposes of this study, Northern Ghana refers to three administrative and political zones namely Northern, Upper West and Upper East regions. By this definition, communities such as Yeji and Prang, which were once part of the Northern Ghana Protectorate, are not part of the study. Northern Ghana covers 97,702 square kilometers of total land area (approximately 40.8%) of Ghana's 239,460 square kilometers (See Figure 1).

colonial government neglect. Songsore (2003:16), for instance, argues that the manner in which the British entered Ghana from the coastal parts of the country contributed to the development gap between the coastal entry points and parts of the country which are distant from the coast, since “development tends to be a negative exponential function of increasing distance from the coast”.

While the coastal parts of Ghana bordering Ashanti had “...become British satellite as early as 1874, it was not until 1902that the Northern states had become politically integrated into what became known as the Gold Coast under British colonial rule” (Songsore, 2003: 53). Thus, coastal parts of Ghana had a head start in development owing to their early contact with the British.

The uneven distribution of infrastructure was more evident in the development of education. While the British vigorously supported educational development in the southern sectors of the country, they only encouraged minimal education in the Northern Territories beyond standard six and actually discouraged missionary efforts at promoting education in the North (Bening, 1972). The colonial masters’ attitude towards education in Northern Ghana was aptly captured in a remark by the Chief Commissioner of the then Northern Territories to the effect that: only “a few crumbs from this feast of instruction might well be spared for the children of this dependency” (Bening, 1971: 24). Indeed, the colonial government implemented a deliberate policy of denying Northern Ghana its fair share of education so that residents of those areas could serve as “cheap, untrained docile labour” for the southern cocoa-mining economy (Songsore, 2003:66). As a result of the colonial administration’s indifference to

the North, traditional agriculture remained almost unchanged and even declined in some parts of Northern Ghana during the colonial period (Yaro, 2009).

Thus, residents of Northern Ghana migrated to the south to serve as farm hands or to join the army and police. The British found this arrangement so favourable to their interests that some officers administering the Northern Territories at the time did not favour the development of the area for fear of halting the north-south migration and losing easy access to labour (Bening, 1972). For instance, in 1908, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories commenced implementation of a policy of recruiting young boys from the Northern Territories to work at Tarkwa and Prestea mines. Again in 1950, the Colonial Secretary approved the recruitment of labour numbering 1,500 – 2,000 annually to work for Finsbury Pavement Group, a mining company. Aside the government sanctioned recruitment, there were illegal recruiters (Songsore 2003).

No wonder that Arrighi (1970b) believes that political forces rather than market mechanisms controlled the labour market of the North at the time. Some historians suggest that the colonial government employed coercive methods and a systematic system of neglect of the North to obtain cheap labour from that part of the country (Songsore, 2003). This position of the colonial government was articulated in 1899 by Sir F.M. Hodgson, Governor of the Gold Coast: “I would not at present spend upon the Northern Territories a single penny more than is absolutely necessary for their suitable administration and the encouragement of the transit trade” (Songsore, 2003:70).

The Northern migrant labourers were often exploited by both cocoa farmers and mining companies. The labourers worked long hours and were rewarded with meager wages. The exodus of able-bodied Northern youth was devastating to the economy of the area so much that in 1937 some district commissioners in the North pleaded for the protection of the interests of the Northern Territories since "... as a matter of common humanity ... the protectorate has its own economic destiny to work out, and that that destiny is not solely to provide a reservoir of labour for the commerce and industry of the Colony and Ashanti" (Bening, 1975: 78). Songsore (2003) contended that out-migration widened the development gap between the North and the South to the extent that Northern Ghana became a depressed area which was only useful as a supplier of unskilled labour. The out-migration of Northern labour force continued even after independence.

In the advent of Ghana's independence, rapid changes took place in the social and economic spheres of the country. In 1957, the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, introduced the state farm and workers brigade systems. Under the "Grow what you eat policy", farming was boosted even as the state designed parallel initiatives to complement subsistence farming. The policies sought to make Ghana self-sufficient in food production and also reduce the import bill of the government. Northern Ghana's comparative advantage in cereals, livestock and vegetable production was harnessed resulting in the establishment of the Nasia Rice Mills, Pwalugu Tomato Factory and Zuarungu Meat Factories. These industries were part of the national campaign on import

substitution industrialization. It afforded farmers the much-needed markets and income (Kuu-Ire, 2009). The socialist-oriented government of Kwame Nkrumah also improved the infrastructure of Northern Ghana and brought social services including hospitals and education to the doorsteps of the people (Yaro, 2009). However, the import substitution policy eventually failed because of stiff competition from foreign agricultural products (Kuu-Ire, 2009).

When Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup in 1966, no major shift in development policy occurred under the National Liberation Council (NLC). The Second Republican Government of Ghana, the Busia Administration (1969-1971) adopted rural development as distinct from the urban development thrust of previous governments. Unfortunately, the rural development was short-lived as the Progress Party (PP) administration did not stay long enough in power to execute it. The National Redemption Council (NRC) administration under General Acheampong introduced "Operation Feed Yourself" (OFY) policy in 1972. Ghanaians were encouraged, like under Nkrumah, to "Grow what they eat and eat what they grow." Some early successes in food production were achieved (Kuu-Ire, 2009).

In Northern Ghana, this translated into massive irrigation schemes and development programmes based on its agricultural endowments. The Northern Regional Integrated Development Programme (URADEP) was launched to lead the development of Northern Ghana. To boost agricultural activities in the semi-arid regions, the regime introduced and expanded irrigation schemes to move the area from unreliable rain-fed agriculture to all year round irrigation agriculture.

The Tono, Vea and Bontanga Dams, to date, are important agricultural sites providing jobs for farmers, labourers, processors, retailers and porters as well as food and other agro-related activities. Farmer service centers and stores were opened in strategic locations that offered technical support and agricultural inputs at subsidized prices to farmers (Kuu-Ire, 2009).

Rice production in the Nasia, Fumbisi Valley and Nabogu areas were also boosted. Several dug outs and small dams were constructed in rural communities some of which continue to provide water for gardening, livestock rearing, construction and household use. The State Housing System, which led to the building of estate and low cost housing schemes, provided affordable housing for low income workers, improved the spatial beauty of communities and served to hasten urban development. These highly commendable efforts of the Acheampong era, did not only improve socio-economic conditions of the people but also helped to close gaps between the north and south. However, it was not for long that the agenda ran into crisis (Kuu-Ire, 2009).

The projects suffered from misappropriation, mismanagement and nepotism. Also, abuse of the import license system soon crippled domestic agriculture as cheap imports made it impossible for farmers to sell their produce. The collapse of the agricultural sector worsened the plight of northerners as they had no alternative livelihoods. What started in 1972 as the most promising era in terms of indigenized, people -centered and nationalistic endeavours for the north ended as a fatal era in Ghana's socio-economic history (Apusigah, 2002). Again, these initiatives failed to improve the lives of the vast majority of Northern

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farmers since a select few who were mainly civil servants, military officers and rich local farmers benefited from the government policies rather than the peasant farmers for whom the initiatives were implemented (Yaro, 2009).

The nearly two decades of President Jerry John Rawlings leadership was marked by varied socio-economic reforms that have been both radical and controversial. Starting as a socialist agenda based on populist politics, the administration soon turned to the neo-liberal Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and IMF, for respite, when the populist agenda was not delivering the expected results timely. During the early era of the radical revolutionarism, the populist agenda that was promoted was intended to address equity gaps. The sudden swing in politics from populist socialism to liberal capitalism resulted in the structural adjustments that for some time seemed to have been delivering socio-economic benefits. However, after about a decade of adjustment, studies revealed that the poverty net was growing and equity gaps widening (GSS, 2002; GOG/NDOC, 2003). Abugre (1993) observed that the trade liberalization policy had made many Ghanaian products and their prices uncompetitive. Structural adjustment hardships led many companies to retrench, wind up or import cheaper products for sale.

Under such liberal reforms, the ailing Ghanaian economy whose growth rate was negative 10 percent by the end of the 1970s, was greatly boosted. The inflation rate reduced significantly, although it remained high. Mass infrastructural development in water, roads, markets, schools, hospitals and electrification resulted in marked improvement in living conditions. The cocoa

and mining sectors were rehabilitated and supported to become the leading foreign exchange earners in Ghana. A human-centered pricing policy for cocoa and gold sought to improve the balance of payment difficulties that Ghana was experiencing at the time. Privatization and liberalization, however, exacerbated the plight of the poor, especially rural farmers and led to the resurgence of a buying and selling regime in most of Ghana's cities. A long term development policy known as Vision 2020 and a Medium Term Development Plan sought to consolidate the gains made in the era of the Structural Adjustment Policies. By the end of the year 2000 when President John Kufuor took over the reins of power, these development plans were set aside (Kuu-Ire, 2009).

For Northern Ghana, rural electrification and expansion of health and educational facilities resulted in the extension of services to hitherto unreached places. The creation of the Upper West Region and districts such as Bongo, Zabzugu-Tatal, Saboba-Chereponi, among others, extended services to these hitherto neglected rural areas while the establishment of the University for Development Studies and Tamale Polytechnic (with the opening of Wa and Bolgatanga Polytechnics in progress) extended higher education to Northern Ghana for the first time. However, these were not enough to impact on the poverty situation in any significant way. The introduction of cash and carry in the health sector, facilities user fees in tertiary education and removal of subsidies including those for agricultural inputs coupled with cutbacks on government subventions to state enterprises and civil/public service tended to affect the poorest of the poor (Kuu-Ire, 2009).

development projects (Kuu-Ire, 2009). The GPRS II sought to increase access to irrigation agriculture, a marked departure from high dependence on rain-fed farming system in the past. It also sought to increase access to credit for agricultural inputs, develop selected crops and increase access to mechanized agriculture. Additionally, GPRS II sought to increase extension services to farmers, improve agricultural marketing and increase access to the global export market. However, the seven aims of the GPRS II did not transform northern Ghana as envisaged (Kuu-Ire, 2009).

Also, as part of worldwide poverty reduction efforts, Ghana, under the Kufuor administration, benefited from the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). Unfortunately, this growth oriented package did not favour the most impoverished parts of Ghana, especially the North. Programmes such as the School Feeding Programme, Capitation Grants, Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), Micro-Finance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC) were aimed at improving education, providing microcredit for enterprise development and supporting poor households to meet basic needs. In the health sector, the introduction of health exemptions, replacement of cash and carry with a National Health Insurance Scheme all delivered positive results. However, there were no targeted schemes for northern Ghana.

The causes of poverty in Northern Ghana cannot be solely laid at the doorsteps of colonial policies and political biases. Weather and environmental hardships coupled with conflicts and the peoples' own attitudes to development have contributed to the continued marginalization of this part of the country.

Maasole (2007), Awedoba (2005) and Bacho (2005) established that ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts have contributed significantly to the poverty situation within Northern Ghana. History has it that Northern Ghana was a fertile ground for slave raiders like Samori Babatu and Amrahi before Ghana became independent in 1957. This was the nurturing ground of conflicts in Northern Ghana. In the 21st Century, conflicts continue to plague the North often driving away investors (Kuu-ire, 2009).

Also, majority of people living in Northern Ghana are peasant farmers. Where the land is fertile, the use of crude implements like the cutlass and hoe do not allow for large plantation farm holdings. Again, access to credit and animal traction services or machines for enhanced agriculture is difficult (Dittoh, 2008). Where credit is available, exorbitant interest rates and the risks associated with rain-fed agriculture scare farmers away from accessing such credit. Poverty also prevents the Northern farmer from benefiting from technology to enhance their productivity. Besides this, population pressure has reduced fallow periods in Northern Ghana. Shorter fallow periods, overgrazing, bush burning and deforestation have resulted in serious soil erosion and degraded lands. These factors combine with environmental hazards, especially flooding affect Northerners' ability to enhance productivity (Kuu-ire, 2009). Moreover, owing to the single rainfall pattern of the area, farmers become unemployed for much of the year. During the dry season, farmers migrate to the forest belt to supplement their incomes. The lack of irrigation facilities prevents hardworking peasants in Northern Ghana from maximizing their productive capacity (Kuu-Ire, 2009).

Songsore (2003:2) stresses the need for a system of development where the productive capacities of all regions are “mobilized by linking them in both a structural and organizational sense to the mainstream of the national economy”. Effective socio-economic development involves changing patterns of control of communication, production and investment to integrate outlying parts of a country into the mainstream of the economy (Songsore, 2003).

Research design

Research design is the over all strategy that a researcher uses to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical way. This ensures that the researcher effectively addresses the research problem. It is considered as the blueprint for collecting, measuring and analyzing data (Adèr, Mellenbergh, & Hand, 2012).

Research design can be divided into fixed and flexible research designs. In fixed designs, the design of the study is determined before the main stage of data collection takes place. Fixed designs are usually driven by theory. This means that the researcher knows in advance the variables he/she needs to control and measure. Flexible designs, on the other hand, allow for more freedom during the data collection process. One may use a flexible research design when the variable of interest cannot be measured quantitatively, or where a theory is not available before one starts the research (Robson, 1993). This study adopted fixed research designs namely, survey design and in-depth interviews.

Owens (2002) identified four main reasons for using survey research. First, survey has the uniqueness of gathering information that is not available from other sources. Second, probability sampling, which is employed in survey research, gives an unbiased representation of the population of interest. Third, survey research results in standardization of measurement by ensuring that the same information is collected from every respondent. Finally, survey data is used to compliment existing data from secondary sources.

There are two basic survey designs: cross-sectional surveys and longitudinal surveys. In cross-sectional surveys, data are collected at one point in time from a sample selected to represent a larger population. Longitudinal surveys, on the other hand, consists of either trend surveys of a sample population at different points in time, or a study of the same population each time data are collected, although samples studied may be different. Longitudinal surveys could also be in the form of panel surveys where data is collected at varying points in time with the same sample of respondents (Owens, 2002).

This study used cross-sectional survey design. This design was appropriate for the study because it made it possible for an examination of “large and small proportions (or universes) by selecting and studying samples chosen from the proportions to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables” (Kerlinger, 1986: 377). Newspaper readers across Ghana is a rather large population to be studied. Survey approach enabled the researcher to study samples from this population and to discover their views on development issues from Northern Ghana.

The design for this research also took the form of in depth interview. In depth interview is a qualitative research design used to conduct intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their views on a particular idea, programme, or situation (Boyce and Neale, 2006). When a researcher wants to obtain detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours or to explore new issues in detail, in depth interviews are used. Such interviews are appropriate in place of focus group discussions in instances where the potential participants feel uncomfortable talking openly in a group, or when the researcher wishes to distinguish individual opinions from the perspectives of an entire group (Boyce and Neale, 2006). In depth interviews are usually conducted using a thoroughly composed interview guide to ensure that the interview covers all the topics that are crucial to for addressing the research questions (Sarantakos, 2005).

For this study, in depth interviews were conducted with media gatekeepers. In depth interview was considered appropriate for this study since it creates a forum for confidential and secure conversations between the researcher and the media editors. In depth interview was an appropriate method of addressing a controversial subject like media coverage. This design afforded the media gatekeepers' sufficient time to dilate on ways in which the mass media contributed to the development of Northern Ghana. Since the interviews were conducted in their offices, respondents were relaxed and gave information without being interrupted or influenced by other respondents.

The interview design was used to establish editors' views on the role of the media in the development of Northern Ghana and to find out the criteria for news selection as well as the mindset which may bring about a negative or positive slant in news emanating from Northern Ghana. The in depth interviews were also meant to elicit the editorial philosophy of the various media houses which were selected for this study. The editors also assisted the researcher to find out factors which account for coverage of specific geographical locations as well as certain development and non-development activities that take place in such areas.

Research philosophy

As far back as the 600s BC, a number of Greek Philosophers showed great interest in empirical ways of gaining knowledge. For instance, Thales (640 – 550 BC) used observation of natural events which was termed empirical-scientific approach. Anaximander (611 – 547 BC), Empedocles (c. 450) and Xenophanes (c. 600 BC) were other philosophers who employed empirical means of investigation. But Hippocrates (c. 450) was even more active in the use of empirical research than his colleagues (Sarantakos, 2005).

Interest in controlled research that employed observation and experimentation increased with the emergence of Aristotle (384-322 BC) who saw empiricism as a manifestation of fundamental principles of an ordered universe. On the contrary, Socrates and Plato were reluctant to abandon traditional philosophical thinking (Sarantakos, 2005). Empirical and traditional

methods of research continued into the 17th and 18th Centuries with reason, tradition, religion and rationalism still dominating.

Theory of positivism

The changing social and economic conditions of the late 18th and 19th Centuries greatly influenced the nature of research. For instance, a surge in social problems in agriculture and agrarian populations caused by progressive industrialization and urbanization demanded realistic, specific and quantifiable data. Four leading researchers namely Le Play, Quételet, Saint-Simon and Comte championed the revolution in research during this era. Claude-Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825) came up with the theory of positivism even though Comte subsequently publicized the theory and became known as the father of positivism (Sarantakos, 2005). Comte (1848) denounced the conventional methodology of his time which was based mainly on metaphysics, speculation and mysticism and posited the positive method as the most authentic means of conducting social research. For Comte, knowledge was gained only through sensory experiences. Therefore, only positive phenomenon, which is registered through the senses, is worth studying. Owing to the work of Comte and other researchers, research in the 19th and early 20th Centuries became more systematic and scientific (Sarantakos, 2005).

Trochim and Donnelly (2006) refers to positivism as a rejection of metaphysics. According to him, positivism holds that the goal of knowledge is simply to describe the phenomena that we experience. For positivists, the purpose

Table 4: Central principles of positivism

SN	Principle of positivism	Explanation
1	Objectivity	Disciples of this school adhere to the notion of objective reality and absolute truth
2	Empiricism	The claim that knowledge comes, through sense and experience
3	Quantitativism	Stresses the value of accuracy, precision and measurement
4	Objectivity	It employs scientific means of enquiry rather than using the researcher's own perceptions
5	Value-neutrality	A belief that facts should be separated from values
6	Anti-rationalism	A rejection of the notion that knowledge comes from reason
7	Universality	An assertion that methods of the physical sciences are also applicable in the social sciences
8	Deduction	Research design must be based on deduction to produce inductive generalizations
9	World as deterministic	The world follows causal laws. This means that if these laws are discovered, social life can be predicted and controlled
10	Pre-planned research design	Research design is planned and constructed prior to commencement of every research

Source: Sarantakos, 2005

Post – Positivism

In the second half of the 20th Century, there was a surge in criticism against positivism which resulted in fundamental changes in the areas of theory

and research. This gave rise to the post-positivists movement. Post-positivist theoretical schools of thought which challenged positivism were symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, philosophical hermeneutics, Marxism, the Frankfurt School, ethnomethodology and feminism. Such criticisms encouraged researchers to rethink their methodological orientations (Sarantakos, 2005).

To begin with, post-positivists questioned the knowledge extraction process, especially the methods employed in data collection and analysis. Moreover, the ways in which research was designed and executed, the relationship between the researcher and the researched were cardinal concerns of anti-positivists. Again, researchers criticized the positivists' perception of gender as well as the fact that they employed methods of physical sciences as tools for social science research. Finally, post-positivists queried the positivists' belief that reality is objective, arguing instead that reality is interpreted social action (Sarantakos, 2005).

Post-positivists who disagreed with the objective nature of reality grouped under one of the most common forms of post-positivist philosophy called critical realism. A critical realist believes that there is reality independent of our thinking about it and what science can study. The post-positivist critical realists recognize that all observation is liable to error and that all theory is revisable. This goes without saying that the critical realist does not believe a researcher is capable of knowing reality with certainty. Whereas the positivist believed that the goal of science was to uncover the truth, the post-positivist critical realist was of the view

that the goal of science is to try as much as possible to get it right even though the researcher can never achieve reality (Trochim and Donnelly, 2006).

Since all measurement is fallible, the post-positivist emphasizes the importance of multiple measures and observations, each of which may possess different types of error, and the need to use triangulation across these multiple potentially erroneous sources to try to comprehend happenings around us. The post-positivist also believes that all observations are theory-laden and that scientists and everyone else are inherently biased by their cultural experiences and social orientations. This fact notwithstanding, researchers can share experiences and get to understand one another. Thus, post-positivism rejects the relativist idea of the incommensurability of different perspectives, the idea that we can never understand each other because we come from different backgrounds and cultures (Trochim and Donnelly, 2006).

Most post-positivists are constructivists who believe that we each construct our view of the world based on our perceptions of it. According to them, since perception and observation are fallible, individuals' constructions would also be imperfect. While positivists believe that objectivity is a characteristic that resides in the individual scientist and that scientists are responsible for putting aside their biases and beliefs and seeing the world as it really is, post-positivists reject the idea that any individual can see the world perfectly as it really is. For the post-positivist, human beings are all biased and their observations are affected or theory-laden.

Thus, one's best hope for achieving objectivity is to triangulate across multiple fallible perspectives. This means that objectivity is not the characteristic of an individual but a social phenomenon. Indeed, it is what multiple individuals are trying to achieve when they criticize one another's work. One can never achieve true objectivity. One can only approach objectivity. Therefore, the best way for the researchers to improve the objectivity of his or her research work is to conduct the study within the context of a broader contentious community of truth-seekers (including other scientists) who criticize each other's work (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006).

Though the present study adopts some quantitative methods of data gathering which are akin to positivist philosophy, the research is mainly informed by post-positivist philosophy. Analysis of media coverage cannot be done in a strictly scientific manner since much subjectivity is required in assigning meanings to the content of news stories. Moreover, in deducing the intentions of editors in selecting or rejecting development news emanating from the Northern parts of Ghana, a degree of subjectivity is required. Thus, for much of this research, the researcher cannot claim, as positivists do, that there is some truth to be uncovered about news coverage. Using well known and time-tested research tools, the researcher attempted to reconstruct reality based on his training and experience as a journalist. To counter the potential subjectivity involved in the process, the study employed three main methods of data collection namely content analysis, in depth interviews and surveys.

Profile of selected media houses

Media houses sampled for this study are: (1) *Daily Graphic*, (2) *Ghanaian Times*, (3) *Ghanaian Chronicle*, (4) *Public Agenda*, (5) *Radio Ghana*, (6) *GTV* and (7) *Metro TV*.

Daily Graphic

Ghana's most widely circulated newspaper, *Daily Graphic*, was established by a British newspaper magnate, Cecil King in 1950 (Asante, 1996). From the onset, *Graphic* sought to maintain a policy of political neutrality, emphasizing objective reporting by local African reporters. The paper positioned itself as the most professional newspaper in the Gold Coast (Hasty, 2005).

In 1963, Kwame Nkrumah purchased the *Daily Graphic* and incorporated it into his state apparatus. Since then, the newspaper and its entertainment weekly, *The Mirror*, have been produced in Accra by the state-funded Graphic Corporation whose name was later changed to Graphic Communications Group. It has over the years remained the most widely circulated newspaper and indeed, its name has become synonymous with newspapers in Ghana. As far back as 1996, Maja-Pierce (1996) reported *Daily Graphic's* circulation figure as 200,000. This figure has more than doubled over the years. Since its establishment, state-funded Graphic Corporation and later Graphic Communications Group has been the most prosperous news organization in Ghana, largely due to the patronage of the company's flagship newspaper, *Daily Graphic*. With a roomful of computers, several company vans, access to world news services, more sophisticated color

printing, available newsprint, and a large, well-paid staff, Graphic Communications Group produces newspapers that resemble the Western prototype (Hasty, 2005).

In 2004, Graphic Communications Group made a dividend of GH₵3,000.00. This more than doubled to GH₵8,000.00 in 2007. Currently, the Group produces eight publications, the latest being *Business Graphic* which was launched on 26th August, 2008 (Radio Ghana News, 27th August, 2008). Since *Daily Graphic* consistently supports the agenda of the state, the professional quality of the state media serves an ideological purpose, symbolizing the stability, reliability, and accumulation of the state (Hasty, 2005).

In terms of ranking the importance that readers and advertisers attach to pages within *Daily Graphic*, the Editor of the paper indicated that front page is the page that sells the newspaper, followed by page three, the back page and the centre spread (Private Interview with Editor, 15th May, 2009).

Ghanaian Times

The New Times Corporation, formerly known as the Guinea Press Limited, was established by the first President of Ghana, the late President Kwame Nkrumah, in 1957, as the printing house for his political party – the Convention People's Party (CPP). The Guinea Press Limited was meant to be a modern press that could match the quality of *Graphic*, and was to begin publishing a serious morning paper, the *Ghanaian Times*. The maiden edition of the paper came onto the newsstands on 3rd March, 1958. The *Ghanaian Times* was followed in 1962 by the *Spark* and in 1963 by *Weekly Spectator* (Smertin,

1987). After the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah in a military putsch in 1966, the Guinea Press was taken over as a state property by the National Liberation Council Decree 130 of 1968. In 1971 the Press was renamed the New Times Corporation by an Instrument of Incorporation - Act 363, 1971. This Act also repealed the National Newspapers (Guinea Press Limited – Interim Reconstitution Decree) which Nkrumah used to acquire Guinea Press as state property. Act 363 was given further recognition by the provision of PNDC Law 42 (www.newtimes.com).

Before 1993 when *Ghanaian Times* and *Daily Graphic* enjoyed some level of monopoly, New Times Corporation was selling not less than 120,000 copies of its flagship paper, *Ghanaian Times*, a day. However, with the proliferation of newspapers on the newsstands, the paper's market share which stood at 45 percent for the *Ghanaian Times* and 65 percent for the *Weekly Spectator* has now reduced to about 35 percent for *Ghanaian Times* and 50 percent for the *Weekly Spectator* (<http://www.newtimes.com>).

Ghanaian Chronicle

Published by General Portfolio Limited, a company established by Kofi Coomson, the first edition of the *Ghanaian Chronicle* came onto the newsstands on 31st August, 1991. It is the most widely read private daily newspaper and has offices in nine regions of Ghana. Only the Upper West Region has no office for the newspaper which was established to be the voice of the voiceless and to champion the fight against oppression. Currently, it has more than 30 trained journalists and a circulation of 18,000 copies a day as against 40,000 in 1996. The paper lost much of its readership since 1996, when it was one of few private

- Page 14 – The very opposite to page 15 is Page 14. For Chronicle Deputy Editor, Page 14, therefore, ranks third in importance since after reading page 15, the reader is likely to read the page before it.

- Centre Spread – The two pages which constitute the centre spread are ranked fourth, while page 2 where unfinished stories from page 15 sometimes continue comes fifth.

