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RADIO AS AN AGENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: A STUDY OF OBONU FM

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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DECLARATION

I, Frank Owusu-Ofori, do hereby declare that except for the reference to other people's work which has been duly acknowledged, the work presented here is the result of my own effort for the award of a Master of Arts degree Development Communication at the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

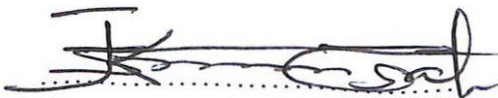
I also declare that this thesis, carried out under the supervision of Dr. James Dzisah, has neither in whole or in part been submitted to any institution for the award of any certificate.



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Date

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Date

(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God almighty for his grace and mercies. I also dedicate it to my family and friends who encouraged me all along.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am pleased to acknowledge the many people through whose invaluable contributions have led to the accomplishment of this thesis. I am highly indebted to Dr. James Dzisah, my supervisor, for not only been the intellectual backbone of my academic success, but also being my academic mentor.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
Declaration	I
Dedication	II
Acknowledgement.....	III
List of Abbreviations.....	IV
Abstract	V
Table of contents	VI

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement	5
1.3 Research Objectives	6
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.5 Significance of Study	7
1.6 Structure of Dissertation	7

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction.....	8
2.2	Concept of Social Change	10
2.3	Community Radio.....	11
2.3.1	Core Values & Premises of Community Radio	
2.3.2	Main Characteristics of Community Radio	
2.3.3	Why Community Radio.....	
2.3.4	Community Radio: A Global Phenomenon.....	
2.3.5	A Case of Radio & Social Change in Pakistan.....	16
2.3.6	Salient Features Of Community Radio.....	
2.3.7	The Social Impact of Community Radio.....	
2.4	Development Journalism.....	24

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction.....	30
3.2	Research Design	30

3.4	31
Analysis of Data	31
3.5 Population and Sample.....	31
3.6 Sampling Method.....	32
3.7 Data Collection Tools	32
3.8 Scope of Study	33
3.9 Confidentiality and Consent.....	33
3.10 Ethical Considerations	33

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction	34
4.1 Presentation and Analysis of Data	34
4.1.1 Interview with the Staff of Obonu FM.....	34
4.1.2 Community Chiefs, Elders and Opinion Leaders	38

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary	44
5.2 General Conclusions	46
5.3 Recommendations	47
References.	48
Appendix One- Interview Guides	52

ABBREVIATIONS

CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GCRN	Ghana Community Radio Network
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to evaluate the role radio played in bringing social change in community development by assessing the effectiveness of Obonu FM. This was done by also assessing the general role of radio as an agent of social change.

It was revealed that there is marginalisation of indigenous culture, norms and ideologies by the state-owned and, private media. There is also the sense that participation in the media and a sense of ownership in its operations are missing in the other forms of broadcasting. This calls for another force to whip up interest and participation in the media by the local people.

The study also shows that Obonu FM is not really a community radio station technically speaking as station does not consult the members of the public before they develop their programmes. However, they give room for the people to participate through phone-ins, and through social media platforms that compensates for the initial inertia about public involvement.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Radio developed in very different ways in different parts of the globe. Before the first radio broadcast in 1920 the world of information and communication was confined to few literate urbanised, who have the financial means to purchase and read newspapers. The invention of radio virtually radicalized the process of social communication. It was envisaged as a democratic medium, though it was operated and controlled differently in different parts of the world.

According to Spiker (2006), radio technology is a useful channel through which people communicate. Messages sent through invisible airwaves inform, persuade and entertain. Radio connects individuals across geographical, cultural, and even political divides.

Myers (2008) opines that radio is still the dominant mass-medium in Africa with the widest geographical reach and the highest audiences compared with television (TV), newspapers and other information and communication technologies (ICTs). Overall, radio is enjoying a renaissance as numerous small local stations have exploded over the last twenty years, due to democratisation, market liberalisation and affordable technologies. Radio seems to have proven itself as a developmental tool, particularly with the rise of community and local radio, which have facilitated a far more participatory and horizontal type of communication than was possible with the older, centralised broadcasting model of the 1960s and 1970s.

According to the 2005 Ghana Broadcasting Study, Ghana is a country of rich ethnic and linguistic diversity among its population. It has over fifty languages, hundreds of dialects and a cultural heritage that dates back hundreds of years. Ghana's economic potential and its

strong social capital base have set it apart from many other countries in the sub-region. In recent years it has experienced accelerated economic expansion and it is one of the few countries in sub-Saharan Africa has achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals. Information and communication technology (ICT) has been identified as one of the key drivers for further growth and development in Ghana.

In common with most African countries, Ghana has a long-established publicly-owned and financed broadcaster, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) which provides national and regional radio services and a national television service. GBC has played a major role in engendering national identity and national development throughout the country's late colonial and post-colonial history.

Over the last ten years, Ghana's cultural heritage has begun to find new forms of expression in the media through the growth of private commercial and community radio broadcasting. The liberalisation of broadcasting has brought a new pluralism in the media enabling different voices to be heard and opinions to be aired. This, however, has not produced a corresponding diversity or quality of service. However, the potential for community broadcasting, in particular, a sector that can play a crucial role in giving voice to poor and marginalised groups, is far from realised with still only a handful of services on the air.

The 1992 Constitution provides the legal framework for broadcasting in the country. The Constitution asserts in Article 21(1a) that all persons shall have the right to "freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media". Article 21(1e) additionally asserts the right to "information, subject to such qualifications and laws as are necessary in a democratic society". Chapter 12 of the Constitution detailed provisions for

the freedom and independence of the media which must form the basis for any broadcasting law in Ghana.

Chapter 12 Article 162 provides, inter alia, that “freedom and independence of the media are guaranteed”, that “subject to this Constitution and any other law not inconsistent with this Constitution, there shall be no censorship in Ghana”, and that “there shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media”.

Article 162(3) states that, in particular, “there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for communication or information”. Critically, Article 164 of the Constitution, provides for limited restrictions to the provisions of sections 162 and 163 “that are reasonably required in the interest of national security, public order, public scrutiny and for the purpose of protecting the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons”.

It has been argued, in the case of *Republic of Ghana v Independent Media Corporation of Ghana and others*, that Article 162(3) precludes the licensing of broadcasters however the Supreme Court ruled, in 1996, that “it was a restriction reasonably required for the protection of ‘national security, public order, public morality’ and the ‘reputation, rights and freedom of others’” within the meaning of Article 164. The Supreme Court declined to rule on whether or not the Ghana Frequency Registration and Control Board was the proper institution to be designated to regulate frequencies for broadcasting as it considered that was not an issue in this case.

In Ghana, the Broadcasting landscape has seen a major transformation since 1995 with Commercial, Community and also Campus Radio, developing alongside the former monopoly of State Broadcasting (GBC). A 3/4-tier system of FM Radio Broadcasting is recognized in Ghana and elsewhere. Community radio which is the focus of this study is defined by the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN, 2000:

1) as:

“Broadcasting which is about, for, by and of a specific marginalized community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community which pursues a participatory social development agenda, and which is non-profit, non-partisan and non-sectarian”

As a result, this work seeks to study the role of radio as an agent of social change in community development. It is specifically focused on Obonu FM, a local radio station based in Accra, Ghana that broadcasts predominantly in the Ga and Dangbe languages.

