



UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES (UniMAC)

INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**LEVERAGING COMMUNITY RADIO FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS AND
ADAPTATION IN RURAL GHANA: A DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION
PERSPECTIVE**

EMMANUEL KWESI GYAN

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

DECEMBER 2025

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES (UniMAC)

INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**LEVERAGING COMMUNITY RADIO FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS AND
ADAPTATION IN RURAL GHANA: A DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION
PERSPECTIVE**

BY

EMMANUEL KWESI GYAN

(ID No. MADC24006)

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
(SoGS) IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS (MA) IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

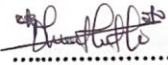
DECEMBER 2025

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Emmanuel Kwesi Gyan, declare that this thesis, except quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Therefore, I bear the responsibility for any shortcomings.


.....

DATE: 10/12/2025
.....

EMMANUEL KWESI GYAN

(Student)

SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We, the undersigned supervisors, declare that we supervised the preparation and presentation of this work in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of Master's thesis as laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC).


.....

DATE: 10/12/2025
.....

DR. KODWO JONAS ANSON BOATENG

(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to everyone who is working hard to protect our planet from the effects of climate change. Your efforts to keep our environment safe inspire others to do the same.

I also dedicate this thesis to Radio Ada for using community radio to educate, inform, and support people in finding solutions to climate problems. Your work shows how powerful radio can be in helping communities face environmental challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give thanks to Almighty God for His grace, guidance, and strength throughout the preparation and completion of this thesis. I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Kodwo Ansong Boateng, whose invaluable support, patience, and insightful direction greatly shaped the quality of this work.

I also wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Amannor of Radio Ada and my family for their unwavering love, encouragement, and sacrifices. Their continuous support motivated me through every stage of this journey. To all who contributed in diverse ways, I am sincerely thankful.

ABSTRACT

Climate change continues to affect rural Ghanaian communities, especially coastal areas like Ada, where flooding, sea-level rise, and saltwater intrusion disrupt livelihoods. Despite these risks, climate information does not always reach local people in forms they understand or trust. This study examined how Radio Ada, a community-based broadcaster, can be leveraged to improve climate change awareness and adaptation. The objectives were to explore how climate issues are communicated, assess participatory structures that support communication, and identify the challenges that shape this process. Guided by Participatory Communication Theory and a conceptual framework linking communication inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes, the study used a qualitative research design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively selected staff, and data was analysed thematically. Findings show that Radio Ada integrates climate issues into everyday programming using local language, storytelling, and indigenous knowledge. Trust and strong cultural identity enhance audience engagement, while partnerships with agencies help strengthen content. However, limited resources, volunteer pressure, and the five-kilometre broadcast restriction hinder wider reach. The study concludes that community radio can significantly support climate adaptation when adequately resourced.

Keywords: community radio; climate change; adaptation; participatory communication; Ghana.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	Error! Bookmark not defined.
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background to Study.....	1
1.1 Problem Statement.....	7
1.2 Research Objectives.....	8
1.3 Research Questions.....	8
1.4 Significance of the Study	8
1.5 Scope of the Study	9
1.6 Organization of the study.....	9
CHAPTER TWO.....	11
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2.0 Introduction	11
2.0.1 Evolution of Climate Communication.....	11
2.1 Community Radio and Development Communication	16
2.1 Empirical Perspectives on Community Radio and Climate Awareness	18
2.2 Challenges and Barriers to Effective Climate Communication via Community Radio.....	20
2.3 Review of Related Studies	22
2.4 Theoretical Framework: Participatory Communication Theory	24
2.5 Conceptual Framework: Leveraging Community Radio for Climate Change Awareness and Adaptation	25
2.6 Profile of Radio Ada and Ada Foah.....	28
2.6.1 Ownership, Mission, and Governance	29
2.7 Radio Ada's Role in the Community	29
CHAPTER THREE	30
METHODOLOGY	30
3.0 Introduction	30
3.1 Research Design.....	30
3.2 Study Area.....	31
3.3 Population and Sampling Procedure.....	32

3.4 Data Collection Methods	32
3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews.....	32
3.5 Data Analysis	33
3.6 Ethical Considerations.....	35
CHAPTER FOUR	36
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	36
4.0 Introduction	36
4.1 Profile of Radio Ada and Participant	36
4.2 Emerging themes from the Data	38
4.2.1 Summary of Emerging Themes	38
4.3 Discussion of Findings	49
CHAPTER FIVE.....	54
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54
5.1 Introduction	54
5.2 Summary of Findings.....	54
5.4 Recommendations	59
5.4.1 Strengthen Capacity Building for Community Radio Staff.....	59
5.4.2 Provide Dedicated Funding for Climate-Related Programming	60
5.4.3 Enhance Collaboration Between Radio Ada and Climate-Related Agencies	60
5.4.4 Improve Policy Support for Community Radio.....	61
5.4.5 Develop Creative Approaches to Sustain Listener Engagement on Climate Issues	62
5.5 Limitations of the Study	62
REFERENCES	66

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Key Traits of Community Radio that can Communicate Climate Change	15
Figure 2: Leveraging Community Radio for Climate Change Awareness and Adaptation.....	26
Figure 3: Objectives and Major Themes Identified.....	38
Figure 4: Objective 1 – Nature and Extent of Climate-Related Programming	39
Figure 5: Objective 2 – Participatory Communication Practice	40
Figure 6: Objective 3 – Challenges and Opportunities	41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participants’ Demographics	37
Table 2: Objective One – Nature and Extent of Climate-Related Programmes on Radio Ada.....	42
Table 3: Expanded Objective Two – Participatory Communication Practices and Community Engagement	44
Table 4: Expanded Objective Three – Challenges and Opportunities in Leveraging Radio Ada.....	46
Table 5: Opportunities and Strengths.....	48

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to Study

Climate change represents one of the most formidable challenges to global development in the twenty-first century. It has far-reaching implications for ecosystems, livelihoods, and human security, threatening to reverse decades of socio-economic progress (Agalo, 2023). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) underscores that climate change's effects rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, droughts, and floods are already visible and disproportionately affect vulnerable populations in developing regions (Harvey, 2011). These changes have led to severe disruptions in agriculture, fisheries, and water resources, intensifying poverty and inequality across many parts of the world (Kapinga, Siyao, Sife, & Silayo, 2020).

While scientific consensus on the causes and impacts of climate change is firm, translating this knowledge into local understanding and behavioral change remains a persistent challenge. Effective communication is vital for bridging this gap between science and society. As Moser (2010) argues, communication is not merely about information transfer but about engagement, an interactive process through which people interpret, internalize, and act on climate information. This is particularly crucial in rural contexts, where literacy levels may be low, and access to digital media is limited.

Among the various communication tools, radio stands out as one of the most accessible and influential media platforms globally. It transcends linguistic, geographic, and educational barriers, reaching audiences that other media fail to engage (Abdulai, Chireh, & Tchoukaleyska, 2021). For

this reason, scholars and practitioners increasingly regard community radio as a central medium for promoting awareness and adaptive responses to climate change (Bisht & Ahluwalia, 2020; Somanje, 2021). Community radio, unlike commercial or state-owned broadcasting, is participatory and people driven. It allows communities to voice their concerns, share local knowledge, and collectively deliberate on challenges affecting their lives (Harvey, 2011). This participatory ethos aligns perfectly with the goals of development communication, which seeks to empower people through dialogue, mutual learning, and collaboration.

Globally, radio remains one of the oldest yet most resilient forms of mass communication. Despite the proliferation of the internet and social media, radio continues to reach an estimated 95% of the world's population, making it the most pervasive medium for disseminating information (UNESCO, 2019). Its enduring relevance lies in its affordability, simplicity, and immediacy. In the context of climate change communication, radio plays an indispensable role in transforming complex scientific concepts into everyday language accessible to the public (Bisht & Ahluwalia, 2020).

Studies from Asia, Europe, and the Americas demonstrate that radio has been effectively deployed as a knowledge mobilization tool. For instance, in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, community radio became a platform for dialogue among researchers, practitioners, and rural communities during the Gros Morne Climate Change Symposium (Abdulai et al., 2021). The initiative demonstrated that community-based broadcasts could engage dispersed populations in collective discussions on adaptation, risk perception, and resilience planning. Abdulai et al (2021) argue that community radio's participatory format fosters "place-based knowledge mobilization," a process where local experiences and scientific insights coalesce to produce actionable understanding.

In South Asia, Bisht & Ahluwalia (2020) observed that community radio stations integrated climate narratives with local storytelling traditions to convey issues like soil degradation, rainfall variability, and deforestation. Their study revealed that participatory broadcasts increased farmers' awareness of adaptive practices such as crop diversification and rainwater harvesting. This demonstrates radio's flexibility; it can blend cultural identity with educational purpose, ensuring that messages resonate with listeners' lived experiences.

Moreover, in fragile and post-conflict contexts, radio has proven to be an instrument of stability and education. Somanje (2021) notes that in regions recovering from socio-economic instability, such as Afghanistan and parts of the Middle East, community radio serves not only as an information source but also as a space for civic rebuilding. In such settings, it allows marginalized populations to share their observations of changing weather patterns and collectively explore coping strategies.

From a global development communication standpoint, these examples illustrate that effective climate communication must be dialogic. Rather than a top-down dissemination of scientific information, it should involve two-way exchanges where communities articulate their own perceptions and local knowledge contributes to global climate discourses (Harvey, 2011; Abdulai et al., 2021). Radio's affordability, portability, and oral nature make it ideal for this task, especially in rural settings.

In sub-Saharan Africa, radio is the most pervasive medium. It reaches remote communities more effectively than television or the internet. It requires neither literacy nor high costs, making it the preferred source of information among rural dwellers (Agalo, 2023). Community radio stations

have thus become vital platforms for climate awareness and adaptation learning. They disseminate weather forecasts, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and provide forums where farmers and local leaders discuss changing environmental trends (Kapinga et al., 2020; Agalo, 2023).

For instance, in Tanzania, Kapinga et al (2020) studied the Isimani Division of Iringa Rural District and found that community broadcast media significantly enhanced smallholder farmers' understanding of adaptive strategies. These included the use of drought-tolerant seeds, early-maturing crop varieties, intercropping, and soil conservation. However, they also identified barriers such as limited funding, poor electricity supply, and low broadcaster education levels. These findings underline the need for supportive policies and capacity building to enable rural broadcasters to sustain climate education programs.

Similarly, in Kenya, Agalo (2023) examined the role of community radio in Migori County and discovered that while radio remains the main source of climate information, most stations do not prioritize climate issues. Climate topics often appear only as short news items rather than structured educational programs. The study emphasized the importance of integrating local languages and participatory discussions to make climate communication more relevant to rural audiences. Findings from Agalo (2023) echo the call by Ogenga (2020) and Anyuor & Achieng, (2022) that community radio in Africa must move beyond mere information delivery to become a platform for civic engagement, enabling citizens to deliberate on adaptation practices collectively.

However, sustainability and institutional challenges remain major obstacles. Moffat et al (2024) argue that many African community radio stations face dwindling donor support, low revenue generation, and technological obsolescence. These issues limit their ability to sustain educational programming, train staff, or maintain broadcasting infrastructure. They also note that the absence

of coordinated environmental communication policies often leads to fragmentation where stations operate in isolation without partnerships with governmental or scientific institutions.

Despite these challenges, community radio has shown transformative potential in Africa's development communication landscape. Harvey (2011) asserts that in contexts where national media are centralized and urban-focused, community radio offers a decentralized communication structure that amplifies rural voices. It connects local realities to broader policy debates, allowing communities to influence environmental decision-making. This aligns with the participatory communication paradigm, which views citizens not as passive recipients of information but as active agents of social change.

The emergence of projects such as Farm Radio International and Climate Airwaves across Africa has demonstrated the practicality of community-based approaches. These initiatives leverage storytelling, local dialects, and interactive programs to strengthen adaptive capacity. They show that when communities are meaningfully engaged in the communication process, awareness leads to action.

Ghana's climate challenges mirror those of the broader African continent but are accentuated by the country's geographic diversity. The northern regions experience prolonged droughts and desertification, while the coastal zones, including Greater Accra and the Volta Estuary, face severe coastal erosion and flooding (Harvey, 2011). These environmental shifts have significant implications for agriculture, fishing, and settlement patterns.

The Government of Ghana has developed national climate policies through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), focusing on resilience, mitigation, and adaptation. However, as Harvey (2011) observes, the success of such policies

depends not only on their design but also on how effectively they are communicated to local populations. Many Ghanaians, especially in rural communities, remain unaware of national strategies or of how climate change affects their daily lives.

Community radio, therefore, plays a pivotal role in bridging this awareness gap. Ghana boasts one of the most vibrant community radio networks in West Africa, coordinated under the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN). These stations are non-profit, locally owned, and broadcast in indigenous languages, making them uniquely suited for grassroots education. Studies by Harvey (2011) Climate Airwaves project, implemented through the GCRN, provides a landmark example of how community radio can support environmental communication. The initiative trained broadcasters to investigate and report on local climate impacts while engaging communities in dialogues about adaptation and rights.

Despite successes within the global context, many community radio stations face sustainability issues, limited funding, and inadequate training in environmental reporting (Moffat, Mukhongo, & Ongus, 2024). Furthermore, while developed nations often have institutionalized frameworks supporting environmental journalism, developing countries struggle with weak media capacity and a lack of collaboration between scientists and journalists (Bisht & Ahluwalia, 2020). This gap highlights the need for localized research into how community radio can be strengthened to play a more proactive role in climate adaptation communication.