- Back page – This page contains stories on sports which attract a significant male readership. This, according to Chronicle’s Deputy Editor, earned the page the sixth position of importance on the newspaper.

The other pages within the newspapers are unranked since they are not accorded much importance in the newspaper (Personal interview with Assistant Editor of Chronicle, 17th April, 2009).

Public agenda

Public Agenda is a privately owned newspaper published by PA Communications, with sponsorship from Third World Network, a Non-Governmental Organization. Established in November, 1994, the newspaper is published twice every week, on Mondays and Fridays. Its objective is to promote democratic participation, articulate social justice principles and defend the poor. It has six trained journalists. However, none of the journalists work within Northern Ghana, since the paper has no office in the North. The paper makes use of three stringers located in Tamale and Bolgatanga to obtain information from that part of the country. *Public Agenda* is dedicated to promoting sustainable development

through working for good governance and giving a voice to the disadvantaged by articulating their concerns.

In terms of ranking the significance attached to the various pages within the newspaper, Public Agenda considers the front page as the most important. Unlike Chronicle, however, page 2, which is the editorial page, is regarded as the second most important page, followed by pages 3 in third place, and the centre spread coming fourth. After the centre spread, the back page is regarded as the next in importance (Personal Interview with Editor, 15th May, 2009).

Ghana Broadcasting Corporation

The Ghana Broadcasting System was set up September, 1962 and later christened the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). It provided two domestic radio services, Radio 1 and Radio 2, broadcasting from Accra. Radio 1 is devoted to local-language programs, broadcasting in Akan, Ga, Ewe, Nzema, Dagbani, Hausa, and English. Radio 2 transmits in English. Both stations operate for 15 and one-fifth hours on weekdays and 17 and half hours on weekends. The wireless Radio 3 has been discontinued due to scarce resources. In 1986, GBC began broadcasting in VHF-FM in the Accra-Tema Metropolitan Area, assisted by the German government (Hasty, 2005).

Currently, GBC has opened new FM stations in all regions and some districts of Ghana. Radio GAR operates in Accra, Garden City Radio in Kumasi, Twin City FM in Sekondi-Takoradi, and Volta Star Radio in Ho (Hasty, 2005). In Northern Ghana, GBC FM stations are *Radio Savanna* in Northern Region, *Radio*

Upper West, in the Upper West Region and *URA Radio* within the Upper East Region.

For many years, *GBC* has been suffering an identity crisis since it was neither a state broadcaster, a commercial station nor a community station. In September, 2010 the Ghana Government finally took a decision to make *GBC* a state broadcaster in order to end its identity crisis (Radio Ghana, 6:00am News, 8th September, 2010).

GTV

GTV was set up by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1965 in collaboration with Sanyo of Japan. Sanyo wished to promote television in Ghana to support its own television assembly plant in Tema. Despite Sanyo's commercial impetus, Nkrumah stressed that television should educate citizens for national development rather than merely entertain or generate profit. Eventually, radio and television broadcasting were centralized in a single unit, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, housed in a sprawling compound in Accra (Asante, 1996). Initially, *GTV* established transmitters at Ajankote near Accra, Kissi in the Central Region, Jamasi in the Ashanti Region, and a relay station in Tamale in the Northern Region. In 1986, another transmitter was added in Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region and since then others have been added in Sunyani in the Brong Ahafo Region, Han in Upper West Region, Amedzofe and Akatsi, both in the Volta Region. Transposers or boosters operate at Ho, Akosombo, Prestea, Sunyani, Oda, Tarkwa, Dunk-wa, and Mpraeso (Hasty, 2005).

Currently, the quality of TV transmission has significantly improved with the installation of satellites in all regions of the country. The Ghana television transmission standard is PAL B-5 with five low power relays. Through these transmitters, 95 percent of Ghana has access to GTV broadcasts. Television programming begins at 5:00 am and ends 1:00am the following day.

Metro TV

After privatization of the airwaves, the government gave approval for the allocation of frequencies to private television stations as well. Two private channels, *TV3* and *Metro TV*, went on air in 1997. Owned by Talal Fattal's Media Number One Limited, *Metro TV* is transmitted live from studios at Cantonments in Accra. It is currently the only privately owned television station with a nationwide coverage. The station is broadcast on VHF, Channel 26.

Population of the study

The target population from which the sample was selected was made up of newspapers, radio and television news bulletins published and aired between July, 2008 and June, 2009 as well as newspaper readers in Ghana. Additionally, gatekeepers of media houses within Ghana formed part of the study population. Some of the newspapers are weeklies while others are either bi-weeklies or dailies. Also, majority of the papers are privately owned while few, those published by the Graphic Communications Group Limited and New Times Corporation, are state owned. Table 5 shows the target population of the study.

Table 5: Target population of the study

Target population	Type of data	Instruments used
Newspapers	Qualitative & quantitative	Coding frame
Radio	Qualitative & quantitative	Coding frame
Television	Qualitative & quantitative	Coding frame
Newspaper readers	Quantitative	Interview schedule
Media Editors	Qualitative	Interview schedule

Source: Reseracher

As at 2008, there were more than 300 newspapers and magazines which had been registered with the National Media Commission. On the other hand, since the airwaves were liberalized in 1996, the National Communications Authority has granted licenses to about 24 television stations and 137 FM radio stations to operate in the country (NCA, 2007). An estimated 130 FM stations are on air in addition to four free-on air and four pay-per-view television stations (Gadzekpo, 2008). Again, as at 2004, daily newspaper readership within the country was estimated at 48,757 people (GSS, 2005).

Sampling procedures

Two state-owned dailies, *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*, were purposively sampled for the study. As state-owned newspapers, these print media have a major responsibility to cover development news from all parts of the country. Graphic Communications Group Limited and New Times Corporation,

the media houses that publish these papers, also have offices and journalists in all ten regions of the country. Additionally, the state-owned papers selected for this study were the most widely read newspapers in the country at the time the research was carried out. Aside the state-owned papers, two privately owned newspapers, *Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Public Agenda*, were purposively sampled. *Chronicle* had consistently been adjudged the most widely read private newspaper and was the only private paper which had an office and a correspondent in the Northern Region. *Public Agenda*, on the other hand, is a newspaper which is sponsored by an NGO with a focus on development of vulnerable communities.

With regards to broadcast media, the state-owned *Ghana Television* and *GBC Radio* were purposively sampled since they are state-owned media houses with a mandate to use broadcasting to promote development. These stations are also appropriate for the study since they have national coverage. Since the study focused on media houses which had national coverage, no privately-owned radio station was sampled since none of them broadcasted to the whole country. However, one privately owned television station, *Metro TV*, was selected for the sole reason that it was the only privately owned station whose coverage extended to all regional capitals of Ghana.

Since broadcast programme scheduling is the same every week, simple random sampling was employed to select and analyze print and broadcast news and programmes for one week every month from July, 2008 to June, 2009. The one year period selected for this study is appropriate since it allows the researcher sufficient time to extensively analyse media coverage. For each of the selected

months, the lottery method was used to select one week for data collection. Using this method, the following weeks were selected for the study:

- July 27 – August 02, 2008
- August 24 – 30, 2008
- September 14 – 20, 2008
- October 26 – November 01, 2008
- November 16 – 22, 2008
- December 07 – 13, 2008
- January 18 – 24, 2009
- February 15 – 21, 2009
- March 15 – 21, 2009
- April 05 – 11, 2009
- May 03 – 09, 2009
- June 14 – 20, 2009

Every page of selected newspapers was studied to identify stories emanating from Northern Ghana, which were coded. For radio and television programmes, news was purposively sampled. The 6:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. news bulletins were purposively sampled on *GBC Radio* for the simple reason that these constitute the major news bulletins on the station with 30-minutes coverage each for the 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. bulletins, and one hour coverage for the 1:00 pm news. For *GTV* and *Metro TV*, their 7:00pm and 7.30pm

news bulletins respectively were purposively sampled since these were the major bulletins for the two stations, and are broadcast for primetime viewing.

The editors of all media organizations which formed part of the study were also purposively sampled and interviewed to determine the varying considerations which went into coverage and publication of stories. As gatekeepers of state-owned and major privately-owned media, the editors were expected to have much insight into the role that the media can play in the development of Northern Ghana.

Ghana's four major cities namely Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Sekondi-Takoradi were purposively sampled for a survey of newspaper readers who reside within those cities. As the four largest cities in Ghana where, according to the modernists, media consumption habits were expected to be high, respondents were believed to be more knowledgeable of media stories which focused on Northern Ghana than residents of less developed parts of the country. Within each selected city, purposive sampling techniques were used to select four newsstands where newspaper buyers aged 18 years and above were accidentally sampled for interviews. Within each city, two highly patronized newsstands were selected from high income residential areas while two were also selected from low income residential areas. This was done to account for diversity of views among the various socio-economic groups.

In all, 100 newspaper readers were selected from each of the 4 cities for interviews. The sample size for newspaper readers was chosen in conformity with Rubin and Babbie (1997) which states that where a study which wishes to conduct

multivariate analysis is being conducted with inadequate resources, the selected sample size could be determined by multiplying the number of variables to be simultaneously analyzed by the minimum number of cases per variable required by the appropriate multivariate statistical procedure. Since this study has at least 10 cases for each of 10 variables, 10 is multiplied by 10 to arrive at 100 as the sample size for respondents drawn from each city. Research Assistants were stationed at selected newsstands between 6:00 am and 10:00 am, the peak newspaper purchasing hours, to interview any newspaper buyer irrespective of gender who fell within the specified age group. The interviews were aimed at eliciting the views of respondents on the portrayal of Northern Ghana in the Ghanaian media. Twenty five respondents were selected at each newsstand.

Sources of data

The primary data for the study were collected using content analysis, in depth interviews and structured interviews. Secondary data, on the other hand, were obtained from reports, manuals and brochures at the National Communications Authority, the National Media Commission, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Graphic Communications Group Limited and Metro TV. Some secondary data were also retrieved from the internet websites of Metro TV, New Times Corporation, the Ghanaian Chronicle and Public Agenda. The secondary data gathered were mainly profiles of the media houses which were selected for the study. Such data also consisted of information on the activities of other media houses in Ghana. Some of the most frequently visited libraries for

secondary data were the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana Library, library of the Institute for Development Studies of the University of Cape Coast and the Balme Library of the University of Ghana. There was also extensive internet search for data related to media and development.

Data collection instruments

An interview schedule was used to gather data from newspaper readers across four cities in Ghana. This interview schedule was made up of 17 open-ended questions and 24 closed-ended questions. Research Assistants gave the schedules to respondents and waited to have them filled. The questions elicited information on newspaper readers' media consumption habits and their perceptions of development issues related to Northern Ghana to enable the researcher gain insight into views about the North which the media feed their audiences with. The questions further sought respondents' views about the role that the Ghanaian media had played in developing the North. An interview guide was also developed for media gatekeepers to enable the researcher obtain information on factors that editors consider in selecting stories for publication and the extent to which such factors influenced media coverage of the North. The interview guide also gave the researcher an opportunity to obtain information regarding the amount and quality of coverage they accord Northern Ghana.

Various studies including Hall et al (1978), Gans (1979), Cottle (2000), Day (2000) and, more recently, Gadzekpo (2008) have questioned the editorial judgment of some media gatekeepers and attributed news selection to subjective

reasons like influence of editors by powerful political and commercial forces. The interview guide provided an opportunity for editors to lay bare the criteria for selecting news for publication and established from them whether their media outfits had a policy for promoting the development of Northern Ghana. Again, the guide enabled editors to address accusations by Saa-Dittoh (2008) and others of biased media coverage of Northern Ghana. To facilitate data collection on the content of media stories, coding frames were devised for both the broadcast and print media. The coding frames enabled the researcher to obtain information on the type of development stories published on Northern Ghana, the prominence and slant of such stories as well as how favourable or otherwise the stories were to the development efforts of the North.

Pre-testing of the instruments

The instruments were pre-tested in April, 2008 for the following reasons:

- There was the need to detect and remove any errors or ambiguities and modify the instruments for data collection;
- It was also essential to establish the face validity of the instruments by making sure that the items measured what the instruments were designed to ascertain;
- Pre-testing enabled the researcher to ensure that there was proper coordination and comprehension by research assistants of the main data collection process;

- The test study offered the researcher an opportunity to deal with challenges that were likely to be encountered during conduct of the study. For instance, through pre-testing, the researcher was exposed to the technical challenges of audio-visual recording and found ways of dealing with such challenges. Besides, difficulties encountered with poor reception of *Metro TV* signals and occasional lack of signals from *Radio Ghana* and *Metro TV* were identified as potential threats to data gathering; and
- The exercise was essential to establish the peak newspaper purchasing hours and the major newsstands within the four sampled cities where newspaper readers could easily be gotten for data gathering purposes. The pre-testing revealed that 6:00am to 10:00am were the peak newspaper buying hours suitable for collecting data from newspaper readers.

Reliability and validity

Research reliability deals with the ideal situation of consistency and quality of the instruments to produce the same results when employed under similar conditions. Reliability and validity in content analysis are similar to those addressed in other research methods. The reliability of a content analysis study refers to its stability, or the tendency for coders to consistently re-code the same data in the same way over a period of time. Reliability also has to do with reproducibility or the tendency for a group of coders to classify category membership in the same way; and accuracy, or the extent to which the classification of a text corresponds to a standard or norm statistically (Busha and

Harter, 1980). The generalizability of one's conclusions, then, is very dependent on how one determines concept categories, as well as on how reliable those categories are.

To ensure reliability, the researcher developed rules that allowed the Research Assistants to categorize and code the same data in the same way over the one-year period that the study lasted. This was to conform to Busha and Harter (1980) who noted that reproducibility, not only of specific categories, but of general methods applied to establishing all sets of categories, makes a study, and its subsequent conclusions and results, more reliable. Weber (1990: 12) also noted: "To make valid inferences from the text, it is important that the classification procedure be reliable in the sense of being consistent: Different people should code the same text in the same way". The validity, inter-coder reliability and intra-coder reliability are subject to intense methodological research efforts over long years (Krippendorff, 2004). Neuendorf (2002) suggested that when human coders are used in content analysis, reliability translates to inter coder reliability or the amount of agreement or correspondence among two or more coders.

Regarding data sources, both primary and secondary, have been listed, while data collection methods and processes have been explained. Samples of questionnaires, interview guides and coding frames are also attached as appendices.

Validity of instruments has to do with the capacity of the instruments to measure what the study set out to establish. Efforts were made to ensure validity

came in two forms, namely, internal validity and external validity. The first attempt at ensuring internal validity was the construction of a research design to limit errors. To achieve this, the study objectives were clearly stated and the categories of data were made easy to identify. For recording, transcription and coding of media content, the two Research Assistants selected were journalists who could appreciate issues related to the effects of media coverage on development and could therefore, easily categorize stories into development and non-development publications as well as undertake analyses of stories under favourable, unfavourable and neutral coverage. In spite of their professional experiences in media work, they were meticulously trained to ensure consistency in coding and to enable them obtain the exact data expected of them.

The four Research Assistants who carried out the survey of newspaper readers were also rigorously trained on techniques of questionnaire administration and how to conduct interviews. In the course of their work, the researcher remained in touch with them at all times to assist them deal with challenges obstructing the data gathering process. Again, internal validity was attained by ensuring that items used measured the content they were intended to measure and were based on the objectives of the study. Finally, the researcher approximated internal validity through consistently checking the data collected against the stated objectives of the study.

External validity concerns itself with ensuring that the results of the study can be generalized to a wider context beyond the present study. To this end, media content was studied over a one-year period to make up for the possibility of

seasonal changes influencing reportage of certain sectors of development or regions of the country. Using a large sample of media stories also ensured that the researcher obtained, for purposes of analysis, many development stories from varied sectors of development. Again, a variety of data sources was resorted to validate the content of media stories which were analysed. The advantage of employing varied sources for data collection was that the researcher compared responses of media editors and media consumers to actual media output to ensure credence of the data.

Data collection/Fieldwork

Actual data collection commenced in June, 2008 and ended in October, 2009. The researcher himself interviewed the Editor of *Daily Graphic*, the Producer of News at *Ghanaian Times*, the Deputy News Editor of *Ghanaian Chronicle*, the Editor of *Public Agenda* and News and Political Editor of the paper, the Editor of Radio News for *GBC* and *Metro TV's* News Producer. To facilitate access to media gatekeepers and elicit their co-operation during the interviews, a letter of introduction was obtained from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Cape Coast. The researcher's identity card as a lecturer at the University for Development Studies and his experience as a journalist also facilitated access to information from the media gatekeepers. Data from the editors was collected between February and April, 2009. Interviews, each of which lasted about one hour, were conducted on one-on-one basis in the offices of the editors.

A training of four Research Assistants who conducted a survey of newspaper readers took place between May 25 – 27, 2008, while the actual survey was conducted between June 11, 2008 and February 25, 2009. One Research Assistant each was assigned to conduct the survey in Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi. In the course of their work, the researcher met his assistants regularly to discuss and make necessary adjustments and effect changes in response to challenges encountered in the field. With regards to newspaper readers, questionnaires were given to them for self-administration. Research Assistants waited for an average of 35 minutes to collect questionnaires which were filled by the newspaper readers.

Data collection on media content took place between 1st July, 2008 and 30th June, 2009. Prior to the actual data collection, two Research Assistants who were journalists were recruited and trained using a structured coding frame. Several mock recording, transcription and coding sessions were held as part of the training. The Research Assistants' task was to record sampled news bulletins from selected broadcast media outfits and code such news according to a pre-determined format. The researcher also purchased selected newspapers for coding. Where a Research Assistant failed to record a sampled news item, or where failure in transmission made it impossible to record the news, the researcher obtained hard or soft copies of the newsreel from the media houses concerned.

Fieldwork challenges

A number of challenges were encountered by the researcher in the course of data collection. As Gadzekpo (2008) observed, most Ghanaian media organizations lack financial accountability. They are quick in professing government accountability but when the same yardstick is demanded of the media, they often resist robustly. This explains why media organizations are often unwilling to divulge information about themselves, particularly their circulation figures and audience-ratings so that they can, according to Gadzekpo (2008), inflate their readership and audience to advertisers and potential sponsors. The researcher found it extremely difficult arranging interviews with media editors who often gave excuses about having tight working schedules. When after much persistence the researcher booked time for the interviews, impatience was a common trait with the editors. Most of them were not prepared to spend more than 15 minutes with the researcher. Again, most of them either did not have much background information and facts about their media houses or were reluctant to provide such information in spite of assurances from the researcher that the information was solely for academic purposes.

Poor broadcast media reception signals and occasional breaks in transmission within the Upper West Region where the Research Assistants were based, also constituted a challenge during the data gathering. For instance, between the middle of February and end of April, 2009, *Metro TV* went off air within the Upper West Region. *Radio Ghana* and *GTV* also experienced periodic breaks in transmission. This often prevented Research Assistants from recording

news items to facilitate coding and analysis. In such instances, the researcher then had to visit head offices of the affected media houses in Accra to obtain newsreel for the bulletins.

Poor documentation within libraries and the archival services also came to the fore when the researcher failed to purchase some sampled newspapers and attempted obtaining copies of such papers from the libraries. Aside the School of Communication Studies library and the Balme Library of the University of Ghana, none of the libraries that the researcher visited subscribed for the *Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Public Agenda*. Some copies of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* which the libraries subscribed for had also been misplaced. The National Archives neither subscribed for private papers nor did it have the 2008 issues of *Graphic* and *Times* that the researcher needed. Eventually, the researcher visited offices of the selected newspapers and some vendors for back issues of the papers.

Data processing and analysis

Content analysis was used in analyzing media coverage of Northern Ghana because it is a useful method of evaluating public information. This method focuses primarily on the characteristics or content of messages, determining what kind of “meanings” the words may represent. Holsti (1969) defined content analysis as any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.

Content analysis is a research tool focused on the actual content and internal features of media. It is used to determine the presence of certain words,

concepts, themes, phrases, characters, or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this presence in an objective manner. Texts can be defined broadly as books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, advertising, theater, informal conversation, or really any occurrence of communicative language (Sarantakos, 2005).

Palmquist (2008) contended that content analysis is qualitative analysis used primarily in the social sciences. It is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. It often involves building and applying a “concept dictionary” or fixed vocabulary of terms on the basis of which words are extracted from the textual data for concordance or statistical computation. Due to the fact that it can be applied to examine any piece of writing or occurrence of recorded communication, content analysis is used in a large number of fields, ranging from marketing and media studies, to literature and rhetoric, ethnography and cultural studies, gender and age issues, sociology and political science, psychology and cognitive science, as well as other fields of inquiry. Additionally, content analysis reflects a close relationship with socio- and psycholinguistics, and is playing an integral role in the development of artificial intelligence (Palmquist, 2008).

Sarantakos (2005) identifies four major types of content analysis namely descriptive, contextual, comparative and processual or particularistic content analysis. Descriptive content analysis identifies and describes the main content of data chronologically and thematically using narratives to make such description

vivid. Contextual analysis, on the other hand, studies the research object in context and aims at understanding the context through the meaningful statements found in the text. Comparative content analysis entails comparing texts of different media and examining the validity, reliability or credibility of such media, while procedural or particularistic content analysis studies elements or aspects of a whole process such as the sender, receiver, medium or message (Sarantakos, 2005).

Palmquist (2008) makes reference to two general categories of content analysis: conceptual analysis and relational analysis. Conceptual analysis can be thought of as establishing the existence and frequency of concepts in a text. Relational analysis builds on conceptual analysis by examining the relationships among concepts in a text. Traditionally, content analysis has most often been thought of in terms of conceptual analysis. In conceptual analysis, a concept is chosen for examination and the number of its occurrences within the text recorded. Since terms may be implicit as well as explicit, it is important to clearly define implicit terms before the beginning of the counting process. To limit the subjectivity in the definitions of concepts, specialized dictionaries are used. As with most other research methods, conceptual analysis begins with identifying research questions and choosing a sample or samples. Once chosen, the text must be coded into manageable content categories. The process of coding is basically one of selective reduction, which is the central idea in content analysis. By breaking down the content of materials into meaningful and pertinent units of

information, certain characteristics of the messages may be analyzed and interpreted (Palmquist, 2008).

Qualitatively, content analysis can involve any kind of analysis where the content of communication such as speech, written text, interviews or images is categorized and classified. To conduct a content analysis, a text is coded, or broken down, into manageable categories including words, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme. Having broken them down in such form, they are then examined using one of content analysis' basic methods: conceptual analysis or relational analysis. Having done this, the results are then used to make inferences about the messages within the subject of analysis. For instance, content analysis can indicate important features like the comprehensiveness of coverage or the intentions, biases, prejudices, and oversights of authors, publishers, as well as all other persons responsible for the content of materials (Carvalho, 2000).

Krippendorff (2004) identified six crucial questions which the researcher needs to consider in the course of content analysis. The researcher has to establish which data are to be analyzed, how the data are defined and what population the data will be drawn from. One also determines what the context relative to which the data are analyzed is, what the boundaries of the analysis are, and what the targets of the inferences are. While analysing the data the assumption usually is that words and phrases mentioned most often are those reflecting important concerns in the communication. That explains why quantitative content analysis usually starts with word frequencies, space measurements (column centimeters/inches in the case of newspapers), time counts (for radio and

television time) and keyword frequencies. However, content analysis extends far beyond plain word counts. For instance, with analysis of keyword in context routines, words can be analysed in their specific context to be disambiguated. Synonyms and homonyms can be isolated in accordance with linguistic properties (Krippendorff, 2004).

Again, a distinction is often made between the manifest contents of communication and its latent meaning. "Manifest" refers to what an author or speaker definitely has written, while latent meaning describes what an author intended to say or write. Normally, content analysis can only be applied on manifest content; that is, the words, sentences, or texts themselves, rather than their meanings. McKeone (1995) has also highlighted the difference between prescriptive analysis and open analysis. In prescriptive analysis, the context is a closely-defined set of communication parameters including specific messages or subject matter. Open analysis, on the other hand, identifies the dominant messages and subject matter within the text. A further step in analysis is the distinction between dictionary-based (quantitative) approaches and qualitative approaches. Dictionary-based approaches set up a list of categories derived from the frequency list of words and control the distribution of words and their respective categories over the texts. While methods in quantitative content analysis transform observations of found categories into quantitative statistical data, the qualitative content analysis focuses more on the intentionality and its implications (McKeone, 1995).

Sarantakos (2005) identifies various techniques used by quantitative researchers to analyse data collected through content analysis. Researchers could employ descriptive analysis whereby the frequency of appearance of certain elements of the research question are counted and compared with other elements. There is also categorical analysis which involves studying documents by means of a set of categories and producing nominal, ordinal as well as interval data to be processed statistically. The researcher could also employ valence and intensity analysis. This entails processing data by means of multi-step scales based on theoretical criteria. Contingency analysis, on the other hand, is a semantic communication analysis usually employed to make an inference from the text about the personality of the author. Again, contextual analysis is a technique open to quantitative researchers analysing data through content analysis. Contextual analysis entails examining the sequence in which certain concepts appear together in the text.

In the case of qualitative content analysis, the units of analysis namely texts of books, transcripts of interviews, or other forms of verbal or visual communication are usually ascertained before the researcher then identifies and evaluates the items that appear to be theoretically important and meaningful and relate them to the central question of the study. In some cases the researcher studies the text semantically and syntactically, employs the rules of logic, relates the meaning of parts of the text to the whole document and the general thinking of the author based on which hypotheses are developed. In other cases, the processes of collection and analysis of data are seen as an attempt to identify criteria in the

text that may refer to actions, effects of expressions and principles that will allow statements about the emotional and cognitive background as well as the behaviour of the communicators (Sarantakos, 2005).

Mayring (2000) proposes various ways of analysing qualitative data during content analysis. One could employ summative content analysis by reducing data in such a way that important elements in the text is retained making it clearer and more transparent. The researcher could, alternatively, use inductive category construction.

Here, summarizing is taken to another level by gradually developing categories from the data. The third technique open to the qualitative researcher is explicating content analysis which aims at explaining unclear parts of the text. This is done through controlled and systematic gathering of extra information either using information from the same protocol or sources outside the protocol. Structuring content analysis is done by developing structures by putting the material in some kind of order. The order could either be formal criteria, content criteria type or dimension criteria or criteria related to dimensions of scales. This eventually leads to the development of dimensions of structuration that can be divided into single categories. The final technique of qualitative analysis outlined by Mayring (2000) is objective analysis. This technique aims at uncovering latent structures of meaning which lie behind single forms of action and which guide individual action. It entails objective and subjective interpretations of social situations.

