

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION DISSEMINATION CENTRES IN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF EBENEZER INFORMATION
CENTRE IN OBOGU IN ASANTE-AKYEM SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

BY

KWASI OBENG-FOSU

MADC20031

DECEMBER, 2021

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION DISSEMINATION CENTRES IN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF EBENEZER INFORMATION
CENTRE IN OBOGU IN ASANTE-AKYEM SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

KWASI OBENG-FOSU

MADC20031

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES,
GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ART DEGREE IN
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

DECEMBER, 2021

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Kwasi Obeng-Fosu, do hereby declare that this work is the result of my own research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in this work have been fully acknowledged. I therefore, bear full responsibility for any shortcomings.



SIGNATURE:

15th December, 2021

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by Ghana Institute of Journalism.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. A.J. TAYMAN



SIGNATURE:

15th December, 2021

DATE:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my entire family especially my beloved wife and beautiful strong children, and not forgetting my father for their massive love, support and encouragement.

Wherever you are Daddy, this is for you. I made it for you because these are the sort of accomplishments you wished for me. It was evident in your burning desire to see me climb to the topmost. Your dedication to my upbringing makes me who I am today. I love you Daddy.

To my children, I get motivated when I see you all. Now more than ever, I am committed to plotting a path that would make life easier for you all than it was for me. Let this be your motivation. And be a role model to your younger siblings yet to come. Daddy loves you all!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to thank God Almighty for the grace to complete this study.

I also want to say thank you to my boss and mentor, Energy Minister and Manhyia MP, Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh inspiring me and creating the enabling space for me to apply myself to both my work and studies.

To my supervisor, Dr. A.J. Tayman, I am grateful for your directions and input during this study. This work would not have been possible without your contributions and suggestions. Your depth of knowledge, especially in research is unparalleled. Sir, I say thank you and may you excel in all your endeavours.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Acknowledgement.....	
Dedication.....	
Abstract	
CHAPTER ONE (INTRODUCTION)	
1.0 Introduction.....	
1.1 Background.....	
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	
1.3 Research Objectives.....	
1.4 Research Questions.....	
1.5 Research Significance	
1.6 Limitations to the Study	
1.7 Chapter Organization	
1.8 Summary	
CHAPTER TWO (THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUAL REVIEW)	
2.0 Introduction	
2.1 Theoretical Framework	
2.1.1 Technology Acceptance Model	
2.1.2 Media Advocacy Theory	
2.2 Conceptual Review.....	
2.2.1 Concept of Communication.....	
2.2.2. Community Media.....	

2.2.3 Community Information Dissemination Centre	
2.2.4 Communication for Social Change.....	
2.2.5 Development.....	
2.2.6 Development Communication.....	
2.3 Conclusion	

CHAPTER THREE (METHODOLOGY).....

3.0 Introduction.....	
3.1 Epistemological and Ontological Approaches.....	
3.2 Research Approach.....	
3.3 Research Design.....	
3.4 Sampling.....	
3.5 Data Collection.....	
3.6 Data Analysis.....	
3.7 Ethical Considerations	
3.8 Validity and Trustworthiness.....	
3.9 Conclusion	

CHAPTER FOUR (FINDINGS)

4.0 Introduction.....	
4.1 How is the setup of Community Information Dissemination Centres in Ghana?....	
4.2 What developmental issues do Community Information Dissemination Centres involve in?.....	
4.3 What challenges do Community Information Dissemination Centres face in doing their work?.....	

4.4 Summary

CHAPTER FIVE (CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION)

5.0 Introduction

5.1 Conclusion.....

5.2 Recommendations

5.3 Summary

REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

The study looked at how Community Information Dissemination Centres (CIDCs) help in enhancing community development. The study used qualitative approach to research. Interviews, discussion and observation were used to gather data. Purposive sampling was used to select the information centre that was studied. Purposive sampling was also used to select the respondents for the interviews. The study found out that information centres can be owned by one person or jointly owned. The study also found out that amplifier, desktop computer, microphone and horned-speakers make up the set-up of information centres. It was also found that information centres do announcement, promote health, agriculture and social issues. Again, it was found that information centres face power fluctuation challenges, low level of income for patronage and faulty equipment. Finally, the study recommends that government should regulate the use of information dissemination centres. Also, state institutions and other bodies should help train operators of information centres. Lastly, organizations should help set-up community information dissemination centres for information-poor communities in Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Community information dissemination centres have become a complementary media outlet to the traditional forms of media. They fill in the gaps where the press, radio, television and the internet do not satisfy the information needs of the people. Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018) expressed that community information dissemination centres in the Effutu and Awutu districts of the Central Region of Ghana have been able to satisfy local information needs of a prior information-poor people. With the insurgence of community information centres in several communities (Ofori-Birikorang & Aggrey, 2018), it will be prudent to study other community information dissemination centres to ascertain their relevance, prospects and challenges in their quest to disseminate information to community people. This study was undertaken to examine how community information dissemination centres help with the development agenda of their communities using Ebenezer information centre in Obogu in the Asante Akim South Municipality as a case study. Obogu was selected because it has similar features with communities that use community information dissemination centres in Ghana: relatively small size, inadequate social amenities, and agrarian lifestyle, among others.