In this study, the concept of leveraging refers to the deliberate and strategic strengthening of community radio's participatory, linguistic, and cultural capacities to enhance climate change communication outcomes. It involves transforming community radio from a passive tool of information dissemination into an active platform for dialogue, empowerment, and knowledge co-creation. According to Harvey (2011), community radio has the ability to localize scientific climate

data through participatory discussion formats, turning global climate issues into locally meaningful narratives. Similarly, Bisht & Ahluwalia (2014), found that community broadcasters who contextualize climate messages using indigenous knowledge systems effectively bridge the gap between scientific and local understanding. Hence, this study argues that community radio can be leveraged when its participatory features, such as local language use, audience inclusion, and community ownership, are optimized to drive awareness, stimulate dialogue, and inspire collective adaptation actions. This conceptual stance positions Radio Ada as more than a broadcaster; it becomes a communication hub that empowers local communities to understand and respond to climate risks.

1.1 Problem Statement

While previous studies affirm the relevance of community radio in creating environmental awareness Harvey (2011) Kapinga et al. (2020), few demonstrate how these stations can be *leveraged* to sustain engagement and translate awareness into adaptive behaviour. Most stations lack consistent and structured programming on climate change issues. Studies across Africa highlight that inadequate funding, limited broadcaster training, and weak collaboration with scientific institutions hinder the effective communication of climate information (Kapinga et al., 2020; Moffat et al., 2024; Agalo, 2023). Consequently, communities most vulnerable to climate impacts often receive fragmented or no information at all.

This study, therefore, shifts the focus from the descriptive role of community radio to its strategic potential, exploring how participatory structures, local knowledge systems, and institutional capacity can be strengthened to make climate communication more effective.

1.2 Research Objectives

The study aims to explore how community radio can be leveraged for climate change awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana. The specific objectives are to:

1. To explore the extent and nature of climate change-related programmes on Radio Ada and how they create awareness among rural audiences.
2. To analyse the participatory communication practices adopted by Radio Ada in engaging community members on climate change and adaptation.
3. To identify the challenges and opportunities that affect how Radio Ada can be effectively leveraged as a tool for promoting climate change awareness and adaptation.

1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What types of programmes and content does Radio Ada broadcast to create awareness about climate change and environmental issues among its rural audience?
2. How does Radio Ada apply participatory communication practices in engaging community members on issues of climate change and adaptation?
3. What challenges and opportunities exist in leveraging community radio, particularly Radio Ada to strengthen climate change awareness and local adaptation in rural Ghana?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it contributes to the growing body of literature on development communication by providing empirical insight into how community radio can be used as a tool for climate change awareness and adaptation in Ghana. The study emphasizes the role of participatory

communication in empowering rural communities, fostering dialogue, and helping them make informed choices on how to cope with environmental changes,.

Moreover, the study provides evidence to guide government agencies, NGOs, and the Ghana Community Radio Network in integrating climate communication into local development and environmental frameworks, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of grassroots adaptation strategies. Overall, the study bridges the gap between research, media practice, and community resilience by highlighting the transformative potential of community radio in addressing climate challenges in rural Ghana.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on Radio Ada, which is located in the Ada East District of Ghana's Greater Accra Region. The choice of this radio station is purposive given its audience comprising mainly fishers, farmers, salt miners and petty traders as well as faces acute climate impacts such as tidal erosion, salinization of farmlands and flooding.

Conceptually, the study focuses on climate change awareness and adaptation, rather than mitigation, with emphasis on how communication fosters understanding and behavioural adjustment within the community.

1.6 Organization of the study

The study is structured into chapters that collectively explore how community radio can be leveraged for climate change awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana. Chapter One introduces the study, setting the context for understanding the role of community radio in climate communication. Chapter Two reviews existing literature and theoretical perspectives on development communication, community radio, and climate change, identifying key gaps that this

study seeks to address. Chapter Three explains the research methodology, and Chapter Four presents and discusses the findings. Finally, Chapter Five presents conclusions and recommendations for strengthening community radio as a tool for climate change awareness and adaptation in Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews conceptual and empirical studies across several interrelated themes. First, it outlines the evolution in climate change communication from information dissemination to participatory engagement. Then it discusses community radio in the development communication tradition, followed by empirical cases linking radio and climate awareness. Next, it explores barriers and challenges that impede effective climate programming via community radio. Finally, the chapter synthesizes these insights, identifies gaps in the literature, and presents the Participatory Communication Theory as the guiding framework for your study.

2.0.1 Evolution of Climate Communication

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges of the twenty-first century, posing significant risks to ecosystems, human health, and development (IPCC, 2023). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports that extreme weather events, such as prolonged droughts, heatwaves, and floods, are now more frequent and intense, threatening global food security and water systems (IPCC, 2023). While scientific understanding of climate change has grown, effectively communicating its implications to communities, especially those most vulnerable, remains a persistent challenge (Moser, 2010; O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009). Scholars agree that how climate information is communicated determines how people perceive, internalize, and act on it (Moser, 2010; Abdulai, Chireh, & Tchoukaleyska, 2021).

Historically, climate communication followed a deficit model, which assumed that providing more scientific facts would automatically lead to public understanding and behavioral change. This

linear model, however, underestimated the role of local context, culture, and prior knowledge in shaping how people interpret information (Nisbet, 2009; Moser, 2010). As research evolved, critics argued that audiences are not passive recipients of knowledge but active interpreters who negotiate meaning based on lived experiences, beliefs, and social dynamics (Fahy & Nisbet, 2011). Hence, the focus of climate communication shifted from information dissemination to engagement and dialogue.

Abdulai, Chireh, & Tchoukaleyska, (2021) emphasize the concept of knowledge mobilization a process of translating and sharing scientific, policy, and indigenous knowledge so that it can be understood and applied by different stakeholders. Their work on community radio in Newfoundland, Canada, revealed that participatory forms of communication such as radio talk shows, listener call-ins, and collaborative broadcasts enable a two-way exchange of knowledge. Such participatory approaches transform radio from a tool of information transfer to a platform for deliberation and co-learning (Abdulai et al., 2021). This insight echoes the argument of Gumucio-Dagron (2001), who defined participatory communication as a dialogic process that empowers people to articulate their own needs and contribute to solutions.

In the context of development communication, the shift from the deficit model to participatory communication represents a philosophical and methodological transformation. Scholars such as Servaes (2008) argue that development communication must center on people's participation and ownership of the communication process, not just their consumption of information. This principle is particularly relevant to climate change communication, where top-down dissemination of scientific data often fails to inspire meaningful behavioral change at the local level. For instance, Olausson (2009) notes that climate communication dominated by technical jargon and global-scale

narratives often alienates rural audiences who relate more closely to their immediate environment and livelihoods.

Furthermore, framing, how messages are constructed and contextualized—has become central in climate communication studies. As Moser (2016) explains, effective climate communication requires framing messages around locally relevant issues such as agriculture, health, or livelihood rather than abstract global warming data. In rural Ghana, for example, discussions about declining crop yields, fishing challenges, or flooding resonate more deeply with community members than discussions of greenhouse gas concentrations. Harvey (2011) demonstrates this through the Climate Airwaves initiative, which trained Ghanaian community radio broadcasters to frame climate discussions in ways that connect with local realities and rights. By localizing global environmental discourse, the initiative fostered awareness, trust, and participation among rural listeners.

Another important evolution in climate communication research concerns the integration of indigenous and experiential knowledge. Scholars argue that local knowledge systems provide valuable insights into environmental patterns, risk perception, and adaptive behavior (Riedlinger & Berkes, 2001; Nyong, Adesina, & Osman-Elasha, 2007). However, for such knowledge to be effectively communicated, the medium must be accessible, credible, and participatory. Community radio meets these criteria because it operates in local languages, engages trusted community members, and allows reciprocal communication through call-ins and community reporters (Kapinga, Siyao, Sife, & Silayo, 2020; Harvey, 2011).

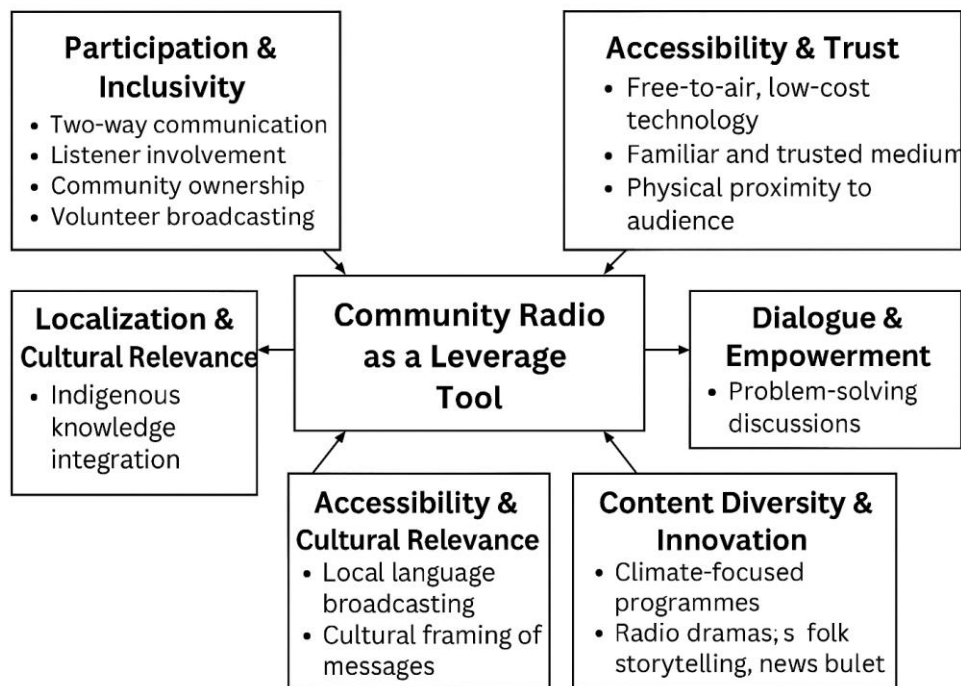
This participatory capacity of community radio aligns with what scholars term social learning in climate communication. Social learning emphasizes that communities collectively generate and share knowledge about environmental change through dialogue and interaction (Reed et al., 2010).

It is not simply about telling people what to do but fostering continuous conversations that shape shared understanding. Community radio facilitates such learning processes by offering a communal space where experiences of farmers, fishers, and local authorities converge and evolve (Abdulai et al., 2021; Agalo, 2023).

UNESCO (2022) underscores this function of community radio, describing it as “a critical medium for environmental learning and resilience building,” especially in rural areas of the Global South. UNESCO’s global framework for climate education identifies radio as one of the few media that can combine accessibility, cultural relevance, and affordability. In sub-Saharan Africa, where internet access remains below 40% and literacy barriers persist, radio is often the only consistent channel through which communities engage with public information (UNESCO, 2022).

Globally, several studies corroborate this observation. In Latin America, Gumucio-Dagron (2001) documented how community radio helped marginalized populations articulate local environmental concerns. Similarly, in South Asia, Bisht & Ahluwalia (2020) found that community radio stations integrated local storytelling and folk traditions with expert interviews to discuss soil degradation, water conservation, and weather changes. Their study concluded that climate awareness increased significantly when local idioms and examples were used rather than scientific jargon (Bisht & Ahluwalia, 2020).

Figure 1: Key Traits of Community Radio that can Communicate Climate Change



Source: Adapted from Abdulai, Chireh, and Tchoukaleyska (2021), supported by Evans, Dyll, and Teer-Tomaselli (2017).

The diagram above illustrates the core features and properties of community radio that make it a practical tool for leveraging climate change communication and adaptation. At the centre is community radio, representing its role as a participatory medium that connects local people to climate information in meaningful ways. Surrounding it are five interrelated elements: Participation and Inclusivity, Localization and Cultural Relevance, Accessibility and Trust, Dialogue and Empowerment, and Content Diversity and Innovation, each depicting a defining characteristic that enables community radio to function effectively within a development communication framework.

Participation and Inclusivity highlight the community-driven nature of the medium, where local people are not mere recipients but active contributors through listener groups, volunteer presenters,

and on-air discussions. Localization and Cultural Relevance capture how community radio integrates local languages, indigenous knowledge, and cultural values to make climate messages understandable and relatable. Accessibility and Trust emphasize radio's affordability, familiarity, and proximity, which make it one of the most dependable media in rural Ghana. Dialogue and Empowerment reflect the two-way communication process that builds confidence, nurtures learning, and encourages collective problem-solving on climate issues. Lastly, Content Diversity and Innovation represent the creative and flexible programming, including dramas, folk stories, call-ins, and panel discussions, that sustain public engagement and reinforce understanding.

Together, these elements define the inherent strengths of community radio that can be strategically leveraged to bridge the gap between scientific climate knowledge and local adaptation practices, positioning it as a transformative communication platform for sustainable climate action.

2.1 Community Radio and Development Communication

Community radio is at the core of development communication because it bridges the gap between formal information systems and the lived experiences of ordinary people. It is rooted in the principle of communication for social change, emphasizing participation, cultural relevance, and empowerment (Servaes, 2008). Gumucio-Dagron (2001) argues that development communication must shift from "telling people what to do" toward facilitating dialogue that enables communities to define their own priorities. This aligns with Freire's, (1970) vision of dialogic communication, where learning and social change emerge through collective reflection and action.

According to Das (2011), participatory communication allows people to influence, control, and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives. In rural contexts, it provides a means for communities to articulate issues that mainstream media overlook. Scholars like Craig & Mayo,

(1995) and Narayan (2006) emphasize that development must be a participatory process of social change, rather than a top-down transfer of knowledge. In this sense, radio functions not merely as a transmitter of information but as an “articulation space” Das (2011) where people express concerns, negotiate meanings, and co-create knowledge.

Community radio embodies this participatory ethos. It is typically local, non-profit, and community-owned, operating within a small broadcast radius that allows close interaction between producers and listeners (Fratzke, 2008; Siva Balan et al., 2012). Choudhury (2011) and (Jumani, 2009) note that radio’s simplicity, affordability, and accessibility make it a preferred communication tool among rural populations, especially those with low literacy. As Kapinga et al. (2020) observed in Tanzania, radio effectively overcomes challenges of distance, language, and illiteracy, making it ideal for disseminating agricultural and environmental information.