As part of the process of analysing data, the researcher has to construct categories. Some of the categories are usually central to the analysis. These are referred to as primary categories as against secondary categories which are not very essential to the analysis and tertiary categories which address only peripheral aspects of the research. Sarantakos (2005) outlined some criteria for selecting categories for content analysis. In the first place the categories are expected to be clearly defined and unambiguous. Secondly, they must relate exclusively to the research topic and focus on a specific part of the research topic. Also, categories are required to be exhaustive as in covering the entire topic and accurate. They must also be independent from each other.

Having constructed categories for the analysis, one now has to select units of analysis and code. Units of analysis are words, symbols, items, sentences, characters and themes as well as messages, meanings and symbols which indicate the presence of one of the categories (Sarantakos, 2005). The researcher is expected to code, that is record, the presence, frequency, intensity and so on of the units of analysis. In coding, codes are assigned to codes identified in the study. Codes can be numbers, words or symbols. When the study is conducted within a qualitative design, emphasis is not placed on counting but rather on identifying meanings and indicators of categories (Sarantakos, 2005).

After the categories, units and contexts have been chosen and defined, they are then tested. The testing is done by either using statistical procedures or using the expertise of other researchers. This entails giving experts samples of relevant texts and asking them to define the categories and select the recording

units independently. When the study is conducted within a qualitative design, emphasis is not placed on counting but rather on identifying meanings and indicators of categories (Sarantakos, 2005).

This study employed content analysis as a methodology since it is unobtrusive and yields data that can be quantified. Additionally, content analysis specifically examined the theme of messages produced by the media in their task of reporting and analyzing development news on Northern Ghana. Content analysis assisted in measuring the importance that both print and electronic media attached to news on Northern Ghana as well as the intensity and frequency with which they published stories from this part of the country.

The instrument designed for this study was meant to extract contents of four Ghanaian newspapers – *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Public Agenda* – as well as three broadcast stations namely *GTV*, *Metro TV* and *Radio Ghana*. Analysis of media content was carried out in terms of the salience, prominence, frequency and balance of coverage given to Northern Ghana. First, all stories were categorized into development-oriented and non-development stories and coded. Development-oriented news was operationally defined as the type of news story that focused primarily on the development needs and aspirations of Northern Ghana, especially news on agriculture, education, health and social capital including community development, gender issues, environment, governance and the economy. Non-development-oriented news included items such as poverty, ignorance and disease, crime, conflict, court

proceedings, accidents and deaths, natural disaster and partisan politics (Asante 1999).

Also, stories were analyzed as either being favourable, unfavourable or neutral. Development-oriented stories were categorized favourable while non-development-oriented stories were coded unfavourable. Stories were coded using the following coding frame:

- Name of medium (newspaper, radio or TV)
- Date of Publication or Broadcast
- Time of Broadcast
- Identification of story (Title of publication)
- Story type – coded under: hard news, features and news commentary / editorial.
- Prominence – coded under: headline news and non-headline news for broadcast media, and front page, centre spread and back page for the print media.
- Enhancement – coded using actuality or without actuality for broadcast media, and with photograph / illustration or without photograph / illustration for the newspapers.
- Salience – coded under: more than one page, full page, three-quarters page, half page, quarter page and less than quarter page for the print media.
- Agenda of story – coded under: development and non-development.

- Theme of story – was coded under: education, economy, agriculture, security, communications, foreign affairs, tourism, water and housing, health, environment, roads, energy, partisan politics, local governance and gender.
- Region Covered – coded under: Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions.
- Source of Story – coded under: research, interviews, Ghana News Agency (GNA), news conference / press releases and event coverage.
- Balance was coded: favourable, unfavourable or neutral. Favourable stories were regarded as those which carried news that portrayed Northern Ghana in good light particularly regarding progress being made by the people, while unfavourable stories were the ones which portrayed a bad image of Northern Ghana, especially the ones on conflicts, inimical cultural practices, poverty and lack of progress. A neutral story, on the other hand, was adjudged as straight reportage that neither painted a negative image of the North, nor reported on progress within that part of Ghana. The idea here is to assess the slant of coverage given to Northern Ghana.
- Analysis of story – This took account of the type of development issue discussed.

Data from the survey were coded and processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 19 (SPSS 19) software. The data were edited prior to the analysis. However, this did not lead to loss of significant data

owing to the rigorous nature of the data collection process and the fact that the data was based on the conceptual framework and the study objectives. An analytical approach that combined both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis was employed. For ease of comprehension and visual impression, the numerical data was grouped and presented using frequency distributions, percentages and correlations.

Assistant News Editor, the impact of stories also determined the prominence given to them. Thus, stories which were likely to contribute to development were given space and prominence while those without any development objective were dropped. Other stories which failed to find space in the *Chronicle* were those based on allegations that could not be proved or information which was likely to de-stabilize the security or peace within the country.

Since editorial policy of newspapers determined story selection and placement, the study was also interested in finding out the editorial policy of media houses. Chronicle's Assistant News Editor stated that the paper sought to be objective, neutral and balanced in its coverage. The paper believed in giving each side to a dispute an opportunity to be heard, rather than siding with one party to the detriment of the other. As far as story selection was concerned, the Chronicle's gatekeeper stated that stories which were newsy and likely to sell the newspaper were given priority and prominence. According to him, the impact of a particular story on the public and its contribution to development were deciding factors for the selection of such a story.

It was clear from the responses of Chronicle's Deputy Editor that the paper recognized both its utilitarian and normative roles as a media house. This was in keeping with the findings of McQuail (2005) that as utilitarian organizations, the media aimed at making profits while as normative organizations they served the interest of society. However, the utilitarian role of the *Ghanaian Chronicle* took precedence over its normative role. Analysis of *Ghanaian Chronicle's* news content proved that like Agbanu (2009) found with

the Nigerian media, news was commercialized to the extent that the public interest angle of news diminished. Sensationalism was *Ghanaian Chronicle's* means of making profits. Analysis of the paper's content showed that almost all its front page stories were deliberately coined to attract the attention of readers and, thus, sell the paper.

Unlike the *Ghanaian Chronicle*, *Public Agenda* placed its normative role above its utilitarian role. As if heeding the advice of Day (2000) that unrestrained profit motives may sacrifice both public interest and journalistic standards, *Public Agenda's* philosophy was geared toward providing voice for the voiceless. According to the Deputy Editor and Political Correspondent of the paper, since its establishment, the paper's policy had been to bring to the attention of Ghana's leaders, development issues which were neglected by other media houses, particularly social, health, education and sanitation issues. The paper also paid particular attention to the concerns of marginalized groups including the physically challenged, women and children. The Deputy Editor and Political Correspondent indicated that *Public Agenda's* publications were informed by the policy of fighting against trade imbalance between developed and developing countries as well as human rights and labour issues, since labour was always at the losing end of political power play. Clearly, the paper's editorial policy was informed by the type of development journalism which, according to Smith (2008), served as a tool for social justice, speaking for the voiceless. In practice, however, the paper failed to abide by the tenets of development journalism. Public

Agenda did not have offices in rural areas and journalists on the paper hardly ever visited remote areas to focus their attention on the needs of rural dwellers.

State-owned *Daily Graphic* also considered its normative role as a newspaper more important than its utilitarian role. The Editor of Ghana's biggest selling newspaper stated that *Daily Graphic* was devoted to promoting development and the integration of Ghanaians for peaceful co-existence. The paper also aimed at giving voice to all Ghanaians. As a state-owned paper, *Graphic* usually published stories which articulated government policy as well as stories emanating from deprived parts of the country. According to him, stories from the countryside were usually aimed at drawing government's attention to the concerns of deprived communities, as well as human interest stories. Development-oriented stories usually found their way into the back pages of the newspaper.

As a state broadcaster, *GBC Radio* and Television coverage of events was not motivated by commercial interests but by the national development agenda. The state broadcaster's editorial policy was to unite the nation. To this end, GBC did not engage in sensationalism. The Head of Radio News said in an interview that while other media houses may regard news a commodity to be sold, the station placed priority on the development value of news. In this regard, GBC usually weighed the consequences of its broadcasts to ensure that the overriding national interest was served. In selecting news items, GBC considered the social relevance of the stories. According to him, the station also considered the personalities involved in the stories. He indicated that the state broadcaster was

always cognizant of its constitutional mandate to accord presidents and vice presidents of Ghana access to its airwaves whenever either of them needed to communicate a message to the nation.

Like state-owned *Daily Graphic*, GBC accorded extensive coverage to government as a result of what the stations Head of Radio News described as a constitutional mandate. Thus, news coverage by the two state-owned media corroborated the findings of Ogan and Fair (1984) that the media within developing countries had a high preference for government sources of information. This explained why three-quarters of both *GBC* and *Graphic* stories were event-oriented rather than process oriented. Attempts by the state-owned media to articulate governments' policies had resulted in the type of reportage which some media critics referred to as "Government says journalism". Merely replaying government officials' promises of development for rural communities without analyzing the viability of such promises or following up to ensure that the promises were fulfilled amounted to assisting public office holders to deceive rural dwellers.

Articulating government's voice was also a means of drowning the voice of the voiceless. This negates the practice of development journalism as espoused by Smith (2008) to the effect that journalists must look at proposed government projects to improve conditions in the country, analyze whether or not these projects will be effective. Aside government sources, however, the Head of *GBC* Radio News also indicated that their impact on society determined what stories must be aired on *GBC*. In other words, stories which were likely to have the

biggest impact on the nation were given priority over those that were less impactful.

One broadcast station which did not propagate government policies was *Metro TV*. To ensure accuracy and truthfulness of its news stories, *Metro TV* always crosschecked its stories. According to the station's Producer of News, though a privately owned station, *Metro TV's* news was not influenced by either commercial or political interests. The station tried to be as balanced as possible in its coverage. Instead, public interest was the overriding consideration in the station's broadcast. The Producer of News explained that owing to public interest considerations, the station was always critical of public office holders.

Indeed, *Metro TV* had aired many stories which served the public interest. However, what the Producer of News failed to admit was that financial considerations also influenced some news stories aired by the station. The station's major news bulletins usually had financial news components which aired some paid for financial news.

Style of media coverage of the economy

Development journalists consider the manner in which news is gathered (event coverage, interviews or research) and format of news presentation (hard news, features or editorial) as significant indicators of the likely impact of stories on the intended audience. The news gathering process and format of presentation are discussed under style of media coverage.

The results show that 14 newspaper stories and six broadcast stories on the economy of Northern Ghana were published between July, 2008 and June, 2009. Out of this number, 69.2 percent and 66.7 percent were print and broadcast hard news stories respectively. The broadcast media published more feature stories (33.3%) compared to the print media (23.1%). No opinion piece or news commentary was done on radio or television, whereas 7.7 percent of the newspaper stories on the economy were opinion pieces.

The fact that majority of stories on the economy were in hard news style shows that journalists did not give in depth coverage to economic issues from the North. This is in view of the fact that hard news stories are usually summarized versions of journalists' observations of happenings at organized events. Not much research, if any at all, is usually conducted on the subject matter of the story. Feature writing, which lends itself to more in-depth analyses of issues, would have been more appropriate for coverage of economic issues. Additionally, people's personal opinions were not harnessed by the mass media to facilitate the development of the Northern economy. This observation is based on the fact that the broadcast media did not air any news commentary while the print media published less than 10.0 percent opinion pieces on Northern Ghana's economy.

Also, economic issues related to Northern Ghana were not prioritized. Newspapers carry their most important stories in banner headlines on their front pages. Besides front pages, back pages and centre spread are also valued in terms of story placement. However, no story on Northern Ghana's economy made front page news. On the contrary, 90.9 percent of the economic stories were placed in

the inside pages of the newspapers, and only one story was published in the back page. This is against the background of the fact that Ansah (1990: 33) advocated for ordinary people's affairs also making banner headlines when he stated: "If the non-elite sections of the society are not given much space on the front page ... unless they are involved in some unusual or bizarre event, it is because the society does not accord them much importance and therefore their activities are not newsworthy". With regards to the broadcast media, stories which are prioritized are aired as headline news. This ensures that such stories gain the maximum attention of the listeners. Analysis of broadcast media stories on the economy showed that Northern economic news was not accorded much prominence, since only 33.3 percent made headline news and the rest of the 66.7 percent were non-headline news.

In terms of the salience of the stories, no story was more than one page or three-quarters of a page long. As Figure 2 indicates, half of the stories were a quarter of a page long while 7.1 percent were a full page long.

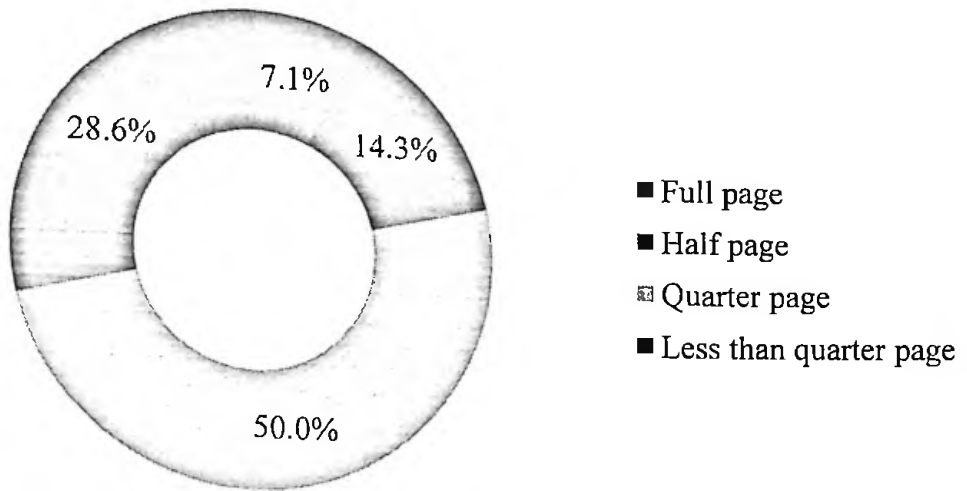


Figure 2: Salience of newspaper economic stories

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

The little space devoted to economic news from the North also testifies to the already stated position that not much importance is attached such stories. Similarly, not many stories on the economy were enhanced with photographs. Only 14.3 percent of the newspaper publications were accompanied with photographs or other illustrations, while the rest of the stories were not. Meanwhile photographs complement the message behind written words and may sometimes even convey stronger messages than the written word. When stories do not have the complement of photographs such stories lose much visual appeal. For the broadcast media, actuality captures the essence of a message in the very words of a news maker. This ensures credibility of message and attracts the attention of the listener. Thus, the fact that only 16.7 percent of the broadcast news had actuality as against 83.3 percent which were mere narrations of the

journalists showed that economic news from the North was denied a significant technique of ensuring message comprehension and adoption.

One main reason why majority of the economic news items were in hard news format is that the journalists obtained much of their news from organized events rather than conducting interviews or research to come up with detailed analysis of the economic situation of Northern Ghana (Gadzekpo, 2008). As depicted in Table 6, majority of both print (58.3%) and broadcast (50.0%) media stories resulted from event coverage.

Table 6: Sources of news on economy of Northern Ghana

Source of new	Type of medium			
	Broadcast		Print	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Event coverage	3	50.0	8	58.4
GNA files	0	0.0	1	8.3
Research	2	33.3	4	25.0
Interviews	1	16.7	0	0.0
New coferences/Press releases	0	0.0	1	8.3
Total	6	100.0	14	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

Development communicators have criticized the event-oriented style of news adopted by media persons in covering economic news from Northern Ghana. For instance, Ansah (1990) stated that event-oriented news places emphasis on what has just happened rather than on the consequences of the event on people or lessons to be drawn from the event.

Content of favourable and unfavourable news on the economy

For both the print and broadcast media, majority of the stories portrayed a favourable image of the economy of Northern Ghana. The print media published 64.3 percent of favourable stories and the broadcast media 66.7 percent, as against 33.3 percent unfavourable broadcast news and 7.1 percent unfavourable print news. More than a quarter (28.6%) of newspaper stories was adjudged neutral, whereas broadcast media did not have a single neutral story. Some favourable stories pointed at improved economic activity in the North or prospects for better standards of living.

In “Bolga Exhibits made in Africa products”, a *Ghanaian Times* story of 20th August, 2008, the writer gave a detailed account of a five-day exhibition of made-in-Africa products organized in the Upper East Regional capital, Bolgatanga, to showcase the economic potentials of the Northern, Upper East and West Regions. Similarly, *Metro TV*, on 6th May, 2009, aired a news item on the Bolgatanga Crafts Village showcasing the economic potential of the Village. Still within the Upper East Region, *GTV*, on 21st February, 2009, highlighted the economic potential of the Dog Market in Bolgatanga. *Radio Ghana* also conveyed

some positive economic news on the North. As a means of alleviating poverty within Northern Ghana, government secured funding for the Northern Rural Growth Programme. *Radio Ghana's* 6:00am bulletin of 18th June, 2009 aired this news. As an indication that business was growing in Northern Ghana, *Radio Ghana*, on 29th October, 2008, again amplified the voice of the President of the North-Eastern Chapter of Rural Banks Association who indicated at Bolgatanga that rural banks had advanced GH¢8.5 million to businesses within Northern and Upper East Regions.

The *Ghanaian Times* published two favourable stories on the Livelihood Empowerment Action Programme (LEAP). The first story on 8th December, 2008 was titled, "LEAP beneficiaries re-invest money", while the second story of 9th December, 2008 had the caption, "LEAP beneficiaries laud government". The two stories, the former from Northern Region and the latter from the Upper East Region, indicated that beneficiaries of LEAP used the money to register with the National Health Insurance Scheme while others invested the monies in agriculture and agro-processing. In the Talensi-Nabdam District, 343 people benefited from the programme.

"Credit scheme for teachers in Nadowli District" is also a *Ghanaian Times* story of 16th December, 2008 which announced that the Member of Parliament for the Nadowli West Constituency, had instituted a credit scheme for teachers within the Nadowli District. On a visit to the three regions of the North, President John Atta Mills announced that a sheabutter producing factory would be established in the North to help fight poverty. This story obtained back page coverage in the

Ghanaian Times of 7th April, 2009. On 12th December, 2008, *Public Agenda* also came up with a favourable news story titled, “Upper East gets Association of Women Entrepreneurs”.

These stories are deemed favourable because they portray positive economic development in Northern Ghana, while other stories advertised the economic potential of that part of the country. However, the favourable stories do not go far enough in creating the “physic ambience within which economic development and productivity occurs”, a requirement for effective development communications (Yayewera, 1987: 49). This shows that media coverage of development issues from the North failed to contribute effectively to the economic development of Northern Ghana. On the contrary, stories which portrayed a negative picture of the economy of Northern Ghana could scare away investors and dampen the spirit of the Northern businessperson.

All unfavourable print stories on the economy were published by the *Daily Graphic*. One such story was published on 16th September, 2008 bearing the title, “Woes of loan seekers in Tamale”. Another had earlier on the 26th August, 2008 featured in the paper headlined, “Foreigners capture Tamale market”, while the third story of 16th September, 2008 which bore the heading “Food joints on holiday”, lamented that restaurants in Tamale had closed down owing to the Ramadan fasting. Only two unfavourable broadcast stories on the economy were featured in the news, one each on *Metro TV* network and *Radio Ghana*. The *Metro TV* story of 6th May, 2009 brought to the fore the deplorable state of the Bolgatanga Crafts Village and the traders’ call on government to complete it. The

Radio Ghana's 1:00pm story of 20th March, 2009, on the other hand, featured the Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition which questioned the closure of the Bolgatanga Tomato Factory.

Style of coverage of agricultural news

Majority of the inhabitants of Northern Ghana depend on agriculture for their sustenance. This shows that improvement in agriculture through media sensitization could improve the well-being of the people. This realization called for analysis of the content of media messages on the state of agriculture in Northern Ghana.

Twenty nine (29%) print media stories on agriculture were covered on Northern Ghana within the research period, as against 33 broadcast media stories. Out of the number, 28 print media stories were hard news stories while one *Ghanaian Chronicle* story was a feature article based on extensive research on Northern Ghana's development potential. On the other hand, 29 out of the 33 broadcast stories on agriculture were in hard news format while four were features. While no print media story on agriculture was given much prominence as none was displayed either on the front page, centre spread or back page of the sampled newspapers, 37.0 percent of broadcast stories were accorded the prominence of being aired as headline news. However, majority of the broadcast stories (63.0%), were aired as non-headline news. Also, almost a quarter of print media stories (24.6%) were not enhanced with photographs, while more than half (54.8%) of broadcast stories did not benefit from enhancement in the form of

actualities. The other 45.2 percent of the stories were aired with actualities. Again, stories on agriculture were not accorded much salience in the papers.

As with stories on the economy of Northern Ghana, priority was not given to news on Northern agriculture. This explains why the hard news format of writing was adopted in reporting such stories and the fact that the news was not given priority space in placement, neither did such news make the headlines on the broadcast media. Also, little space on newspapers was devoted to stories that dealt with Northern agriculture issues. As has been indicated in Figure 3, 58.6 percent of the stories were less than quarter page long.

Storeies covered

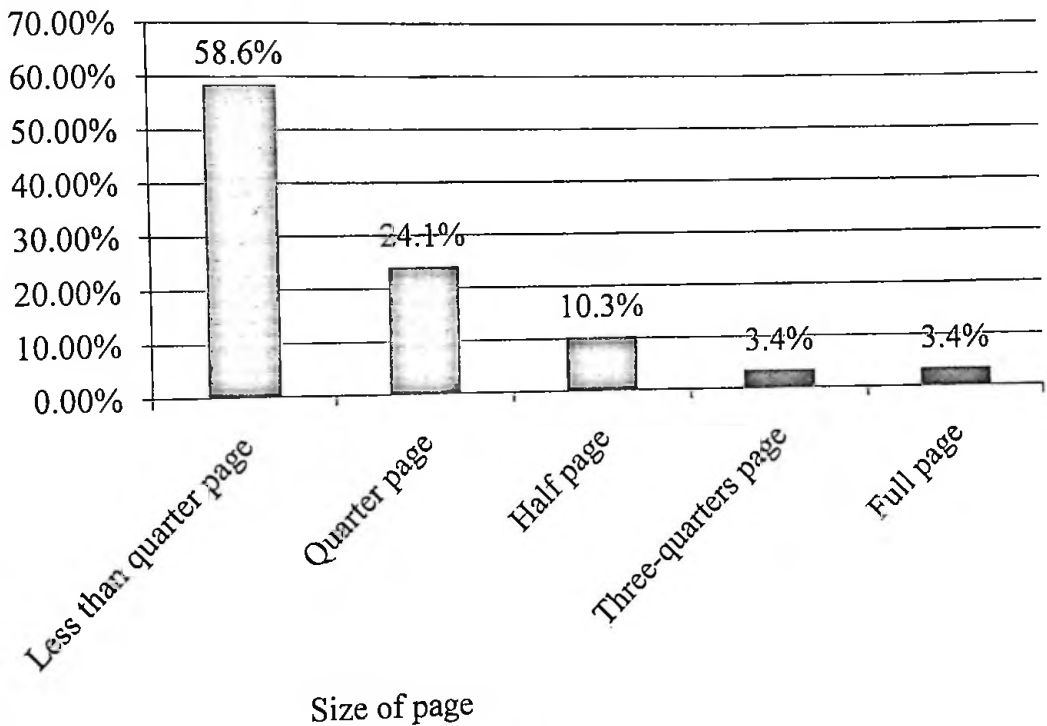


Figure 3: Salience of agriculture stories

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

The fact that majority of the news were less than a quarter page long emphasizes the fact that journalists adopted hard news style of writing which does not yield itself to much investigation and in depth research into development challenges of Northern Ghana. Also, one can infer from the rather limited space devoted to stories from the North that stories were merely event-oriented. This was so for both the print and broadcast media. For instance, almost 70 percent (69.7%) of broadcast media stories resulted from event coverage, with 15.2 percent, 12.1 percent and 3.0 percent originating from interviews, research and news conferences respectively. This again goes against the requirements of development journalism which focuses on investigative reporting. Gough (2002) recommended that development journalists must offer leadership, build role-models and promote new norms and practices instead of simply mirroring events and processes as journalists of the sampled media houses did with respect to their coverage of Northern Ghana.

Content of favourable news on agriculture

The positive aspect of media coverage of stories on agriculture was that majority of the stories painted a favourable picture of agricultural development within Northern Ghana. Table 7 also indicates that few stories were neutral in their portrayal of agriculture within Northern Ghana.

Table 7: Balance of News on Agriculture of Northern Ghana

Balance of news	Type of medium			
	Broadcast Frequency	Broadcast Percentage	Print Frequency	Print Percentage
Favourable	16	48.4	12	41.4
Neutral	12	35.5	9	31.0
Unfavourable	5	16.1	8	27.6
Total	33	100.0	29	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

Some favourable stories announced Government policies or assistance packages which were expected to impact positively on agricultural development within the study area. For instance, in the last quarter of 2008, there were reports of tomato glut in Upper East Region since large scale buyers of tomatoes preferred a variety of the crop which was produced in Burkina Faso. As an intervention effort, the Upper East Regional Minister held a meeting in March 2009, between the tomato buyers and farmers of the crop to persuade the buyers to purchase from the region. This positive development was reported in *Public Agenda* of 20th March, 2009.

On 17th March, 2009, *Radio Ghana's* 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm news bulletins also reported that owing to an intervention by the Vice President of Ghana, a factory in Tema had agreed to buy all tomatoes produced in the Upper East Region to avert a glut of the crop. In February, 2009, tomato farmers within the

Upper East Region had complained of lack market for their produce since “Market Queens” from Accra preferred to purchase an improved variety of the crop from Burkina Faso. Media reports of the farmers’ woes notched government into negotiating market for the farmers’ crop. Having elicited government’s response to the farmers’ plight, development journalism practice entails following up the story to ensure that government lived by its promise and that the farmers’ plight is addressed. Aside bringing the challenges of the tomato farmers to the fore, journalists also failed to come up with proposed solutions to the farmers’ plight, contrary to the admonition of Smith (2008) that the development journalist goes beyond cataloguing problems of deprived communities to offering solutions.