1.1 Background of the Study

Development communication research is to identify more effective communication strategies to improve the overall development of state and society (Stacks & Salween, 2008). However, most of the development communication and other development programmes are urban biased. The urban audience is targeted due to the commercialization of the media as a result of the media's

reliance on adverts and commercials for survival. Adverts and commercials come from and are patronized by the urban centres with the financial and resources to pay or purchase the products being advertised (McMichael, 2012). This makes media houses skew towards urban content in order to get sponsorship for their programmes; and consequently affects the rural areas in getting information.

Airwave liberalization in the late 20th century and early 21st century with its attendant media pluralism expanded media presence in Ghana (Karikari, 1994). Several media facilities were opened. (Karikari, 2004). Karikari (2004) advocates that media pluralism enhanced information dissemination, education of the citizenry, and diversely entertained people. He also expresses that it also deepened democracy, enhanced responsible and accountable stewardship of public office and served as a watchdog on the public purse. Again, media pluralism gave adequate voice to the deprived and bridged the communication gap between the rulers and the ruled. However, media pluralism, the diversity of media supplies in the plurality of independent and autonomous media and the diversity of media contents available to the public (Doyle, 1997), has its challenges. One major challenge of media pluralism is media monopoly in which the media landscape is controlled by a few people and/or institutions (Time Warner, 2010; Bagdikian, 2004). This resulted in same programme or content being replicated on media outlets from same ownership.

Another challenge with media pluralism is the fact that content is still planned and produced in the urban centres and dumped on rural people in the hinterlands with little or no consultation on what actually suits them. Content from centralized urban media has less effect on rural folks (Ofori Birikorang & Aggrey, 2018). McMichael, 2012 espouses that even under decentralization, media facilities produce pro-urban and elite-influenced programmes but because of the desire to reach the larger numbers of people. Messages disseminated became general, with less relevance; instead of specificity to suit rural folks. Rural folks that had receiver sets had no option but to either listen

(because radio was the far reaching facility) to programmes disseminated from urban centres or switch off their receiver sets. The basic aim of decentralizing the media terrain: reaching out to relegated communities and abandoned people, has also not been very effective as studies done in other countries show (Hoffman & Metzroth, 2010).

Koah (2021) also expresses that the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the body that is tasked to reach every individual with civic education in the country, is haphazardly organized, from the top of the hierarchy to down. She also expresses that the disorganized nature of the NCCE makes it look non-serious and not ready to perform its responsibility. It is also espoused in Koah's (2021) work that the NCCE faces challenges in efficient information dissemination. She explains that faulty information dissemination equipment such as modern Public Address system, lack of generators and batteries to power electronic machines gadgets when they visit places with no electricity, no or limited transport system to convey information officers to remote and hard-to-reach areas and financial incapacitation as the other challenges that consequently hinder the effectiveness of the Commission. These assertions buttress the long-standing communal complaints that the NCCE is inefficient and thus, ineffective, in performing their task in the country.

The Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications was also set up to complement information dissemination to rural and information-poor people in Ghana (GIFEC, 2015). GIFEC provided the community information centres with computers to provide communication technology that shall aid communities with information. The roles of Community information centres included the supporting economic activities in the rural areas. The centre was supposed to provide ready information on economic issues such as marketing, production practices, extension services, credit facilities, among others. This was to help educate local people so as to get them unto the global business scene. The community information centres had information on computers

that community people could use to enhance their knowledge about the economy, production, business, loans, among others. Also, community information centres were to address community information needs and enhance national integration. Communities, especially the rural areas were deficient in information. The community information centres were thus created to give local people information and let them be abreast with other in the urban centres. It was also set to give information that suit the agrarian style of local communities. News portals were made available on the computers to aid community folks in accessing news stories at any time. Students also used the community information centres to enrich their academic status. Community information centres were also to provide Information and Communication Technology, provide the platform for grass-root education on communal and national issues, and provide public communication and education support for community-based development organizations. However, erratic power cuts, poor network and government inability to provide more centres challenged the successful implementation of the community information centres as espoused by GIFEC.