Harvey (2011) reinforces this in his *Climate Airwaves* study in Ghana, demonstrating that community radio’s strength lies in its ability to connect scientific knowledge to local culture and experience. Through vernacular languages, folk storytelling, and participatory formats, Community radio stations mobilize community dialogue on issues like flooding, deforestation, and fishing disruptions. Similarly, Al-Hassan (2011) and Nakabugu (2001) show that community radios can rapidly and accurately disseminate locally relevant content on agriculture, natural resources, and climate change an advantage that enhances adaptive capacities.

In development communication theory, this participatory model contrasts with the diffusion paradigm, which treats audiences as passive receivers of innovation (Rogers, 1976). Instead, community radio follows the multiplicity model of Servaes (2008), which celebrates cultural diversity and localized solutions. It situates development within the social fabric of communities, empowering them to use communication as a tool for problem-solving. Hence, community radio

operates as both a pedagogical and political platform, educating, mobilizing, and amplifying marginalized voices.

Empirical evidence show that community radios play a crucial role in promoting local governance, gender inclusion, and environmental consciousness. McKay (2009) and Faisal & Alhassan (2018) note that in Ghana, community radios foster civic participation by integrating citizens into local decision-making. Such participatory platforms enable co-learning between broadcasters, policymakers, and the community, aligning with the sustainable development agenda (UNESCO, 2022). However, the extent to which these stations have integrated climate-related themes remains underexplored, especially beyond short-term donor-funded projects, a gap this study seeks to address through Radio Ada.

2.1 Empirical Perspectives on Community Radio and Climate Awareness

Empirical literature across Africa demonstrates the value of community radio as a tool for environmental education and climate adaptation. Kapinga et al. (2020) found that Tanzanian farmers relied heavily on radio for agricultural and climate information because it is available, affordable, and delivered in local languages. These stations helped farmers adopt adaptive practices such as soil conservation, crop diversification, and water management. However, they also reported gaps, many stations lacked access to expert knowledge or training in environmental reporting, leading to inconsistent quality.

In Kenya, Agalo (2023) conducted a case study in Migori County and found that while radio stations increased awareness of climate risks, only a few had structured climate change programs. The challenge was sustainability: after donor support ended, environmental content often

disappeared from programming schedules. Agalo (2023) emphasized the importance of integrating climate information into everyday broadcasts rather than treating it as a separate issue.

In Malawi, Chavinda (2025) highlighted participatory radio as a major success factor in promoting adaptation. Programs that allowed listener call-ins, testimonies, and local case stories built trust and ownership. Similarly, in Ghana, the Climate Airwaves project Harvey (2011) proved that when communities discussed climate change in their own languages and contexts, they were more likely to act. The project empowered journalists at Radio Ada and other community stations to frame climate discourse around social justice and everyday resilience rather than scientific abstraction.

Despite these successes, Moffat et al. (2024) warn that sustainability remains a persistent challenge for community radios across Africa. Financial instability, lack of policy support, and limited technical capacity hinder long-term climate programming. Many stations depend on advertising or donor funds that prioritize short-term objectives, resulting in inconsistent messaging and limited impact. UNESCO (2022) similarly identifies weak institutional partnerships between community media and scientific institutions as a major barrier to accurate climate reporting.

From a development communication perspective, these empirical findings demonstrate the critical need for localized climate storytelling, an approach where communication is tailored to the social and ecological contexts of audiences (Devine-Wright, 2013). Effective radio programming should integrate scientific knowledge with community narratives, indigenous practices, and local problem-solving strategies (Berkes et al., 2000). Without this cultural grounding, messages risk being perceived as foreign or irrelevant.

The literature also highlights a methodological gap. Most studies focus on broad regional comparisons rather than micro-level station analyses. There is limited understanding of how

editorial decisions, community participation, and institutional constraints shape the presence, or absence of climate programming within specific stations. This study contributes to filling that gap by conducting a qualitative exploration of Radio Ada's content and institutional practices to assess how it engages with climate awareness and adaptation discourse.

2.2 Challenges and Barriers to Effective Climate Communication via Community Radio

Although the potential of community radio to enhance climate awareness is widely documented, a number of structural and operational challenges persist. Studies consistently identify funding constraints, technical and human-resource limitations, institutional fragmentation, and sociocultural barriers as recurring obstacles (Moffat et al., 2024; Kapinga et al., 2020; Agalo, 2023).

Financial instability remains perhaps the most critical limitation. Many stations depend on short-term donor projects or modest community contributions that rarely cover the costs of production, maintenance, and staff training. Moffat et al., (2024) argue that without sustainable business models, climate programmes tend to vanish once external grants expire. Kapinga et al., (2020) reached a similar conclusion in Tanzania, where insufficient funds curtailed field reporting and the inclusion of expert voices.

Limited technical and human capacity also undermines quality. As Harvey (2011) observed during the Climate Airwaves initiative in Ghana, few broadcasters possess environmental-journalism skills or access to reliable data. Consequently, climate topics are often simplified or detached from scientific evidence, weakening credibility. Abdulai et al., (2021) therefore recommend sustained capacity-building partnerships between universities, meteorological departments, and local stations to enhance message accuracy.

Equally significant are weak institutional linkages. Many community radios operate independently of state or scientific bodies, which constrains their ability to verify or localize climate information (Somanje, 2021). Successful cases, such as Radio Ada's early collaboration with the Ghana Meteorological Agency, illustrate how partnerships improve both technical accuracy and public trust (Harvey, 2011). Yet such models remain exceptions rather than the rule.

The material infrastructure of broadcasting further shapes outcomes. Somanje, (2021) and Gallegos and Buizer (2024) emphasize the importance of what they call "media materiality": transmitter strength, studio layout, and even energy reliability directly affect participatory engagement. In rural areas, frequent power outages or weak signals reduce listenership and cut short interactive segments.

Finally, sociocultural barriers influence how audiences interpret climate messages. Gonzalez & Sanchez (2021) found that local cosmologies and fatalistic beliefs often frame weather changes as acts of God, which can blunt scientific appeals. In Ghana, Odoom et al. (2024) report that listeners prefer narratives grounded in everyday livelihoods, fishing, farming, or housing, rather than abstract global discourse. This suggests that culturally attuned storytelling is indispensable for resonance and behavioral uptake.

In sum, community radio's impact on climate adaptation hinges not only on communicative intent but also on structural sustainability, institutional cooperation, and sociocultural sensitivity. Addressing these interconnected challenges is central to strengthening the role of stations such as Radio Ada in promoting climate-resilient communities.

2.3 Review of Related Studies

Existing studies show widespread recognition of community radio as a potent medium for inclusive communication, local empowerment, and social transformation. From Latin America to Africa, community radio has been credited with democratizing access to information and amplifying marginalized voices in ways that commercial and state-owned media often fail to achieve (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Servaes, 2008). Within the context of climate change, its participatory potential has been repeatedly affirmed. Harvey (2011), for instance, illustrates through the Climate Airwaves project in Ghana that community radio can transform abstract climate science into locally relevant dialogue, fostering both awareness and agency. Similarly, Kapinga et al. (2020) demonstrate how Tanzanian farmers use radio as an accessible and affordable source of adaptive knowledge. These studies affirm that radio remains the most localized and culturally resonant form of mass communication in many rural settings.

However, despite such optimism, a closer examination of the literature reveals several weaknesses and inconsistencies that warrant deeper inquiry. One key limitation concerns the scope and depth of empirical analysis. Much of the existing research provides broad overviews of the role of community radio in development, but few studies engage in detailed, station-specific analysis of how climate change content is conceptualized, produced, and disseminated (Moffat, Mukhongo, & Ongus, 2024; Agalo, 2023). The operational dynamics inside the radio stations, the decision-making processes, editorial constraints, and audience participation structures are often glossed over. Consequently, the inner workings that either enable or constrain climate programming remain poorly understood.

Another critical observation from the literature is that while scholars acknowledge the participatory ideals of community radio, few interrogate the extent to which these ideals are

realized in practice. Servaes (2008) and Freire (1970) conceptualize participation as a transformative process rooted in dialogue and co-creation. Yet, as Manyozo (2012) cautions, what is often labeled “participatory” in community broadcasting may be limited to symbolic involvement, with real control still retained by external actors or elite producers. Studies by Moffat et al. (2024) and Somanje (2021) confirm this disconnect, showing that many African community radios operate under severe financial and logistical constraints that compromise their participatory integrity. Hence, although participation remains a core principle in theory, in practice it is frequently curtailed by structural realities.

Closely related is the problem of sustainability, which surfaces repeatedly across empirical studies. Moffat et al. (2024) note that community radios in sub-Saharan Africa often depend on donor funding, making their climate-related programmes transient and inconsistent. Agalo’s (2023) work in rural Kenya echoes this concern, observing that once external support ends, climate segments are discontinued or merged into generic current-affairs slots. The Tanzanian experience reported by Kapinga et al. (2020) is similar: stations that once hosted agricultural and climate broadcasts struggled to sustain them due to limited technical capacity and unstable finances. These findings reveal a structural fragility that undermines the long-term communicative potential of community radio in climate adaptation efforts.

Beyond operational constraints, there are also epistemological gaps in literature. Much of the current discourse treats audiences as homogeneous entities who automatically interpret and act upon radio messages. Yet, studies in environmental communication demonstrate that perception and response are mediated by culture, identity, and prior experience (Gonzalez & Sanchez, 2021). Odoom et al. (2024) show that in Ghana, climate information is only effective when it resonates with people’s everyday livelihood concerns, such as fishing, flooding, or farming. This

underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of audience interpretation and meaning making in rural settings. Without ethnographic insight into how listeners receive and negotiate radio content, conclusions about effectiveness remain speculative.

The reviewed literature presents evidence of community radio's importance in environmental communication, but it also reveals a persistent gap in how its full potential can be harnessed. Many studies emphasize radio's role in awareness creation Harvey (2011); Kapinga et al.(2020); Agalo (2023) but provide limited insight into how such awareness translates into sustainable adaptation practices. This study therefore extends the discussion by arguing that leveraging community radio requires systematic enhancement of its operational, participatory, and institutional capacities. As Abdulai et al. (2021) note, the participatory foundation of community radio makes it an ideal vehicle for social learning and grassroots dialogue, but this potential is often constrained by inadequate funding, technical expertise, and policy support. Leveraging, in this sense, means optimizing these participatory structures through climate literacy training for broadcasters, integration of indigenous knowledge with scientific information, and creation of enabling policy frameworks that support bottom-up climate action. By examining how Radio Ada embodies or falls short of these dimensions, this study moves beyond descriptive accounts of community radio use to develop an applied understanding of how it can be strategically leveraged as a participatory mechanism for climate adaptation in rural Ghana.

2.4 Theoretical Framework: Participatory Communication Theory

The Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) is used as the main guiding idea for the current study. This theory comes from the work of Paulo Freire (1970), who believed that communication should not be one-sided. Instead, it should be a two-way process where people talk, listen, and learn from one another. PCT focuses on dialogue, shared learning, and cooperation between people

rather than on one group sending information and another simply receiving it (Servaes, 2008; Gumucio-Dagron, 2001).

In terms of climate change, this theory suggests that knowledge about adaptation should be created together by experts and community members, not just passed down from scientists to the public. Community radio puts this idea into practice by allowing local people, policymakers, and experts to exchange information and ideas on an equal level (Abdulai et al., 2021). According to this theory, a truly participatory radio station is one where community members are directly involved in planning, creating, and evaluating radio programmes.

When applied to Radio Ada, PCT helps to assess how much the station encourages open discussion, community involvement, and empowerment in its climate-related activities. It also makes it easier to identify barriers, such as donor control or government policies, that can reduce true participation. Gumucio-Dagron (2001) emphasizes that real participation happens only when the community has the power to make decisions, not just when they are invited to give opinions.

In conclusion, PCT helps the study focus on people. It connects the daily work of community radio to bigger issues like participation, fairness, and sustainability. The theory shows how communication through Radio Ada can either support or limit how rural communities in Ghana understand and respond to climate change.

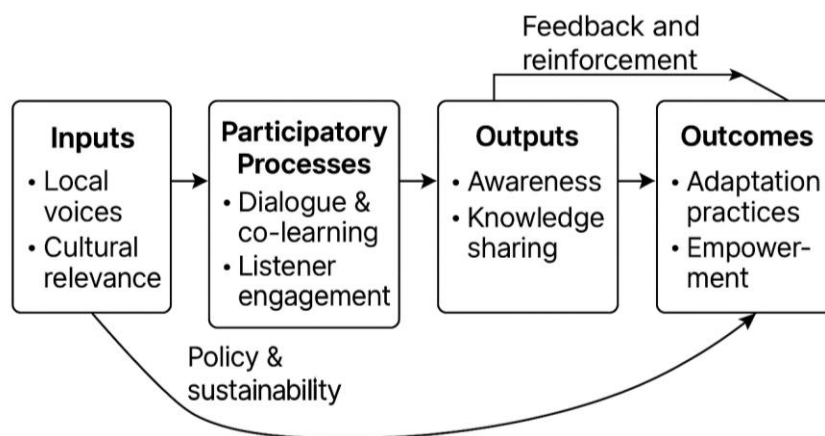
2.5 Conceptual Framework: Leveraging Community Radio for Climate Change Awareness and Adaptation

This study conceptualizes “leveraging” as the strategic use and optimization of community radio’s unique attributes accessibility, participation, local ownership, and cultural relevance to enhance climate change awareness and adaptation. In this sense, leveraging goes beyond simply using radio

to share information; it involves maximizing its participatory structure to empower communities to understand, discuss, and act upon climate issues.