The *Ghanaian Times* of 7th April, 2009 also published a story titled “FASCOM Coming Back” which outlined Government’s intention to reintroduce the Farmers’ Service Centre (FASCOM) as a means of enhancing agriculture under the Savanna Accelerated Development Authority (SADA). On 11th November, 2008, *Ghanaian Times* published the story of a Farmers’ Day ceremony which was held at Sandema in the Upper East Region during which many farmers were honoured. At the ceremony, the Vice President promised to use SADA as a means of promoting agriculture within Northern Ghana. As a means of encouraging the cultivation of rice, *Public Agenda* again reported in its 16th March, 2009 issue that the Vice President, His Excellency John Mahama, announced to farmers at Navrongo in the Upper East Region that the School Feeding Programme would target locally produced rice rather than imported foodstuff. In a similar vein, the *Ghanaian Times* of 5th May, 2009 featured the

Upper East Regional Minister who pledged government's support to revitalize agriculture within the three Northern regions. In a similar vein, *Radio Ghana* broadcasted during its 1:00pm and 6:00pm news bulletins on 15th September, 2008 that a long-term strategic development plan for the development of agriculture was unveiled by the Northern Development Fund.

Government also provided seven (7) farming communities in the Bole District with water pumping machines. This favourable news item was aired by *Radio Ghana* on 27th October, 2008 during its 6:00am news. Both *Metro TV* and *GTV* also announced government initiatives aimed at enhancing agricultural production. For instance, *Metro TV* carried a story on 31st July, 2008 to the effect that some farmers in the Upper East Region had benefited from fertilizer subsidies, and another story on 7th April, 2009 reported of a workshop organized for livestock breeders in Tamale to enhance productivity. *GTV* aired two favourable news items on agriculture in Northern Ghana. The first, aired on 6th April, 2009, reported of the inauguration of a dam at Fusegu in the Northern Region during which the Minister for Food and Agriculture announced that government would strengthen agricultural mechanization to make farming more attractive. The second story covered the launch by the Northern Regional Minister of a sheabutter processing factory.

Other favourable media stories centred on NGO and donor assistance packages aimed at promoting agricultural development in the North. The 15th June, 2009 issue of *Public Agenda* published a story to the effect that the Catholic Relief Service, Savanna Research Institute, the International Centre for Soil

Fertility and the Agricultural Development Service launched a project to increase rice production by 30,000 tonnes. The project was to benefit 10,000 farmers within Northern Region. Also, the 12th December, 2008 edition of *Daily Graphic* reported of emergency food relief that was provided to 25 communities within Northern Ghana. The *Ghanaian Times* of 6th April, 2009 also indicated that Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) donated fifteen million Ghana cedis to the three regions of the North to enhance agricultural activities in the area so as to promote food security. *Radio Ghana* carried a story during its 6:00pm news on 10th April, 2009 which was repeated at 6.00am on 11th April, 2009 to the effect that the Opportunity Industrialization Centres International supported 130,000 farmers in the Northern Region to improve upon their agricultural production.

While such stories show an attempt by the media to showcase positive developments in agriculture within Northern Ghana, the stories do not go far enough in analyzing the potential impact of such positive initiatives. Moreover, development journalism prescribes that news coverage should go beyond focusing on the planned events which the media houses covered to deal with initiatives by Northern farmers which are producing positive results. Such initiatives could then serve as examples to show the way to successful agricultural production for other farmers. It is not enough for the development journalist to merely outline government's promises of support communities as the stories published above did. What the journalists who reported on pledges to use the Savanna Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) to improve agriculture and to bring back the

Farmers' Service Centre (FASCOM) failed to appreciate was that, "The journalist's job on a development newsbeat is critically to examine, evaluate and report the relevance of a development project to national and local needs ..." (Aggarwala, 1978 cited in Kunczik, 1992). However, there was neither analysis from the media on the proposed agricultural policies and programmes for Northern Ghana nor were there follow up stories to find out whether government made good its promises for the people.

Content of unfavourable news on agriculture

Unfavourable stories on agriculture took the form of natural and manmade disasters, lack of market for farm produce and lack of conducive environment for agricultural production. The *Ghanaian Times* of 20th January, 2009, carried a story headlined, "Fire razes 10 acre mango farm". The unfortunate incident took place at the Savlugu/Nanton District of the Northern Region. A similar story was published by the same paper on 21st August, 2008 titled, "Cattle destroy farms at Gbiligu". The story reported how large tracts of cultivated fields were destroyed by cattle headed by Fulani men at Gbiligu in the Northern Region. Destruction of farms by cattle also caught the attention of *Radio Ghana* during its 6:00pm news on 19th March, 2009.

In the news, the Northern Regional Minister was reported to have met with Fulani herdsmen to caution them against allowing their cattle to destroy farm crops. The Economics of tomato marketing was not left out of media reportage. The 5th November, 2008 issue of *Ghanaian Times* reported that the refurbished

Northern Tomato Factory could not operate since there was disagreement between farmers and the factory management in pricing tomatoes. Thus, the farmers preferred selling to market queens who bought the crop at a higher price. This story was captioned, "Tomato farmers prefer selling to market queens".

Daily Graphic also reported some unfavourable news on agriculture. In a story titled, "Mango plant producers cry for market", the story related the plight of mango farmers in the Northern Region who lacked market for their produce. Tomato and mango farmers were by no means the only ones whose challenges came to the media limelight. *Radio Ghana's* 1:00pm news of 19th September, 2008 reported that at a forum organized by the Cotton Growers Association at Tamale, the farmers said production of cotton was at its worse state than ever before and called on government to intervene to alleviate their plight. Another *Graphic* story brought to the fore challenges faced by farmers who depend on the Tono Dam for their livelihood. The story was published on 21st November, 2008 headlined, "Delay in rehabilitation of Tono Dam worrying".

From the *Ghanaian Chronicle* of 19th September, 2008 came the stark revelation, "Climate change would affect food production – ISODEC Director". After outlining the dangers of climate change, the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) boss called on farmers in the North to cultivate drought resistant crops like millet and guinea corn. In a similar vein, the Northern Regional Director of Food and Agriculture was reported on *GTV's* 20th February, 2009 news bulletin to have expressed concern about the effect of bushfires, flooding and erosion on the food security situation in Northern Ghana, and called

on farmers to use improved farming methods to promote soil fertility. The other *Chronicle* story was “Woyongo warns against smuggling of agric. inputs”. The Upper East Regional Minister’s warning published in the *Ghanaian Chronicle* could be compared to *Metro TV*’s 25th June, 2009 news story which indicated that farmers in the Upper West Region had complained of the smuggling of fertilizers meant for them.

Few of the unfavourable stories published in the media abided by dictates of development reporting which state that merely mentioning challenges facing deprived communities could have the negative effect of demoralizing such communities, and that journalists must show the way out of development challenges. For instance, the ISODEC Director’s story in *Public Agenda* and *GTV*’s story on the Northern Regional Director of Food and Agriculture both came up with ways of dealing with the negative effects of climate change. However, the rest of the unfavourable stories catalogued challenges that confront agriculture within Northern Ghana without proposing any suggestions to deal with such challenges.

Style of coverage of stories on education

Education is another important area of development. Unfortunately for Northern Ghana, Bening (1977) and Songsore (2003) identified historical and political prejudices which have affected the development of education within the North, making that area lag behind the rest of the country in terms of educational

attainment. This necessitated analyses of the content of media messages which centred on education within Northern Ghana.

In all, 81 print news stories were published on education within the study period. Out of this number, *Daily Graphic* recorded 32 stories which was the highest number of stories, followed by *Ghanaian Times* with 30 stories, *Ghanaian Chronicle* with 18 stories and *Public Agenda* with only one story. The selected broadcast media stations, on the other hand, published 36 education stories within the study period. Almost all the news items were in the hard news format (94.1% for broadcast and 90.1% for newspapers). Also, 8.6 percent of print media stories on education were features as compared to 5.9 percent of broadcast stories which adopted the feature style of reporting news. Whereas there was no news commentary regarding education on any of the selected broadcast stations, one newspaper story (1.2%) was an editorial. Majority of the media stories resulted from coverage of organized events (broadcast media – 68.6% and print media – 62.5%). Table 8 illustrates details of the sources of news on education within Northern Ghana.

It was also established that education stories were not given much prominence in the media. Only one story appeared on the front page of one of the newspapers, *Ghanaian Times*. This, however, happened to be an unfavourable story which featured a caution by the Bongo District Education Director to truant teachers that they would have their salaries withheld should they persist in their waywardness. Similarly, one story found its way onto the back page of *Daily Graphic*, while 12 stories were captured on the centre spread of the selected

newspapers. As many as 67 stories were published in other pages which may not be accorded much attention by readers.

Table 8: Sources of education news on Northern Ghana

Source of news	Type of medium			
	Broadcast Frequency	Broadcast Percentage	Print Frequency	Print Percentage
Event coverage	25	68.8	51	62.5
GNA files	0	0.0	14	17.5
Research	6	17.1	4	5.0
Interviews	3	8.6	10	12.5
News conferences / Press releases	2	5.5	2	2.5
Total	36	100.0	81	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

With regards to the broadcast media, over a quarter (27.8%) of their news items were headline news with the remaining 72.2 percent being non-headline news. Majority of the print media stories on education were neither enhanced with photographs or other illustrations to reinforce the verbal messages nor were they accorded much salience in terms of amount of space devoted to them. Only 11.9 percent of the stories were accompanied by photographs or other illustrations. As evidenced in Figure 4, majority of the stories were either less than a quarter page

or only a quarter page in length. No story was more than one page long. Also, majority of broadcast media stories (55.9%) were not enhanced with actualities while 44.2 percent were accompanied with actualities.

Stories published

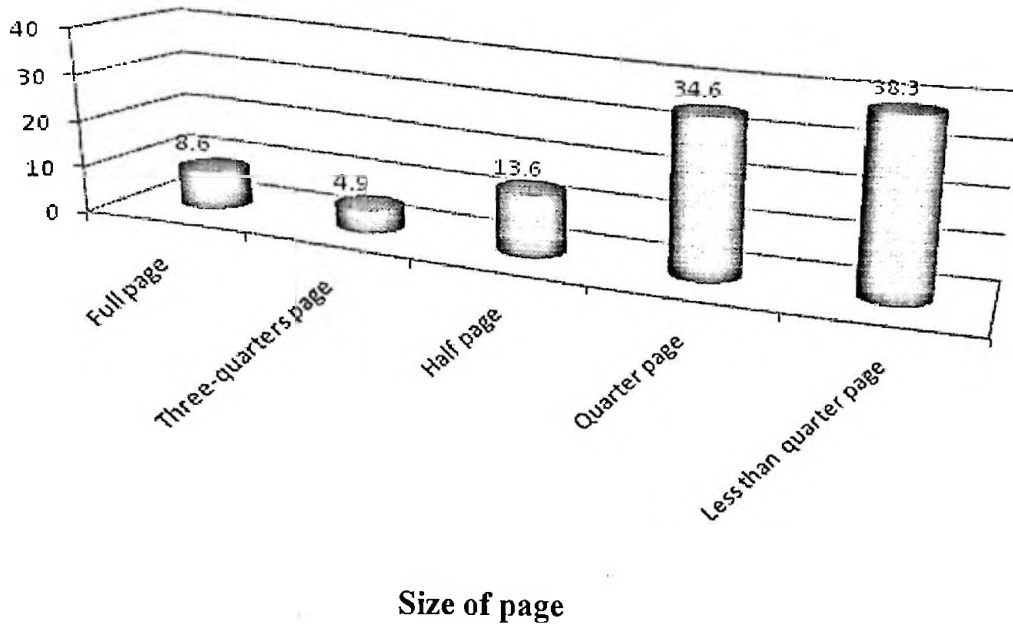


Figure 4: Salience of education stories

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

Content of favourable education stories

While more than half (54.3%) of the print stories either portray a favourable image of education in Northern Ghana or report on some progress in education within that part of Ghana, only 29.4 percent of broadcast stories did the same. Many of the favourable stories report some progress made in education or some forms of support given to educational institutions within Northern Ghana. In “Kassena – Nankana West District in focus”, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* edition of

16th February, 2009 dilates on educational progress within the district, focusing mainly on the development of educational infrastructure. Another district which was praised for implementing educational policies was the Sissala West District of the Upper West Region. The *Ghanaian Chronicle* edition of 25th August, 2008 carried a story with the title, “Enrolment figures jump in Sissala West”, in which the GES District Director applauded government and NGOs for their role in the enhancement of enrolment within the district. A *Radio Ghana* story of 16th September, 2008 also spoke of an enrolment figure of 282 pupils into Primary One in the Upper West Region. This came to light during the Regional Minister’s visit to some schools on the occasion of “My First Day in School”. The Talensi-Nabdam District of the Upper East Region was equally concerned about enrolment of children in school. Thus, the Assembly enacted a bye-law to ensure that parents send their children to school. This was reported in the 19th June, 2009 edition of *Daily Graphic*.

The history and development of the oldest secondary school in the Upper West Region, St. Francis Girls Secondary School, was also the subject matter of “Fifty years of St. Francis Girls – the prospects and the challenges”. This story was carried in the *Ghanaian Times* edition of 18th March, 2009. The publication was preceded by another *Ghanaian Times* story of 8th December, 2008 which also reported on the 40th anniversary celebration of Lawra Senior High School during which the Vice President of Ghana inaugurated school projects worth GH¢2,600,000.00. Favourable stories which focused on infrastructure

development within some educational institutions in Northern Ghana are indicated in Table 9.

Table 9: Empirical stories on educational infrastructure

Media house	Date of publication	Subject matter / Title of story
Ghanaian Chronicle	7 th April, 2009	UDS poised for infrastructural development
Daily Graphic	16 th September, 2008	New science lab for GHANASCO
Daily Graphic	29 th July, 2008	Wa Polytechnic gets Cosmotology department
Daily Graphic	16 th February, 2009	Bagbin supports Gbankor community with classroom block
Ghanaian Times	20 th January, 2009	GH¢46,000.00 classroom block for Kunkua inaugurated
Ghanaian Times	21 st August, 2008	NGO constructs school for mentally retarded at Wa
Radio Ghana	13 th December, 2008	Vice President inaugurates projects
Radio Ghana	5 th April, 2009	Upper West Regional Minister cuts sod for lecture hall for the University for Development Studies
Radio Ghana	11 th April, 2009	Red Crescent and Dubai Society sponsored school projects in Northern Region

Table 9 Continues

GTV	13 th December, 2008	VSO official presented educational materials to Wa Municipal Assembly
GTV	6 th April, 2009	Savlugu School for the Deaf was provided with assistance by a philanthropic native of the area

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

The 2008 floods in Northern Ghana caused considerable havoc to educational infrastructure. Some press stories tagged favourable reported on reconstruction of school buildings and assistance packages for some schools. The *Ghanaian Times* edition of 9th December, 2008 carried a story titled, "School blocks destroyed by floods rehabilitated ... 30 new blocks to be constructed". The information, attributed to the Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Development Authority, was given during the inauguration of the Savlugu Experimental Primary School. *Daily Graphic* reported on the back page of its 21st January, 2009 issue that work had commenced on 30 flood-affected schools in Northern Region. For the Bolgatanga Polytechnic, it was fire that gutted their students' hostel. As a means of supporting the institution, Afrikids (a local NGO) donated three hundred Ghana cedis (GH¢300.00) to the fire disaster victims. Some favourable education stories resulted from donor and NGO support for Northern schools.

One such story was carried by the *Ghanaian Times* edition of 10th December, 2008, captioned, “Development Partners assist Bawku West”. “Tamale NGO supports 60 female students”, published in the *Daily Graphic* edition of 20th February, 2009, also reported that the Regional Advisory Information and Network System, a Tamale-based NGO, assisted 60 female students with bicycles. Similarly, ISODEC also supported school children in Upper East Region with books. This was given coverage by the *Ghanaian Times* edition of 18th March, 2009, captioned, “ISODEC commends government on free school uniforms”. CENSUDI, an NGO based in the Upper East Region, also provided scholarships for 200 needy students in that region. This was the thrust of *Public Agenda*’s story of 8th May, 2009 which bore the heading, “NGO provides scholarship to poor students in Upper East”. On 16th March, 2009, *Daily Graphic* also carried a story headlined, “NGO supports Zebilla ICT centre with computers”.

Three favourable stories were aired by the broadcast media on the University for Development Studies. *GTV* reported on 20th February, 2009 that the first batch of the University’s Medical School’s clinical students had begun practical training at the Tamale Teaching Hospital. On 9th April, 2009, *Radio Ghana* also reported the Vice Chancellor of the University as having said that medical students of the University for Development Studies would be posted to hospitals within Northern Ghana to undertake their practical training. The same radio station on 11th April, 2009 again attributed to the UDS Vice Chancellor the news that 70% of students of the University hail from Northern Ghana.

Almost all the favourable stories on education concentrated on reporting accomplishments in education particularly infrastructure development. No story paid attention to how specific development objectives were achieved. This style of reporting contrasts Ansah's (1990) study which stated that news should show how projects were accomplished so as to give others inspiration.

Content of unfavourable education stories

Regarding the contents of unfavourable educational stories, 47.1 percent of broadcast stories on education were in the negative as against 16.1 percent of newspaper publications on the area which were unfavourable coverage of educational issues within the North. Less than a quarter (23.5%) of broadcast stories was neutral as against 29.6 percent of print media stories which were neutral. Most unfavourable education stories merely catalogued educational challenges within Northern Ghana without attempting to show the way forward. Notable among such stories was a feature story in the 19th September, 2008 edition of the *Ghanaian Chronicle* under the headline "New Education Reform, Challenges of Upper East Schools". This full page story merely mentioned the well-known challenges in education – inadequate classroom accommodation, lack of furniture, insufficient textbooks and syllabi etc. Similar to this story was a *Ghanaian Chronicle* story of 16th June, 2009, which was titled, "Most children in Bongo district attend school late – research". The news item, which mentioned many educational challenges within the Bongo District of the Upper East Region, was based on research carried out by some civil society groups.

Again, lack of educational infrastructure and facilities is the subject matter of “Vittin Ansuariya School lacks classrooms”, which was a *Daily Graphic* story published on 4th May, 2009. *Metro TV* also played a crucial role in articulating the educational challenges of Northern schools. On 19th January, 2009, the station turned its lens on poor infrastructure and lack of furniture at Kumbieri Primary School in the Upper West Region. It also exposed similar problems at the Navrongo Senior High School on 19th June, 2009, and on 29th June, 2009 drew the attention of its viewers to the fact that Doba Community in the Kassena Nankana East District of the Upper East Region had only one junior high school which was also in a deplorable state.

From the Northern Region also came the news item, “Girls education in danger in Tolong Kumbungu”. This story, published in the 18th September, 2008 edition of the *Ghanaian Times*, brings to the fore the frustrations of educational authorities and NGOs whose attempts at enhancing girls education was frustrated by early marriage of girls, North – South migration and negative cultural practices. Indeed, dropout of both girls and boys from schools within Northern Ghana still constitutes a major challenge to education authorities. Again, low girl-child enrolment at the senior high school level was the concern of *Radio Ghana* during its 1:00pm news on 17th September, 2008. The station reported that at an Education Review Forum in the Tolon-Kumbungu District of the Northern Region, UNICEF bemoaned the failure of girls to progress into higher levels of education. The *Ghanaian Times* of 18th June, 2009 articulated this concern as expressed by the Deputy Northern Regional Minister. Under the headline,

“Parental neglect and safety of Wa school children”, *Daily Graphic* edition of 29th July, 2008 argued that the streets of Wa are unsafe for school children whose parents fail to guide them to school since motorists within the township ride carelessly on the streets.

The fact that the above stories conveyed news of challenges within the educational sector of Northern Ghana is not itself a negative reportage. The style of reportage is what makes such stories unfavourable in terms of the development aspirations of the Northern communities which formed the subject matter of such stories. All that such news stories did was to enumerate the educational challenges without indulging in campaigns to ensure that such challenges are addressed. Such reportage, according to Gough (2002), might only end up demoralizing the community members since constantly being exposed to their many problems could make them throw up their arms in despair. The media could go beyond the simplistic act of presenting such challenges to mobilizing the people for action, advocating for support for the communities concerned and proposing credible options for tackling such challenges.

One of the stories which conveyed unfavourable news also had political undertones. The 20th November, 2008 issue of *Ghanaian Chronicle* carried a story captioned “Politicisation of NYEP: 20 teachers fired at Saboba ... for being NDC sympathizers”. The story bemoaned the fate of teachers who were dismissed for being NDC sympathizers and followed up with an editorial captioned “Over to you, Nana Akomea”, which lambasted the ruling NPP Government for dismissing 20 teachers under the National Youth Employment Programme at Saboba in the

Northern Region. Another story on the plight of teachers made news on 16th February, 2009 on *Metro TV* to the effect that pioneers of the Diploma in Basic Education teaching programme in the Sawla Tuna/Kalba District of the Northern Region were forced to withdraw an earlier threat to go on strike over unpaid allowances.

Student riots, particularly at the University for Development Studies, featured among the unfavourable news reported on by the media. In the 29th October, 2008 edition of *Daily Graphic*, a clash between students of the School of Hygiene at Tamale and management of the School over students' failure to pay fees was reported. Also, in the 20th January, 2009 issue of the *Ghanaian Chronicle*, appeared the screaming headline: "UDS students threaten demonstration against Ag. VC over 'unlawful' suspension of SRC president". The story reported agitations among students of the University for Development Studies because their Student Representative Council President was suspended from office by authorities of the University. *Radio Ghana* reported the same stand-off in its 6:00 pm news bulletin on 22nd January, 2009. In the face of student threats of strike actions, the Acting Vice Chancellor of the University for Development Studies told *Ghanaian Chronicle* in an interview which was published on 22nd January, 2009 that he stands by his decision to suspend the SRC President.

After a long standoff between students and authorities of the University which resulted in student strike actions, the 19th February, 2009 edition of the *Ghanaian Times* carried the story, "Minister intervenes in Wa UDS impasse". The

Education Minister's intervention also made news in 6:00am news bulletin of *Radio Ghana* on 18th February, 2009. While the Minister was striving to prevent closure of the University, more negative happenings were taking place there. *Radio Ghana's* 6:00 pm news of 17th February, 2009 and 6:00 am news of 18th February, 2009 disclosed that unidentified persons had tried to burn down a newly constructed lecture hall on the Wa Campus of the UDS. Again, "Commotion in Bawku Schools – 20 students injured" was a story which appeared in the 9th April, 2009 issue of *Chronicle* discussing a fight between students of the Bawku Senior High School and their counterparts at the Bawku Senior High Technical School which led to serious injuries and destruction of school property. The same story had on 7th April, 2009 made news on *Radio Ghana's* 6:00 pm news, indicating that both schools had been closed down.

Challenges encountered in educating physically challenged students were also captured by the broadcast media. *Metro TV* reported on 8th April, 2009 that it emerged during the 40th Anniversary of the Wa School for the Deaf that among numerous challenges, computer literacy among deaf students was very low. In its 7:00 pm news bulletin on 24th August, 2008 *GTV* reported on the same event, stressing on the challenges faced by deaf students in their attempt to pursue higher education. A natural disaster which made news was the destruction by rainstorm of a girls' hostel for the Bongo Senior High School. The story was aired at 6:00 am on 4th April, 2009. Finally, the plight of pupils of a school in Bimbilla where teachers had not reported to school for a number of months was disclosed on *Metro TV's* 7.30 news bulletin on 6th April, 2009.

Using Ansah (1990) work as a yardstick for measuring the effectiveness, it emerges that Ghanaian media coverage of educational issues from Northern Ghana is below expected standards. Contrary to Ansah's admonition that processual approach to news would serve educational ends better than hard news and event-oriented approach to news, majority of news items on education were hard news coverage of events.

Style of coverage of news on health

Namra (2004) has indicated that the mass media is best suited for carrying out health campaigns such as anti-HIV/Aids campaigns. This section of the thesis examines the extent to which the mass media have promoted health education and sensitization within Northern Ghana.

For both the broadcast and print media, majority of the health stories (95.8% for broadcast and 83.1% for print) were published as hard news stories. News commentary for the broadcast stations was 4.2 percent as against 6.8 percent editorials of selected newspapers. The newspapers also published 6.8 percent features and 3.2 percent photo stories. There were neither features for the broadcast stations nor opinion piece for the newspapers. The major source of health stories was event coverage as presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Sources of news on health issues

Source of news	Type of medium			
	Broadcast Frequency	Broadcast Percentage	Print Frequency	Print Percentage
Event coverage	3	50.0	8	58.4
GNA files	0	0.0	1	8.3
Research	2	33.3	4	25.0
Interviews	1	16.7	0	0.0
News conferences / Press releases	0	0.0	1	8.3
Total	6	100.0	14	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Health stories in the selected media were not accorded much prominence. None of the stories appeared in either the front or the back pages of the newspapers. Only 18.6 percent of the stories were published in the centre spread of the papers. Majority of the stories (81.4%) were published in other pages which are usually not accorded much attention. Similarly, only a fifth (20%) of the broadcast stories on health made headline news. The other 79.2 percent were aired as non-headline news. Also, slightly more than a fifth (22.8%) of health stories in the newspapers were enhanced with photographs or other illustrations. Majority of the stories (77.2%) were not accompanied by either a photograph or any form of enhancement. This situation is akin to the enhancement accorded health stories

in the selected radio and television stations where almost 61 percent (60.9%) of stories were aired without any actuality while almost 40 percent (39.1%) had actuality. Again, the selected newspapers did not devote much space to health stories from Northern Ghana. No story published in the papers exceeded one page. Only one story was a full page story, while 6.9 percent of the stories filled three-quarters of the pages. Half page, quarter page and less than quarter page stories published on health issues were 15.5 percent, 43.1 percent and 32.8 percent respectively.

Content of favourable news on health

Between print and broadcast media, there were variations in the balance of stories. On the one hand, half of the news from the electronic media was adjudged unfavourable and 37.5 percent were favourable, with neutral stories accounting for 12.5 percent. On the other hand, favourable stories (43.9%) outnumbered unfavourable (42.1%) and neutral stories (14.0%) for the print media houses. Many of the favourable health stories published on Northern Ghana reported of assistance packages from donors, philanthropists and government agencies to healthcare institutions in the North. Under the headline, “NGO collaborates with GHS ... to address health issues in Upper East”, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* of 9th December, 2008 reported that Grassroots Africa and the Ghana Health Service were working towards eliminating negative cultural practices which hinder healthcare delivery in the Upper East Region. The 17th February, 2009 issue of *Daily Graphic* also reported that the Christian Children’s Fund of Canada, an

NGO donated one thousand, five hundred Ghana cedis (GH¢ 1,500.00) and drugs to people living with HIV/Aids in Tamale, while the 19th March, 2009 issue of the same paper reported of a de-worming exercise for 17,000 basic school pupils in the Saboba District of the Northern Region. “Rotary donates to Tamale Hospital” is another story published in the *Daily Graphic* edition of 9th April, 2009. A *Radio Ghana* news report at 6:00pm on 15th September, 2008 also indicated that UNICEF donated money for the construction of the Community Health Planning and Services (CHIPS) compounds in the Upper West Region as a step toward reducing maternal and infant deaths in the Region.