The challenges in dissemination information to rural communities and the problems associated with the mediums of reaching rural folks have created a wide information gap between urban centres and rural areas (Ommani & Chizari, 2008). The rural population suffer the effect of mass media dysfunction, whereas the educated elite and urban rich have full access to the mass media while the suburban and rural population enjoy less or none Ugboajah (1972). While the urban centres have access to all the information they need, the rural areas have deficit of information which makes Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018) refer to such communities as ‘information-poor’ communities.

To avoid going back to stone-age gong-gong communication which will not enhance any effective communication in modern times like this, and in the bid to close the urban-rural communication gap, inhabitants in information-poor communities have resultantly created a way of generating

and disseminating information (Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey, 2018). These newly created communication facilities are commonly known as Community Information Dissemination Centres (CIDs) and popularly referred to as Information Centres in the rural communities they are situated. Scholars such as Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018) refer to CIDs as Rural Information Dissemination Technology Centre (RIDTC).

CIDs are spreading in Ghana that they have penetrated some urban centres and cities. The popularity of CIDs in the country, besides the main objective to fill the information void of rural and information-poor communities, is due to the relatively low cost in set-up and the ease of operating it. CIDs have similar characteristics as community media. They are relatively small. It takes few equipment to set them up; major ones among them include microphone(s), amplifiers, tuners, and speaker horns. Again, CIDs are communally owned and controlled. Though a CID in a community might have been set up by an individual, it is for the whole community and controlled by selected people on behalf of the community members. In addition, CIDs have non-profit aim. They also have limited coverage and relatively smaller audience (usually a section or sometimes a whole community), use indigenous equipment and resources, and involve community members in decision making and programming (Ofori-Birikorang & Aggrey, 2018; Tabing, 2000). Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018) explain in 'Horns Over Roofs: A Study of Locally Designed Rural Information Dissemination Technology Centres (RIDTCS) in Ghana' that Community Information Dissemination Centres provide information on themes such as farming, community development and announcement.

It is therefore generally believed that the reliable alternative to access information on development issues, and any other issues, by Ghanaian citizens, and for that matter plentiful of the rural communities in the country as a whole, is through the Community Information Dissemination Centres (CIDs) that receive information, rebrand it and disseminate it to suit local taste. Hence,

with information dissemination to the local Ghanaian taking a new turn through the media, it is very necessary to study these facilities as they communicate especially development issues which are technical. This study was, therefore, undertaken to look at how Community Information Dissemination Centres help enhance the development of the communities they are located in using Ebenezer community information dissemination centre in Obogu in the Asante-Akim South Municipality as a case study.