Community radio operates at the intersection of communication and development. From a development communication perspective, it functions as both a platform and a process: a platform for sharing climate-related knowledge, and a process for co-creating adaptation solutions through local dialogue. The concept of leveraging therefore implies identifying and strengthening the mechanisms within community radio that can amplify awareness, facilitate learning, and inspire behavioral and institutional change in the face of climate threats (Servaes, 2008; Gumucio-Dagron, 2001).

Figure 2: Leveraging Community Radio for Climate Change Awareness and Adaptation



Source: Adapted from Abdulai, Chireh & Tchoukaleyska (2021) and Foxwell-Norton et al. (2017).

The framework conceptualizes community radio as both a platform and a social process that connects local communities, experts, and policymakers. By leveraging its participatory nature, community radio enables citizens not only to receive climate information but also to interpret, discuss, and act upon it within their cultural and livelihood contexts.

At its base are the inputs, which represent the inherent strengths of community radio such as local language broadcasting, cultural relevance, community ownership, and accessibility. For instance, Radio Ada's use of the Dangme language and reliance on local volunteers make it a credible and trusted source of information.

The participatory communication processes translate these inputs into active engagement. Through talk shows, call-ins, listener clubs, and community forums, Radio Ada fosters two-way communication, allowing community members and experts to share perspectives and co-create local solutions to environmental challenges.

These participatory interactions lead to outputs such as increased awareness, knowledge exchange, and understanding of climate risks. By simplifying scientific data through culturally grounded narratives, community radio bridges the gap between global climate discourse and local realities.

The resulting outcomes include behavioral and social changes such as adoption of adaptive practices, community collaboration, and empowerment. As demonstrated by Harvey (2011) in the Climate Airwaves initiative, community radio can transform awareness into collective adaptation behavior.

Finally, feedback and reinforcement complete the communication cycle. Community input informs new programming, while lessons learned guide future content and policy dialogue. This cyclical process ensures sustainability and accountability, making communication a continuous and responsive activity.

In summary, this framework shows that leveraging community radio involves optimizing its participatory structures from inputs and processes to outputs and outcomes to build awareness, strengthen local ownership, and foster adaptive capacity. It highlights that effective climate

communication is not merely about information transfer but about nurturing shared understanding and collective resilience within vulnerable communities.

2.6 Profile of Radio Ada and Ada Foah

Ada Foah, the administrative capital of the Ada East District, is situated at the estuary where the Volta River enters the Gulf of Guinea in southeastern Ghana. The district lies within the Volta Delta, a low-lying coastal zone identified as one of Ghana's most climate-vulnerable regions due to its exposure to tidal flooding, coastal erosion, storm surges, and saltwater intrusion (Mensah & FitzGibbon, 2012; Johnson, 2025). These hazards have led to shoreline retreat, infrastructure damage, and loss of livelihoods in many deltaic settlements, including Ada Foah (Abu, Codjoe, & Sward, 2022). The local economy relies primarily on small-scale fishing in the estuary, salt extraction around the Songor Lagoon, subsistence agriculture, and petty trading, all of which are highly sensitive to environmental change (Mensah & FitzGibbon, 2012; Abu et al., 2022). Given its ecological fragility and the dependence of its residents on natural coastal and riverine systems, Ada Foah provides an appropriate context for examining how community radio can enhance climate-change awareness and adaptation among vulnerable populations.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2021 Population and Housing Census), the Ada East District has a population of approximately 72,000 people, spread across both rural and peri-urban settlements. Most inhabitants speak Dangme, and literacy levels are relatively lower compared to urban centers. Women and youth form a significant portion of the population, many of whom depend directly on natural resources for their livelihoods. These socio-economic characteristics heighten the district's vulnerability to climate change impacts, but they also make the community highly receptive to localized and culturally relevant communication strategies.

2.6.1 Ownership, Mission, and Governance

Consistent with GCRN's participatory ethos, Radio Ada is community-owned and nonprofit, governed by a board of community representatives and operated mainly by volunteers. Its mission is to “use radio to strengthen local identity, knowledge sharing, and grassroots participation in decision-making” (GCRN, 2019). Programmes are produced in Dangme and English, ensuring linguistic inclusivity while maintaining cultural authenticity. This bilingual format enhances accessibility for low-literacy listeners and preserves local oral traditions (Lewil & Diedong, 2023).

2.7 Radio Ada's Role in the Community

Radio Ada broadcasts on 93.3 MHz FM and transmits mainly in Dangme and English, ensuring accessibility to a wide audience. Its programming philosophy is grounded in participatory communication, which emphasizes dialogue, cultural identity, and community empowerment. The station's content spans areas such as education, local governance, health, gender equality, and environmental awareness. Its community-based structure, which involves local volunteers and listener groups, provides a model for inclusive and bottom-up information sharing.

Radio Ada has, in past years, implemented environmental communication projects such as the Climate Airwaves Initiative, which used participatory radio formats to discuss climate impacts and adaptation strategies with local residents (Harvey, 2011). This makes it a strategic and relevant case study for understanding how community radio can be leveraged to foster climate change awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methods and processes that guided the current study. It outlines the research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection methods, data analysis approach, and ethical considerations. The purpose of this chapter is to justify the use of a qualitative research approach and to show how the chosen methods help achieve the study's objectives.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative research design. Qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena through the meanings people assign to them rather than through numerical data. It allows researchers to explore experiences, perceptions, and interpretations in their natural settings (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This approach is suitable because the study seeks to understand how community radio, specifically Radio Ada contributes to creating awareness and promoting adaptation to climate change in rural communities.

According to Pathak et al. (2013), qualitative research provides rich, detailed insights into complex issues and is useful when the goal is to explore rather than to measure. It allows the researcher to capture how participants make sense of their communication experiences and how institutional, social, and cultural factors shape those experiences. In the context of this study, it helps reveal how radio practitioners, producers, and listeners interpret and engage with climate-related content.

The qualitative approach is chosen because of its flexibility. It permits the researcher to adapt data collection strategies as new insights emerge (Creswell, 2014). This aligns with the study's aim of understanding evolving communication practices within Radio Ada. Furthermore, qualitative

research emphasizes the researcher's reflexivity, the continuous awareness of one's role in the research process, which is essential in participatory communication studies (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

The design is therefore exploratory and descriptive. It explores the current state of climate change programming at Radio Ada, describes the strategies and challenges faced, and identifies opportunities to strengthen participatory communication for adaptation.

3.2 Study Area

The study is conducted at Radio Ada, Ghana's first community radio station, located in Ada Foah in the Greater Accra Region. Radio Ada was established in 1998 under the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN) to serve the Dangme-speaking communities in and around the Ada East District. The station was selected for this study because of its long-standing commitment to participatory communication, its role in local development, and its historical involvement in environmental initiatives such as the Climate Airwaves Project (Harvey, 2011).

Radio Ada broadcasts in both Dangme and English and serves communities that are highly dependent on agriculture and fishing livelihoods that are directly affected by climate change. The station's proximity to the Volta estuary also makes it a relevant site for studying how community media can contribute to climate-change adaptation in vulnerable coastal areas.

The community's socio-economic profile, which includes farmers, fisherfolk, traders, and youth, provides a diverse range of perspectives on how climate issues are communicated and understood. This context makes Radio Ada a rich site for examining participatory approaches to environmental communication.

3.3 Population and Sampling Procedure

The study population comprised individuals and groups directly involved in or affected by Radio Ada's operations. This included: Station management and programme producers, Presenters and volunteers, Community members and listeners.

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability technique common in qualitative research. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants who have specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research topic (Bryman, 2016). This method is appropriate because the goal is not to generalize findings statistically, but to gather in-depth insights from those directly engaged with Radio Ada's climate communication efforts.

Participants were selected based on three criteria: (1) active involvement with the station, (2) knowledge of or participation in environmental programmes, and (3) willingness to share experiences. Five participants were targeted, including station staff (such as producers and reporters)

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method. They allowed flexibility for participants to express their views freely while ensuring that key issues were covered. An interview guide was developed around the study objectives, focusing on programming content, participation, challenges, and opportunities in climate communication. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with station staff. Each interview lasted between 120 and 150 minutes and was audio-recorded with consent. This method enabled the researcher to probe deeply into participants' understanding

of how Radio Ada communicates climate issues. As Denzin & Lincoln (2005) explain, qualitative interviews are ideal for exploring meaning and perspective within participants' own words.

3.5 Data Analysis

This study adopted thematic analysis as the main method for analysing the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a flexible and systematic approach that involves identifying, analysing, and reporting recurring patterns or themes within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is especially suitable for exploratory qualitative studies like this one, where the aim is to understand meanings, experiences, and relationships rather than to measure variables in numbers. Through this approach, the study was able to explore how Radio Ada staff and stakeholders understand climate change communication and how institutional, cultural, and contextual factors shape their practices.

The data collection took place through face-to-face interviews at the premises of Radio Ada in Ada Foah. Before each interview began, the researcher introduced the study, explained its purpose, and shared the interview guide with the Participants. This helped the participants to clearly understand the focus of the discussion and also created a relaxed and trusting atmosphere for the interaction. The interviews were dialogical in nature, allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions and seek clarification where necessary. This made it possible for participants to freely express their experiences, views, and reflections without feeling restricted.

With the permission of the Participants, all the interviews were audio recorded. At the same time, the researcher took field notes to capture important issues such as emotions, tone of voice, and other non-verbal cues that could not be fully captured by audio recordings alone. These notes later supported a deeper interpretation of the data during the analysis stage.

After returning from the field, the recorded interviews were uploaded onto the TurboScribe application for transcription. The transcripts were carefully reviewed alongside the original audio recordings to ensure that the information was accurate and complete. Any errors identified in the automated transcription were corrected manually. Special attention was also given to local expressions and meanings to ensure that the original intent of the Participants was well preserved.

Once the transcripts were ready, the researcher spent time reading through the data repeatedly to become very familiar with the content. This made it easier to identify recurring ideas and important issues related to the objectives of the study. From this point, coding was carried out by highlighting meaningful statements and assigning short labels to them. These codes captured key issues such as climate awareness, programme integration, participation, institutional challenges, funding constraints, and partnerships.

As the coding progressed, related codes were then grouped together to form broader categories. These categories later developed into clear themes that reflected the major areas of concern in the study. The emerging themes were reviewed and refined carefully to ensure that they were well grounded in the data and clearly linked to the research objectives. Some themes were merged, others were adjusted, and unclear ones were reworked until they properly represented the views of the Participants.

After this refinement, the final themes were clearly defined and named to reflect their exact meaning and relevance to the study. These themes were then organised in line with the study objectives.

In presenting the findings in Chapter Four, the themes were interpreted and discussed in a narrative form. Direct quotations from the Participants were used to support the analysis and to present the real voices and experiences of Radio Ada staff and stakeholders. The findings were also interpreted in relation to the study's theoretical and conceptual framework.

Overall, this thematic analysis process made it possible to develop a deep understanding of how Radio Ada staff and the community perceive climate change communication, how participatory practices operate within the station, and what institutional, technical, and policy factors shape the station's ability to promote climate change awareness and adaptation. By organising the findings around the research objectives and grounding the analysis in the actual words of participants, the study achieved a rich and context-based understanding of community radio's role in climate change communication in Ada.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed. Approval was obtained from the relevant university ethics committee before data collection. Informed consent was sought from all participants, who were briefed on the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Real names were replaced with pseudonyms, and data were securely stored. Sensitive information, particularly about internal station operations, was handled with discretion. As (Creswell, 2014) and (Bryman, 2016) emphasize, ethical integrity in qualitative research helps maintain trust and protect participants' rights.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from field data collected at Radio Ada, Ghana's first community radio station. The purpose of the study was to examine how community radio can be leveraged for climate change awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana, focusing on Radio Ada's role, practices, and challenges. Data were collected qualitatively through semi-structured interviews with key staff members, including programme coordinators and producers, and analysed thematically. The analysis was guided by the Participatory Communication Theory (PCT), which emphasises dialogue, inclusivity, and community ownership in communication for development (Freire, 1970; Servaes, 2008).

The presentation of results follows the research objectives and emerging themes from the data. These themes cover: (1) the nature and extent of climate-related programming on Radio Ada; (2) participatory communication practices and community engagement; and (3) the challenges and opportunities in leveraging Radio Ada for climate communication.

4.1 Profile of Radio Ada and Participant

Radio Ada operates from Ada Foah in the Greater Accra Region and broadcasts primarily in Dangme, the local language. Established in 1998 under the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN) with support from UNESCO, it was designed as a participatory platform for local voices. Its broadcast radius covers over 60 communities across the Ada East District and surrounding areas.

The Participants included senior producers, programme coordinators, and volunteer broadcasters. They have served between five and fifteen years at the station. A key feature of Radio Ada's staffing is its volunteer-based model, reflecting the participatory philosophy of community media. Participants described the station's identity as "a radio of the people, by the people and for the people," a statement that aligns closely with UNESCO's (2001) definition of community radio as a people-centred medium.