NGO support aside, private companies and philanthropic individuals also assisted health institutions within Northern Ghana. Such forms of assistance are the subject matter of the following stories:

- “Company donates mosquito nets to two communities” – *Daily Graphic*, 19th March, 2009;
- “Philanthropist funds clinic at Kasuliyili” - *Daily Graphic*, 19th March, 2009;
- “Veep’s wife to the rescue of Upper West HIV victims” – *Ghanaian Times*, 16th September, 2008; and
- Hospital and Disease Control Programme was sponsored by Zoomlion in Bolgatanga – *Radio Ghana*, 27th October, 2008.

The *Ghanaian Chronicle* of 20th February, 2009 published a story that outlined various forms of assistance, including upgrading of health workers’ skills, provision of health equipment and volunteers for healthcare institutions

within the Upper West Region. Improvement of health facilities and healthcare services as well as the provision of free healthcare services to some communities also constituted favourable news (Table 11)

Table 11: Favourable news on health

Date of publication	Media house	Subject matter / Title of story
19 th June, 2009	Daily Graphic	600,000 children immunized against polio in Northern Region
4 th May, 2009	Daily Graphic	Community psychiatry unit for Wa Regional Hospital
330 th August, 2008	Daily Graphic	603 pregnant women receive free care in Lawra
12 th December, 2008	Daily Graphic	Health Insurance Scheme registers more people – In Kassena - Nankana
21 st August, 2008	Ghanaian Times	Tolon women undergo free breast cancer screening
31 st July, 2008	Ghanaian Times	GMA lauds government on free maternal care
8 th December, 2008	Ghanaian Times	Bawku to achieve 100% NHIS coverage soon

Table 11: Continues

24 th June, 2009	Ghanaian Times	Community-based health planning compounds for Boli, Kpongu
15 th September, 2008	Ghanaian Times	Sissala East NHIS agents made mobile
118 th September, 2008	Ghanaian Times	100 HIV patients insure in Upper West Region
26 th August, 2008	Ghanaian Times	More pregnant women access Health care in UW
66 th May, 2009	Ghanaian Chronicle	U/E health officials ready to fight swine flu
116 th March, 2009	GTV	NHIS achieved 75% coverage in Upper East

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Most of the favourable health stories published by the selected media houses were in the form of either on-going health projects or pledges of improved health conditions. The District Chief Executive for Sissala West's pledge that all health facilities in the area would be connected to the national grid was the subject of *Radio Ghana's* 6:00 pm news bulletin on 29th July, 2008. When the Minister of Health stated at the inauguration of the board of the Tamale Teaching Hospital that government would rehabilitate the Hospital at the cost of 39.3 million Euro, it

made news on *Radio Ghana's* 6:00 pm news on 18th June, 2009. The same radio station also carried a story at 1:00 pm on 21st January, 2009 featuring the Upper East Regional Director of the Ghana Health Service who promised that the Bolgatanga Regional Hospital would be upgraded to a teaching hospital.

Content of unfavourable news on health

Unfavourable health stories published in the press covered areas such as lack of health personnel, poor health facilities, common ailments which constitute health challenges to Northern Ghana and cultural practices that are inimical to the health status of Northerners. Bad cultural practices was the subject of *Chronicle's* story of 11th December, 2008 edition headlined "Bad cultural practices killing pregnant women" and *Public Agenda's* story of 12th December, 2008, titled "Pregnant women die as a result of negative cultural practices". Both stories resulted from the coverage of a forum organized by a civil society organization during which a District Director of Health Services complained that some communities within the Upper East Region were not allowing pregnant women to attend antenatal care at clinics. Cultural practices impeding good healthcare was also the subject matter of "We smell a communication challenge", a *Ghanaian Times* story of 17th November, 2008 which intimated that pregnant women in some Northern communities were refusing to use mosquito nets provided by health personnel. On 8th May, 2009, a similar story was published in the same paper headlined, "Anti-malaria drugs don't cause abortion".

When the media was not bemoaning inimical cultural practices, it brought to the fore challenges in the implementation of the National Health Insurance

Scheme within Northern Ghana. “Delay in payment of claims affects NHIS at Gushegu” (*Ghanaian Times*, 21st August, 2008), “Bolgatanga Health Insurance – exigencies of worries” (*Ghanaian Times*, 16th September, 2008), “Jirapa/Lambussie NHIS holds Annual General Meeting (AGM)” (*Daily Graphic*, 18th November, 2008) and “Bawku Municipal Mutual Health Insurance holds AGM” (*Daily Graphic*, 11th December, 2008) were all unfavourable stories published on the health sector. *Radio Ghana*’s 1:00 pm news bulletin of 14th September, 2008 also revealed that there was a lot of pressure on the Sissala East District Mutual Health Insurance Scheme for payment of claims.

The lack of medical doctors within Northern Ghana was also accorded much media attention during the study period. Some media news items which addressed this issue were as follows:

- “Reducing the doctor-patient ratio” – This was an editorial in the 20th June, 2009 edition of the *Daily Graphic* which analysed the doctor-patient ratio within Northern Ghana and recommended an improvement in living conditions of rural areas to encourage doctors to accept postings there;
- “Shortage of health workers in three Northern Regions” – According to this *Ghanaian Times* story, medical doctors at Ridge Hospital in Accra alone are more than the total number of doctors in all three regions of the North. *Radio Ghana* also captured the same news item during its 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm news on 15th September, 2008;
- “Three Northern Regions cry for more doctors” – The *Ghanaian Times* of 13th September, 2008 bemoaned shortage of doctors in the North;

- “Doctors refuse postings to Upper East” – *Daily Graphic* of 19th June, 2009 reported that the Upper East Regional Director of Health Service lamented at a stakeholders’ forum that for three years no doctor had accepted posting to the Upper East Region while 95% of doctors in the Region were looking for transfers to other parts of the country; and
- “Director worried about shortage of health personnel” – This April 9, 2009 story by the *Daily Graphic* reported a concern expressed by the West Gonja District Director of Health Services that health personnel were refusing postings to the District.

Metro TV also indicated during its primetime news on 31st July, 2008 that health training institutions and health personnel within the Upper East Region were over-stretched. The lack of a single pathologist in the three regions of the North was made known during an interview that *Radio Ghana* held with the Upper West Regional Director of the Ghana Health Service during the station’s 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm news bulletins on 18th February, 2009.

Media coverage was also given to the poor state of the Tamale Teaching Hospital. On 18th November, 2008, *Daily Graphic* captioned one of its stories, “Tamale needs new teaching hospital”. This story was a result of a visit that the Chief Executive Officer of the hospital paid to *Graphic* offices in Tamale where he outlined challenges faced by the Tamale Teaching Hospital. A day after the *Daily Graphic* publication, *Ghanaian Chronicle* also published its research report entitled: “Health facilities in Northern Region in shambles – Tamale Hospital

work affected". The story identified congestion, dilapidated structures and equipment as major challenges which sometimes lead to deaths at the Hospital. *Daily Graphic* turned its spotlight on the Hospital again on 11th December, 2008 with the story, "Tamale Teaching Hospital woos corporate bodies". The paper followed this story up with another story on 6th April, 2009 titled, "Tamale Teaching Hospital needs support". Aside the Tamale Teaching Hospital, the plight of the Tamale Rehabilitation Centre was also brought to the attention of government in a *Daily Graphic* story captioned, "Rehabilitation Centre cries for support".

Ailments which pose health challenges to Northerners were also given attention by the media. *Ghanaian Times* of 15th September, 2008 screamed, "Upper West women suffering from fistula". The same paper reported on 17th September, 2008 that, "Stigma posing challenge to TB control". A similar story on stigma was a *Radio Ghana's* 6:00 pm news item on 15th March, 2009 which indicated that women and girls living with HIV/Aids within the Upper East Region were discriminated against. On 19th November, 2008 the *Ghanaian Times* again headlined one of its page 21 stories, "Polio resurfaces in Northern Region communities". The *Ghanaian Times* of 18th September, 2008 stated that 29 women within the Upper West Region died during child birth in 2007. This was the subject matter of a story captioned, "More women die during delivery – Upper West Region". The spread of cerebrum spinal meningitis in the Upper West Region made headline news on *Radio Ghana's* 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm news on 19th February, 2009. On 7th May, 2009, the same radio station observed during its

6:00pm news that the Upper East Region had nutrition-related problems owing to food shortages.

“Black flies re-emerge in Bawku West District” (*Ghanaian Times*, 9th December, 2008) and “Black flies resurface in Bawku West” (*Public Agenda*, 12th December, 2008) were stories which drew attention to the threat of black flies at Widnaba community in the Bawku West District of the Upper East Region. *Public Agenda* again published a story indicating that the Upper East Regional Health Directorate held a forum at Paga in the Upper East Region to educate the people on swine flu disease. Some stories also articulated concerns about the health risks in the consumption of unwholesome foods. A rather long headline in the *Ghanaian Chronicle* edition of 25th August, 2008 read, “Alleged sale of unwholesome food items in Bolga, Northern Region Poverty Reduction Programme (NORPRA) threatens court action against the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) ... But Samari denies allegations, sets up investigation c’ttee”. The same story was captured in the *Ghanaian Times* of 26th August, 2008, headlined, “RCC probes sale of unwholesome food items”. The *Chronicle* again raised the red flag on the consumption of sachet water when it alleged in its 17th June, 2009 edition that 70% of sachet water produced in Tamale is not licensed by the Ghana Standards Board.

It may be observed that both the favourable and unfavourable health stories lacked critical analysis. The media did not undertake the health campaigns that Namra (2004) recommends for tackling health care problems in developing countries. What the media did, instead, was to report on events which happened

related to health. This means that they reneged on their core duty as the fourth estate of the realm which is to educate audiences. The media's attempt at informing audiences on health issues within Northern Ghana was also poorly executed. Rather than using research and interviews to gather comprehensive information to educate Northerners on health issues, the media merely attended organized events and functions where they obtained and published speeches of politicians and management of health service providers. This has proved insufficient in catering for the health information needs of Northerners.

Style of news coverage on water and sanitation

Newspaper stories published on water and sanitation were either hard news stories (75.0%) or features (15.0%). No story was either a photo story, an editorial or an opinion piece. Similarly, all 10 radio and television stories were hard news stories. None was either a feature story or a news commentary. In terms of their prominence, none of the print media stories was placed on the front page. However, a quarter of the stories (25.0%) were back page stories while 16.7 percent were published in the centre spread of the papers. Majority (58.3%) of the stories, though, found their way into other less read pages of the newspaper. This could be likened to the broadcast media which had only 20.0 percent of its water and sanitation stories making headline news. Also, out of 12 newspaper stories published on water and sanitation, only one story was accompanied with a photograph, just as only two out of eight broadcast media stories had actuality. The longest story on water and sanitation was a half page story. There were,

however, three quarter page stories and seven stories which were less than a quarter page long.

Also, majority of both the newspaper (41.7%) and broadcast (90.0%) stories on water and sanitation resulted from event coverage as indicated in Table 12.

Table 12: Sources of news on water and sanitation

Source of news	Type of medium			
	Broadcast		Print	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Event coverage	9	90.0	5	41.7
Research	0	0.0	3	25.0
Interviews	1	10.0	3	25.0
News conferences / Press releases	0	0.0	1	8.3
Total	10	100.0	12	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

Content of favourable stories on water and sanitation

As far as the balance of the stories is concerned, majority of press (41.7%) and electronic (66.7%) stories were neutral, while 33.3 percent of press stories were unfavourable as against no unfavourable electronic news story. On the other hand, there were a quarter (25.0%) of favourable press stories as against 33.3

percent of electronic media news which reported on unfavourable environmental and sanitation issues from Northern Ghana. Stories recorded as favourable mainly announced improvement in either water supply or sanitation. Under the Tamale Water Expansion Project, water supply to Tamale was reported in the 18th November, 2008 edition of the *Daily Graphic* to have improved. "MiDA to extend Tamale water supply" was another *Graphic* story which, on 22nd January, 2009, celebrated improvement in water situation to Tamale. Outside Tamale but still within the Northern Region, the *Ghanaian Times* of 28th October, 2008 carried the news that, "Seven farming groups in Bole benefit from water pumping machines". The provision of water was also the subject of a news item aired on *Radio Ghana's* 1:00pm news bulletin on 11th April, 2009 and repeated at 6:00 pm on the same day. According to the story, residents of the Upper East Region were provided with 13 hand-dug wells to solve their water problems. The station also reported on 26th August, 2008 at 6:00 pm that the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Red Cross built and handed over houses to flood victims at Chuchuliga.

Majority of the favourable sanitation stories reported on a national day of cleanliness which President Atta Mills called for: "Zoomlion commends people of Upper West" was how the *Daily Graphic* of 18th February, 2009 captured the response of the people of the Upper West Region to the President's call for a clean-up campaign. The story reported that the Operations Supervisor of Zoomlion Limited commended Upper Westerners for actively participating in a clean-up exercise. *Radio Ghana* also reported during its 6:00 am news on 16th

February, 2009 on the clean-up exercise by residents of Wa, while *GTV* of 19th February, 2009 telecasted a massive response from Bolgatanga to the exercise. The *Ghanaian Times* of 16th September, 2008 also published a favourable story titled: "Media in the North sensitized on sanitation issues". Another story by the same paper was: "Facelift for Bolga", in which its 19th June, 2009 issue stated that the Bolgatanga Municipal Chief Executive had decided to prioritize environmental cleanliness of the Upper East Regional capital.

Content of unfavourable stories on water and sanitation

Unfavourable stories on the water sector focused on water shortages within parts of Northern Ghana. For example, on 29th October, 2008, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* reported: "Acute water shortage hits Tamale ... AVRIL, Biwater under siege". Similarly, *Daily Graphic* edition of 6th May, 2009 portrayed the plight of Yendi residents who suffered a water shortage. The story was titled, "Water shortage hits Yendi Municipality". It was *Graphic* which also carried the unfavourable news, "New completion date for Tamale Water Project", a story which reported the visit of a Public Utility Regulatory Commission (PURC) delegation to Tamale where it emerged that the 45 million euro water project which was scheduled to complete in August, 2008 would now complete in October, 2008. Another *Daily Graphic* story on poor water supply was published on 20th September, 2008 and came with the heading, "PURC deplores poor water supply to U.E.". On 19th September, 2008, *Radio Ghana* aired a news item at 1:00pm which indicated that the Chairman of the PURC had expressed

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displeasure at the inability of Acqua Vittens Rand Limited to supply sufficient water to residents of Bolgatanga, Navrongo and Bawku. *Radio Ghana* again observed during its 6:00 am news on 6th May, 2009 that the Yendi township was hit by severe water shortage.

On 29th July, 2008, *Daily Graphic* headlined one of its stories, "Sanitation management still a problem". This unfavourable story outlined sanitation challenges within the Tamale Metropolis. *Graphic* again published the story, "Open defecation – the biggest sanitation problem in U.E."

As happened in other areas of development, media stories on water and sanitation issues lacked the detail and depth prescribed for development journalism. Instead, the stories were episodic coverage of events, often amplifying voices of people in authority or merely repeating promises of politicians rather than analyzing development issues for the appreciation of ordinary Northerners.

Style of coverage of news on local governance

Twenty two (22) newspaper stories were published on the development activities of local governments (that is metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies – MMDAs) within the three regions of the North as against only five broadcast news on local governance issues. All the broadcast stories and almost all the newspaper articles (90.9%) were hard news stories, while 4.6 percent each were press photo stories and editorial pieces. Also, 85.7 percent of the press stories were published in inside pages other than the centre spread, as against only 7.1 percent each which could be found in the centre spread and the back pages of

the newspapers. No local governance story appeared on the front page of the papers.

Similarly, broadcast local governance stories were not accorded much prominence since none of them was headline news. Again, press stories without photographs constituted 85.7 percent while those with photographs were made up of 14.3 percent. This may be contrasted with the broadcast media stories which had equal numbers for those with actualities as those without actualities. Additionally, half of the stories were less than a quarter page in prominence, with quarter page stories constituting 45.0 percent and half page stories being made up of 5.0 percent, indicating that no story was more than half page long.

As pertained in other fields of development, event coverage was the main source of news on the local government systems for newspapers. For the broadcast stations, however, press conferences / press releases and interviews emerged as leading sources of information on local governance within Northern Ghana. Table 13 shows that the broadcast media do not often use research and GNA files as sources of information on local governance issues within Northern Ghana.

Table 13: Sources of news on local governance

Source of news	Type of medium			
	Broadcast		Print	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Event coverage	1	20.0	16	72.7
GNA files	0	0.0	3	13.5
Research	0	0.0	1	4.6
Interviews	2	40.0	1	4.6
News conferences / Press releases	2	40.0	1	4.6
Total	5	100.0	22	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

Content of favourable and unfavourable news on local governance

With regards to the balance of the stories, more than half of the press stories (54.6%) were neutral in nature, 31.8 percent were favourable and 13.6 percent were unfavourable news items. This may be contrasted with the broadcast media which had fifty-fifty for favourable and unfavourable news stories. All the two favourable broadcast news were reported on *Radio Ghana* and focused on the endorsement of President Atta Mill's nominees for the post of District Chief Executives (DCEs). Aired at 1:00 pm on 7th May, 2009, the first story announced that the District Chief Executive for Bole had been endorsed. Following this story, *Radio Ghana* did a more favourable story at 6:00 pm on 7th May, 2009 that

indicated that Upper East Region was the first region to have all its nominated District Chief Executives endorsed by the various assemblies, the latest being the Bawku West District Assembly.

The only unfavourable broadcast news item on local governance was also aired by *Radio Ghana's* 1:00 pm news and repeated at 6:00 pm on 7th May, 2009. The story reported the venom of members of the Wa East District Assembly who challenged the verdict of the Electoral Commission after the Commission declared that the President's nominee for the post of District Chief Executive had obtained the requisite two-thirds majority endorsement from the assembly members.

Journalists are expected to develop detailed and analytical stories on development projects. They are also required to localize the contents of their stories by explaining to the readers, the relevance of such projects to people's specific needs and how the projects can help improve people's lives. The journalist is also expected to monitor the implementation of planned projects and report if such projects are actually making impact or not. He should be able to report if the project can achieve what the governments or initiators of such projects claimed (Dare, 2000). Unfortunately, media persons who covered local governance stories failed to adhere to these tenets of development journalism. It would have been more useful if the media persons had followed district or municipal assembly sessions to identify the development focus of the various local governance institutions and monitored development projects being implemented by the assemblies.

Style of reporting stories on gender issues

Only eight (8) print media and four (4) broadcast media stories on gender issues were published during the study period. All the stories were in the hard news format. Also all the print media stories were placed in the inside pages of the newspapers, with only 16.7 percent being on the centre spread, while the rest (83.3%) were in less read pages of the sampled papers. When this is considered alongside the fact that only one (1) out of the four (4) electronic news items made the headlines, it becomes evident that the media did not give much prominence to stories on gender issues. However, while 50.0 percent of print media stories were enhanced with photographs, no electronic media story had an actuality. Majority of print media stories (71.4%) and all broadcast media news bulletins resulted from event coverage, while 14.3 percent of print media publications were each obtained from interviews and GNA files.

Content of favourable and unfavourable news on gender

On the one hand, a quarter of the press stories (25.0%) were favourable while the rest were neutral. On the other hand, there were three (3) unfavourable and one (1) neutral broadcast news bulletins on gender issues which emanated from Northern Ghana. Just as there was no unfavourable print story, there was no favourable broadcast story on women issues. The favourable press stories were from *Daily Graphic* of 19th February, 2009 and the *Ghanaian Chronicle* of 30th July, 2008. Titled “Bolga MP supports needy children, mothers”, the *Chronicle* story reported that the Member of Parliament for Bolgatanga Constituency

donated bed nets to vulnerable women and registered such women and their children under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The *Graphic* story, which was titled “Tamale women receive skills training”, revealed that women who had no employable skills and sold sachet water for a living in Tamale were trained in groundnut oil extraction and assisted to start their own businesses.

Cultural practices which are inimical to women’s development was the subject matter of two (2) unfavourable *Radio Ghana* news items. During its 1:00pm news bulletin, *Radio Ghana* reported on 9th April, 2009 that FIDA had appealed to heads of institutions within the Upper East Region to review socio-cultural practices which were inimical to the interest of women. On 31st October, 2008, the radio station again reported on a dialogue which was held with traditional authorities within the Upper East Region where it emerged that harmful cultural practices were still prevalent within the Region.

A common observation of media coverage was their failure to abide by the principles of development reporting which establishes that a journalist covering the development beat is duty bound, and expected to “critically examine, evaluate and report on the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation, and the difference between its impact on the people as claimed by the government and as it actually is (Aggarwala, 1981, cited in Dare, 2000:164). The present study also affirms earlier research to the effect that the media’s ability to perform development roles is waning (Eapen, 1975; Heath, 1992; Steeves, 1996).

Heath (1992) gave an example of the purchase of new equipment by Kenya Broadcasting Corporation which plunged the station into so much debt that it had to commercialize its programmes at the expense of producing development-oriented local language programmes. This situation compares with that of GBC where a debate has been going on regarding its relevance as a state broadcaster. Proponents of privatizing GBC cite the station's inability to fund itself as a reason for advocating that it be sold to the highest bidder. Though the station remained a state broadcaster during the period of this study, it had commercialized its airtime to the detriment of broadcasting development programmes, particularly programmes which are relevant to the development aspirations of Northern Ghanaians. Many programmes on agriculture, health, education, environment and other sectors of development have given way to programmes sponsored by religious and business organizations to promote commercial interest. The two state-owned print media – Graphic Communications Group Limited and New Times Corporation – have also commercialized their pages. A study of both papers shows that nearly half of their pages are always devoted to advertisements. For instance, out of a 32-page *Daily Graphic* publication, an average of 13 pages is usually devoted to advertisements.

At this point, it is essential to analyse the quantum of development news from Northern Ghana that is published by both broadcast and print media. It is equally important to establish the manner in which development news from Northern Ghana is published. Such analyses will either give credence to or

debunk accusations that both the state-owned and private media are commercializing their services to the detriment of prioritizing development issues.

CHAPTER SEVEN
STYLE OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT
ISSUES

Introduction

This chapter examines how the media handled news stories – whether in hard news, features or editorial style – on development issues from Northern Ghana. Besides style of coverage, the chapter also delves into the quantum of news that is devoted to development-oriented issues as against non-development-oriented news. Besides, the level of prominence and enhancement attached to development news is also addressed in this chapter.

Type of broadcast news on Northern Ghana

In all, 364 news items were aired on Northern Ghana between 1st July, 2008 and 30th June, 2009. Table 12 shows that out of this number, 203 stories (56%) were development-oriented stories while 161 (44%) were non-development-oriented stories. *GTV* carried majority of the development-oriented stories (71.43%) as compared to *Radio Ghana* which had 55.30 percent and *Metro TV* which actually had fewer development stories (49.23%) compared to non-development stories.

Motivated more by commercial interests than development motives, majority of stories from *Metro TV*, a privately-owned station, were non-development in nature since the station operated by the journalistic maxim that bad news sells. On the contrary, state-owned *GTV* and *Radio Ghana* both carried more development news than non-development news because the two stations are not motivated by commercial interests. As the Head of *Radio Ghana* News stated, GBC focuses on publishing stories which bring to the fore development challenges facing deprived communities.

Type of print media stories on Northern Ghana

More than broadcast stations, the newspapers sampled for this study operate along the teachings of the modernist theory of development communications. In keeping with this theory, the papers compete for readership in order to increase their profit margins. This explains why they publish sensational stories which do not promote the development of Northern Ghana, but rather increase media profits. Thus, out of 557 newspaper articles which focused on Northern Ghana, 249 (44.7%) were development-oriented stories as against 308 (55.3%) which constituted non-development stories on Northern Ghana. However, Ansah (1990) criticizes this western ideal of news reportage. According to him, in determining the value of news, a distinction needs to be made between news as a saleable commodity and news as a social asset.

Table 14 gives a breakdown of the number of development and non-development stories published by the various newspapers.

Table 14: Type of news covered by the print media

Medium	Type of News				Total Frequency %	
	Development Frequency	Development %	Non-development Frequency	Non-development %		
Daily Graphic	101	44.1	128	55.9	229	100.0
Ghanaian Times	96	47.1	108	52.9	204	100.0
Ghanaian Chronicle	41	43.6	53	56.4	94	100.0
Public Agenda	11	36.7	19	63.3	30	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

From the Table 14, it is clear that *Daily Graphic* published more stories on Northern Ghana than the other papers. Being a bi-weekly, *Public Agenda* published fewer stories on the North than the other papers which are dailies. In terms of the number of their Northern stories which were development-oriented, *Ghanaian Times* published the greatest percentage of development stories as against *Public Agenda* which published the least percentage of such stories. Obviously, the two state-owned papers have a greater responsibility than the privately-owned papers to ensure equity in coverage of the entire country. This explains why *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* published more development stories on Northern Ghana than the *Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Public Agenda*. Also, the two state-owned media have more infrastructure and logistics than privately owned *Chronicle* and *Public Agenda* to facilitate coverage of Northern

Ghana. While *Times* and *Graphic* have offices and reporters in all three regions of the North, *Chronicle* and *Public Agenda* have neither offices nor reporters in all three regions. Since *Public Agenda* had a staff of ISODEC, the NGO which established the paper, reporting from the Upper East Region, the paper also carried more development-oriented news compared to *Chronicle*.

Amount of coverage accorded various Regions of Northern Ghana

Both the print and electronic media placed priority of story publication on the Upper East Region to the detriment of the Upper West Region, as Table 15 shows.

Table 15: Media stories published by Regions

Region Covered	Type of medium			
	Broadcast		Print	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Upper East	145	39.8	237	42.5
Northern	113	31.1	192	34.5
Upper West	106	29.1	128	23.0
Total	364	100.0	557	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

Both the print and broadcast media reported extensively on the Bawku conflict within the Upper East Region and efforts made to resolve the conflict.

This accounted for the extensive media reportage on the Upper East Region as against the rather small focus on the Upper West Region. Indeed, a quarter (25%) of all media reports from the Upper East Region focused on the Bawku conflict.