The study reveals that Obonu FM though a regional station, reaches as far as other five regions in Ghana, thus making the literal meaning of a community radio to be a misnomer. Most of the people in the community are aware of the presence of Obonu FM, but they do not have a direct influence on the programming of the station. The radio station does not also consult the community in drawing their programmes but rely on suggestions made by individuals who call into the programme and also through the station's own community selfassessment in the course of their work.

The radio station is underequipped and the staff find it difficult carrying out their duties due to lack of basic technology to help them carry their works out. The elders of the communities that were interviewed are impressed with the work the station is doing to protect and preserve the Ga and Adangbe languages, culture and traditions. However, the people in the community believe there is still enough room for improvement since they need a direct means of communicating their needs through the programmes of the radio station.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The mass media landscape has changed drastically in the last two decades. The process of globalization has increased the presence of transnational media, brought about by the convergence of computer-mediated technologies and the emergence of consolidated multimedia empires. Consequently the new communication environment of the digital age has upset conventional broadcasting systems.

Transnational broadcasting operates within political, economic, technological and developmental environment, a very large interconnected landscape that according to Reddi (2007), is making individual discussion nearly. This phenomenon coupled with the emergence of small but highly political conscious and ethnically based political systems with the breakup of bipolar Cold War system, gave birth to some new questions. The preservation and promotion of indigenous cultures seems threatened in this new media environment which has already resulted in a decline of public media. In most circles, radio was seen as its first casualty.

Despite its diverse origin and expanded networks, the commercial radio makes very little use of its special opportunities for local communication throughout the world. Normally such stations quickly linked up into networks in order to enlarge their distribution area and advertising revenue. They also have their major focus on easily consumable music programmes. Similarly the public service providers or state radios also keep on increasing their coverage area may be due to political and other reasons and keep the national distribution objective on their priority. A third type of radio therefore emerged in between these two, aiming neither at profit nor at geographical expansion, and has been able to establish itself.

The problem that arises thereof is the marginalisation of indigenous culture, norms and ideologies by the state-owned, private and campus media. Not only that, the lack of participation in the media and a sense of ownership in the operations of the media are missing in the other forms of broadcasting. This calls for another force to whip up interest and participation in the media by the local people.

1.3 OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of this study is to evaluate the role played radio as an agent of social change in community development by accessing the effectiveness of Obonu FM. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Assess the general role of radio as an agent of social change
2. Assess the role of Obonu FM in as an agent of social change in the development of the Greater Accra Region.

i

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions will serve as a guide to solving the problem.

1. What is social change within the context of rural, peri urban and urban community?
2. What is community development?
3. How can we contextualise radio as an agent of change?
4. What is the role of Obonu FM in the development of Greater Accra?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The following are the significance of the study.

1. It would help academics appreciate the role of radio as an agent of social change in community development.
2. It would guide Obonu FM to either maintain or restructure its mode of operation to suit the changing trends of community radio broadcasting.
3. It would serve as a guide to other academic work that would be conducted.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation has five chapters.

Chapter one comprises the introduction, background, problem statement, objectives, purpose and significance of study, and research questions.

Chapter two details the review of literature and the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

Chapter three is devoted to the methodology used in the study.

Chapter four focuses on the analysis and discussion of data. The final chapter, that is, chapter five summaries the main findings, the limitations of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section focuses on the literature review and the theoretical framework used to contextualise the research. Literature review helps us to interrogate the state of the art in terms of scholarship so as to situate our own work within the prevailing discourse.

The purpose of this literature review is to critically engage existing scholarship on the media's role in the development of Ghana.

2.2 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The guiding philosophy of communication for social change can readily be traced to the work of Paulo Freire (1970), the Brazilian educator who conceived of communication as dialogue and participation for the purpose of creating cultural identity, trust, commitment, ownership and empowerment (in current terminology). The principles he espoused has been built on by other scholars, practitioners and activists in development communication leading to a burgeoning literature on theories of communication, dialogue and conflict resolution (Beltran, 1980; Bordenave, 1976, Castillo, 1995; Rogers, 2003; and Kincaid, 1993). In bringing together the work of practitioners and scholars we have found a considerable agreement on the role of communication in development even though at various times over the last 30 years the two groups have diverged.

Theories are not right or wrong, only appropriate or inappropriate given the circumstances and nature of the phenomenon to which they are applied. For example, the theory of reasoned

action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1993), the health-belief model (Becker, 1974), and the stages of change model (Prochaska, et al., 1992) may all work quite well for communication projects designed to persuade individuals to reduce unsaturated fat in their diet, quit smoking and drinking, and practice safer sex, especially in situations where external constraints (social or physical) do not prevent or discourage individuals from taking action by themselves. Even in these situations, however, models of individual change reach their own, inherent limitations.

For example, when a research shows that social influence and peer pressure are the major determinants of smoking and drinking, then finding the best rational arguments against smoking and drinking are simply not sufficient. Collective, institutional changes, policies and laws — such as the smoke-free workplace and a maximum, legal blood-alcohol level — are also necessary.

The communication literature also contains criticisms of the dominant, individual approach to communication theory (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981). Early models of communication were linear, one-way processes from sources to receivers (Shannon and Weaver, 1949; Berio, 1960), usually for the purpose of having an effect on individual receivers. When feedback was included in these models, it was treated as “knowledge of effects.” Even though the diffusion model identified a “diffusion effect” in the adoption of the “S” curve due to interpersonal communication with satisfied adopters, communication was still assumed to serve primarily a function of information dissemination and persuasion (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971).

During the 1970s, criticism of one-way, top-down, persuasive models of communication was well articulated by Latin American scholars such as Beltran, (1974, 1976, 1980) and Diaz Bordenave (1976).

As a consequence of this growing dissatisfaction, emphasis began to shift from audience members as individual objects to audiences as social groups, and from the action of sources on receivers to the *relationships* among participants (Schramm, 1973), to *mutual understanding* (Kincaid, 1979, 1988), and to *convergence* within communication networks (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981; Kincaid 1993; Rogers, 1995). In spite of this initial effort to shift the paradigm from action to transaction, by the end of the 1990s it became apparent that transmission and persuasive models still continue to dominate the design of strategic communication, at least in the field of health (Piotrow, et al., 1997).

Communication practitioners, however, have not let go of this important issue (Gray-Felder and Deane, 1999; Gumucio, 2001; UNAIDS, 2001). The call for a model of development communication based on dialogue versus monologue, horizontal versus vertical information sharing, equitable participation, local ownership, empowerment, and social versus individual change continues to be heard and, if anything, has grown stronger with the steady decentralization of authority and increased access to new communication technology that occurred during the 1990s (Beltran, 1993a, 1993b; Diaz Bordenave, 1994, 1998; Fox and Coe, 1998).

In April of 1997, twenty-two communication professionals, community organizers, social change activists and broadcasters from 12 countries met in Bellagio, Italy, at a conference sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation to examine the connections between social change and communications in the 21st century and to explore the possibilities of new communication strategies for social change. A follow-up meeting took place in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1998 and 2000 (Gray-Felder and Deane, 1999). The members of these meetings defined communication for social change as "a process of public and private

dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want and how they can get it* (1999, p. 15). These meetings clarified the most important questions and provided the appropriate perspective for an inclusive and *participatory* model of social change, but they did not specify any particular model (Gumucio, 2001).

Nevertheless, a consensus was reached regarding the key components of such a model:

1. Sustainability of social change is more likely if the individuals and communities most affected *own* the process and content of communication.
2. Communication for social change should be empowering, horizontal (versus top-down), give a voice to the previously unheard members of the community, and be biased towards local content and ownership.
3. Communities should be the agents of their own change.
4. Emphasis should shift from persuasion and the transmission of information from outside technical experts to dialogue, debate and negotiation on issues that resonate with members of the community.
5. Emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to social norms, policies, culture and the supporting environment.