41.1 Demographics of Participants

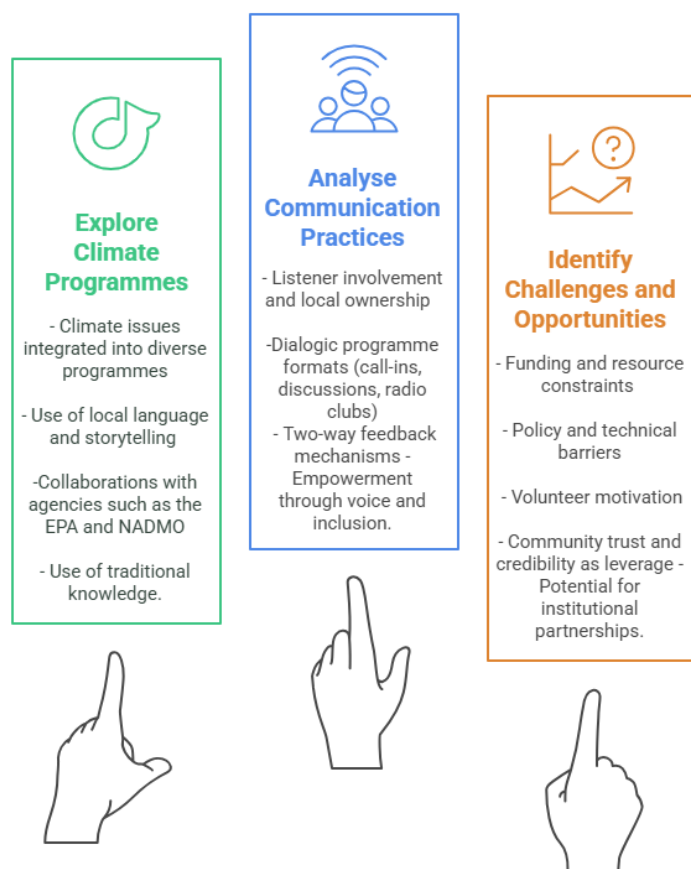
Table 1: Participants' Demographics

Code	Position/Role	Gender	Area of Responsibility	Years of Experience (Approx.)
PM	Programmes Manager	Male	Oversees programming, community engagement, climate content	15+
PE	Programmes Editor	Male	Editing, programme scheduling, content development	10+
ST1	Radio Staff(Producer)	Male	Field recording, community interviews, spot messages	8+

4.2 Emerging themes from the Data

Thematic analysis revealed three broad clusters that correspond to the study's objectives:

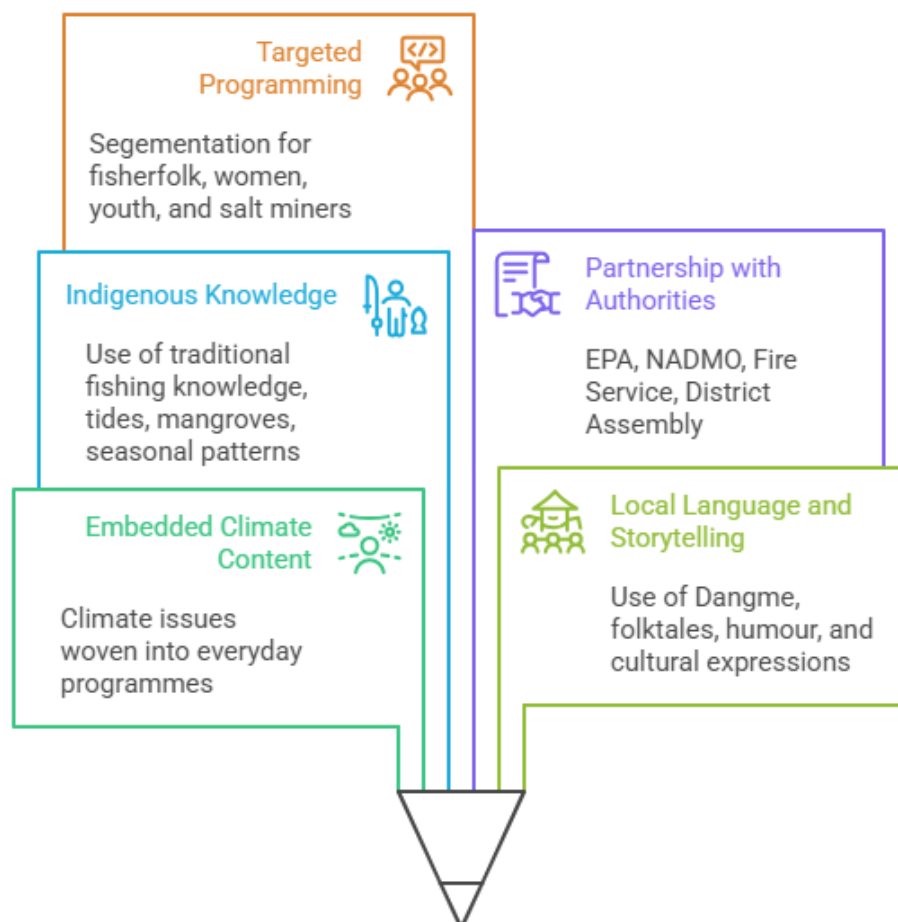
Figure 3: Objectives and Major Themes Identified



Source: Field Data 2025

4.2.1 Summary of Emerging Themes

Figure 4: Objective 1 – Nature and Extent of Climate-Related Programming



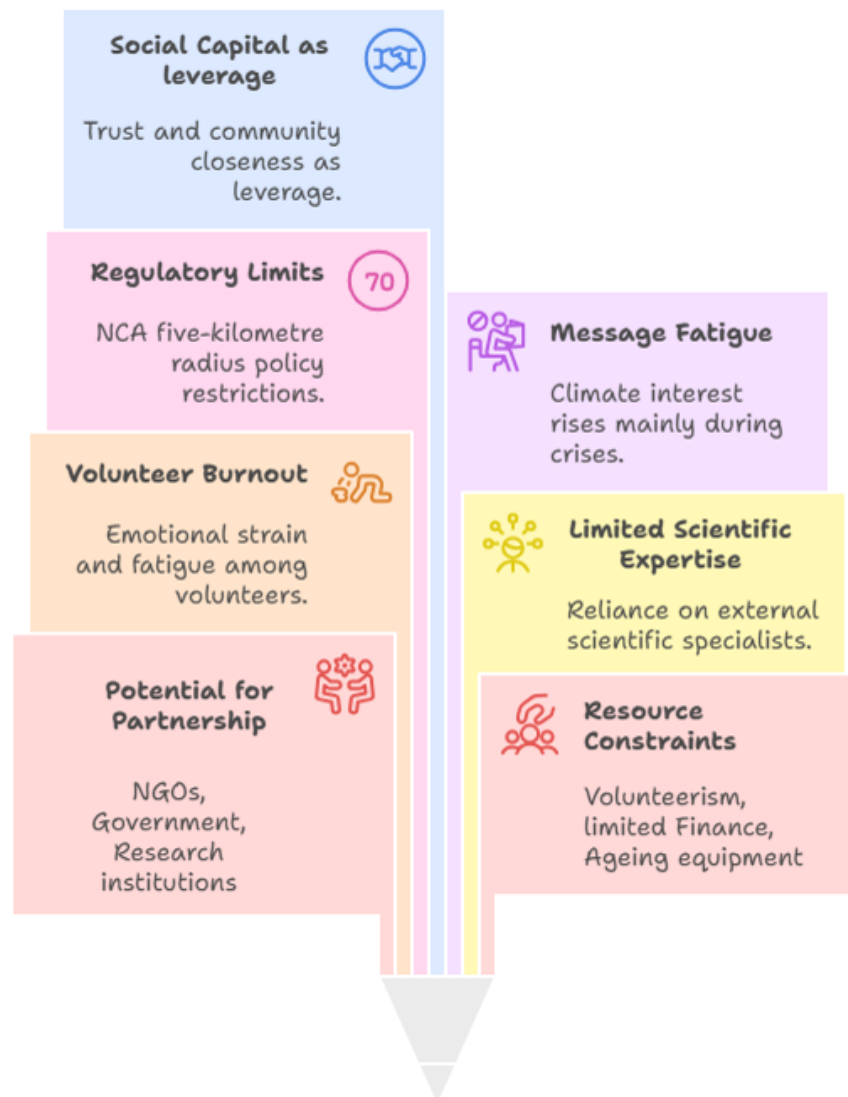
Source: Field Data 2025

Figure 5: Objective 2 – Participatory Communication Practice



Source: Field Data 2025

Figure 6: Objective 3 – Challenges and Opportunities



Source: Field Data 2025

Each of these themes is elaborated in the section below:

Table 2: Objective One – Nature and Extent of Climate-Related Programmes on Radio Ada

Theme	Sub-theme	Quote	Interpretation
Local understanding	Observed realities	“The sea is taking over our homes.”	Climate is understood through lived experiences.
Integrated programming	Organic content flow	“We don’t force climate issues.”	Climate issues are woven into daily discussions.
Hybrid knowledge	Indigenous scientific +	“The community has its own knowledge.”	Blending enhances relevance and trust.

Source: Field Study 2025

The findings show that Radio Ada actively integrates environmental and climate-related topics into its general programming schedule. These themes appear not as stand-alone “climate shows” but as embedded discussions in community programmes, talk shows, and drama.

“Sometimes we create jingles to be played... we invite the community opinion leaders to come on air so they can share their experience,” (PE)

The inclusion of climate issues reflects the station’s awareness of Ada Foah’s vulnerability to coastal erosion, flooding, and saltwater intrusion. Staff indicated that Radio Ada has collaborated with institutions such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NADMO, and the District Assembly to design content that promotes environmental education. These programmes discuss issues like waste disposal, bush burning, flooding, and sustainable fishing practices.

In addition, local proverbs, folktales, and songs are used to simplify complex environmental messages. This localisation strategy ensures that scientific terms like “climate change,” “erosion,”

and “adaptation” are reinterpreted in the Dangme language to make sense to farmers and fisherfolk. Such practice aligns with Somanje (2020) and Moffat et al. (2024), who noted that community radio stations often contextualise environmental messages to ensure comprehension and ownership.

“We discuss things that affect us here – the sea taking over our homes, the rains not coming when expected, or the destruction of mangroves. It’s all part of our normal discussion,” – (PM)

Beyond structured programmes, Radio Ada also produces spot messages, news reports, and community alerts during periods of heavy rains or tidal waves. The flexibility of programming allows the station to respond swiftly to emerging environmental concerns, illustrating the “responsive” characteristic of participatory media (Foxwell-Norton et al., 2017).

In summary, the nature and extent of Radio Ada’s climate-related programming demonstrate a strong alignment between local realities and communication content, reflecting the adaptive potential of community radio as a tool for environmental education and resilience-building.

Table 3: Expanded Objective Two – Participatory Communication Practices and Community Engagement

Theme	Sub-theme	Quote	Interpretation
Co-creation	Community-led content	“Every programme grows from the community.”	Strong community ownership.
Cultural identity	Local language	“People understand with their hearts.”	Cultural connection improves comprehension.
Dialogue	Two-way communication	“People call to challenge us.”	Encourages collective problem-solving.

Source: Field Study 2025

Participation emerged as a defining element of Radio Ada’s communication practice. The data reveal that the station maintains a dialogue-based relationship with its listeners through direct interaction and involvement in programme planning, implementation, and evaluation.

“The programmes are the communities... they plan with us how the programme should go,” – (PM)
“We do what we call radio listening groups... they own the programme; they are part of it.” –(PM)

“Every programme we do germinates and grows from the community.” (PM)

“They plan with us how the programme should go... which thematic areas the programme should talk about.” -(ST1)

“Before we bring out such programmes, we look at the situation on the ground and first discuss the topic with our wildlife or environmental partners. We ask: What exactly are we going to discuss, and how will it benefit our people?” (ST1)

“When they listen, they tell us what they’ve tried. Sometimes we go back to record them and broadcast their stories so others can learn,” (PM)

These statements indicate that Radio Ada’s approach reflects Freire’s (1970) dialogic pedagogy, where learning is mutual and knowledge is co-created. Listener groups meet regularly to discuss community problems, record field interviews, and suggest topics for subsequent broadcasts. This two-way exchange allows the community to become both the subject and the producer of communication, embodying what Servaes (2008) calls “horizontal communication.”

The study found that such participatory mechanisms are especially effective for climate change awareness. Listeners’ lived experiences such as losing farmland to flooding or dealing with unpredictable tides become the foundation for discussions about adaptation. The dialogue between experts and community members ensures that local coping strategies (e.g., reinforcing homes with sandbags, replanting mangroves) are shared across villages.

“When they listen, they tell us what they’ve tried. Sometimes we go back to record them and broadcast their stories so others can learn.” – (ST1)

This co-production of knowledge strengthens the social learning process described by Abdulai et al. (2021), who argue that participatory media enhance climate literacy by validating indigenous knowledge alongside scientific information.

In addition, the use of the Dangme language fosters inclusivity and trust. Most Participants indicated that audiences feel ownership because the language, idioms, and humour used on air

reflect their own culture. The sense of belonging encourages communities to engage freely with presenters and contribute feedback.

The participatory communication model thus allows Radio Ada to serve not only as a broadcaster but also as a facilitator of community dialogue, empowerment, and social cohesion.

Table 4: Expanded Objective Three – Challenges and Opportunities in Leveraging Radio Ada

Theme	Sub-theme	Quote	Interpretation
Policy barriers	NCA restrictions	“Climate issues don’t follow that boundary.”	Limits reach of climate messaging.
Financial gaps	Volunteer burnout	“Sometimes it is hard.”	Threatens sustainability.
Capacity gaps	Lack of training	“We were sidelined.”	Limits content quality.

Source: Field Study

While Radio Ada’s participatory approach has proven effective, the study identified several challenges that constrain its ability to fully leverage its potential for climate communication.

a) Resource and Funding Constraints

The station operates largely on voluntary labour and minimal donor support.

“All of us here are volunteers. We are not on any structured salary.” (PM)

This lack of financial stability affects the consistency and quality of climate programmes. Limited funds restrict field reporting, technical maintenance, and staff motivation. Similar findings were reported by Moffat et al. (2024), who observed that sustainability challenges threaten community radios' ability to serve as reliable platforms for environmental communication.

b) Regulatory and Technical Limitations

Government broadcasting regulations restrict community radios to a five-kilometre transmission radius, limiting their reach.

“Government brought a new policy... community radios cannot operate beyond five kilometres,”
(PM)

This policy, though intended to manage spectrum use, prevents Radio Ada from serving all vulnerable communities in its catchment area. The limited transmission range also reduces the potential to network with other stations for climate campaigns.

c) Infrastructure and Equipment Issues

The station's old equipment and unreliable power supply disrupt broadcasts, particularly during severe weather events. These issues highlight the structural constraints that many African community radios face (Kapinga et al., 2020).