Type of reportage

From the present study, it also emerged that almost all the media coverage was done in hard news format of reporting. Table 16 shows the type of reportage engaged in by both the print and broadcast media.

Table 16: Type of Reportage by Print and Broadcast Media

Type of reportage	Type of medium			
	Broadcast		Print	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Hard news	339	93.1	510	91.6
Features	21	5.8	26	4.7
Photo stories	-	-	8	1.4
News commentaries/ Editorials	4	1.1	9	1.6
Opinion pieces	-	-	4	0.7
Total	364	100.0	557	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

The findings of this study may be contrasted with those of Kayode (2009) who, having analyzed the content of two Nigerian newspapers to find out their contribution to creating awareness about the MDGs and established that almost a fifth (20%) of all stories were published as hard news. Further analysis of the data for this study indicates that *Ghanaian Times* published the highest number (98%) of hard news stories, followed by *Daily Graphic* (90%), *Ghanaian Chronicle* (84%) and *Public Agenda* (83.3%). However, *Public Agenda* did not publish either a feature story or a photo story. The paper focused on opinion pieces (10%). *Chronicle*, on the other hand, was the highest publisher of feature stories (10.6%) as against *Graphic* (5.7%) or *Times* (1.5%). Like *Public Agenda*, *Times* did not publish any photo story on Northern Ghana, unlike *Graphic* which had 3.1 percent of such stories and *Chronicle* which carried 1.1 percent of photo stories.

Editorial, which usually constitutes the voice of a newspaper, was scantily used. This is an indication that the newspapers hardly expressed their views on happenings within Northern Ghana. Since editorials are written on subjects which newspapers consider significant enough to draw audiences' attention to, the papers' failure to publish editorials on Northern development efforts testifies to their lack of interest in the area's development. Aside *Public Agenda*, 10 percent of whose stories expressed the paper's views on the North, and *Ghanaian Times* had only 0.5 percent editorials, *Graphic* carried 0.4 percent editorials while *Chronicle* did not carry a single editorial on the North. State owned *Radio Ghana* also led the electronic media in hard news reporting. Whereas almost all the station's stories (98.5%) were hard news, it carried only one feature story (0.4%)

and three news commentaries (1.1%) on Northern Ghana. *Radio Ghana's* counterpart, *GTV*, also aired 80 percent of its stories in hard news format as against 20 percent features. This may be compared to privately owned *Metro TV* which had the highest number of feature stories (21.5%) as against hard news stories of 78.5 percent. The two TV stations do not broadcast news commentaries.

The hard news style of reporting adopted by the selected media proves that they have not been very effective in promoting the development of Northern Ghana. This is because hard news conforms to the traditional news values of timeliness, prominence of major actors and novelty as espoused by western media practitioners (Ansah, 1990). Considerations such as timeliness necessitates the use of hard news style of reporting which hardly gives time for investigative journalism since stories must be hurriedly packaged to beat the clock. This is against the background of the fact that Ansah (1990) found hard news as inappropriate for reporting development issues in Africa. The hard news format also negates the concept of development journalism which mandates journalists to analyze the root causes of underdevelopment and advocate for the type of improved circumstances that lead to development. Thus, the feature style of reporting would have better served the development aspirations of the North since such stories are more analytical and delves deeper into issues raised.

Majority of media stories also confirmed the findings of Gadzekpo (2008) that the Ghanaian media content was institution-driven to the point where media agenda was set by public and private organizations whose functions journalists cover. The present study found that 61.6 percent of print media and 62.4 percent

of broadcast news stories on Northern development issues emanated from coverage of events organized by public and private organizations, while 7.9 percent print and 13.7 percent broadcast news emanated from press conferences and news releases from the same organizations. This shows that for 69.5 percent of newspapers and 76.1 percent of broadcast media, agenda for their news was determined by public and private organizations rather than either the Northern audiences or the media houses themselves.

The study corroborates the work of Suleiman (2002) to the effect that journalists in Africa pay little attention to independent work or investigative stories which add nothing to the reporters' pockets. However, results of this research failed to confirm Suleiman's finding that interviews take pride of place in news casts and adorn the pages of publications. It was only in few instances that journalists initiated stories using research (that is 8.4% for print and 4.9% for broadcast) and interviews (11.7% for print and 18.4% for broadcast). A tenth (10.4%) of the print media publications were also obtained from routine news covered by the GNA, as against 0.3 percent of broadcast news which also came from the wire service.

Ansah (1990) has, however, dismissed the use of event-oriented approach to news as inappropriate for development purposes and advocated, instead, for a processual approach to news. He thus described news as a series of events amounting to a process. News "pays attention to trends and movements rather than concentrate on particular isolated events. It puts the series of events into a wider context to aid comprehension and evaluation (Ansah, 1990: 35).

Level of importance attached to news

Story placement determines the amount of attention it gets from readers. Interviews conducted with editors of *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Public Agenda* indicate that the front pages of the various papers are the most prominent pages where prioritized stories are usually placed. Front page stories also sell newspapers since they are usually attention-grabbing. Stories which are placed within the inside pages of newspapers are not as impactful as front page stories since the inside page stories do not attract as much readership as those on the front pages. Next to front page stories, in terms of impact, are back page stories. For stories published in the inside pages of newspapers, the most impactful are those displayed in the centre spread of the newspapers.

This study confirmed that development news from Northern Ghana was not accorded much prominence. Whereas only 2.2 percent of press publications on the North were front page stories, 85.6 percent of the stories were placed in less read inside pages of the newspaper. Table 17 shows the pages on which stories from Northern Ghana were placed. The prioritized inside pages of the papers – the centre spread – attracted just 8.4 percent of Northern development stories whereas the back pages, which come second in terms of page prioritization, got 3.8 percent of the stories. It is worth noting that the *Ghanaian Chronicle* attached more priority to stories from the North than the other newspapers. Half (50%) of the total number of stories published on the front pages of the four newspapers were *Chronicle* stories. However, the *Chronicle* front page stories were negative reports on the North. Four (4) out of the six (6)

Chronicle stories focused on the Bawku conflict. Against the caution of Ansah (1990), the stories explored ethnic issues which could escalate the conflict rather than quelling the war.

Table 17: Placement of Northern Ghana Stories in Newspapers

Medium	Story Placement									
	Front page		Centre spread		Back page		Other pages		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Daily Graphic	2	0.9	4	1.7	12	5.3	211	92.1	229	100.0
Ghanaian Times	4	2.0	7	3.4	9	4.4	184	90.2	204	100.0
Public Agenda	0	0.0	3	10.0	0	0.0	27	90.0	30	100.0
Chronicle	6	6.4	33	35.1	0	0.0	55	58.5	94	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

Slightly more than a quarter (26.1%) of Northern development news made the headlines in radio and television broadcasts as against almost 74 percent (73.9%) of such news which were non-headline news. Over all, *Metro TV* (32.3%) carried more headline news on the North than either *Radio Ghana* (25%) or *GTV* (22.9%). While *Metro TV* and *GTV* enhanced majority of their stories with actualities, just above a fifth (22.4%) of *Radio Ghana* stories had actualities. Since headline news usually catch the attention of audiences and therefore make

more impact than non-headline news, the fact that just above a quarter of Northern stories made the headlines means that editors of the selected stations did not place much priority on stories from that part of the country. It is also obvious that stories emanating from Northern Ghana which did not make the headlines had little impact compared to headline news. Again, among stories which made headlines from the North, 65 percent covered conflicts in that part of the country.

Unlike the television stations, majority of newspaper stories were not enhanced with photographs. Only 29.4 percent of press stories were published with photographs while the other 70.6 percent were not accompanied with photographs. In contrast to the other papers, however, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* carried three-quarters (75.5%) of its stories with photographs as against *Graphic* (21.8%), *Times* (18.6%) and *Public Agenda* (16.7%).

Stories with photographs are more attention-grabbing than those without them. Additionally, photographs enhance the meaning of stories. Thus, the fact that majority of press stories on Northern Ghana were not accompanied with photograph shows that such stories did not make as much impact as they could have. Ironically, *Chronicle*, which accompanied majority of its stories on the North with photographs used the type of photographs that portrayed a negative image of the area. It is also worth noting that not much space was devoted by the newspapers to development news from the North. As may be seen from Table 16, majority of the stories were less than a quarter page long. This is mainly due to the fact that the stories were in hard news format and, therefore, not detailed exploration of development issues from the North. If the journalists had adopted

the feature style of writing, they would have done lengthier stories by investigating the causes of underdevelopment in the North and analyzing the development challenges in that part of the country.

It is worth noting that *Chronicle* did not only accord more prominence to Northern news than the other newspapers, it also gave such stories more salience through the amount of space devoted to the stories. The paper was the only print medium which devoted more than one page to a story from Northern Ghana. It also carried 12 full page stories, 11 three-quarter page stories and 32 half page stories. If the stories published by *Chronicle* had adopted the development reporting format providing useful development information for Northerners or motivating them to seek development, the paper would have been adjudged the most development-oriented newspapers out of the four sampled papers.

However, the lengthy *Chronicle* stories showcased Northern Ghana as a conflict zone. *Ghanaian Times* also carried three full page stories, three three-quarter page stories and 22 half page stories as compared to *Daily Graphic* none of whose story was up to a page long, and which carried eight three-quarter page stories and 17 half page stories. *Public Agenda*, which is a bi-weekly unlike the other sampled papers which are dailies, had three three-quarter page stories and no half page story on Northern Ghana.

Balance of news

Many researchers including Gans (1979), Cose (1994), Campbell (1995) and Cottle (2000) have disputed the idea of objectivity in news coverage and

identified various causes of bias in reportage. With regards to coverage of development news from Northern Ghana, this study was interested in the level of neutrality or bias in coverage of events.

Results of the study showed that majority (57%) of newspaper publications were neutral as against broadcast media stories, majority of which were unfavourable news items. Table 18 shows that the State-owned press carried more favourable news than the privately-owned newspapers.

Table 18: Balance of newspaper stories

Newspaper	Balance of story			
	Favourable Frequency	Percentage	Unfavourable Frequency	Percentage
Graphic	49	28.8	26	16.2
Times	53	31.2	30	23.3
Chronicle	36	21.2	41	31.4
Agenda	32	18.8	38	29.1
Total	170	100.0	135	100.0

Source: Field data, 2008/2009

With regards to the broadcast media, the state-owned radio and television stations also published more favourable news on Northern Ghana (that is 29.4% for *Radio Ghana* and 34.3% for *GTV*) compared to the privately-owned *Metro TV* which aired only 10.9 percent of favourable news as against 60.9 percent

unfavourable news and 28.1 percent of neutral news. *Radio Ghana* carried 32.1 percent unfavourable and 38.6 percent neutral news while *GTV* aired 34.3 percent unfavourable news and 31.4 percent neutral news.

A common observation of media coverage was its failure to abide by the principles of development reporting which establishes that a journalist covering the development beat is duty bound, and expected to “critically examine, evaluate and report on the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between its impact on the people as claimed by the government and as is” (Aggarwala, 1981, cited in Dare, 2000: 164). Journalists are expected to develop detailed analytical stories on development projects. They are also required to localize the contents of their stories by explaining to readers, the relevance of such projects to people’s specific needs and how the projects can help improve people’s lives. The journalist is also expected to monitor the implementation of planned projects and report whether or not such projects are making the intended impact (Dare, 2000). On the contrary, the media stories which focused on Northern Ghana’s development lacked the detail and depth prescribed by development journalism. Instead, the stories were episodic coverage of events, often amplifying voices of people in authority or merely repeating promises of politicians rather than analyzing development issues for the appreciation of ordinary Northerners.

Thus far, the study has undertaken analyses of media content to determine the amount and style of coverage accorded development news on Northern Ghana. Using the tenets of development journalism as yardsticks, the study found

that the mass media have not been as effective as they could be in covering development news. Beyond content analysis, it is also useful to find out the views of media gatekeepers and consumers regarding the effectiveness or otherwise of the media's coverage of Northern Ghana.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORS AND NEWSPAPER READERS ON DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN GHANA

Introduction

This chapter examines the perceptions of media editors and newspaper readers on development issues of Northern Ghana. It examines, from the perspectives of media editors and newspaper readers, the extent and quality of media coverage accorded Northern Ghana as well as the role expected of the Fourth Estate of the Realm in enhancing the development of the poorest part of Ghana. Since editors control media content and style of presentation, it is essential to give them an opportunity to explain some considerations that determine the volume and style of media coverage of development issues from Northern Ghana. Editors are also media experts whose views on the media's role in the development of Northern Ghana must be taken seriously. Such views could be contrasted with the opinions of ordinary media consumers. Newspaper readers' assessment of the content and style of reportage is also a useful exercise since as beneficiaries of media output, media consumers are well placed to give informed views on the media's contribution to development.

Background of respondents

Majority of the 400 newspaper readers who were sampled from Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi were male (78.8%), educated up to the tertiary

level (80.5%). Those with senior school level of education formed 16.5 percent of the sample while 3 percent had junior high school education. As seen in Figure 5, majority of respondents were aged 26 – 35.

Percentage of respondents

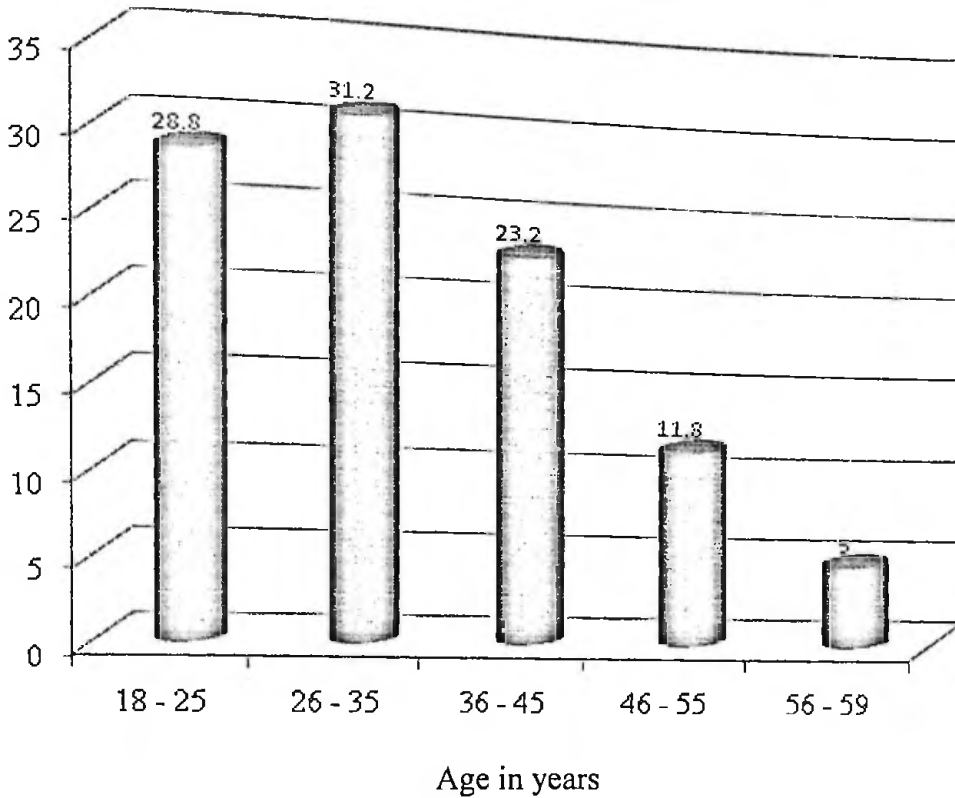


Figure 5: Age of respondents

Source: Field Work, 2009

Also, respondents were mostly students (39.2%) and government employees (37%). However, more than a fifth were self-employed (22.3%), while 1.5% were farmers. With regards to their religious affiliation, the respondents were mainly Christians (81.5%). Others were Moslems (16%), traditional religious worshippers (2%) or belonged to other religions (0.5%).

Development disparity between North and South

Songsore (2003) and Dittoh (2008) observed that Northern Ghana has over the years been denied its fair share of development from central governments. Recognizing that popular views often shape news coverage and by extension media output, one of the specific objectives of the study was to find out the views of newspaper readers on the urgency or otherwise of the need to develop Northern Ghana.

Thus, the question was posed, “How wide is the disparity in development between the Southern and Northern parts of the country?” Sixty one percent of newspaper readers felt the development gap between Southern and Northern Ghana was “very wide”, over a quarter (25.3%) felt the gap is wide while 11.5 percent and 2.2 percent felt the North-South development divide was “Not wide” and “not at all wide” respectively.

Views of the newspaper readers conform to the findings of Salia (1987), Songsore (2003), Dittoh (1998) and GSS (2007) that Northern Ghana lags behind the rest of the country in terms of development. The realization by majority of newspaper readers that there exists a wide North-South development gap indicates that there is sufficient awareness within Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi of this development challenge. Table 19 indicates that more males than females felt the development gap between North and South of Ghana was “very wide”.

Table 19: Newspaper Readers' Views on Development Disparity Between Northern and Southern Ghana

Sex of respondents	Degree of disparity								Total	
	Very wide		Wide		Not wide		Not at all wide			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	204	64.8	85	27.0	22	7.0	4	1.3	315	100.0
Female	40	47.1	16	18.8	24	28.2	5	5.9	85	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Readers resident in Tamale and Accra were of the view that the disparity in development between Southern and Northern Ghana is “very wide”, as against Takoradi and Kumasi respondents. This suggests that residents of the Northern Regional capital and Accra were more aware of the existence of a development divide between the South and North of Ghana.

When the question, “Do you think Northern Ghana is getting its fair share of development from national resources?” was posed, majority of respondents (59%) responded in the negative. Reasons for the belief that the North is not getting its fair share of development are based on the fact that budgetary allocations for the development of Northern Ghana are usually inadequate and that government concentrates its resources in developing the Southern parts of the country. Some respondents also indicated that infrastructure and other amenities in the North have been neglected by government to deteriorate. Over 40 percent

(41.0%) of the respondents who felt Northern Ghana has been receiving its fair share of development said so on the basis that, that part of Ghana is occasionally in conflict and government need not waste resources there. They also stated that there are many NGOs in the area which assist in its development. For such respondents, the resources allocated by central government are usually sufficient, but perhaps corrupt Northern politicians misuse such resources.

From Table 20, it is clear that Tamale and Accra residents believe that Northern Ghana is being denied its fair share of development while Kumasi and Takoradi respondents thought otherwise.

Table 20: Respondents' views on whether northern Ghana gets its fair share of development

City of residence	Perception of Northern Ghana's development					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Accra	29	29.0	71	71.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	69	69.0	31	31.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	51	51.0	49	49.0	100	100.0
Tamale	71	71.0	31	31.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

As indicated earlier, the belief by Tamale and Accra residents that the North deserves more resources could translate into support by the two cities for any media advocacy for more development support for the poorest part of Ghana.

Also, younger and middle aged respondents felt more strongly that the North has not had its fair share of development. While 65.2 percent, 67.2 percent and 53.8 percent of respondents aged 18 – 25, 26 – 35 and 36 – 45 respectively indicated that Northern Ghana was denied its fair share of development, 38.3 percent and 45 percent of respondents within the ages of 46 – 55 and 56 or more respectively supported the view that the North was being neglected in terms of development. The fact that young people and the middle aged are aware of the development disparity between the North and South of Ghana gives hope of this imbalance being addressed in future. The youth, who constitute majority of the population of Ghana, are likely to support advocacy aimed at addressing the peculiar development needs of Northern Ghana. Similarly, it also appears that females were more likely to favour media advocacy for Northern development than males. As Table 21 shows, slightly more females than males felt that Northern Ghana was not getting its fair share of development.

Table 21: Newspaper readers views on northern ghana's share of national development resources

Northern Ghana receives fair share of development resources						
Sex of respondents	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	131	41.6	184	58.4	315	100.0
Female	33	38.8	52	61.2	85	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

The study further sought to establish whether, in the opinion of newspaper readers, Northern Ghana deserves special attention by government and other development partners to speed up the development of that part of the country. More than four-fifth (83.0%) responded in the affirmative while 17.0 percent opposed the idea of devoting special attention to Northern Ghana. As Table 22 shows, majority of newspaper readers in the four cities felt the need for special attention to be paid to the development of Northern Ghana. Not surprisingly, almost all Tamale respondents (99.0%) felt the need for the North to be given special attention.

Table 22: Place of residence and views on whether Northern Ghana deserves special attention in development

Place of residence	Views on whether Northern Ghana deserves special attention					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Frequency	%
Accra	92	92.0	8	8.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	64	64.0	36	36.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	79	79.0	21	21.0	100	100.0
Tamale	99	99.0	1	1.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

The support for special attention to be paid to the development of Northern Ghana could be reflected in media advocacy within the four major cities for that cause. Fewer females (78.8%) than male respondents (84.8%) felt that Northern Ghana deserved special attention from government and other development partners. This is against the background of the fact that as indicated earlier, more females than male respondents said Northern Ghana was not given its fair share of development. It is also worth noting that, as illustrated in Table 23, respondents with tertiary and senior high school education supported the channeling of more resources into developing Northern Ghana than those with junior high school education.

Table 23: Level of education and views on whether Northern Ghana deserves special attention in Development

Level of education	Yes		No		Total Frequency	Total %
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
JHS	7	58.3	5	41.7	12	100.0
SHS	53	80.3	13	19.7	66	100.0
Tertiary	274	85.1	48	14.9	322	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

The reason why newspaper readers with higher education supported the channeling of more resources into developing northern Ghana than those with relatively lower levels of education is that the former are more informed about the development challenges of Northern Ghana and are therefore more sympathetic towards the development needs of that part of the country. This is buttressed by the fact that when asked whether Northern Ghana gets its fair share of development, almost 60 percent (59.9%) and 59.1 percent of tertiary and senior high school level respondents respectively answered in the affirmative as against 20.0 percent JHS level respondents and 42.9 percent respondents without formal education who also recognized the fact that the North-South development gap is wide

Table 24: Reasons why Northern Ghana deserves special attention

City of Residence	Reasons for special attention for Northern Ghana									
	Inadequate resource allocation to the North		Northern Ghana lags behind the South		To address conflicts		Opportunities exist in North for dev't		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Accra	33	33.0	29	29.0	22	22.0	16	16.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	43	43.0	24	24.0	19	19.0	14	14.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	32	32.0	28	28.0	21	21.0	19	19.0	100	100.0
Tamale	16	16.0	14	14.0	19	19.0	11	11.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Respondents assigned several reasons for their belief that Northern Ghana deserves special attention in terms of development. Majority of the respondents drawn from Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi indicated that Northern Ghana has not been given its fair share of resource allocation. From Table 24, it is clear that respondents' reasons for asking for increased support reflect their view that Northern Ghana has not been accorded a fair share of development. This is because more than half of the respondents in the selected cities opined that Northern Ghana suffers inadequate resource allocation and that the area lags behind the rest of Ghana in terms of development.

On the basis of views from newspaper readers, one can conclude that media audiences fully appreciate the need for the speedy development of

Northern Ghana. Thus, the respondents are likely to support media initiatives aimed at drawing the attention of development stakeholders on the need to focus efforts on bettering the living standards of residents of Northern Ghana. However, recognizing the existence of the need for Northern development is one thing while having a firm political grasp of the challenges confronting Northern Ghana is another.

Views of editors and newspaper readers on impediments to development of Northern Ghana

The media can only play a role in the development efforts of Northern Ghana where it appreciates the challenges which inhibit progress in the area. In order to assess the knowledge of media editors on the development challenges facing Northern Ghana, the researcher asked them about the leading causes of underdevelopment within Northern Ghana. Besides editors, the newspaper readers were also asked about the major impediments to the development of Northern Ghana.

Corroborating the findings of Maasole (2007), Awedoba (2005) and Bacho (2005), the newspaper readers cited Northern conflicts as the main cause of underdevelopment of the area. Table 25 shows the views of newspaper readers on factors which are impeding the development of Northern Ghana. The fact that majority of the respondents, particularly those resident within Takoradi, attribute the slow pace of development within Northern Ghana to conflicts in the area could affect media advocacy for support to develop the area. Even Tamale

residents admitted that conflicts are the bane of Northern underdevelopment. However, the Tamale residents, more than residents of the other cities, also blamed their underdevelopment on inadequate political support.

Table 25: Place of Residence and Views on the Greatest Impediments to the Development of Northern Ghana

Impediments to development of Northern Ghana

City of residence	Conflicts		Inadequate political support		Inadequate donor/NGO support		Inadequate private sector investment		Wrong attitude of Northerners towards dev't		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Accra	77	77.0	6	6.0	2	2.0	2	2.0	13	13.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	65	65.0	2	2.0	0	0.0	5	15.0	18	18.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	80	80.0	4	4.0	6	6.0	8	8.0	2	2.0	100	100.0
Tamale	56	56.0	30	30.0	3	3.0	4	4.0	7	7.0	100	100.0
Total	278	100.0	42	100.0	11	100.0	29	100.0	40	100.0	400	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

While Kuu-Ire (2009) traced the genesis of Northern conflicts to slave raiders, particularly Samori Babatu and Amrahi, Maasole (2007), Awedoba (2005) and Bacho (2005) blamed such conflicts on ethnic and chieftaincy misunderstandings. They were of the view that Northern conflicts are influenced by politicians and influential individuals who consolidate their powerful political and economic positions by inciting people to fight. When disadvantaged people see each other as enemies, they are unable to unite in demanding accountability and development support from their leadership.

It appears that the effect of colonial government neglect of Northern Ghana on the people's current economic situation is fading from the collective memory of Ghanaians. This situation is not being helped by the media's failure to remind Ghanaians of this historical injustice. The media's concentration on making headline news out of Northern conflicts may have influenced respondents into believing that conflicts are the main cause of Northern Ghana's underdevelopment.

Mass media editors also gave reasons for the high poverty levels in Northern Ghana. The Assistant News Editor of *Ghanaian Chronicle*, said that poverty in Northern Ghana should be blamed on residents of the area. He indicated that Northern Ghana has had many initiatives aimed at enhancing development. Paramount among such initiatives is the policy of free education. In his opinion, residents of Northern Ghana have made little use of such initiatives since they waste resources on conflicts. According to the Assistant News Editor, government spends too much resources containing conflicts in Northern Ghana.

Bening (1971) blamed the colonial government for the plight of the North. The Deputy Editor of *Public Agenda*, supported such earlier findings that historical neglect of the North by European colonial masters was a main cause of Northern Ghana's poverty. He debunked assertions that Northern Ghana is responsible for its plight, stating instead that the area lacks opportunities for development. According to him, there should be a conscious effort to bridge the gap between Northern Ghana and the rest of the country.