What would an alternative paradigm look like? At least two key features are necessary. It needs to be based on a *model of communication* that describes a process of dialogue, information sharing, mutual understanding and agreement, and collective action. Second, it needs a *model of social change* based on community dialogue and collective action that clearly specifies *social outcomes* as well as individual outcomes. The convergence/network model of communication meets the first requirement (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981). It

represents communication as a process of *horizontal* sharing between two or more participants within social networks.

2.3 COMMUNITY RADIO

According to Tahir (1998), the potential of Radio as a tool of social development is being utilized throughout the globe, be it developing or the developed world. It has a long history of penetration at grassroots through community radio in the western world. In Asia, though community radio is comparatively a new arrival, but over the years, community radio broadcasting has taken root and playing a vital role in the development of small communities.

Radio developed in very different ways in different parts of the globe. Before the first radio broadcast in the 1920's the world of information and communication was confined to few literate urban dwellers, those who can purchase and read newspapers. The invention of radio virtually radicalized the process of social communication. It was envisaged as a democratic medium though it was operated and controlled differently in different parts of the world. In United States it is a synonym for competition and commercialism. In Europe and its colonies including the subcontinent, radio operated under centralized state control. In Canada there is a combination of the two, a strong centralized State network on the national level and competition and commercialism on the local level. In Latin America they developed a mixture of all, private, church, university, special interest and indigenous peoples radio stations. With the passage of time the models of radio broadcasting kept on changing throughout the world (Ibid).

In Ghana, The Broadcasting landscape has seen a major transformation since 1995 with Commercial, Community and also Campus Radio, developing alongside the former

monopoly of the State Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). A 3/4-tier system of FM Radio Broadcasting is recognized in Ghana and elsewhere. The definition of community radio as expanded by the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN, 2004: 4) is:

“Broadcasting which is about, for, by and of a specific marginalized community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community which pursues a participatory social development agenda, and which is non-profit, non-partisan and non-sectarian.*“

2.3.1 CORE VALUES & PREMISES OF COMMUNITY RADIO

1. The air waves are a public resource which should be used in the interest of the people.
2. People are at the center of development.
3. Development needs to be inclusive, particularly of those who have traditionally been left out.
4. Development requires growth but not cloning.
5. Culture is central to development

2.3.2 MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

1. Community-driven (language/ culture)
2. Participatory
3. Inclusive
4. Dialogue
5. Conflict transformation
6. Priority to the least voiced -
 - a. a voice to the voiceless

The media landscape has changed drastically in the last two decades. The process of globalization has increased the presence of transnational media, brought with it is convergence of technologies and emergence of media industries and multimedia empires. Consequently the new digital age communication environment has upset conventional broadcasting systems.

Transnational broadcasting operates within political, economic, technological and developmental environment so interconnected according to Reddi (2007) that it paradoxically seems to make individual discussion nearly impossible. This phenomenon coupled with the emergence of small but highly political conscious and ethnically based political systems with the breakup of bipolar system, gave birth to some new questions. The preservation and promotion of indigenous cultures seems threatened in this new media environment which has already resulted into decline of public media and radio may be seen as its first casualty.

2.3.3 WHY COMMUNITY RADIO?

Despite its diverse origin and expanded networks, the commercial radio makes very little use of its special opportunities for local communication throughout the world. Normally such stations are quickly networked in order to enlarge their distribution area and advertising revenue. They also have their major focus on consumable music programmes. Similarly, the public service providers or state radios also keep on increasing their coverage area partly due to political and other reasons while maintaining the objective of national distribution. A third type of radio therefore emerged in between these two, aiming neither at profit nor at geographical expansion, and has been able to establish itself (Robinson, 1972).

These are the stations that emerged from local initiatives, by groups or even by individuals. As an alternative to commercial and State radio, most distinguished characteristic of community radio is its commitment to community participation at all levels. The concept behind this type of radio station is to ensure public participation at all possible levels; here listeners are also producers, managers, directors, actors and financiers. The popularity of this kind of radio lies in the fact that these are aimed at working for those who are at the margins of society and for those who seek change but are far away from the mainstream media. The role of community radio is to respond to the priorities set by the community, to facilitate their discussions on issues confronting them and to reinforce their social development agenda through communication. These community run and managed radio stations eventually provide voice to the voiceless throughout the world (Weaver and Elliot, 1985).

2.3.4 COMMUNITY RADIO: A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

Community radio is a global phenomenon now. People all around the world are establishing radio to enable them gain control of a communication tool that permits popular access. Every day people from one end of the planet to the other, manage to make radio a collective enterprise devoted to development. Community radio is no more a dream, the medium of communication among the members of marginalized communities in the remote areas, away from main urban centres.

In the digital age of today, when the whole communication environment has virtually upset the conventional broadcasting systems all around the world, it has become immensely difficult for the national broadcasters to meet the public obligations. Marc Raboy (2003) suggests the following three fold strategy for the broadcasters;

1. Think globally, but programme to local needs and interests;

2. Target audience as citizens, desiring to participate more fully in the public life of their society;
3. Be sensitive to expression of social demand, as well as the more obvious economic and political imperatives.

2.3.5 A CASE OF RADIO & SOCIAL CHANGE IN PAKISTAN

Radio and other broadcast media are considered to be the important agents of change. Especially in societies where almost all the social indicators portray a negative picture, the role of media in bringing social change becomes immensely important.

Even television was introduced in Pakistan with the same objectives; to promote awareness, to develop a consciousness about the cultural heritage, social and economic growth of the country, and to provide a direct linkage with the world around (Takesheta, 2006).

Describing the objectives of Pakistan Television, Aslam Azhar former Chairman and one of the founders of PTV once said, for the unskilled and the jobless there will be programmes to teach them vocation. For the peasant and farmer there will be instructions in the use of new and improved techniques; for the illiterate, there will be television lessons on literacy. The use of television will be geared toward the objectives of the country's education policy.

What role Pakistan Television had played to achieve its development goals is not a part of this discussion, the point to emphasize here is the capacity of media in bringing changes in society at grassroots' level has always been realized by the policy makers right from the very beginning. Both Television and Radio in the country had to face the problem of accessibility for a long time. But now running fast on information highway, converting from analogue to

digital and following the emerging patterns of convergence, why those who matter in the country are so unconcerned about the millions who are living in far flung areas, speaking different languages, following different cultural codes and belonging to different sects or following different religions? The answer is very simple mainstream media will never be able to give voice to these millions of voiceless due to its ever increasing desire for more audiences and ultimately for more revenue. It has to survive in a highly competitive environment in and around the country. The public service broadcasting or state-run media has its own political and social agenda; its programming cannot reach out to small communities spread over the large terrain of Balochistan just to quote only one example (Ibid).

2.3.6 SALIENT FEATURES OF COMMUNITY RADIO

- a. UNESCO defines community radio as radio run by, for and about a community. This broad principal definition distinguishes between; state-owned or public service broadcasting, commercial broadcasting and community radio.
- b. Community radio is not-for-profit. This does not mean that community radio can not engage in revenue generating activities, which tends to be vital for survival and sustainability. This means its main objective is not revenue generation like commercial radio.
- c. Community radio incorporates open access in some form. In some station all broadcasters are volunteers while at some other it is a mix of volunteers and paid

staff. Not only this, it is also managed by the community itself. The communities are involved in active ownership of the station. This is usually done by the community electing a management committee for the station.