Table 5: Opportunities and Strengths

Theme	Sub-theme	Quote	Interpretation
Trust	Credibility	“If you lose trust, nobody listens.”	Trust amplifies messages.
Cultural identity	Local Ownership	“Radio Ada is part of the community.”	Enhances authenticity
Partnership	External Collaboration	“Sometimes we bring people from NADMO and EPA to speak on the programme.”	Strengthens capacity and content

Despite these obstacles, Radio Ada’s trust, credibility, and cultural proximity position it uniquely for climate communication.

“Trust is also important. If a station is trusted because of its authenticity... everybody is involved.”

(PM)

“If a station is trusted... the least mistake you do, you lose it. So, we are careful to keep that trust,”

(PM)

“If you lose the trust of the communities, you can be promoting climate change... nobody cares,”–

(PM)

The strong bond with its audience ensures sustained listenership and responsiveness. The station’s grassroots orientation allows it to mobilize communities quickly in emergencies, making it an essential stakeholder in local adaptation efforts. Its partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organisations further reinforce its role as a bridge between communities and policymakers.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that Radio Ada occupies a unique communicative, cultural, and social position that enables it to effectively advance climate change awareness and adaptation within the Ada region. The station's programming practices, participatory traditions, and long-standing relationships with the community reflect a model of grassroots communication that is consistent with the principles of Participatory Communication Theory (Freire, 1970; Servaes, 2008) and affirm the relationships outlined in the conceptual framework of this study. At the same time, the analysis also reveals important structural, technical, and institutional challenges that shape how far community radio can be leveraged to support climate resilience.

A central insight emerging from the findings is that Radio Ada does not treat climate change as a separate or technical topic but embeds climate concerns within everyday programme content. Participants repeatedly explained that climate issues “naturally” emerge in discussions about fishing, farming, sanitation, settlement patterns, lagoon health, and community development. This finding strongly aligns with Somanje's (2020) study, which showed that climate communication on African community radio is most effective when integrated into livelihood-based content rather than delivered in isolated environmental segments. Similarly, Harvey (2011) found that when environmental information is tied to local lived experiences, uptake and action tend to improve. Thus, the integration observed at Radio Ada supports existing literature and confirms that meaningful grassroots climate communication requires grounding scientific information in familiar local realities.

The station's use of Dangme, folktales, humour, proverbs, and rich cultural references is another important finding. These forms of cultural expression enable Radio Ada to translate complex environmental and meteorological concepts into symbols and narratives that listeners immediately

recognise. This is consistent with Agalo's (2023) argument that climate communication in rural Africa is most effective when culturally localised, and with Gumucio-Dagron's (2001) emphasis on cultural identity as a foundation of participatory communication. The use of local language and storytelling fits squarely within the inputs stage of the conceptual framework (language, cultural identity, indigenous knowledge), enabling effective processes of communication by strengthening comprehension and emotional resonance.

Another important finding is that Radio Ada functions as a bridge between scientific climate knowledge and indigenous environmental understanding. Participants highlighted how the station draws from community interpretations of wind patterns, rainfall behaviour, and tidal movements, while also incorporating information from NADMO, the Environmental Protection Agency, the District Assembly, and experts. This knowledge blending is supported by literature such as Harvey (2011) and Agalo (2023), who argue that hybrid knowledge systems strengthen environmental adaptation because they combine scientific accuracy with cultural familiarity. The finding also aligns directly with the knowledge co-creation dimension of Participatory Communication Theory, which rejects linear sender–receiver models and instead promotes shared interpretation, equalisation of voices, and dialogic learning.

Participation emerged as one of the strongest themes in the findings and is central to Radio Ada's ability to support climate adaptation. Participants emphasised that climate topics “come from the community” and that programme content is shaped through call-ins, listener clubs, outdoor broadcasts, and community feedback. This supports Freire's (1970) notion of dialogue as the basis of empowerment and Servaes' (2008) argument that development communication must be participatory rather than prescriptive. The participatory mechanisms observed correspond closely to the processes stage of the conceptual framework, where horizontal communication, shared

agenda-setting, and community-driven content lead to outputs such as increased awareness and knowledge exchange.

Trust also emerged as a key communicative resource. Participants consistently noted that community members trust Radio Ada because the station “belongs to them,” speaks their language, and reflects their values. This trust enhances the station’s ability to mobilise community action during environmental crises. The literature supports this: Agalo (2023) found that trust in community media significantly increases climate message uptake, while Moffat et al. (2024) argue that social legitimacy is a critical leverage point for community-based communication. Within the conceptual framework, trust reinforces the inputs and strengthens the feedback loops, allowing climate messages to circulate continuously between the station and the community.

Despite these strengths, the findings also reveal constraints that limit the ability of Radio Ada to fully leverage its potential for climate communication. Resource limitations including lack of funding, inadequate equipment, absence of scientific expertise, and reliance on volunteers were repeatedly mentioned by Participants. This finding aligns closely with Kapinga et al. (2020) and Moffat et al. (2024), who document chronic structural and financial challenges in African community radios. These constraints weaken the inputs needed for effective communication and ultimately affect the outputs and outcomes such as sustained climate awareness and adaptation behaviour.

The National Communications Authority’s proposed 5-kilometre broadcast radius restriction emerged as another major barrier. Participants noted that “climate problems don’t follow that boundary,” indicating that the regulatory framework is not climate-responsive. This aligns with Somanje (2020), who argues that restrictive media policies reduce the developmental impact of community radio. Within the conceptual framework, policy restrictions negatively impact the

inputs by limiting reach and reducing the potential for adaptation outcomes across contiguous at-risk communities.

The findings also reveal that audience engagement with climate content fluctuates. During environmental crises such as coastal erosion events or severe tidal surges listener participation spikes. However, during non-crisis periods, interest declines. This cycle mirrors conclusions by Agalo (2023), who found that rural climate engagement is event-driven. Within the conceptual framework, this fluctuation disrupts the feedback loop, indicating the need for innovative reinforcement strategies.

Despite these challenges, the study identifies substantial opportunities for enhancing climate adaptation through community radio. These include establishing stronger partnerships with universities, research institutions, climate agencies, and NGOs; securing stable funding; and providing staff with training on environmental journalism and scientific interpretation. These opportunities correspond with the inputs and processes of the conceptual framework and align with recommendations made by Harvey (2011) and Moffat et al. (2024) for strengthening environmental communication infrastructures in rural Africa.

Overall, the discussion shows strong alignment between the findings and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. None of the findings contradict previous studies; rather, they reinforce established patterns in community media research. The findings also validate both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the study. Participatory Communication Theory is reflected in Radio Ada's dialogic, community-driven, culturally embedded communication style. The conceptual framework's progression from inputs to processes, outputs, outcomes, and feedback is observed consistently in the station's climate programming practices.

In summary, this discussion demonstrates that leveraging community radio for climate change communication and adaptation requires more than information dissemination. It depends on participatory communication structures, cultural legitimacy, knowledge co-creation, and deep community trust, all of which Radio Ada embodies. At the same time, realising the full potential of community radio requires overcoming structural, policy, and resource-related constraints. With stronger institutional support and strategic investment, community radio can become a fulcrum of grassroots climate resilience in rural Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations for strengthening the role of community radio in climate change awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana. The study explored how Radio Ada, Ghana's pioneer community radio station, can be leveraged to promote climate change understanding and adaptive behaviour within the Ada area. The findings have shown that Radio Ada has significant potential in this regard, supported by its strong community ties, participatory communication approaches, and cultural relevance. However, several structural and institutional challenges limit its ability to fully realise this potential. The summary, conclusions, and recommendations that follow highlight the central insights from the study and point to ways the station can be empowered to enhance climate communication and community resilience.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study set out to examine the role of Radio Ada in advancing climate change awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana. It found that climate-related information is integrated into the station's programming, even though it is not always organized into dedicated climate change programmes. Environmental issues such as flooding, tidal erosion, irregular rainfall, and changing seasons naturally emerge in discussions because these challenges directly affect the livelihoods of residents in Ada. The study revealed that the station conveys climate information through the Dangme language, folktales, proverbs, music, and humour, making complex scientific ideas easier for listeners to understand.

Another key finding was Radio Ada's strong participatory communication model. The station works closely with community members through listener groups, call-ins, field recordings, and consultative programme planning. This approach reflects true community ownership, where listeners contribute ideas, share experiences, and shape the discussions. Trust emerged as a central factor in the station's relationship with the community. Residents consider Radio Ada as their own platform, and this trust drives listenership, participation, and collective learning.

The study also identified several significant challenges. One major limitation is the lack of stable funding, which affects the consistency of climate-related programming. Staff members work voluntarily, and this contributes to burnout and fatigue. The station also faces technical limitations, including outdated equipment and a lack of scientific expertise to handle complex climate topics. Regulatory restrictions, including the National Communications Authority's five-kilometre broadcast radius, were another concern raised by Participants. The findings further showed that local interest in climate issues fluctuates depending on the season or crisis. Despite these challenges, the study identified opportunities for Radio Ada to expand its climate communication role through stronger partnerships, increased training, and targeted funding support.

5.3. Conclusion

This study set out to explore how Community Radio can be leveraged for climate change awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana using Radio Ada as a case study. Using participatory communication as the guiding lens, the study examined the nature of climate-related programming, the participatory practices adopted by the station, and the challenges that shape its ability to support climate resilience. The findings show that community radio remains one of the most grounded and culturally trusted mediums for climate communication in rural communities, but its full potential depends heavily on institutional, financial, and structural support.

A key conclusion from this study is that Radio Ada has naturally integrated climate communication into its everyday programming. Rather than treating climate issues as isolated topics, the station embeds them in discussions about fishing, farming, sanitation, water, flooding, and marine erosion issues that directly shape livelihoods in Ada. This confirms the argument made by Harvey (2011) and Bisht & Ahluwalia (2020) that community radio becomes more effective when it localises climate information and connects it to people's lived experiences. The findings also align with Abdulai et al. (2021), who highlight that radio can support "place-based knowledge mobilization" by combining scientific information with community stories and observations.

Participatory communication emerged as a major strength of the station. Radio Ada's programmes are shaped with the community, not for them. This supports Freire's (1970) view that communities learn best through dialogue and shared reflection rather than top-down instruction. Participants confirmed this participatory approach. For example, the PM explained that "*the programmes grow from the community...their lived experiences are the heartbeat of the programme*". This shows that Radio Ada's climate content is grounded in real community concerns rather than external agendas.

Furthermore, the interviews show that participation is not symbolic; it is practical. The use of community forums, call-ins, listening groups, and collective programme design ensures that climate communication is a two-way process. As the PE said, "*we involve them...if they are not involved, they can't feel it*". This supports Servaes' (2008) argument that genuine participation strengthens communication impact and improves behavioural outcomes.

The findings also show that climate awareness among listeners has improved over time. Interviewees shared practical examples of behaviour change: reduction in sand winning near riverbanks, increased communal clean-ups, improved waste management, and shifts away from

harmful environmental practices. ST 1 said *“stopped some of the things they were doing...they now understand and refrain from those acts”* after the climate programmes. These observations confirm earlier empirical findings from Tanzania (Kapinga et al., 2020) and Malawi (Chavinda, 2025), which showed that participatory radio can directly influence community practices related to environmental conservation and adaptation.

Another important conclusion is that Radio Ada has contributed to community resilience by linking climate issues to local rights, livelihoods, water safety, sanitation, and environmental health. The example shared by the programmes coordinator, where clarifying scientific information about river pollution led to immediate community reactions, confirms Moser’s (2016) claim that when climate information is framed in familiar and relevant terms, communities understand it better and act faster.

However, like many African community radio stations, Radio Ada’s potential is limited by structural and institutional challenges. The findings strongly support literature by Moffat et al. (2024), UNESCO (2022), and Agalo (2023), all of whom identify weaknesses such as inconsistent funding, limited training in environmental reporting, lack of scientific partnerships, and weak policy support. Interviews confirmed these issues clearly. ST1 explained *“the biggest challenge is transport for duty bearers...we cannot sustain the programmes because we can’t keep bringing the experts”*

The PM added that programme continuation depends heavily on volunteerism because *“we are not on any structured salary...we do this to help our community”*

These constraints demonstrate that although Radio Ada aligns strongly with participatory communication principles, it operates within an environment that does not adequately empower

community media. This confirms the literature that participatory communication must be accompanied by supportive structures, long-term funding, and institutional recognition if it is to succeed (Servaes, 2008; UNESCO, 2022). Without this support, community stations struggle to maintain climate programming even when the need is urgent.

The study also highlights a critical policy limitation: community radio stations are often excluded from national climate platforms, consultation processes, and capacity-building initiatives. A Participant noted that broadcasters are rarely invited to climate workshops or policy discussions, meaning they “hear things only on the news.” This aligns with research showing that many African governments overlook community radio in climate governance, even though these stations reach the most affected populations.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that community radio when grounded in participation, cultural relevance, and trust can significantly enhance climate awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana. Radio Ada exemplifies how local voices, storytelling, dialogue, and continuous engagement can shape climate knowledge and influence community behaviour. However, for community radio to function as a strategic instrument for climate resilience, there must be deliberate investment in broadcaster training, long-term funding mechanisms, stronger partnerships with scientific and governmental institutions, and national policies that formally recognise community media as climate stakeholders.

This study contributes to development communication literature by showing that participatory, locally rooted communication is not only effective but necessary for climate adaptation in rural communities. It also offers evidence that aligns with global research while bringing new insights into the Ghanaian context, particularly the unique structural challenges that limit the capacity of community radio stations like Radio Ada. Strengthening these stations will help ensure that rural

communities receive the climate information they need to understand changes in their environment and take informed, collective, and sustainable action.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen Radio Ada's role in climate change awareness and adaptation.