On the other hand, the Editor of *Daily Graphic* blamed Northern Ghana's underdevelopment on colonial government's neglect of the area. Like Salia (1987) who attributed the current poverty within the North to political bias against residents of the area, the Daily Graphic Editor said:

The current leaders of Ghana still maintain the colonial government mentality of using Northern Ghana as a cheap source of labour for cocoa farms and the mines. The media also portrays a stereotypical picture of the North as a conflict zone where indigenes of the area are not civilized. And such stereotypical picture of the North is a result of the fact that most journalists do not appreciate the historical disadvantage that Northern Ghana has suffered.

The Daily Graphic Editor indicated that conflicts in the North are often ignited by challenges the people face owing to their poverty. However, he also blamed some indigenes of the area for contributing to its underdevelopment since there are some rich northerners who do not even educate their children.

The Head of Radio News at GBC was of the view that contrary to accusations about the failure of Northern elite to assist their kith and kin, the elite should not be blamed for the underdevelopment of their part of Ghana. Like Bening (1977) and Songsore (2003), the GBC News Editor laid the blame for Northern Ghana's underdevelopment on historical factors since the colonial masters bequeathed a lopsided form of development in favour of Southern Ghana. He was of the view that apart from Ghana's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who attempted bridging the development gap, successive governments did very little in this direction.

On his part, *Metro TV* News Producer blamed the underdevelopment of the area on the historical discrimination against the area in many sectors of development, especially education. "Northern Ghana is still discriminated against resulting in low levels of education, poor infrastructure and lack of irrigation facilities. Indeed but for such discrimination, inhabitants of the North are very hard working people. However, in the face of such constraints, they can do little to help themselves". He was, however, of the view that in some cases, Northerners must take the blame for their underdevelopment since indigenes of Northern Ghana in positions of responsibility do not aggressively advocate for the development of the area.

Media managers' acknowledgement that Northern Ghana's poverty has a historical antecedents and newspaper readers' affirmation that the North deserves special attention in development are significant recognition that media advocacy could be engineered for resource mobilization to enhance development of the

area. However, analyses of media content between July 2008 and June 2009, as presented in Chapter 5 of this thesis, showed that the media was not making adequate efforts to call the attention of governments and other development partners to focus on Ghana's three poorest regions. Since there is media goodwill for the north to be supported, media advocacy could be triggered to speed up development of the area. This raises the question of which type of media to use for such advocacy.

Obviously, media which is most patronized and frequently carries development news on Northern Ghana would be most effective in advocating for development of the area. This led the researcher into establishing from newspaper readers their major sources of development news on Northern Ghana.

Source of development news on Northern Ghana

As with results of the 1975 nation-wide survey that was conducted by the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Ghana to determine the sources of information on selected national affairs, results of the present study showed that the mass media is the major source of information for development purposes. However, the significance of radio as leading source of information has dwindled since the 1975 study owing to expanded access to other broadcast media particularly television. Ansah (1984) reported that in the 1975 study, 64% of respondents cited radio as their leading source of information as against 43% of the sample of this study who chose radio.

From Table 26, it emerged that TV was the main source of Northern development news for residence of Accra. This contrasts with the situation where more than half of Kumasi respondents obtained much of their development news from radio. Majority of respondents from Tamale and Takoradi also obtained much of their development news from radio.

Table 26: Place of residence and sources of development news

City of Residence	Sources of development news										Total	
	Television		Radio		Newspapers		Internet		Family & Friends			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Accra	36	36.0	33	33.0	28	28.0	1	1.0	2	2.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	29	29.0	53	53.0	13	13.0	3	3.0	2	2.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	43	43.0	44	44.0	11	11.0	2	2.0	0	0.0	100	100.0
Tamale	40	40.0	42	42.0	13	13.0	1	1.0	1	1.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

The fact that television emerged as the leading source of development news for Accra residents is hardly surprising. As the capital of Ghana, Accra is the most cosmopolitan city in Ghana with more television station presence and, by extension usage, compared to other parts of Ghana. Thus, while television is the most appropriate means of disseminating development information for Accra

residents, radio serves that purpose best for residents of Tamale, Kumasi and Takoradi.

Sex and source of development news

It is not only place of residence which may have a bearing on a person's media consumption habits. Gender could also influence such habits. As indicated in Table 27, females watch television and listen to radio more than males. Females, more than males, also resorted to friends and family members as sources of news, while male respondents read newspapers and used the internet more often than females.

Table 27: Sex of newspaper readers and main source of development news

Sex	Source of development news											
	Television		Radio		Newspapers		Internet		Family & Friends		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	112	35.6	133	42.2	57	18.1	9	2.9	4	1.3	100	100.0
Female	36	42.4	39	45.9	8	9.4	0	0.0	2	2.4	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Though both males and females obtained much of their development news on Northern Ghana from radio, females watch television more than males.

Therefore, any development messages meant for females could be best channeled through television and radio, but not through newspapers. In addition to radio and television, it makes sense to use newspapers when communicating to male audiences within the study areas since a significant number of males read newspapers.

Educational attainment and source of development news

There was evidence from the study that educational attainment had an effect on the type of mass medium one depended on for development news. As presented in Table 28, though radio and television emerged favourites among respondents across different levels of education, JHS leavers listened to radio more than SHS holders and tertiary level respondents.

Table 28: Educational attainment and source of development news

Level of education	Source of development news											
	Television		Radio		Newspapers		Internet		Family & Friends		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
JHS	36	36.0	43	43.0	11	11.0	9	9.0	1	1.0	100	100.0
SHS	34	34.0	36	36.0	17	17.0	12	12.0	1	1.0	100	100.0
Tertiary	31	31.0	33	33.0	22	22.0	14	14.0	0	0.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

It is clear that while radio and TV are appropriate media for communicating development messages to audiences irrespective of their educational levels, newspapers may not be appropriate for communicating to audiences whose highest educational attainment is JHS since such audiences hardly read newspapers. It is also worth noting that even respondents who indicated having obtained news of Northern Ghana from newspapers did so only occasionally.

Frequency of listening to or reading news of Northern Ghana

Frequent access to news on Northern Ghana is important for educating people on the development challenges confronting residents of that part of the country. Also, the frequency with which media audiences read or listened to news from Northern Ghana could be an indicator of how often the media published stories from that part of the country. To enable a determination of the frequency with which newspaper readers had access to news from Northern Ghana, one of the survey questions attempted to explore how often respondents read news stories emanating from Northern Ghana.

The results suggests that 14.2 percent of the readers could recall "very often" reading stories from Northern Ghana, while slightly more than a quarter (26.8%) indicated that they had "often" read stories from Northern Ghana. Half of the respondents had "not often" read about Northern Ghana. As Table 29 shows, Kumasi residents have been the most frequent readers while Takoradi residents were the least readers of news from Northern Ghana.

Table 29: Frequency of reading news on Northern Ghana

City of Residence	Frequency of reading stories on Northern Ghana									
	Very often		Often		Not often		Not at all often		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Accra	13	13.0	15	15.0	55	55.0	17	17.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	21	21.0	33	33.0	40	40.0	6	6.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	8	8.0	31	31.0	51	51.0	10	10.0	100	100.0
Tamale	15	15.0	28	28.0	54	54.0	3	3.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

The newspaper readers interviewed gave the impression that the electronic media carried news from the North more often than the print media published stories on development from Northern Ghana. Unlike the newspapers where half of the respondents said they did “not often” read stories from Northern Ghana, almost 40 percent (39.9%) of media consumers said they had “not often” heard or viewed news from Northern Ghana on radio and TV. This view contradicts results of content analyses of the broadcast and print media between July, 2008 and June, 2009 which established that the broadcast media aired a total of 364 news items as against newspaper publications totaling 557 on Northern Ghana. Respondents’ indication of having heard more electronic news items than they read from the papers may be an indication that they listened to radio and viewed television more

often than they read newspapers. From Table 30, it is clear that Accra residents were the least exposed to stories from Northern Ghana.

Table 30: Frequency of hearing broadcast news on Northern Ghana

Place of Residence	Frequency of hearing broadcast news on Northern Ghana									
	Very often		Often		Not often		Not at all often		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Accra	14	14.0	14	14.0	59	59.0	13	13.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	23	23.0	45	45.0	31	31.0	1	1.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	23	23.0	36	36.0	34	34.0	7	7.0	100	100.0
Tamale	16	16.0	44	44.0	35	35.0	5	5.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

It also emerged that the higher a respondent's education, the less likely he/she was to have "often" heard on radio or viewed on TV, news stories about Northern Ghana. Table 30 shows that majority (46%) of tertiary level respondents had "not often" heard or viewed stories from Northern Ghana, while 16.0 percent had "not at all" heard or viewed such stories. Since majority of the tertiary level respondents in the present study were employed in the formal sector, they had less time to watch television and listen to radio as compared to respondents who had attained senior high school and junior high school education and, being unemployed, had more time to watch television and listen to radio. This could

explain why respondents with lower levels of education attested to having heard or viewed more development news than their counterparts with higher education.

Table 31: Educational attainment and frequency of hearing or viewing broadcast news

Level of education	Source of development news									
	Very often		Often		Not often		Not at all often		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
JHS	36	36.0	43	43.0	11	11.0	9	9.0	100	100.0
SHS	34	34.0	36	36.0	17	17.0	12	12.0	100	100.0
Tertiary	15	15.0	23	23.0	46	46.0	16	16.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

The fact that audiences with less education recollected having read or listened to Northern stories is an indication that they consume the media more frequently than their more educated counterparts. This could be the result of the fact that highly educated audiences were so busy working that they had little time to watch television or listen to radio as against their less educated counterparts who were unemployed and therefore had sufficient time to listen to radio and watch television. The fact that less educated respondents listened to radio and watched television more than their more educated counterparts also means that development messages meant for the less educated could be channeled through

the mass media. For audiences who have tertiary level education, interpersonal channels of communication could be explored.

Newspaper readers' views on role of the media in development of Northern Ghana

Aside expressing their views on the frequency of reading or listening to development news from Northern Ghana, respondents also indicated the contribution of the mass media in developing Northern Ghana.

Like Obeng-Quaidoo (1964), Brydon and Legge (1996), Tufte (2004) and Karlyn (2001), newspaper readers who were interviewed as part of this study recognized the educational role of the mass media. More than half of newspaper readers (54.8%) felt that the mass media have educated residents of Northern Ghana on development issues, while 17.8 percent were of the view that the media have contributed toward maintenance of peace. Also, more than a tenth (11.2%) argued that the media are advocates for development, and more than a tenth of the respondents (11.0%) opined that the media mobilizes residents of Northern Ghana for development. For 5.3 percent of respondents, the developmental role of the mass media is to provide entertainment.

However, as shown in Table 32, majority of respondents resident within Accra felt the media's role is to mobilize residents of Northern Ghana for development purposes. Indeed, only residents of Accra felt the need to use the mass media for mobilizing communities for development purposes.

Table 32: Place of residence and views on media's role in development

Place of residence	Role of the media in development												Total
	Advocacy for support		Education on development		Maintenance of peace		Entertaining residents		Mobilizing resident for development				
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Accra	18	18.0	20	20.0	3	3.0	15	15.0	44	44.0	100	100.0	
Kumasi	9	9.0	68	68.0	20	20.0	3	3.0	0	0.0	100	100.0	
Takoradi	12	12.0	62	62.0	25	25.0	1	1.0	0	0.0	100	100.0	
Tamale	6	6.0	69	69.0	23	23.0	2	2.0	0	0.0	100	100.0	

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Unlike findings of Chapman et al (2003), which established that the educational role of the media took the form of extensive and sustained media campaigns on specific health, agriculture and economic issues, what newspaper readers surveyed for this study called educational role of the media were merely news items on development issues. Respondents could not recollect any media campaigns on specific areas of development.

Beyond their traditional roles of educating, informing and entertaining people as well as advocating for development, the media, as part of their social responsibility, sometimes initiate development projects or sources funding for development projects. They do this by appealing to corporate organizations, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations for financial and material resources to assist deprived communities or vulnerable group of people. The study established the extent to which media houses went beyond their traditional roles in assisting the development of Northern Ghana by posing the question: "How actively is the media contributing towards the development of Northern Ghana?" Almost half of the respondents (49.8%) felt the media had not played an active role, with 30 percent rating the media's performance as "active", while more than a tenth of respondents (11.8%) rated the media role as "very active" and 8.5 percent felt the media has not been "at all active" in promoting the development of Northern Ghana. Results from the study also showed that the higher the respondent's level of education, the more he/she felt that the media was not active in its contribution to Northern Ghana's development. For instance, while a fifth (20%) of JHS graduates opined that the media was very active in contributing to

Northern development, only 15.2 percent of SHS graduates and 10.9 percent of tertiary level respondents felt the same as shown in Table 33.

Table 33: Level of education and views on how active the media is in development

Level of education	How active media is in development								Total	
	Very active		Active		Not active		Not at all active			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
JHS	2	16.7	4	33.3	4	33.3	2	16.7	100	100.0
SHS	10	15.2	25	37.9	28	42.4	3	4.5	100	100.0
Tertiary	35	10.9	91	28.3	167	51.9	29	9.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Reasons why respondents felt the media had not been actively promoting the development of Northern Ghana were that the media gives exaggerated and prejudiced accounts of events in Northern Ghana (67.2%) and also delays in reporting positive issues (16%) from that part of the country. Respondents who opined that the media has actively pursued the development of Northern Ghana also explained that the North is made visible through the media (12.2%) and that the media helps to prevent conflicts in Northern Ghana (4.5%).

Media editors' views on role of the media in development of Northern Ghana

Media editors also gave their opinions on the role their institutions play in developing Northern Ghana. In line with the findings of Fabrizio (2007) that the media plays an active role in poverty reduction by raising public awareness and debate on deprived communities as well as shifting public attention to poverty issues, most media managers felt their stations have contributed to the reduction of poverty by raising public awareness and debate on the plight of Northern Ghana. The Deputy Editor of *Chronicle* indicated that the paper plays a major role in promoting the development of Northern Ghana. "Chronicle has reported extensively on challenges facing agriculture in the North. We have projected the cotton industry in that part of Ghana. When cotton farmers were neglected by government, the paper articulated the plight of the farmers until government responded to their grievances", he said.

In the area of health, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* has published stories extensively on communities within Northern Ghana which do not have access to healthcare delivery. The paper also contributed to education by exposing shortcomings like pupils sitting under trees, lack of schools for some communities where pupils have to walk long distances to attend schools, as well as lack of facilities for the University for Development Studies. According to the *Chronicle's* Assistant Editor, the paper has constantly brought to the fore infrastructural inadequacies like poor road and telecommunication network within Northern Ghana. Again, environmental stories of the paper focused on

deforestation, bush burning and people, up North, who reside in the same compound with cattle.

Public Agenda also contributes to the development of Northern Ghana by bringing the attention of policy makers to the plight of the North. The Deputy Editor of the paper stated: "Though the paper does not have a specific page devoted to coverage of the North, it works with NGOs which have an interest in the development of that part of Ghana to publish many stories from the North ... the paper can be given a 70 percent grading for its contribution to the development of Northern Ghana". Similarly, the *Daily Graphic* Editor was of the view that the paper has contributed substantially to the development of the North owing to its coverage of development issues emanating from that part of Ghana. According to him, *Graphic* has a regional file column where every 10 days one region of Ghana gets the spotlight. The three regions of the North also benefit from the regional file page.

Editors of the electronic media applaud their contribution to the development of Ghana's poorest regions. The Head of News of GBC Radio was of the view that the media is making significant contribution to the political, social and economic development of Northern Ghana. In line with the findings of Lerner (1958), Pye (1963) and Schramm (1964), GBC's Head of News drew attention to the educational role of the mass media. He cited the three regional FM stations in Northern Ghana – Radio Upper West, URA Radio and Radio Savannah – as having done exceptionally well in educating ordinary residents of Northern Ghana to eradicate guinea worm and prevent the spread of HIV/Aids. "GBC's

regional FM stations also champion girl-child education in Northern Ghana and constantly inform inhabitants of the area on government policies.

For instance, on 17th February, 2009, GBC Radio did a story to the effect that there was no single pathologist in Northern Ghana. The station did an update on the story the following day by interviewing stakeholders in health on the issue". The Head of News emphasized that GBC has contributed towards bridging the gap between the North and the South through coverage of vulnerable groups like the young women who travel from Northern Ghana to Southern Ghana in search of greener pastures. The state broadcaster also highlights educational programmes and the work of non-governmental organizations within Northern Ghana.

The Station's Head of Radio News continued:

Each time government delays in paying feeding grants for northern second cycle institutions, GBC takes up the issue and advocates for payment of the grants. Additionally, GBC teaches residents of Northern Ghana their rights and responsibilities to ensure that they live at peace with their neighbours in environmentally friendly circumstances, with minimal attacks from diseases. Owing to the Corporation's policy of regional balance in news broadcast, it devotes sufficient airtime to coverage of Northern Ghana. Additionally, the station has regional diary programmes which ensure equitable coverage of all parts of the country. While some media houses concentrate on covering Northern conflicts,

GBC editors make a conscious effort to select development-oriented stories from the North.

The Producer of News at *Metro TV* explained that the station's news bulletins are usually in segments covering development sectors like health, economy, education, water and agriculture. According to him, the distance of Northern Ghana from the station's location does not prevent coverage of that part of Ghana since there are freelancers in the North who cover the news. He indicated that the station strives towards regional balance in its coverage. He admitted, however, that regional balance is not attainable since the station does not get sufficient stories from all parts of the country. According to him, in Northern Ghana, *Metro TV* signals can reach only Tamale, Bolgatanga and Wa, which are the regional capitals. All the same, the station's coverage brings to the attention of duty bearers the development challenges faced by Northerners. He gave an instance of such reportage:

The station did a story about children sitting under trees to learn in the Upper East Region. This story got an angry response from one District Chief Executive from the area. The *Metro TV* News Producer was of the view that beyond presenting development challenges, the station, particularly using its Survivor Stories, celebrates successes chalked by ordinary residents of Northern Ghana. The station has also covered stories on the prospects of sheabutter processing, the potential of *kapaala* (a variety of sorghum), the use of poverty alleviation funds in Northern

Ghana, smock weaving in Upper East and the tourist potential of Yezutang in the Upper West Region.

He indicated that through coverage of the North, the media is assisting in highlighting the gap between the North and the Southern parts of Ghana.

Similar to the views of newspaper readers, the Deputy Editor of *Chronicle* opined that the Ghanaian media has not been very effective in covering development issues from Northern Ghana. According to him, only *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Chronicle* publish positive stories from Northern Ghana. The other press houses give the North negative coverage. He stated, "The media have not lived up to their responsibility of educating and informing Northerners on development issues since most media houses in Ghana do not have correspondents from that part of the country. This fact notwithstanding, the Ghanaian media has forced government to deal with the situation of poverty within that part of the country. Owing to the media's advocacy role, some parts of the North benefited from the Millennium Development Goals. Government has also accorded assistance to farmers within Northern Ghana and opened up roads in hitherto inaccessible parts of the North".

For the Deputy Editor of *Public Agenda*, the paper and the state-owned ones are according sufficient coverage to Northern Ghana. However, the other privately-owned papers which have overriding commercial interests pay little attention to the North, since that area offers little financial benefits for press houses. The Deputy Editor was of the view that *Public Agenda* has, through its coverage, contributed to bridging the development gap between the North and the

South by exposing development challenges of Northern Ghana and advocating for governments' assistance towards ameliorating the plight of residents of the area.

The Editor of *Daily Graphic*, on the other hand, said that his paper was not satisfied with the level of coverage accorded Northern Ghana. According to him, poor state of infrastructure in Northern Ghana and inadequate financial resources prevented the paper from according adequate coverage to the area. He indicated that distribution of newspapers within the Northern parts of Ghana is difficult owing to the poor state of roads. "Tamale and Bolgatanga get their copies of *Daily Graphic* around 5:00pm on the day of publication, while Wa gets its copies a day after the publication. He indicated that during the regime of Colonel Kutu Achaempong, newspapers were airlifted to the North to ensure timely distribution". According to him, the paper had considered the option of airlifting papers to the North but could not implement that option owing to the high cost.

Media coverage of Northern Ghana

On the basis of their assessment of the media's contribution to the development of the North, newspaper readers argued that Northern Ghana deserved more media spotlight than it is receiving currently.

When respondents were asked whether Northern Ghana deserves more coverage, 80 percent answered in the affirmative citing reasons including the fact that Northern Ghana has development potentials which remain unexplored (55%); information and education are crucial for the development of Northern Ghana (24%) and Northern Ghana gets unfair coverage (7.5%). Others were also of the view that media coverage of the North could assist in poverty alleviation (7.2%),

bring about conflict resolution (4.5%) and contribute to peace of the area (4.5%). However, more males (83.5%) than females (69.4%) were of the view that Northern Ghana deserves more media coverage than it was being accorded.

Establishment of media houses in Northern Ghana

Various researchers have pointed at the paucity of media presence in rural parts of Ghana (Eiler and Oepen, 1991 and Asante, 1999). More recently, Gadzekpo (2008) has bemoaned the fact that information flow in media-rich Accra and Kumasi helps residents access and assess governance better. The insufficiency of media presence within rural areas where the majority of Ghanaians live affects the manner in which the Accra-centred Ghanaian media thus cover the rest of Ghana.

The researcher attempted establishing from media consumers whether there is the need for the establishment of media houses within Northern Ghana to enhance coverage of the area. When asked whether there is the need for the establishment of a TV station in Northern Ghana 78.5 percent answered in the affirmative while 21.5 percent felt there was no need for any such TV station. However, as Table 34 shows, majority of Kumasi respondents rejected the idea of the establishment of a TV station in Northern Ghana. Kumasi residents' refusal to support the establishment of a television station in Northern Ghana could be a result of their realization that that part of the country has sufficient media coverage. Tamale and Accra residents strongly supported the establishment of a television station for Northern Ghana owing to their belief that there is insufficient media coverage of Northern Ghana.

Table 34: Respondents' Views on Establishment of Television Station in Northern Ghana

Place of residence	Views on establishment of television station					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Accra	94	94.0	6	6.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	45	45.0	55	55.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	81	81.0	19	19.0	100	100.0
Tamale	94	94.0	6	6.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Respondents who considered the need for a Northern TV station cited television's ability to expose the challenges and explore the potential of Northern Ghana as their reason for supporting the presence of a TV station in the North. Ironically, those who opposed the establishment of a TV station for the North argued that a TV station for the North could only fuel conflict in the area. With media plurality and the surge in private media ownership as well as suggestions that state-owned *GTV* be privatized, it was rather surprising that almost half of newspaper readers interviewed felt government has the responsibility of establishing a TV station for Northern Ghana.

Ansah (1979) and Asante (1999) both complained that even when mass media coverage is extended to rural communities, their programmes are not

linguistically accessible. So we sought views of newspaper readers as to whether there is the need for the establishment of newspapers in Northern local languages. An overwhelming 70 percent supported the establishment of such papers while 30 percent opposed the initiative. Accra respondents gave the strongest endorsement for the establishment of newspapers published in local Northern languages, while Kumasi residents gave the least endorsement of the idea, as indicated on Table 35.

Table 35: Place of residence and views on establishment of newspapers published in local languages

Place of residence	Establishment of newspapers published in local languages					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Accra	85	85.0	15	15.0	100	100.0
Kumasi	52	52.0	48	48.0	100	100.0
Takoradi	68	68.0	32	32.0	100	100.0
Tamale	75	75.0	25	25.0	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008/2009

Majority of respondents who supported the publication of newspapers in Northern languages felt that such an initiative will stimulate greater understanding of development issues. Some respondents also said the use of local languages will educate Northerners to participate in developing their area, while others indicated

that majority of residents of Northern Ghana cannot read and write English and would benefit more from local language publications.

Challenges to media coverage of Northern Ghana

To enable the researcher gain insight into reasons why the media do not give adequate coverage to Northern Ghana, the author asked media gatekeepers the challenges involved in extending sufficient coverage to the North. The Assistant Editor of *Chronicle* identified various challenges which inhibit coverage of Northern Ghana. According to him, many parts of the North are not easily accessible owing to bad roads and lack of vehicles plying some roads. Where an event is taking place in remote parts of the North, journalists find it difficult covering such events. The Deputy Editor of *Chronicle* further noted that, there are inadequate internet access and postal services in the North, and this makes the work of journalists in that part of Ghana difficult.

He concluded that it is expensive sending journalists to Northern Ghana. This explains why the paper has inadequate human resource presence in the North. It has no office within the Upper West Region and hardly gets stories from that region. Though it has offices in the Northern Regional capital, Tamale, and Bolgatanga, the Upper East Regional capital, such offices are poorly furnished and resourced. The Tamale office, manned by one trained journalist, has only one computer, no internet facility and no means of transportation. The Bolgatanga office is even worse off with neither a computer, nor an internet facility or means of transportation. Only one trained journalist also works for the newspaper within the Upper East Region.

Public Agenda's Deputy Editor cited inadequate internet access, bad road network and lack of electricity in Northern Ghana as major hindrances to media coverage of that part of the country. According to him, the unwillingness of officialdom in the North to give information also makes the work of journalists difficult in that part of the country. Similarly, the Editor of *Daily Graphic* mentioned difficulty in accessing information because of traditional beliefs as a major challenge to accessing information from the North. He said, "Negative practices such as female genital mutilation and witchcraft are not reported since the reporter risks being lynched should he / she attempt exposing such practices. Also, lack of access to some parts of the North and unwillingness to accept postings to the North constitute major challenges to media practice in the North". *Graphic*, the Editor stated, often had to employ the services of stringers since qualified journalists are often unwilling to serve in the North. The Editor indicated that though the paper has offices in all three regional capitals of Northern Ghana, the offices are neither well-staffed nor are they well-equipped. Each region of the North has two journalists, while the offices are only provided computers and fax machines. None of the three offices has either a vehicle or internet facilities.

For the Head of GBC Radio News, the media's lack of sensitivity to problems of Northern Ghana is the major challenge to providing accurate coverage of the area. He indicated that most reporters have not been exposed to the development challenges of the North. According to him, his negative perception of Northern Ghana changed only upon his return from a visit to that

part of the country. He mentioned bad roads and inadequate vehicles for journalists as significant challenges to reporting from Northern Ghana.

The Producer of News at *Metro TV* stated:

Reporters and editors may give negative coverage to Northern Ghana owing to their genuine ignorance of happenings there rather than an exhibition of any malicious intent to denigrate the people. This is because most reporters and editors face genuine language difficulties, while others lack an appreciation of the people's culture.