- d. The programming is all about the community, of direct relevance to them. It needs to be community specific.
- e. The main difference between community radio and state-owned radio is the concept of community ownership. This empowers the community to use this radio for community benefits like, poverty eradication, reducing gender disparities, health, hygiene, and much more. The only thing to clarify here is that the communities are not necessarily geographically defined; they can be communities of mutual interests, like minorities or immigrants in Pakistan etc.

The influx of global media has widened up the range and penetration of media content. It has also enlarged the scope of news as it addresses greater audiences now. There is no doubt that competition has also increased the speed as well as quality. Once the fervour of global media is over, one can easily feel the local issues problems and realities fading away from the global media landscape. To practically adopt 'think global act local' slogan, a nearly about turn is needed to reverse this tide.

2.3.7 THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY RADIO

The power of community radio to mobilize groups and bring change to societies is well recognized. This power can, however, also be manipulated and used to spread hate and violence, as was the case in Rwanda in 1994. Cautioning against the negative potential of community radio, Carole Frampton of Search for Common Ground demonstrated how her organization relied on community radio to prevent the spill over of violence from Rwanda to Burundi by focusing on bringing people together and fostering dialogue and peace. By bringing journalists from each of the two ethnic groups that were in conflict and building on their collaboration, Search for Common Ground helped establish the first independent radio production studio—Studio Ijambo—in Burundi. Eleven independent radio stations followed.

According to Frampton (2004), not only did this small and grass-roots effort show that ethnic collaboration and finding solutions based on dialogue was possible, it also helped develop new standards and balanced reporting skills, representing all the voices of the community that other radio stations later emulated. After the initial objective of creating dialogue was successfully achieved, Frampton (2004) said, Search for Common Ground's focus shifted from the core of the conflict to capacity-building through skills training and providing direct assistance. The stations also helped improve the level of the public's media literacy, as people could “compare the good stations to others and see what real media should look like,” she said. Listening and discussion clubs and other initiatives to engage the community beyond radio made the impact of the latter even stronger, she added.

Frampton said that community radio developers must have a clear strategy and vision of what they want to achieve. With community radio, “the focus is on dialogue, on finding solutions, on the future rather than who did what to whom..., on bringing all the stakeholders together and through the radio trying to calm situations down and move the society toward peace and

democracy," she said (2004: 27). Her colleague Paul-Andre Wilton demonstrated the important role IRN played in the 2007 elections in Sierra Leone by providing a model standard of reporting for its 20 stations and leading the media response.

IRN, which started in 2002 with eight member stations, united 420 reporters from 20 stations by the 2007 elections in Sierra Leone. They produced independent, trustworthy, and timely programming and information by having local voices on air from all over the country—from the most remote areas to large polling stations, said Wilton. Through live interviews and analyses, the reporters provided context to help listeners understand the complexity of the elections, and through shadow vote counts, helped monitor election results. IRN makes local radio national. Through collaboration and coordination, these 20 membership radio stations conduct national broadcasts through the local radio stations. According to Wilton, success came from the credibility the stations gained through the gradual and strategic evolution of the network's capacity over five years, their commitment to become a credible platform for information by providing both national and local news, and the expert technical and editorial assistance IRN received from Search for Common Ground in partnership with Developing Radio Partners.

The potential of community radio to bring about social change is not a matter of mere observation but, as Population Media Center President William Ryerson (1999) demonstrated, an empirically proven fact based on quantifiable and statistically analyzed results. Focusing on women's rights promotion, HIV rates reduction, family planning, reproductive health issues, and prevention of child trafficking, the Center uses community radio to produce behavioural change among large audiences in 15 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, educating through entertainment, including with soap opera characters. The highly significant results of pre- and post-broadcast random-sample surveys, as Ryerson

noted, indicated positive changes in the behavior of those who listened to the programming. In Ethiopia, for example, those who listened to special programming on HIV were more likely to be tested for the virus than non-listeners. This approach builds on the power of media to create high emotional contexts that help make information more memorable, and the Population Media Center relies on community radio as the most appropriate and cost-effective medium to reach its target audiences. According to the estimates of a project in Tanzania, for example, the cost of getting people to take steps to avoid HIV infection was eight cents per listener.

William Siemering (2007), president of Developing Radio Partners and founding member of National Public Radio's Board of Directors, described the work of community radio developers as “scattering seeds”—alluding to the original meaning of “broadcast”—the results of which take time to ripen. Like a vaccine capable of reducing preventable diseases, he said, community radio is “a simple, effective solution” to achieve development goals, to prevent “fragile states from becoming failed states,” and also to help people celebrate their own culture. The approach recommended by Developing Radio Partners, Siemering observed, is to first build the capacity of individual community radio stations that evolve out of necessity on the grass-roots level and, then create an association to develop professional standards and increase the likelihood of sustainability, and finally, help individual stations unite into a network. Showing donors the effect these operative stations are having on their communities will attract more investment for community radio development, Siemering concluded.

Papagiannis (1995) of Intemews Network shared what he called “a story of hope, a story of replacing fear with information” in the establishment of three community radio stations to reach refugee camps in eastern Chad for Sudanese refugees who fled Darfur. With funding from USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of

Population, Refugees, and Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and a number of private sources, the three stations with a mixed staff of 25 local Chadians and refugees from Darfur target their primary audience—refugees from Darfur—by broadcasting in local, unwritten languages that have never been on air before, as well as in Arabic and French. In constant communication with the audience, the stations have managed to air discussion on sensitive and formerly taboo issues such as gender-based violence, child marriage, and female genital mutilation. The impact of their flagship program “She Speaks, She Listens,” which aims to empower women—an essential aspect for promoting an open and democratic society, many participants agreed—is further augmented by a drama program dealing with the same subject. Surveys conducted by UNHCR have indicated that the information conveyed to the audience during eight to 10 hours of daily broadcasting is being incorporated into people’s lives, Papagiannis (1995) said.

Having heard the accounts of the presenters, Papagiannis (1995) emphasized the importance of bringing the accomplishments of community radio—especially in post-conflict areas—to the attention of the international development community, as the Rwandan example of spreading ethnic hatred through the airwaves has long haunted the reputation of community radio, forcing media developers to resort to commercial models of radio development instead, as was his experience in Kosovo.

Based on lessons learned, the participants stressed the need to inform donors of the best ways to use community radio’s potential. One representative of an international organization said that donors should abandon their approach of “looking for a quick fix” and regarding community radio simply as a means of getting development messages across through shortterm projects. They should develop a long-term vision for investing in community radio as an institution and “be prepared to stay in for the long haul,” since real change, she continued,

should come from within the community, with community radio playing a “microcosmic” role by helping the community acquire a sense of ownership and empowering people to see their impact on society. The impact of community radio is most evident in areas having practically no other access to information, and donors should, therefore, realize the significance of investing in it as a means of making information available without necessarily having a realistic vision of achieving sustainability over a short time, a representative of one donor organization added. Donors should also avoid imposing models for individual stations to adopt, since the best models are those that develop naturally and out of necessity, a participant observed (Papagiannis, 1995).

Community radio is generally the best tool for getting information to illiterate and poor communities, as it requires neither reading skills nor money to buy newspapers, a radio developer said. Since in many countries most media are concentrated in capital cities and heavily populated areas, and even national media fail to reach remote areas, community radio provides the opportunity of “reaching powerless communities and giving them a voice,” he added. Even in areas where national media broadcast, the impact of a community radio broadcasting in a local language or languages is incomparable, an implementer observed (Papagiannis, 1995).