5.4.1 Strengthen Capacity Building for Community Radio Staff

The study revealed that Radio Ada staff lack specialised training in climate and environmental reporting. This gap is partly due to their exclusion from national climate conferences and capacity-building workshops. The empirical literature confirms that limited broadcaster training is a major barrier to effective climate communication. Kapinga et al. (2020) found that community radio staff in Tanzania struggled to deliver accurate climate information because they lacked environmental journalism skills. Similarly, Moffat et al. (2024) observed that weak training systems reduce the quality and consistency of community-based environmental programmes across Africa.

Strengthening the capacity of Radio Ada staff is therefore essential. Climate-focused institutions such as the EPA, NADMO, the Ministry of Environment, and the Ghana Meteorological Agency should develop training that is specifically tailored for community broadcasters. This aligns with Abdulai et al. (2021), who recommend integrating community media into knowledge mobilisation efforts because they serve as the link between scientific knowledge and local understanding. Partnerships with universities, media training organisations, and environmental NGOs would ensure that Radio Ada receives continuous professional development in climate journalism and participatory communication.

5.4.2 Provide Dedicated Funding for Climate-Related Programming

The findings showed that climate-related programming at Radio Ada is inconsistent due to financial constraints, lack of transport support for resource persons, and the voluntary nature of the work. Literature strongly supports the need for stable funding. Agalo (2023) reported that community radios in Kenya lost climate programming once donor projects ended, resulting in weak public awareness. Likewise, Moffat et al. (2024) emphasised that financial instability and poor funding mechanisms remain the biggest threats to sustained environmental communication in African community radios.

Providing dedicated funding through NGOs, district assemblies, donor agencies, and climate-related institutions would allow Radio Ada to run consistent programmes, support resource persons, and upgrade equipment. Long-term funding will also improve field reporting and participatory activities, which are essential for keeping communities engaged in climate issues. This recommendation aligns with UNESCO's (2022) position that sustainable financing is critical for strengthening community radio as a tool for environmental resilience in the Global South.

5.4.3 Enhance Collaboration Between Radio Ada and Climate-Related Agencies

The study found that collaboration between Radio Ada and organisations such as the EPA, NADMO, and the Forestry Commission is irregular and mostly event driven. Literature shows that stronger institutional partnerships improve the accuracy and relevance of climate communication. Harvey (2011), through the Climate Airwaves project in Ghana, demonstrated that when broadcasters work closely with scientists and environmental agencies, they are able to localise scientific knowledge more effectively. Abdulai et al. (2021) also highlighted that knowledge co-production between experts and community media leads to more meaningful climate engagement.

Structured, long-term collaboration would enable Radio Ada to access up-to-date climate data, receive expert contributions, and co-produce culturally relevant climate advisories in Dangme. During peak climate-risk seasons, such as heavy rains or tidal surges, agencies should provide scientific forecasts while Radio Ada translates these into everyday language, consistent with the framing principles outlined by Moser (2016). This partnership model has been recommended in several studies as a way to strengthen grassroots adaptation.

5.4.4 Improve Policy Support for Community Radio

The current NCA broadcast radius policy of five kilometres restricts the station's ability to reach climate-vulnerable communities across Ada. The literature supports the argument that policy and regulatory environments strongly influence community radio effectiveness. UNESCO (2022) notes that restrictive policies undermine the capacity of community radios to serve rural populations, especially in high-risk environmental zones. Harvey (2011) has also emphasised that decentralised, community-owned stations require enabling regulatory frameworks to fulfil their communication-for-development roles.

A review of the broadcast radius policy, particularly for community radios operating in climate-sensitive areas, would help extend coverage to more at-risk communities. Creating a special category of public-interest community radio stations with extended reach would help fulfil Ghana's national climate change objectives by ensuring that rural populations receive timely and understandable climate information. This aligns with global recommendations that community radio policies must be inclusive and supportive for effective environmental communication.

5.4.5 Develop Creative Approaches to Sustain Listener Engagement on Climate Issues

The study found that interest in climate issues rises during emergencies but declines during normal periods. Literature also shows that climate communication must be continuous, interactive, and culturally grounded to retain attention. Bisht & Ahluwalia (2020) recommend the use of storytelling, local idioms, and folk traditions to make climate information relatable. Chavinda (2025) found that participatory approaches such as listener groups and role-play increased engagement and led to better adaptation outcomes in Malawi. These insights support the need for Radio Ada to adopt more creative methods.

The station can sustain engagement by incorporating dramatized climate stories, seasonal explanations of climate patterns, youth climate clubs, and regular community listening sessions. Establishing a community climate information hub at the station would also create a space for residents, researchers, and experts to exchange climate knowledge. These approaches reflect the participatory communication principles outlined by Servaes (2008) and Freire (1970), which emphasise dialogue, inclusion, and shared learning.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

This study was designed to explore how community radio, specifically Radio Ada, can be leveraged for climate change awareness and adaptation in a rural setting. While the study produced rich and meaningful insights, it is important to acknowledge some limitations that shaped the scope, depth, and process of the research.

One key limitation of the study is that it focused on only one community radio station, Radio Ada. Although Radio Ada is a pioneering and well-established station with strong community roots, the findings cannot be fully generalised to all community radio stations in Ghana. Other stations may

operate under different social, cultural, financial, and regulatory conditions. This means that while the findings provide deep insight into Radio Ada's context, they may not represent the experiences of all rural community radios across the country.

Another limitation relates to the number and type of participants involved in the study. The study relied mainly on interviews with selected staff and stakeholders of Radio Ada. While these participants provided valuable perspectives, the voices of some listener groups, such as farmers, fisherfolk, women groups, and youth clubs, were not deeply captured in this study. Including more listeners could have provided a broader understanding of how climate programmes are received and how they influence community behaviour.

Time and resource constraints also affected the study. The fieldwork was conducted within a limited period, which made it difficult to observe radio programmes over a long time or across different seasons. Climate change is a long-term issue, and longer observation could have provided deeper insights into how programming changes over time, especially during peak climate events such as flooding, tidal waves, or drought periods. Financial constraints also limited the extent of travel to some outlying communities within the station's catchment area.

As the researcher, my own background, interests, and experiences also influenced the research process. My academic and professional interest in development communication and climate change shaped the way I designed the study and framed the questions. Going into the field, I already believed that community radio plays an important role in rural development and climate communication. This belief may have influenced the way I listened to Participants and interpreted their responses.

During the data collection process at Radio Ada, I developed a close interaction with some of the staff. Their openness and willingness to share their experiences helped the study greatly, but it also required me to remain conscious of not becoming overly sympathetic or biased in their favour. In some moments, I found myself emotionally affected by the challenges they described, especially when they spoke about limited funding, volunteer fatigue, and being excluded from major climate training programmes. This emotional connection made me more sensitive to their struggles, but I also made a deliberate effort to remain balanced and objective in interpreting the data.

I also realised during the interviews that some Participants saw me not only as a researcher but as someone who could possibly help amplify their challenges to the outside world. This awareness made me more reflective about my responsibility in reporting their stories accurately and ethically.

Finally, this research process changed my own understanding of climate communication. Before the fieldwork, I viewed climate change communication mainly as the sharing of scientific information. Through this study, I came to see it more as a lived, everyday experience that is deeply connected to culture, language, livelihoods, and community trust. This personal transformation shaped the way I interpreted the findings and strengthened my appreciation of participatory communication in rural settings

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the limitations of this study, future research could expand the scope by examining multiple community radio stations across different regions of Ghana to allow for comparison and broader generalisation of findings. Further studies may also include a larger and more diverse group of Participants, particularly community members such as farmers, fisherfolk, women groups, and youth, to better understand how climate communication is received and acted upon at

the grassroots level. Longitudinal studies that observe community radio programming over extended periods, especially during peak climate events such as floods, droughts, and tidal waves, would provide deeper insights into how climate communication influences adaptation over time. In addition, future research could explore the role of digital media and social media in supporting or complementing community radio in climate change communication. Finally, experimental and action-based studies that test specific participatory radio interventions for climate education and adaptation could help establish practical models for strengthening community-based climate communication in Ghana.

REFERENCES

- Abdulai, A., Chireh, V., & Tchoukaleyska, R. (2021). *Knowledge mobilization through community radio: Place-based communication for climate awareness*.
- Abu, G. M., Codjoe, S. N., & Sward, J. (2022). *Livelihood vulnerability in Ghana's coastal zones*.
- Agalo, J. (2023). *Community radio and climate information dissemination in rural Kenya*.
- Anyuor, J., & Achieng, M. (2022). *Community radio and civic engagement in Africa*.
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). *What is qualitative in qualitative research?*
- Berkes, F., Colding, J., & Folke, C. (2000). *Traditional ecological knowledge and adaptive management*.
- Bisht, S., & Ahluwalia, A. (2020). *Integrating local storytelling in climate communication through community radio in South Asia*.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology*.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.).
- Chavinda, C. (2025). *Participatory radio and climate adaptation in Malawi*.
- Choudhury, N. (2011). *Role of community radio in rural development communication*.
- Craig, G., & Mayo, M. (1995). *Community empowerment: A reader in participation and development*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.).
- Das, P. (2011). *Participatory communication and the politics of grassroots development*.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.).
- Devine-Wright, P. (2013). *Climate change communication: social and psychological dimensions*.
- Evans, S., Dyll, L., & Teer-Tomaselli, R. (2017). *Community media and participatory communication in Africa*.
- Fahy, D., & Nisbet, M. (2011). *The science journalist online: Shifting roles and emerging practices*.
- Faisal, M., & Alhassan, A. (2018). *Community radio and local governance in Ghana*.
- Foxwell-Norton, K., McLean, H., & others. (2017). *Environmental communication and community radio*.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*.

- Fratzke, J. (2008). *Understanding the role of community radio in social development*.
- Gallegos, D., & Buizer, J. (2024). *Media materiality and environmental participation*.
- GCRN. (2019). *Ghana Community Radio Network annual report*.
- Gonzalez, M., & Sanchez, R. (2021). *Cultural perceptions of climate change in rural communities*.
- Gumucio-Dagron, A. (2001). *Making waves: Stories of participatory communication for social change*.
- Harvey, B. (2011). *Climate Airwaves: Community radio broadcasting for climate change adaptation in Ghana*.
- IPCC. (2023). *Sixth Assessment Report: Climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability*.
- Johnson, K. (2025). *Coastal erosion and climate vulnerability in Ghana's Volta Delta*.
- Jumani, N. (2009). *Community radio as a tool for rural development*.
- Kapinga, A., Siyao, P., Sife, A., & Silayo, E. (2020). *Community broadcast media and climate change adaptation in Tanzania*.
- Lewil, F., & Diedong, A. (2023). *Language and identity in Ghanaian community radio*.
- McKay, T. (2009). *Community radio and grassroots participation in Ghana*.
- Mensah, A., & FitzGibbon, J. (2012). *Vulnerability of coastal communities in Ghana*.
- Moffat, R., Mukhongo, L., & Ongus, R. (2024). *Sustainability challenges in African community radio*.
- Moser, S. (2010). *Communicating climate change: history, challenges, process and future directions*.
- Moser, S. (2016). *Climate change communication: psychological and cultural framing*.
- Nakabugu, S. (2001). *Challenges of community media in Africa*.
- Narayan, D. (2006). *Empowerment and poverty reduction: A sourcebook*.
- Nisbet, M. (2009). *Communicating climate change: Why frames matter for public engagement*.
- Nyong, A., Adesina, F., & Osman-Elasha, B. (2007). *The value of indigenous knowledge in climate change adaptation in Africa*.
- O'Neill, S., & Nicholson-Cole, S. (2009). *Fear and hope in climate change communication*.
- Odomo, R., et al. (2024). *Local interpretations of climate information in Ghana*.
- Pathak, V., Jena, B., & Kalra, S. (2013). *Qualitative research: A guide for beginners*.

- Riedlinger, D., & Berkes, F. (2001). *Contributions of traditional knowledge to climate change research*.
- Reed, M., et al. (2010). *What is social learning? A review of the literature*.
- Rogers, E. (1976). *Communication and development: The passing of the dominant paradigm*.
- Servaes, J. (2008). *Communication for development and social change*.
- Siva Balan, et al. (2012). *Community radio in development communication*.
- Somanje, A. (2021). *Community radio in fragile contexts and climate communication*.
- UNESCO. (2001). *Community radio handbook*.
- UNESCO. (2019). *World radio statistics report*.
- UNESCO. (2022). *Environmental communication and climate education framework*.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Emmanuel Kwesi Gyan , a student of UNIMAC -1J and I am conducting an academic study on how community radio can be leveraged to promote climate change awareness and adaptation in rural Ghana, with Radio Ada as a case study.

This interview seeks to explore how the station uses its unique features and participatory methods to engage communities on environmental and climate-related issues.

Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be kept strictly confidential. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only.

With your permission, I may take notes or record our conversation to ensure accuracy.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

Interview Questions

Section A: Role and Programming

1. Could you describe the focus of Radio Ada's programming and how community development issues are integrated?
2. Does the station have programmes that address climate change or environmental concerns? Please explain.

Section B: Leveraging Radio for Climate Awareness

3. How does Radio Ada use its platform to promote awareness and education on climate change?
4. What unique strengths or features of community radio make it suitable for climate communication?

5. In your opinion, how can these features be better leveraged to support climate change awareness and adaptation?

Section C: Participation and Dialogue

6. How are community members involved in designing or contributing to climate-related programmes?
7. What participatory formats (e.g., call-ins, listener clubs, forums) are used to enhance dialogue and learning?
8. How do you ensure that climate messages are understandable and relevant to your audience?

Section D: Impact, Challenges, and Collaboration

9. What changes or impacts have you observed among listeners in relation to climate knowledge or behavior?
10. What key challenges do you face in sustaining climate-related programmes?
11. How does the station collect feedback and work with partners to improve or expand its climate communication efforts?