He observed that *Metro TV* does not have its own reporters based in Northern Ghana. The station depends on stringers to cover the area. For him, the vast nature of Northern Region is a challenge to its coverage since no single stringer can cover the entire Region. Additionally, stringers who cover the area are not provided cameras. They have to acquire cameras on their own for the work. This often affects quality of the video footage, and ultimately, the quality of the news stories. Besides, stringers face logistical constraints as well as difficulties in accessing transportation to some remote parts of the North. For instance, "the stringer for the Upper West Region was swept away by flood waters while going to cover a story and almost got drowned", the Producer stated, adding that *Metro TV* has no single office of its own in the North.

Reconceptualizing development journalism

The study results showed that Ghanaian journalists do not engage in development reporting for the benefit of Northern Ghana. Journalists failed to

adhere to the tenets of development journalism namely, engaging in constructive and positive reportage to facilitate development, conscientizing deprived communities to enhance political participation and using local sources of expertise to identify home-grown solutions to development challenges. Development journalism also recommends that journalists evaluate the relevance of development projects to the needs of deprived communities and advocate for the interests of such needy communities. Additionally, development reporters are enjoined to focus more on long term development issues than day-to-day coverage of events.

In violation of the tenets of development journalism, majority of stories reported on Northern Ghana were based on coverage of planned, day-to-day events rather than giving priority to long term development issues. Ansah (1990) had criticized event-oriented news as inadequate for the development of Africa. This tenet of development journalism falls in line with the sustainable development approach which argues for long-term utilization of natural resources. However, while sustainability issues are essential for development, the lives of residents of deprived communities are influenced by day-to-day events which the development journalist cannot ignore. Each day, ordinary people are confronted with challenges of how to get good drinking water, food and healthcare as well as how to obtain fair prices for their farm produce. Such people must be able to overcome everyday challenges before looking forward to the future. This makes it imperative for the media to address the day-to-day economic and social challenges of ordinary citizens before focusing on long term issues.

Since the media obtained much of their information from organized events rather than researching to identify peculiar development challenges of Northern Ghana, the stories turned out to be hard news stories and not features. Unlike features which carry in depth coverage of issues based on research, hard news usually results from spot coverage of events with little independent enquiry. The results showed that 91.6 percent of print news and 93.1 percent of broadcast news items on Northern Ghana, were in the form of hard news. Ansah (1990) indicated that hard news cannot comprehensively satisfy the informational needs of Africa to facilitate development. Therefore, the Ghanaian media's recourse to hard news style of reporting failed to provide detailed analysis of the development challenges facing Northern Ghana. Stories in hard news style cannot adequately conscientize residents of Northern Ghana, or assist them to actively participate in the political processes that determine their destinies, as stipulated by development reporting.

Smith (2008) recommended that development journalists should focus on progress being made by deprived communities rather than cataloguing people's development challenges. This is contrary to the results of this study which showed that majority of broadcast media stories presented development challenges without making any attempt to propose a way forward for Northern Ghana. When a group of people are constantly reminded of their deplorable living circumstances without any attempt to give them hope of overcoming their deprivation, such people easily resign to their fate and are unable to initiate action towards bettering their situation.

More so, media coverage of Northern Ghana shows a disregard for the recommendation of Dare (2000) that development reporters must look beyond press conferences and polished news releases from government and political actors and find local sources of expertise. Dare (2000) also indicated that the development reporter must critically examine, evaluate and report the relevance of development projects to communities, and monitor the implementation of such projects to ensure that community members benefit from development initiatives. The stories in this study did not go beyond reporting the commissioning of projects by government. Journalists failed to publish follow-up stories on development projects to enable them assess the impact of projects on the lives of Northerners.

While monitoring project implementation is a useful exercise in ensuring proper utilization of scarce resources, overconcentration on donor or government funded projects has the tendency of perpetuating dependency syndrome. As Goulet (1971), Todaro (1977) and Bryant and White (1982) argued, development entails enhancing one's self-esteem and ability to make choices about the future. Therefore, beyond ensuring proper application of donor funds for community development, journalists need to assist deprived communities to identify and fully utilize local resources to enhance development.

This study also showed that journalists failed to think outside the box in coming up with indigenous solutions to alleviate Northern Ghana's plight. Against the advice of Fleury (2008), stories on Northern Ghana did not attempt to present home-grown solutions to pressing development challenges. Development

journalists have the tendency of sitting at their editorial desks to proffer solutions to the development of communities which they have hardly ever visited, or using the views of development theorists as panacea to the progress of deprived communities. This goes against the principles of participatory development communication which posits that beneficiaries of development must express their views and make suggestions that can be integrated into the development process (Zakes, 1993). Frazer and Restrepo-Estrada (1998) also stated that before a group of people can participate in development, they must have appropriate information. Such information need not come from foreign development experts. Using participatory communication methods as espoused in the community radio concept, development journalists can arrive at home-grown solutions to development challenges.

In effect, the media did not live up to the expectation of development reporting as a tool for social justice and empowerment as well as a voice for the voiceless (Smith, 2008). Rather than speak for the marginalized, the media merely articulated the views of policy makers and the government. Journalists acted as propagandists and public relations tools for governments and corporate organizations rather than pursuing development objectives. This is partly a result of commercial interests being pursued by individual journalists and the media houses. Gadzekpo (2008), Suleiman (2002) and Agbenu (2009) have revealed that media men and women practice "soli", a situation where they collect monies from highly-placed individuals or organizations to give publicity to such people or

organizations. This means that in its present form and orientation, the Ghanaian media is unable to practice development journalism to the letter.

Viewed from the background of the fact that Ansah (1990), Gough (2002) and Smith (2008) have found adherence to the principles of development journalism as the most effective means of using the mass media for development of deprived areas, the Ghanaian media's inability to abide by development journalistic practices testifies to their ineffectiveness as development partners. Therefore, a more vibrant and radical approach to development communication, advocacy journalism, is required to bring Northern Ghana's development issues to the attention of the country's development partners.

Advocacy journalism

This is a type of development reportage which is aimed at promoting a specific political or social cause. Careless (2000) gave the following tenets of advocacy journalism:

- In writing a news story, the journalist must acknowledge his / her perspective from the very onset so that the reader knows the journalist's stand on the issues being discussed;
- The journalist ought to be truthful, accurate, and credible, rather than spreading propaganda, taking quotations or facts out of context, fabricating or falsifying information;

- The advocacy media need not give its opponents equal time or space to express contrary views. However, such media cannot totally ignore its opponents either;
- The advocacy journalist has to explore arguments that challenge his / her perspective, and report embarrassing facts that support the opposition.
- Journalists must avoid slogans, ranting, and polemics. Instead, they ought to articulate complex issues clearly and carefully; and
- They must be fair and thorough and make use of neutral sources to establish facts;

Advocacy journalists discount the traditional journalistic notion of objectivity in coverage and instead subjectively select and publish stories which address development challenges and propose ways of solving such challenges. Ansah (1990), Cose (1994), Campbell (1995) and more recently Berman (2004) have challenged the use of objectivity as the major guideline for news reporting. They argued that objectivity is not only difficult to attain but is also an unnecessary requirement in development reporting. Thus, the advocacy journalists make their agenda explicit, with a publicly acknowledged editorial point of view.

Careless (2000) laid the ground rule for advocacy journalism by stating that when the mainstream media ignores, trivializes or seriously distorts happenings within a community, such a community needs its own media. This study has established that news on Northern Ghana was not given much priority by both the print and electronic media. It also came out that only 2.2 percent of press publications on Northern Ghana made it to the front pages, while 26.1

percent of broadcast stories on Northern Ghana were headline news. Also, majority of press stories on Northern Ghana were less than a quarter page long and lacked enhancements with photographs.

Berman (2004) argued that since society is made up of various communities of varying interests and the mass media aims at the whole pool, the needs of smaller communities are often ignored. The advocacy media is targeted at a smaller audience and can delve deeper into the concerns of marginalized communities. This explains why, as the results of the present study testifies, the development needs of Northern Ghana were not adequately discussed by the mainstream media. Advocacy media is required to focus attention on the development priorities of Northern Ghana and to answer, clarify, balance or refute unfair publications about Northern Ghana in the mainstream media. Advocacy journalists would have to be further trained to have the humility to listen carefully and accurately to residents of the area voicing out their development challenges. Media men and women would also be expected to offer leadership, promote new norms and practices aimed at advancing the development of Northern Ghana rather than simply reporting on events.

The Head of GBC Radio News believes that the best way in which the media can contribute to the development of Northern Ghana is by advocating for the implementation of policies that will speed up the development of the area. He stated that the mass media should prioritize development stories from Northern Ghana and should scrutinize and monitor the implementation of ruling governments' policies towards Northern Ghana. The Head of GBC News stated

that the media ought to also exert endless pressure on governments to make good their promises towards development of that part of Ghana

As part of advocacy journalism, media persons ought to also indulge in campaigns aimed at drawing the attention of government and non-governmental organizations to challenges faced by residents of Northern Ghana. Advocacy journalism also requires constructive and positive reportage to facilitate development with less focus on day-to-day events and an emphasis on stories that promote long term development of Northern Ghana. To achieve this, there is the need for Ghanaian journalists to change their perception of news from the western concept of news being regarded as a saleable commodity (Ansah, 1990). News must be seen as a means of strengthening the cultural values of communities and presenting home-grown solutions to challenges which slow down development.

Working within the mainstream media environment and guided by the commercial orientation of the mainstream media, it is difficult for the advocacy journalist to achieve development objectives. The philosophy of community radios makes them more effective channels for advocacy journalism. Since community radios are usually owned by members of a community and are non-profit making entities, commercial interests cannot stand in the way of development advocacy. Additionally, the participatory nature of community radios offers community members fora to debate and reach consensus on their development process.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations made to enhance mass media coverage of development news emanating from Northern Ghana. The chapter further makes suggestions on potential areas that interested future researchers can explore.

Research summary

This study emerged from the background of evidence which showed that the mass media in Ghana mostly serve elitist audiences since programmes aired were either linguistically inaccessible to rural audiences or were of little relevance to the deprived communities. The study investigated the role the media plays in development, especially with regards to its contribution towards placing the development of Northern Ghana on the national agenda. It specifically established the amount and style of media coverage on development issues namely agriculture, education, the economy in general, gender, local governance and water and sanitation. It also assessed the extent to which the national media reports on development issues emanating from Northern Ghana.

The study was based on the concept of development journalism which advocates for constructive and positive reportage to facilitate development. Key variables of this concept included stories which:

- Were positive enough to encourage progress in the lives of Northern Ghanaians rather than stories which catalogued the people's development challenges;
- Conscientized residents of Northern Ghana and assisted them to actively participate in the political processes that determine their destinies.
- Used local sources of expertise to come out with ways of addressing development challenges confronting Northern Ghana;
- Presented home-grown solutions to pressing development problems;
- Critically examined and evaluated the relevance of development projects to the needs of residents of Northern Ghana.

The study analysed the content of major national media namely Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, Ghanaian Chronicle, Public Agenda, Radio Ghana, GTV and Metro TV to establish frequency and style of coverage accorded development news from Northern Ghana. Data was also gathered using in depth interviews with editors of the selected media house, and a survey of newspaper readers who were resident within Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale.

Summary of results

From the results and discussions thus far, the thesis findings can be summarized as follows:

- The Ghanaian media concentrates its coverage on partisan political issues to the detriment of development reportage;
- While the broadcast stations carried more development news compared to non-development news, it was the reverse with the newspapers. *Radio Ghana* was the leading broadcaster of development news while *Ghanaian Times* also emerged the highest publisher of such news among the selected print media. In all, the state-owned media carried more development news than the privately owned ones;
- When the media reported on development news, they often devoted little space to such stories. For instance, majority of newspaper stories on the North were less than a quarter page long. Over the one year period that the study spanned, the researcher came across only one *Ghanaian Chronicle* story which was more than one page long;
- Media stories were not accorded much prominence since very few stories appeared on the front page of papers or made headline news in the electronic media;
- Stories on the north were not given much enhancement either. Close to a quarter (25%) of the stories had no photographs accompanying them, neither did majority of the broadcast stories have actualities;
- Almost all media stories on the North were published as hard news stories rather than features, news commentaries or opinion pieces. This relates to the finding that the media obtain their stories mainly from planned events, and end up merely narrating happenings at such events rather than

researching into Northern development challenges and presenting such information in detailed feature stories

- The broadcast stations published more favourable stories than either neutral or unfavourable ones while the print media published more neutral stories than either favourable or unfavourable stories;
- Media reports on agriculture were more favourable than unfavourable. Favourable stories announced Government policies or assistance packages which were expected to impact positively on agricultural development within the study area. On the other hand, unfavourable stories on agriculture took the form of natural and manmade disasters, lack of market for farm produce and lack of conducive environment for agricultural production;
- On education, favourable stories reported on progress made in education or forms of support given to educational institutions within Northern Ghana. Majority of such stories focused on improvement in infrastructure rather than enhancement of quality education in the North. Unfavourable education stories also catalogued educational challenges within Northern Ghana faces without attempting to show the way forward;
- The mass media also accorded considerable coverage to development issues surrounding health, water and housing, gender, environment, local governance and economic issues;
- Both media editors and newspaper readers agree that there is a yawning gap in development between the North and the South. However, while the

Editors blame this development gap on colonial government, regarding the neglect of the North, newspaper readers felt Northern conflicts are mainly to be blamed for deprivation within the North;

- Again, both editors and newspaper readers agreed that the media are contributing substantially to the development of Northern Ghana. Media gatekeepers mentioned education, especially media publicity on children sitting under trees, as a major area of media advocacy for Northern development. Newspaper readers also pointed at education as a major area of media's coverage of the North. Analyses of media content further corroborated this since education stories in the media outnumbered stories on other areas of development;
- Besides education, the editors pointed at agriculture and health as sectors of development where they devoted much media attention;
- In spite of media managers' assertion that they had contributed substantially to the development of Northern Ghana, half of newspaper readers asserted that they had "not often" heard, viewed or read from the media, development stories from the North. The newspaper readers also indicated that majority of media reports from the North were negative stories about that part of Ghana; and
- An overwhelming 80 percent of newspaper readers felt there was the need for greater media attention to be paid to the development aspirations of Northern Ghanaians and endorsed the establishment of a television station

in the North, as well as the setting up of newspapers published in Northern languages.

Conclusions

- Though the editorial policy of media houses studied favours the objective, fair and balanced coverage of news, in practice media houses are neither objective, fair nor balanced in their coverage of Northern Ghana;
- The Ghanaian media is not in all fairness abiding by the tenets of development journalism which calls for “less political babbling; less intellectualizing; and get closer to life. More attention to how the masses of workers and peasants are building something new in their day-to-day work” (Kunczik, 1992: 84). Majority of stories analyzed concentrated on partisan political issues and few focused on activities of ordinary peasants who reside in the North;
- Media men and women practice little development journalism. This results from the fact that the media has no consistent plans aimed at using communication for development support particularly of deprived parts of Ghana. The media, instead, concentrates on coverage of planned events which often yield routine news reports articulating the views of persons in authority; and
- Much as media editors and newspaper readers admit to historical injustices against the North as well as a development gap between the north and the south, Ghana’s forth estate of the realm has failed to either advocate for

bridging the development gap between North and South, righting the wrongs of colonial injustices or even speeding up development of Northern Ghana.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made to ensure an active media which supports the development efforts of Northern Ghana. Analyses of media content as well as a survey of newspaper readers showed that there is inadequate media attention on Northern Ghana in spite of a plethora of research which points to the potential of the media for facilitating development. To enhance media coverage of the North, therefore, it is worth considering the following suggestions:

- The Deputy Editor of *Chronicle* proposed that media managers should accord some prominence to Northern Ghana by dedicating at least one page in each issue of their papers to Northern issues. Media personnel should constantly interview Northern Members of Parliament to abreast themselves with challenges of the area which could be brought to the notice of development partners;
- The Editor of *Daily Graphic* indicated that negative perceptions of Northern Ghana often feed into media coverage of the area. In order to change media perceptions of the North, the Ghana Journalists Association should organize study tours of Northern Ghana for journalists living in the South to enable them appreciate the development challenges which confront the North. Such tours would also help in stemming some

prejudices and stereotypes which inform coverage of Northern Ghana. Furthermore, Regional Coordinating Councils, municipal and district assemblies in the North should partner the media in coming out with a policy for the coverage of development issues from Northern Ghana. The media must also focus on the activities of the municipal and district assemblies as well as the work of members of parliament who hail from the area;

- Results of this study concluded that almost all media publications on Northern Ghana are hard news stories which are often given little prominence, enhancement or salience. Meanwhile, development reporting entails conducting in depth studies into the development challenges, aspirations and opportunities of various communities with a view to proposing development options to the people. Development reportage on Northern Ghana would be promoted if the media produces and publishes special feature programmes or articles on Northern development;
- Insufficient development news on the North has also been blamed on the presence of few trained journalists in that part of the country. To enhance coverage of Northern Ghana, managers of media houses should assign more reporters cover stories within Northern Ghana. Besides, the Department of African and General Studies of UDS could collaborate with the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) to train journalists who appreciate the culture of the North.

- Additionally, district assemblies in the North could sponsor the training of some indigenes and bond them, on completion of their training programmes, to practice development journalism within the districts where they benefited from such sponsorships;
- Proximity of the media to their sources of news is an important consideration on the amount of news hole devoted a particular area. Thus, the fact that head offices of the major media outlets are located in Accra is detrimental to the amount of news that is received from the North. Besides, as Ansah (1985), Asante (1999) and Yankah (2004) established, media messages are not linguistically accessible to the vast majority of Ghanaians. Therefore, metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies within Northern Ghana must establish community radio stations to complement the national broadcast service in providing community-specific or special-audience needs. The local and particular must combine with the national and general to satisfy local and national interests and development;
- Ansah (1983:48) justified television's developmental potential for rural areas saying, "television can help by producing magazines and documentaries highlighting some of the deplorable conditions in our rural areas so that public opinion can become sufficiently sensitized, or at least make our leaders feel guilty enough to want to translate their pious declarations into concrete action". In recognition of the development potential of this audio-visual medium, government, NGOs and private

businesspersons, particularly those who hail from Northern Ghana, must establish a television station each in the three regions of Northern Ghana to telecast development messages in local languages. With its powerful influence on people's behaviours and habits, Northern TV stations whose programmes are development-oriented could stem conflicts in the area and instill in the people positive habits necessary for development. An initiative in this direction has already been taken by an indigene of the North. Emmanuel Kudi Mwinilayuori's company Orakle Communications Consult has obtained a license from the National Communications Authority to set up *Jamaa TV* for the three Northern Regions. Politicians and other businesspersons from the area need to support the pioneering work of Mr. Mwinilayuori in this direction;

- The use of languages on the broadcast media which listeners within Northern Ghana do not understand is a development challenge that must be dealt with. Ansah (1985:52), advocated the use of minority languages on *Radio Ghana* when he stated: "the [development] situation is particularly disadvantageous for those speakers of Gurenne, Dagaari, Kassem and Kusaal in the Northern and Upper Regions whose languages are not used on the national service". Local FM stations may have come to bridge the linguistic gap on radio but television remains a largely urbanized medium. I recommend that *GTV* reduces the number of its English Language programmes, particularly entertainment programmes

- like soap operas, and introduce programmes in Northern Ghanaian languages to enhance development communication within those areas; and
- Journalism training institutions such as GIJ and the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon must reorient trainee journalists' perception of news to conform with Ghana's development realities. Journalists must be trained to realize that as Ansah (1990: 36) indicated, "...by recognizing and reporting on the activities of ordinary people, projecting their achievements and making them subjects of news, the media will confer status and dignity on them and enable them to articulate their views. This will be a tremendous contribution of the media to the process of social transformation".

Areas for further studies

This study has brought to the fore the need for further research into the media's role in the development of deprived communities. The underlisted areas can be explored in future research:

- Research into the media consumption habits of audiences who reside in deprived communities may reveal their mass media preferences to assist policy formulators and implementers to effectively implement development communications strategies;
- It may also prove useful for development communicators should they obtain data on the extent to biased media coverage of Northern Ghana has

influenced public perceptions about inhabitants of that part of Ghana and also affected the attitudes and behaviours of Northerners; and

- In the course of this study, the possibility of monetary or material inducements determining the volume or quality of media coverage of organizations or institutions became apparent. More scientific enquiries are needed into the extent to which corruption influences media coverage in Ghana.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EDITORS

1. Factors which account for selection of stories for publication.
2. Determinants of prominence given to certain stories.
3. Role media can play in development of Northern Ghana, especially in the following sectors: Economy, Agriculture, Education, Healthcare, Water and Sanitation, Local Governance and Gender.
4. Assessment of how effectively the media has played this role.
5. The extent to which the media are assisting to address the historical imbalances between the North and South.
6. Role of the media in alleviating poverty in Northern Ghana.
7. The extent to which the media have played their traditional roles of educating and informing Northerners.
8. Personal views on the development of Northern Ghana.
9. Challenges to media coverage of Northern Ghana.
10. Human and material resources available in offices located in the three regions of the North.
11. Ways in which the media can significantly influence development of Northern Ghana.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SURVEY OF NEWSPAPER READERS

1. How often have you read news stories emanating from Northern Ghana?
 - a. Very often
 - b. often
 - c. Not often
 - d. Not at all often
2. How often have you heard / viewed news stories emanating from Northern Ghana?
 - a. Very often
 - b. often
 - c. Not often
 - d. Not at all often
3. Do you think Northern Ghana deserves more news coverage than it is currently receiving?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Assign reasons for your response to question 3.
5. What type of news stories from Northern Ghana dominates the major newspapers?
 - a. Positive coverage
 - b. negative coverage
 - c. neutral coverage.
6. Mention some of the positive and negative stories about Northern Ghana which you can recollect.
7. What role can the media play in the development of Northern Ghana?
 - a. Advocacy for support
 - b. educating the people on development issues
 - c. Maintaining peace
 - d. Other (specify)
8. How actively is the media contributing towards the development of Northern Ghana?
 - a. Very actively
 - b. actively
 - c. Not actively
 - d. Not at all active
9. Assign reasons for your response to Q. 8.
10. Do you think Northern Ghana is getting its fair share of development from the national kitty?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
11. Why do you say so?
12. What can government do to enhance the development of Northern Ghana?
 - a. Channel resources into the development of Northern Ghana
 - b. Develop the human resource of the North

- c. Establish industries in the north to give employment opportunities for Northerners.
- d. Assist in poverty alleviation
- e. Develop agriculture

13. Do you see the need for the establishment of newspapers in Northern local languages and meant for the development of the North?

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. Give reasons for your response to Q. 13.

15. If yes to question 13, who should spearhead the establishment of newspapers?

- a. Government
- b. NGOs / donor agencies
- c. Private businesspersons
- d. Patriotic Northerners
- e. Other

16. How wide is the disparity in development between the Southern and Northern parts of the country?

- a. Very wide
- b. wide
- c. not wide
- d. Not wide at all

17. Mention in order of significance three leading areas of development where Northern Ghana lags behind the rest of the country.

18. What are the causes of the North – South development gap exist?

19. Is the need to bridge the North – South development gap?

- a. Yes
- b. No

20. How can the North – South development gap be bridged?

21. Do you see the need for the establishment of a TV station in the North to specifically address the development needs of that part of the country?

- a. Yes
- b. No

22. Assign reasons for your answer to question 21.

23. If you answered yes to question 21, who should spearhead the establishment of such a TV station?

- a. Government
- b. NGOs / donor agencies

c. Private businesspersons d. Patriotic Northerners e. Other
24. Does Northern Ghana deserve special attention in the national developmental agenda?
a. Yes b. No

25. Give reasons for your answer to question 24.

26. How will you rate the contribution of people of Northern origin who are in positions of trust to the development of the North?

- a. Excellent b. Very Good c. good
d. Fair e. poor f. very poor

27. Who has the greatest responsibility to develop Northern Ghana?

- a. President of Ghana (Central Government)
b. Northern Ministers and parliamentarians
c. Northern opinion leaders (chiefs, academics, religious leaders etc.)
d. Northern District Assemblies
e. Donors / NGOs
f. Ordinary Northerners
g. Other (specify)

28. What is the greatest impediment to the development of Northern Ghana?

- a. Inadequate political support
b. Inadequate donor / non governmental support
c. Inadequate private investment
d. Northern conflicts
e. Failure of Northern elite to initiate development
f. Inability of Northerners to initiate development
g. Other, please specify

29. Which is your favourite newspaper and why is it your favourite?

30. Why is it your favourite?

31. Which is your favourite radio station and why?

32. Why is it your favourite?

APPENDIX C
CODING FRAME FOR PRINT MEDIA

1. NAME OF NEWSPAPER:
2. DATE OF PUBLICATION:
3. IDENTIFICATION OF STORIES (TITLE)
4. STORY TYPE:
- a. Hard News b. Feature c. Photo story d. News Commentary
 - e. Opinion piece e. Other
5. PROMINENCE: a. Frontpage b. Centre spread c. Backpage d. Other
6. ENHANCEMENT:
- a. With photograph or illustration
 - b. Without photograph or illustration
7. SALIENCE:
- a. More than one page b. Full page c. Three-quarters page
 - d. Half page e. Quarter page f. Less than quarter page
8. AGENDA OF STORY: a. Development-oriented b. Non-development
9. BALANCE: a. Favourable b. Unfavourable c. Neutral
10. SOURCE OF STORY a. Research b. Interview c. GNA
- d. News Conference / Press Release e. Other
11. ANALYSIS OF STORY (Type of Development issues discussed)
-
12. Remarks
-

APPENDIX D

CODING FRAME FOR BROADCAST MEDIA

1. NAME OF STATION:.....

2. DATE OF BROADCAST:

3. TIME OF BROADCAST:

4. STORY TYPE:

- a. Hard News b. Feature d. News Commentary
- e. Current Affairs e. Other

5. PROMINENCE: a. Headline News b. Non-Headline news

6. ENHANCEMENT: a. Actuality b. No actuality

7. LENGTH OF STORY (seconds):

8. SALIENCE: (First item, second item last item etc.)

9. AGENDA OF STORY: a. Development-oriented b. Non-development

10. BALANCE: a. Favourable b. Unfavourable c. Neutral

11. SOURCE OF STORY: a. Research b. Interview c. GNA
d. News Conference / Press Release e. Other

12. ANALYSIS OF STORY (Type of Development issues discussed)

13. Remarks