The participants also considered contexts where community radio development is infeasible or inadequate. A government’s lack of understanding of the importance of reaching out to and communicating with marginalized or rural sectors of the population can hinder community radio development, a number of participants observed. One implementer suggested engaging appointed and elected officials as part of community radio projects to create a strong link between governments and local media (Papagiannis, 1995).

Another implementer cautioned that the guidelines outlined for donors will prove irrelevant in regions where governments and the legal and regulatory environment hinder community radio development. In the Middle East and North Africa region, he said, discussions on the impact of community radio will matter only after there is legal reform allowing for the licensing and establishment of independent community radio stations. In terms of inadequacy of community radio development, one implementer strongly cautioned against supporting initiatives where there is clear evidence that the majority does not protect the rights of the minority within the community and will take advantage of community radio to further reinforce the disparity, be it on ethnic, political, or social basis (Papagiannis, 1995).

2.4 DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM

According to Choudhury (2011), communication is used for more than just passing on information from one person to another. It is often used as a tool to facilitate the participation of people in developmental activities. According to Everett Rogers (2001) “Development communication refers to the uses to which communication are put in order to further development.” It can thus be said to be an approach to communication which provides communities with information they can use in bettering their lives. Development communication has two primary roles: transforming and socializing. Transforming role, as it steps social change in the direction of the hygiene taste of today's generation in this competitive market and a socializing role by seeking to maintain some of the established values of the society.

Media plays an important role in development communication through circulation of knowledge, providing forum for discussion of issues, teach ideas, skills for a better life and create a base of consensus for stability of the state.

According to Atawura (2013) the participation of people in the activities of the media started with the inception of the traditional mass media. However, access to these media were restricted than it is with the new media. Also, audiences participated in the media by playing the role of passive recipients and are occasionally allowed to phone in, fax or send messages. However, the new media allows any individual to participate without any limit so far as they have access to the gadgets that would enable them do so. Nonetheless, there are still many people who are yet to participate in the advantages of the new media.

New media play a vital role in facilitating changes in public participation - globalisation could never have reached its current intensity without the support of the global digital media...As participation extends to the civic arena, new media seem to provide individuals with enormous potential for (re) constructing the public. (Dzisah, 2011: 4-5)

No consensus exists around a common definition of participation: it varies depending on the perspective applied. Some stakeholders define participation as the mobilization of people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution. Others define it as the reach and inclusion of inputs by relevant groups in the design and implementation of a development project. These examples represent two of the main approaches to participation: *a social movement perspective* and *a project-based or institutional perspective*. These perspectives share a common understanding of participation as the involvement of ordinary people in a development process leading to change. Their scope and methods, however, can differ. (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009, pp. 4)

As a social movement perspective, it is the mobilization of people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power and economic distribution. As a project-based perspective, it is the reach and inclusions of inputs by relevant groups in the design and implementation of a development project.

For the purposes of this work, however, the project-based or institutional perspective of participatory would be applied. It is the belief that when the media has the agenda of participating in the development of education, they can use it as a tool to achieve a pre- established goal defined by someone external to the community involved.

Participation can be used as a development tool by development organizations, ranging from international agencies to civil society organizations. According to Tufte & Mefalopulos (2009), within this landscape of organizations, participation is an essential tool in development projects:

1. **Providing basic services effectively** — Mechanisms of public or private service provision, including health, education, transport, agricultural extension and water, entail strategies that are affordable and inclusive even of marginalized groups.
2. **Pursuing advocacy goals** - Collection of data from ordinary citizens feeds their voice into policy formulation processes. A key element to achieve this input is support of civil society and local governance initiatives, such as popular participation in public budgeting and individual and community empowerment programs that strengthen the voice of marginalized groups. Furthermore, advocacy has grown significantly in recent years as an NGO activity.
3. **Monitoring progress towards goals** - These activities include self-reporting schemes and direct community involvement in monitoring processes.

4. **Facilitating reflection and learning among local groups** - Opportunities for dialogue, learning and critique become central elements in evaluating a project or program.

To make this participatory function of the media work, there is the need for people to have access to the media which is responsible for the development agenda. The increasing changes in media tools, coverage and worldwide use are crucial to who uses what medium and at what time. Using the online news sites, it is without doubt that the media under study have a world wide range yet broadcasts mainly on national issues. However, according to Tufte & Mefalopulos (2009), the more participatory strategies emphasize media that allows more dialogue, such as community-based media. The Colombian scholar Clemencia Rodriguez argues in her book, *Fissures in the Mediascape*, “citizen media are highly participatory by providing access and space for people to participate in all phases of media production” (Rodriguez, 2001: 11).

Participatory communication, when applied to the latter, fulfils a broader social function, providing a voice to the poorest and the most marginalized of the people around the world. By engaging all relevant stakeholders, participatory communication becomes a tool that helps alleviate poverty, mitigates social exclusion, and ensures priorities and objectives are agreed to and refined by a wider base of the constituencies. This process enhances the overall results and sustainability of any development initiative.

Yet, many a time, in the media's delivery of this agenda, they tend to only serve as channels of communication rather than becoming catalysts of social mobilization and change in

themselves. To this act, Brady (1997) argues participation is something that is performed; it is an activity and more than a mere interest in public issues or attitudes towards these issues. Development journalism, borne from the marrow of development communication, has been used and seen as a strategic tool to persuade people to change and enhance development processes.

In trying to explain the concept better, a lot of models have been designed for it. One of the earliest, such as Lasswell's communication theory (1948), was linear in their understanding of communication, which was understood as a transfer of information, leading to foreseeable step-by-step change processes.

The exploitation of the new media by political bodies is becoming a canker to the participatory process. This has propelled other scholars to assume that the traditional and informational role of the mass media has been fused into new forms of 'infotainment', with strong emphasis on the personal lives of political personalities, horse-race journalism, and the spectacle of public debate, with no possibility for ordinary citizens to join this debate (Dahlgren, 2001; Hardt, 2004).

However, some civic organisations have also been quick to access these new technologies to facilitate top-down mobilisation as it is the new media is cheap to use, difficult to censor and gives access to potentially enormous numbers of people (Dzisah, 2011). Yet, van de Donk et al (2004) argue that civic organisations are not by definition any more participatory than political institutions. The 'big players' in particular are powerful and centralised organisations, where communication remains one-way, helping to mobilise people to do something and not vice versa.

Participation paradigm also revolves around two variants. These are negotiated and radical variants.

As a negotiated variant, efforts are made to play safe by accommodating state and community or the dominant class and the masses. One important divergence of this approach is that it is prepared to consider that traditional, non-modern, social structures and media might have a role at least as important as that of the modern mass media in the communication of change. However, although modern and traditional are evenly balanced in this model, it is the modern elements that have the predominant place. Also, it is not clear who amongst the local population defines the problems and their possible solutions.

The radical variant identifies the most disadvantaged within the population as the people most in need of assistance and most likely to benefit from change. It is there to assist the transfer of power from its existing sites into the hands of the people so that they may improve their lots. However, this variant also has its own disadvantages. Sources of funds are not from the dominant political classes since they believe it is not in their interest to implement policies and plans that would substantially improve their conditions. Again, it is not clear that all popular expressions are valuable and desirable. The fact that people are poor and oppressed does not invest saintly qualities in them.

Nevertheless, the participatory paradigm has its own demerits. They come in determining who selects the participants, are participants truly representative of the whole strata of the community, how are participants selected and how would consensus be arrived at in a community where there is mutual suspicion, animosity, political class and economic differences.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In research work, one needs to know the purpose of the research to make an informed decision about which research method to use.