Closing

Thank you for sharing your insights. Your contribution is valuable to understanding how community radio can be effectively leveraged to promote climate change awareness and adaptation.

Appendix 2 Transcriptions

1. Interview with Programmes Coordinator

Interviewer: To start, please mention your name and position at the station.

Participant (Mr. Amanor): My name is (PM). I am the Programmes Coordinator here at Radio Ada.

Interviewer: Thank you. Can you describe the focus of Radio Ada's programmes and how community development issues are integrated?

Participant: Our programmes are basically about the community. Community development is not something we "add" to programmes; the programmes themselves are about the community. Community development issues are at the heart of everything we do.

Everything about the community becomes programme content. Every programme we do germinates and grows from the community. The programmes are built from people's daily lived experiences.

The communities plan with us how the programme should go — which direction to take, which thematic areas to cover. Whether it is daily programming or a new show we want to start, we plan with them. We also decide together which time is appropriate for the programme so that it can have impact.

We don't do this randomly. We consult deliberately. We engage the communities, we share with them how we want to do it, and they bring their input. Then we implement with them.

As we broadcast, we keep engaging them through phone-ins: *What do you think? What should be added or removed?* Every two or three months, we go back to the community and ask: *How far with the programme? What has changed? What target actions have been achieved?* We are not just sitting in the studio talking to duty bearers; we are interested in the impact on the ground.

Climate and environmental content on Radio Ada

Interviewer: Does the station have programmes that address climate change or environmental concerns?

Participant: Yes, a lot. Ada is known for three main occupations, and the geography itself makes climate a very important topic. The district lies between the Volta River and the sea, at the estuary.

People come from Europe, America, Asia just to see the estuary, the Volta, to swim, build and live around it.

The river provides livelihoods, farming, fishing, fish smoking, and other crafts. So the river is a key climate-related issue.

Then there is the sea. The sea is already suffering from the climate crisis. Parts of the islands of Ada are slowly being washed away. Even on the mainland, where the district assembly used to be located at Ada Foah, that area has been almost washed away. The assembly had to relocate about three years ago. So we have no option but to talk about climate and its impact.

Another key resource is the Songor Lagoon. It supports the livelihoods of thousands of people who win salt there and also attracts tourists. It is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and a Ramsar site, and it serves as a hub for migratory birds from Europe and elsewhere, thanks to the wetlands and mangroves.

But there are challenges: sea erosion, flooding when the river overflows its banks, dam spillage, and so on. In some island communities, if you dig below three feet, you hit water, so they cannot even bury their dead easily when floods come. All these issues are part of the climate story we discuss on air.

Interviewer: How does Radio Ada use its platform to promote awareness and education on climate change?

Participant: Climate change is a term, but for our people it is mainly lived experience. They see the changes daily. Rainfall patterns have changed. Farmers used to know when to plough and when rains would come. Now they plough, and the rain does not come.

Our people already know that “the weather has changed”. So our platform is not only used to inform them *that* climate change exists; it is used to promote actions that prevent further environmental destruction and reduce the crisis.

We focus on human activities: farming with heavy chemicals, light fishing, dynamite and chemical use at sea, sand winning from the shore, dumping plastic into the sea, poor waste disposal. We organise programmes that help people reflect on these practices, understand the consequences, and think of alternatives.

We use community forums, focus group discussions, jingles, dramas and regular talk shows. We also cover communal labour activities, shoreline clean-ups, mangrove protection, and campaigns against open defecation and indiscriminate dumping. Our morning show avoids partisan politics and focuses on genuine community issues.

Observed impacts on listeners and behaviour

Interviewer: What changes or impacts have you observed among listeners in relation to climate knowledge or behaviour?

Participant: We have seen many changes. For example, as part of our promotion of cleaning and communal labour, you can now see that in some shore communities the rubbish that used to pile higher than the sand is reducing. Ada is at the lower basin of the Volta, so everything from upstream ends up here, including waste and pollutants. Yet, people are now more conscious about dumping and shoreline management.

We also worked with the district assembly and partners on sanitation and private latrine construction. One community, Tefle-Apim (often called Telapim), was later declared open defecation free. At first, only one household had a toilet. Teachers, nurses, and residents had to go to the bush or wait until they got to work. We broadcast this problem and engaged the assembly. Eventually, the area was included in a support project where households contributed part of the building materials and the project provided the rest. Now, many households have toilets, and you see “open defecation free community” written at the entrance.

These are real changes. Our programmes also contributed to reducing maternal deaths. Bator Catholic Hospital once wrote to us about high maternal mortality from our catchment. We started a weekly health programme, and over a few years they recorded significant reductions in deaths. This shows how radio, when used well, can support life-saving behaviour change.

Strengths of community radio for climate communication

Interviewer: What unique strengths of community radio make it suitable for climate change communication, especially compared with state-owned or commercial stations?

Participant: Language is key. We operate in Dangme, the language of the people here. We are not using complicated English terms and financial jargon that people cannot follow. When we speak Dangme, we know they understand exactly what we are saying.

Another strength is participation. We do not simply talk *at* communities we talk *with* them. We go to communities, record their voices, and play them back. We form radio listening groups who listen to their own programmes and then discuss: *What should we do next? What target actions should we take?*

Because programmes spring from the community, people feel ownership. They see themselves as ambassadors of good practices , including climate resilience. They want their attitudes to reflect what they say on radio.

Also, the trust they have in us is a major strength. They trust us because they see us as part of them, not as outsiders. If we announce a programme, event, or public health or climate campaign, people come because Radio Ada said it.

Participation, listening groups and feedback

Interviewer: What participatory formats do you use to enhance dialogue and learning?

Participant: We use many tools: call-ins, community forums, focus group discussions, radio listening groups, and participatory exercises.

With radio listening groups, we play a programme that was produced from their community, then they sit together and discuss what they heard, what should be done, and who should act. They do not just “consume” the programme; they own it.

In our community meetings, we sometimes use objects from the environment to represent issues for example, using plastic, sticks, stones, and leaves to represent levels of pollution. People then rate what they see and agree on actions. This helps them reflect on the seriousness of the problems and think through solutions themselves.

We also return to communities after broadcasting their issues. We ask: *What has changed since we did the programme?* That is how we collect feedback and assess impact.

Challenges in sustaining climate-related programming

Interviewer: What are some key challenges you face in sustaining climate-related programmes?

Participant: The biggest challenge is transport and logistics for resource persons. As a community radio station, we do not have the funds to be chasing duty bearers. Our model is that they come to the studio, we record several programmes, and later we broadcast them.

Institutions like the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Ghana Health Service, the Forestry Commission, Wildlife Division and others used to come regularly, but many have stopped because their officers have to pay transport from their own pockets. They cannot sustain this.

Our problem as a station is not so much money for airtime; it is bringing experts to the studio or to communities. Sometimes we mitigate this by pre-recording several episodes at once when they do manage to come.

Another challenge is capacity building. When climate conferences or big global meetings happen, government mostly takes national or commercial media, Joy News, GTV, and so on. Community radios are usually left out, yet our communities live with the climate crisis daily. We also need refresher trainings, updated knowledge, and exposure to best practices so we can interpret climate issues well in local languages.

There is also a policy challenge. Government has introduced a policy, approved by the NCA, restricting community radios to a five-kilometre radius. If strictly enforced, Radio Ada would only cover a tiny area, while bigger commercial stations can be heard from Accra to Ada. Climate problems do not respect a five-kilometre boundary, so such a policy would deny many vulnerable communities access to information in their own language.

Volunteers, personal motivation and the power of radio

Interviewer: You mentioned that staff are mostly volunteers. How does that shape your work and your relationship with the community?

Participant: All of us here are volunteers. We are not on any structured salary, and we don't expect a monthly pay. We are here because we want to help our communities develop.

I can give a personal example. Years ago, my own community lay between two other communities that had electricity. The cable passed through our community but we had no power. My elders had complained for years, but nothing changed.

When I joined Radio Ada, the first news script I wrote in Dangme highlighted this problem — how the community is strategic, how water tankers fetch water from there for surrounding communities, yet there was no electricity. I interviewed a man and a woman about their struggles, including children not being able to learn at night.

After that news aired, the MP called the station. Within that same week, they brought cables and meters and connected homes. When I got home that Friday, there was light. My community still calls me a hero, but really, it is the power of community radio.

Stories like this make people value the station. They see that when Radio Ada speaks about their issues, something can happen.

Relationships with duty bearers and closing thoughts

Interviewer: How does the station work with partners and duty bearers to improve or expand its climate communication efforts?

Participant: We build strong relationships with technocrats and duty bearers. They value our platform because they know the community listens. When we invite them to community forums, many of them come, MPs, assembly members, district technocrats, wildlife officers, health officials.

Our feedback system is mostly community-based rather than software-based. We go back to communities, gather “status reports” on their challenges, broadcast them, then organise forums where duty bearers respond. That becomes another programme in itself.

Interviewer: Is there anything you would like to add as a concluding comment?

Participant: Community radios in Ghana are still fighting for recognition and fair policies. The five-kilometre radius policy, for example, will seriously limit our impact if enforced. People have a right to information in a language they understand.

Government and development partners should recognise community radio as a vital asset, especially for climate and development communication. We have volunteered ourselves to share information that is a basic right. We only ask that the laws and policies consider this role and support it rather than weaken it.

2. Interview with Presenter “Dr Focus” (Godwin – Radio Ada)

Interviewer: Please introduce yourself and your role at the station.

Respondent (Godwin – “Dr Focus”): My name Is (ST1), Listeners know me as Dr Focus , that is my radio name.

Interviewer: How do you ensure that climate messages are understandable and relevant to your audience?

Respondent: For any climate-related programme we host, we first look for a prime time when most listeners will be at home or near their radios. We choose times that make it easy for them to listen.

Most of the experts we host on climate issues are from the Wildlife Division and similar agencies. Many of them speak English. So as presenters, we make sure to translate what they say, word-for-word, into the local language. We explain the key points in Dangme so that listeners understand clearly.

Community involvement and feedback

Interviewer: How are community members involved in designing and contributing to climate-related programmes?

Respondent: Before we bring out such programmes, we look at the situation on the ground and first discuss the topic with our wildlife or environmental partners. We ask: *What exactly are we going to discuss, and how will it benefit our people?*

We then pre-inform listeners that the programme is coming. We announce it ahead of time, sometimes one week before, so people can plan to listen. During the programme, we create phone-in segments. Listeners call to share their ideas, raise issues, or ask questions, and the experts respond. That interaction helps shape future programmes too.

Observed changes in knowledge and behaviour

Interviewer: What changes have you observed among listeners in relation to climate knowledge or behaviour?

Respondent: At first, many people were not very aware of climate change. Through the programmes, they have gained deeper knowledge.

For example, some used to win sand right at the river bank. Through our education, they have learned that if they must win sand, they should go a bit deeper or further away from the banks to avoid serious erosion and flooding.

We also advise people in low-lying communities, like Azizanya, where flooding is common. We encourage them to consider moving to higher grounds because of the climate and flooding issues. Some people have taken that advice and relocated, especially many of the youth, who also leave because of limited job opportunities there.

So, yes, we have seen changes some better environmental practices, greater awareness, and migration from high-risk areas.

Challenges in sustaining climate-related programmes

Interviewer: What are some key challenges you face in sustaining climate-related programmes over time?

Respondent: One major challenge is resource persons. Getting experts to come regularly is not easy, especially when there is no funding for their transport or time. You cannot always invite someone who will drive here at their own cost and then go back with nothing.

If there were some dedicated funding to support such programmes and the experts who participate, it would help a lot. Because of the funding gap, sometimes we presenters have to share what we know ourselves, just to keep some level of education going, not only entertainment.

3 Interview with Programme Editor/Producer

Interviewer: Please introduce yourself and what you do at Radio Ada.

Respondent My name is (PE) I live in Ada and I have worked with Radio Ada since I was young. I am a programme editor and producer. I edit programmes before they go on air, and I also go out to record programmes in the community, then edit and send them for broadcast.

Making climate messages understandable

Interviewer: At Radio Ada, how do you ensure that climate messages are understandable and relevant to your audience?

Respondent: Climate change is a big issue in the community where we are. It affects our locality a lot.

We sometimes create jingles specifically about climate issues. We go to communities, assess their situation, and then build programmes from what we see — for example, people blocking water ways or putting things where they should not be, which later affect them. When we explain these issues on air, people understand better.

We also invite community opinion leaders to come on air and share their experiences. That way, others who are not yet facing the same problem can be aware and prepare. We also know the seasons, so when we are getting close to a risky period, we start creating programmes ahead of time so people are fully aware before something happens.

Observed impact and continuous education

Interviewer: Have you observed any changes in behaviour or knowledge from these climate-related programmes?

Respondent: Yes. But as human beings, people can forget, so we must keep repeating the education. If we stop, we go back to zero.

We use different formats drama, role play, jingles and short messages to keep the awareness fresh. Instead of only giving lectures on air, we design content that people can enjoy and still learn from. That makes it easier for them to remember and talk about the issues.

We see that some practices change, but we still have to keep reminding them.

Community involvement and partnerships

Interviewer: When you create climate-related programmes, do you involve community members in the process?

Respondent: Yes, we do. If they are not involved, they will not feel the programme. They will not fully understand or take ownership.

We involve them both in designing the content and in appearing on the programmes.

Interviewer: Besides the wildlife-related programme, are there other programmes that focus on environment and climate change?

Respondent: Yes. We have an environmental programme. We invite the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the district assembly, the Fire Service, and other agencies to come. They educate listeners on different issues such as waste management, bush fires, and disaster risk.

Sometimes we also go to the communities with these partners to do joint education. Because climate issues are many here, most of our programmes end up touching on the environment and climate in one way or another.