The methodology is fundamental to the construction of all forms of knowledge and provides the tools whereby understanding is created (Daly, 2003). It explains the choices researchers make about cases they wish to study, how data is collected, the types of data analysis among others in planning and executing a research in order to achieve the set goals (Silverman, 2005).

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Bernard (2000), the research design ensures that, the evidence that is obtained enables the researcher to answer the research question as unambiguously as possible. According to Ofori & Dampson (2011), the case study becomes a preferred choice when the researcher has little control over the events under the study or when the focus of the study is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context also, the case study approach is particularly suited to research questions which require detailed understanding of social or organisational processes because of the rich data collected in the context. Yin (1994), opines that the case study allows the use of multiple methods as a strategy for the research process, in which instance, the cases may produce results or contrasting results.

3.3 DATA SOURCES

Data sources come in two major ways. These are the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources for this work are interviews from the radio station and the community; whilst the secondary sources are those which include documented articles, works done by other people in the field and journals.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

In data analysis, a comprehensive plan is used to analyse the data obtained. The numerical results provided by a data analysis are usually simple: it finds the number that describes a typical value and finds differences among numbers (Levine, 1997).

A thematic analysis will be used to analyse the interviews that will be generated during the field work. The interviews will be transcribed and themes will be generated from them using coding sheets. Those themes will then be analysed and interpreted.

3.5 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The study population comprises of the staff of Obonu FM and the community members. The probability and non-probability sampling techniques was employed. Under the probability sampling, the systematic sampling will be used to sample the workers of Obonu FM. On the community, the purposive sampling is employed under the non-probability sample technique. The broadcasting staffs of Obonu FM are 15. Using a systematic sampling, the 3rd staff, which is my *n*th, was taken until the 5th staff was interviewed. For the community, because

opinion leaders are best suited to give responses in line with the objectives of the study. As a result, the chiefs, the elders and opinion leaders in the communities were purposely sampled.

3.6 SAMPLING METHODS

The study employs the purposive sampling method under the non-probability sampling technique for the interviews with the community chiefs, elders and opinion leaders and the systematic sampling under the probability sampling technique for the staff of Obonu fm.

Purposive sampling can be very useful for situations where the researcher needs to reach a targeted sample quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern (Trochim, 2006). Thus, for this study, the respondents were selected with the view of in- depth interviewing techniques in mind.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The main data collection tools in qualitative research are interactive interviews, participant observation, observation and documentary evidence.

The interactive interview is used for this study. An interview is a purposeful interaction, discussion or conversation between two or more persons during which one person or group of persons (the researcher in this case) poses questions to the other person or group of persons (the respondents - editors) in anticipation of receiving answers.

3.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study's scope is limited to the operations of Obonu fin and the community in which it operates.

3.9 CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT

The consent of participants to partake in a research work is very important. As a result, a cover letter, stating the purpose and objectives of the research was sent to the various participants. Interviews were also given both verbal and written notices of the purpose of the study before soliciting their consent for the study.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the ethical considerations taken into account collecting data as promised based on the informed consent solicited from the participants that information provided will be treated as confidential.

Regarding this study, the necessary ethical considerations associated with the conduct of research are implemented. Respondents were not coerced to respond to any question and were free to end the interview whenever they wished to.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4. INTRODUCTION

This section is aimed at analysing the data that was gathered and the findings. This involves the application of the data analysis tools stipulated in chapter three to arrive at the findings, it also involves the appropriate presentation of the data by the use of thematic coding and tables where applicable.

4.1 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section is divided into two sections. The first part deals with data gathered from the interviews with the community chiefs, elders and opinion leaders and the second concentrates on the staff of Obonu FM. In all, a total of five broadcasting staff and seven community chiefs, elders and opinion leaders were interviewed. This makes the total number of interviews to stand at twelve.

4.1.1 INTERVIEW WITH THE STAFF OF OBONU FM

The staff of Obonu FM were interviewed to better understand the operations of the FM station and to know the level of relationship they have with the publics that they deal with. The interview was semi-structured. The following answers were transcribed.

In all, five workers of the radio station were interviewed. These people included the programmes manager and other four programme hosts. Two of the participants wanted to remain anonymous, hence their names did not appear here. The other three are Sheriff Idrisu

(Programme Host - Oman je Oman and Times with the Assemblies), Cindy Vanderpuye (Programme Host - Sanitation) and the Nii Adjei Klu (the Programmes Manager).

Of the five staffs that were interviewed, they all gave the impression that Obonu FM, though socially a community radio, it is not functioning as one giving the technical and policy definitions of what a community radio station should be like. It is more of a radio station situated in Accra serving the needs of two particular tribes in Ghana. Hence, its broadcast frequency goes as far as five regions - a deviation from a typical community radio set-up. This was seen as Nii Adjei Klu, the Programmes Manager said:

'Obonu is a community fm station you know we have public broadcasting, community and commercial so we are a community fm station. Obonu serves five out of the ten regions in the country. Greater Accra, Central, Volta, Brong Ahafo, Eastern region and some parts of Ashanti region. Sometime too during the dry season around December and this time you get it in some parts of Western region.'

All the staffs have clear information concerning the establishment of the radio station, its mission, vision and purpose. They all also believe their programmes have created the necessary impact in the lives of the communities that listen to their programmes by citing examples where they were able to make successful strides.

This assertion supports the Ghana Community Radio Network's definition of community radio as one whose ownership and management is representative of the community which pursues a participatory social development agenda, and which is non-profit, non-partisan and non-sectarian

According to Sheriff Idrisu, Programme Host for 'Oman Ji Oman',

'Recently, the Bortianor community in the Ga West District complained about the poor road network system in their community which we picked up on the programme and till date the Assembly is working on the road and will probably apply asphalt to it soon. We mostly set the they agenda and they follow but they bring the issues at times. '

Some of the programmes that they undertake were mentioned. Even though their programmes are designed to help in the development of the communities, the social capital tenets are missing in their programmes. This is so because their programmes are designed from top (management) and broadcasted downwards (to the people) without the top and the down having any collaborative efforts in the programme designing and implementation. According to Robert Nunoo, a resident at Mamprobi,

'they don 't considt us in what they do. Most of the time I hear they come to the Mamprobi Polyclinic and they are having a programme like asking the patients about their welfare and the services rendered them.'

The staff were unable to give an appropriate understanding of the concept of social capital. For some, it was the first time hearing that word. For others who attempted to define the concept, they forgot to bring in the community, which forms the basic socialisation function under which social capital thrives. Without the community or a group of like-minded individuals accepting to undertake a certain project and/or believing in certain ideas and want to project them, there will not be any space for social capital. Perhaps, for the lack of meetings and on-the-job refresher courses might have led to their inability to define social change. As it was done in Bellagio and Cape Town, these meetings clarified the most important questions and provided the appropriate perspective for an inclusive and participatory model of social change, but they did not specify any particular model (Gumucio, 2001).

The programmes of Obonu FM play a role in bringing about social change. Supported interviews from some of the community members reveal there is enough participation from the audience who in turn act upon the ideas shared on the radio station. This confirms the literature that says as a result of marginalisation in media systems, the call for a model of development communication based on dialogue versus monologue, horizontal versus vertical information sharing, equitable participation, local ownership, empowerment, and social

versus individual change continues to be heard and, if anything, has grown stronger with the steady decentralization of authority and increased access to new communication technology that occurred during the 1990s (Beltran, 1993a, 1993b; Diaz Bordenave, 1994, 1998; Fox and Coe, 1998).

From one of the elders at the chiefs palace, he acknowledged they participate in the activities of Obonu.

Accordingly, he said:

'Yes, I do. Because since it's a Ga programme, it is very important because the listening audience at Tema East are mostly Gas. Once a while they invite me to the programme. When they invite me or call me. They normally call me on phone to contribute on their programmes. '

To that effect, social interventions are met and other objectives and goals of government are also achieved.

Their presence has also increased communal activities in the communities and this is essential for any social change activity to take place.

Even though the community participates in their programmes, the level of participation cannot be quantified. This is because the station does not have the technology (eg. ratings and non-ratings research mechanisms). This makes it difficult to tell the number of people listening to a programme at any time and the number of people whose sets are on the dial. Without this technology or idea, all approximations about the level of participation are subjective and analysed in the eyes and minds of the programme producers.

They mostly rely on phone calls for such analysis. Sheriff said,

'The number of phone calls we receive in a day depends on the topic for the day. Some topics attract more calls than others. But averagely, we can get about 10 to 15 calls per programme depending on the length of the programme '.

As it stands, there is no communication model that Obonu Fm uses. As it is seen earlier, the community is not involved in the programming of the radio station. Even though the staff of the community claim they get some of their ideas from the community when they go out to

cover events, there is not laid down communication chat to follow. This is confirmed as one said:

7 earlier told you I am a Journalist too. Normally, when we go out we look at the trend of issues which are challenging to the people and discuss those issues. Issues that bothers on their socio-economic activities. We talk to fish folks and talk to them and other issues eg. landing beach side. So I go to town and look around for their challenges. Some also call to tell you their problems and want you to highlight it for them. '

Even though the issue of challenges the staff face was not part of the interview guide, the interviews showed that some of the interviewees were not ready to tell some of their challenges as one described it as 'washing one's dirty clothes in public'. However, one of the staff said they do not have the basic technology (eg. recorders, laptops and office mobile phones) to carry out their works. This can be true UNESCO's definition for community radio is not-for-profit. This does not mean that community radio cannot engage in revenue generating activities, which tends to be vital for survival and sustainability. This means its main objective is not revenue generation like commercial radio

4.1.2 COMMUNITY CHIEFS, ELDERS AND OPINION LEADERS

Some people in the community were interviewed to know their level of participation with the radio station. Unlike the staff of the station whose interviews were analysed as a single entity, the people in the community have their interviews analysed separately because of the diverse backgrounds that they fall under. However, an exception to this is the interviews among the chief of Tema - Nii Adjei Kraku, the Asafoatse - Nii Shipi Armah and that of the Registrar of Tema Traditional Council, Jeffery Nii-Adjei Lomo. Their interviews were conducted together because it is not appropriate for the chief to speak alone without the presence of the other two.

4.1.2.1 ROBERT NUNOO - RESIDENT OF MAMPROBIIBE

Robert Nunoo is a resident of Mamprobi IBE. He often listens to Obonu Fm. His dial is always, almost on the frequency of Obonu. He only changes the dial when there is the need to listen to other preference programmes. He said,

** Yes, I know of Obonu Fm. Their dial is 96.5. I listen to it often. Normally my radio is on Obonu but sometimes I listen to preachers and other things from other stations like Radio Gold and others*

He does not participate in their programmes though he is an active listener this is because the phone lines of the radio station are always busy and at times that the calls go through, the line becomes faulty making hearing difficult. As he indicated,

I don't participate in some of their programmes. But at times the line does not connect when you call. The line is engaged. I wanted to participate in a particular programme but the phone lines are poor as a result, I don't participate.

Mr. Nunoo's observation makes Obonu FM's operations to contradict the tenets of communication for social change. This is because the operations of Obonu FM have failed to meet a model of communication that describes a process of dialogue, information sharing, mutual understanding and agreement, and collective action. Second, it needs a model of social change based on community dialogue and collective action that clearly specifies social outcomes as well as individual outcomes.

4.1.2.2 HON. TITUS GLOVER - MP FOR TEMA EAST CONSTITUENCY

Hon. Daniel Nii Kortey Titus Glover is the Member of Parliament for Tema East Constituency on the New Patriotic Party (NPP). In the interview with him, he revealed that he

also listens to the radio station but he does that once in a while. He does participate in the programmes of the radio station and he is also invited at times to contribute on their programmes. His advice to the radio station is for them to minimise their level of partisanship in their political programmes. They ought to represent both the government and those in opposition as well, he said. According to him,

'they (Obonu FM) should not be political. If Obonu Fm wants to be a purely professional and fair radio station, they should not be partisan. Always projecting government agenda without that of the opposition. Other than that you don t want people to participate in your programmes. I will only advise them not to be political.'

Per his assertions, if Obonu FM have to operate as a community radio station and promote social change and development, then they must stop favouring one political party over the other since this contradicts the core value three, which is development needs to be inclusive, particularly of those who have traditionally been left out, of operating a community radio station.

4.1.2.3 HON. Nii AMASAH NAMOALE - MP FOR LA DADEKOTOPON

Nii Amasah Namoale is the MP for La Dadekotopon on the ticket of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). He listens to the radio station alot. Yet, he does not have any specific programme he listens to. However, the news segment is mostly listened to. 'Oh. In fact I don t have a particular programme. But I listen to their news. Actually my radio's dial is always on Obonu,' he said.

He believes the radio station is doing well to promote social change in the area though his problem with them is that they don't do political discussions. He believes the truthful nature of the news put out there has increased his likeness for the radio station. He also loves the fact that the language used by the radio station is the native language of the Ga and the

Adangbes. His contribution to the radio station's programmes are based on when the radio calls him to make contributions. He has been on the 'Time with your DCEs' programme twice. He admitted the radio station does not consult him in their programming. On the contrary to Titus Glover, he believes the radio station should include more political programmes.

4.1.2.4 ALHAJI SA-RHACK NARTEY - DCE FOR NINGO-PRAMPARAM

Hon. Alhaji Sa-Rhack Nartey, the District Chief Executive for Ningo-Pramparam is not aware of any social change activities that has taken place in his District which was as a result of Obonu FM's initiative. This was contrary to what one of the staff said concerning the establishment of a school block in the area.

'... they have also not come to me. Maybe they will come later. I am in my second year as the DCE of Ningo-Pramparam he said.

He does not really listen to the radio station, though. He blames that on his busy schedule. Accordingly, he said they have not directly come into contact with them apart from what they show on television. I don't have the personal interaction with them'.

4.2.1.5 CHIEF'S PALACE (Nii ADJEI KRAKU, TEMA MANTSE; Nii SHIPI ARMAH, TEMA SHIPI)

The Tema Mantse, Nii Adjei Kraku I; the Tema Shipi, Nii Shipi Aimah and the Registrar of the palace were all interviewed on the performance of Obonu Fm in their community. They know of Obonu Fm very well. They listen to it almost every day.

'Yes we do know of Obonu Fm. We listen to it. Frankly, in my case, almost every morning I tune to Obonu', the linguist said.

Some of the programmes they listen to is education in Ga and newspaper reviews in Ga. They also participate in the programmes of the radio station especially during their festivals. They are given the opportunity to educate the people about their festivals; the Homowo and Kplijoo. People are allowed to phone in and ask questions. Their contributions are limited (only to their festivals), however, anytime they call on the radio station, they promptly come to their aid.

'For now, our limit is to the festivals. Apart from the festivals, we don't go there. Yes, in the future we can make inputs as and when necessary. If there is a suggestion I want to make across to the entire nation, Obonu is an organ of doing that they said.

They feel part of the radio station as a result of the Ga language used in their broadcasting. They are satisfied with their programmes. They mentioned an increase in the number of participants during the national sanitation day programme and cleaner settlements as a result of the broadcasting of messages in Ga in that regard. They believe the activities of Obonu Fm has been so far, so good.

So far so good. They are doing well. Primarily to promote our Ga language because it's strictly Ga even though there are occasional English interventions. But those are so brief. It is a welcomed radio station. Their only recommendation then, when Obonu Fm started broadcasting was for them to have Obonu television, and this has been satisfied.

'Yes you see this Sanitation day. They explain in the Ga language the importance of keeping sanitation standards in the community. And it goes down well with our people. Because for all you know, a lot of our people do not understand the Twi language and the English as well but the Ga as a medium of communication goes down well. And we are seeing a difference as compared to the past. Because they strictly speak the Ga language they said.

If what the chief and his alders are saying is anything to hold, then it means that Obonu FM have met all the characteristics of a community radio station. The characteristic of primarily using the language of the people in whose community they operate, the fact that it should be

participatory, it should include all people in the community, it should be discussive, resolve conflicts and voicing out the voice of the voiceless.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

In the view of community radio developers, community radio stations often “serve as the most trusted agent in town that brings change’. Community radio plays a vital role in building vibrant communities, in mobilizing groups to action by informing and empowering citizens, in giving voice to the marginalized groups of society, and in bringing community needs to the attention of local and even national governments. The scope of the actual and potential impact of community radio is wide-ranging, many agree, as are the challenges associated with community radio development.

According to CIMA (2007: 6-7), community radio is about the horizontal exchange of information—a participatory interaction between the community and the radio station rather than a vertical, one-way communication method, delivering information from a medium to the public. The most important aspects of community radio, the participants emphasized, include broad participation by community members—often on a volunteer basis—and the ownership and control of the station by the community through a board of governors that is representative of the community and responsive to the diversity of its needs. Community radio involves community organization, joint thinking and decision-making, all of which, one development expert noted, entail great potential for empowering communities and building a democratic society.

The power of community radio to mobilize groups and bring change to societies is well recognized. This power can, however, also be manipulated and used to spread hate and violence, as was the case in Rwanda in 1994.

According to Frampton (2007) community radio developers must have a clear strategy and vision of what they want to achieve. With community radio, the focus is on dialogue, on finding solutions, on the future rather than who did what to whom..., on bringing all the stakeholders together and through the radio trying to calm situations down and move the society toward peace and democracy”.

The potential of community radio to bring about social change is not a matter of mere observation but, as Population Media Centre President William Ryerson demonstrated, an empirically proven fact based on quantifiable and statistically analyzed results. Focusing on women's rights promotion, HIV rates reduction, family planning, reproductive health issues, and prevention of child trafficking, the Centre uses community radio to produce behavioural change among large audiences in 15 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, educating through entertainment, including with soap opera characters. The highly significant results of pre- and post-broadcast random-sample surveys, Ryerson, indicative of positive changes in the behavior of those who listened to the programming. In Ethiopia, for example, those who listened to special programming on HIV were more likely to be tested for the virus than nonlisteners were. This approach builds on the power of media to create high emotional contexts that help make information more memorable, and the Population Media Centre relies on community radio as the most appropriate and cost-effective medium to reach its target audiences.

5.2 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this study was to explore the role of Obonu FM in its catchment area and to show the extent to how it is an agent of social change. In this regard, interviews were carried out for both the staff of the radio station and the community members. The conclusion of the study regarding the objectives set and the data gathered is that Obonu Fm cannot be described as a community radio. Hence they are a public radio station supported by the government and state coffers.

What makes a station to put on the colours of a community are that it is a radio for, about, by and of a specific marginalized community; it is owned and managed by the community representatives; it pursues participatory social development agenda; it is non-profitable, nonsectarian and non-partisan. However, all of these are missing from the core values of Obonu Fm.

The study also revealed that the radio station does not consult the members of the public before they develop their programmes. However, they give room for the people to participate through phone-ins, and the through the social media, for some programmes.

Even though some opinion leaders interviewed believed the radio station has been able to bring about social change, many others are yet to see this side of the radio station. They believe the station is doing its best but its best does not bring the desired development.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The national Media Commission must look into its policies regarding spectrum distribution. This is because Obonu Fm, per its establishment as one of the regional radio stations of GBC, should not be broadcasting in five regions simply because they have some of their tribe members in those areas. If this is the premise, then other regional radio stations may want to expand to cater for their indigenes in other parts of the country.

This phenomenon of radio stations broadcasting beyond their boundaries has become a common phenomenon in the name of affiliations. However, such system tends to cripple the reasons behind frequency allocation in the country. Ideally, Obonu Fm should be broadcasting only in Accra and be more concerned with Gas and Dangbes only in Greater Accra region.

Obonu FM is acting as a community radio but it is not one. What they can do is to have smaller relay stations as community radios under the main radio station. This way, when the core values and characteristics of community radio are achieved, their information will be sent to Obonu FM to be broadcasted. This will give it a regional outlook and still operating within the communities.

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APPENDIX ONE - INTERVIEW GUIDES

INTERVIEW GUIDE (COMMUNITY)

I am Frank Owusu-Ofori, a graduate student of the School of Graduate Studies and Research, Ghana Institute of Journalism. As part of our course requirements, students are supposed to submit a research work to add up to knowledge before they graduate. In the light of this, I would want you to take some time to answer the following questionnaire. The topic is about radio as an agent of social change in community development: a study of Obonu fin. You are reminded that any information that you provide will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Thank you for accepting to participate in this academic exercise.

The following questions will be asked after exchanging pleasantries and following the rules of a semi-structured interview. This will give room for follow-up questions to be asked where necessary.

1. Do you know of Obonu fin?
2. Do you listen to it?
3. How often do you listen to Obonu fin?
4. Do you participate in some of the programmes of the station?
5. What is the level of your participation with the radio station?
6. Are you allowed to make contributions to their programmes?
7. What are some of the contributions you have ever made?
8. Are the contributions adhered to by the station when you make them?
9. How does Obonu fin communicate with you for your inputs in their programmes?
10. Are you satisfied with the work of Obonu fin in this community?
11. Has there been any social change activities in the community which was as a result of the activities of Obonu fin?

12. What is your analysis of Obonu fin in the community?

Thank you for your time and patience.

INTERVIEW GUIDE (OBONU FM)

I am Frank Owusu-Ofori, a graduate student of the School of Graduate Studies and Research, Ghana Institute of Journalism. As part of our course requirements, students are supposed to submit a research work to add up to knowledge before they graduate. In the light of this, I would want you to take some time to answer the following questionnaire. The topic is about radio as an agent of social change in community development: a study of Obonu fm. You are reminded that any information that you provide will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Thank you for accepting to participate in this academic exercise.

The following questions will be asked after exchanging pleasantries and following the rules of a semi-structured interview. This will give room for follow-up questions to be asked where necessary.

1. When was Obonu fm established?
2. What kind of radio station is Obonu fm (community, private, state)?
3. For which purpose was it established for?
4. What are some of the programmes of Obonu fm?
5. Can you tell me what your understanding is of social change?
6. Does Obonu fm play any role in social change?
7. What is the role of Obonu fm in social change?
8. How does Obonu Fm promote citizens/listeners in their content development (programmes)?
9. Does the community participate in the activities of Obonu fm?
10. What is the level of such participation?
11. Does Obonu fm have a communication model?

12. What goes into Obonu fin's programme development?

Thank you for your time and patience.