1.1.1 Study Area

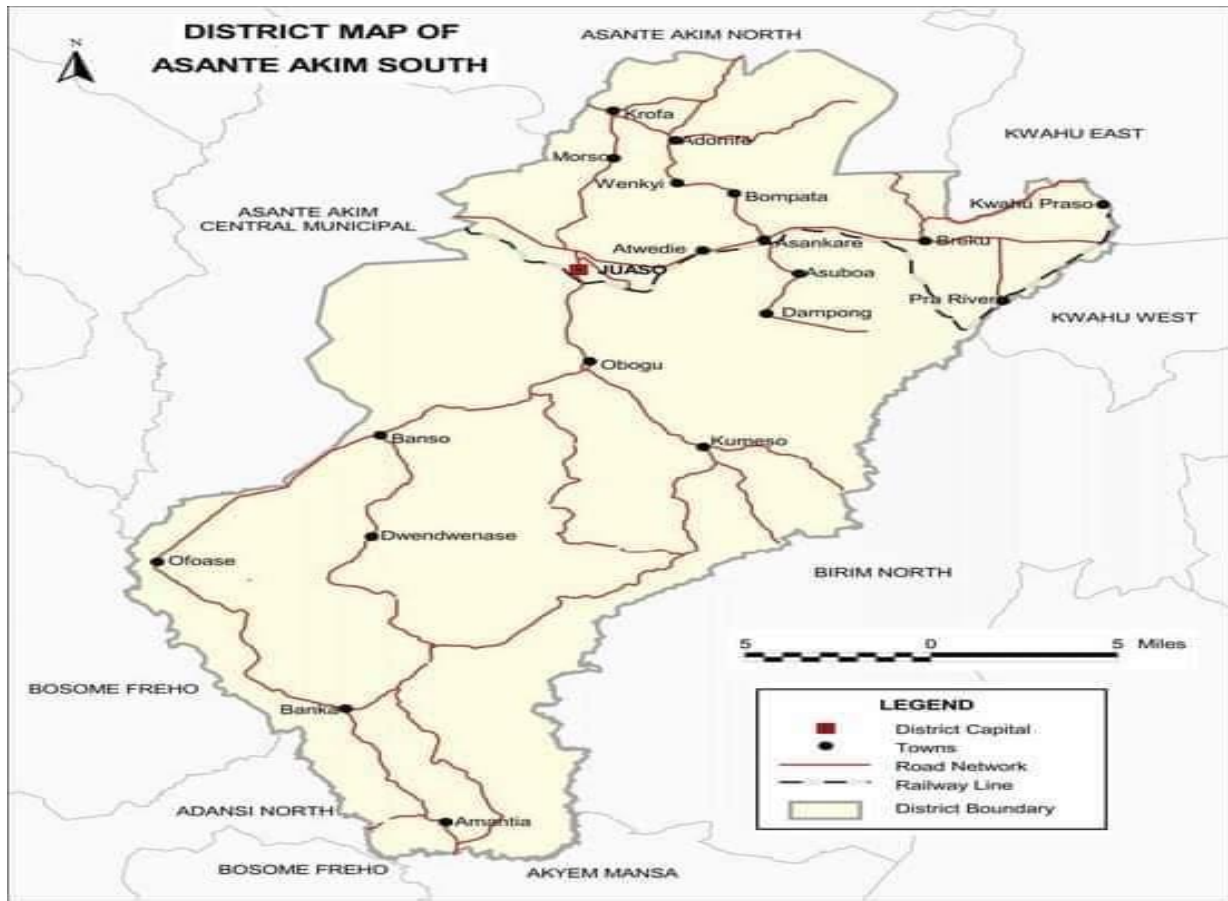
Obogu is in the Asante-Akim South Municipality of the Ashanti Region. The district is located at the eastern part of Ashanti with its eastern boarder forming part of the boundary dividing Ashanti and Eastern Regions. The district also shares boundaries on the North and North-West with Asante Akim North Municipal and Kwahu South District on the West. On the South-West lies Bosome Freho District and on the South-East is Birim North District in the Eastern Region. Juaso is the Capital (ghanadistricts.gov.gh). Obogu is located South-West of Juaso. It is about 10-minute drive from Juaso. It has approximately 10,890 inhabitants (GDHS, 2020). The community has a private senior high school; about six basic schools, a police station, and two banking agencies. Tuesday and Friday are market days. It has tarred road linking Juaso. The inhabitants use pipe borne water established by the Small-Town Water Project (STWP). Obogu inhabitants are predominantly farmers, especially subsistence. They also cultivate cash crops like cacao, oil palm, citrus, and rice. They go to farm as early as dawn and return at dusk; especially during the planting and harvesting seasons.

The people are largely Akans with the Ashanti dominating. Other tribes as the Akwapim and a cluster of tribes from Northern Ghana also inhabit the community. Almost everybody speaks the Asante-twi dialect. Christianity dominates the other religions; with a mixture of both orthodox and

charismatic churches as well as prayer groups scattered all around the community. There is also a community of Muslims who are predominantly settlers from Northern Ghana. There is a community of African Traditional Religious groups in Obogu with Shrines and priests. Politically, it is a Zonal-Council capital with some other communities under its jurisdiction. Traditionally, the Obogu royal stool is a paramount stool under the Asante Royal Stool. It therefore has a Traditional Council of Chiefs. Customarily, it is a taboo to go to farm on Tuesdays. The citizens therefore use Tuesdays to rest and do communal activities. In health and health-care issues, Obogu is in level 'A' under the three-tier primary health care system. Level 'A' is the community level consisting of traditional healers, chemical sellers and community clinic. Obogu has a community health centre with a medical assistant, twelve nurses, and a midwife. Herbal medicine and traditional healers are rampant in the community.

Obogu is a nodal community, serving as a centre to other adjoining communities including Kyempo, Ofoase, Bansa, Muramura, Yaw Bronya, Atiomo, Nkwanta, Nkyesa, Agyei krom, and Dwendwenase, among others. The community market is on Tuesdays and Fridays. Most market women from the cities buy their produce from the Obogu market or straight from the farmers in their farms. The community has one information dissemination facility, Ebenezer Information Centre, that disseminates information to the whole community through public address systems mounted on long erected poles at strategic places to reach every home. Frequencies of FM radio stations such as Ahwenepa fm in Juaso; Salt fm and Adansee fm in Agogo; Kings radio and virgin city radio in Konongo; and other Kumasi stations such as Fox fm, Nhyira fm and Hello fm reach the community.

Fig. 1. Settlement Map of Asante Akim South Municipality



Source: Asante-Akim South Municipal Assembly (AASMA), 2021

1.2 Statement of Problem

Not everyone in the country-side has full access to information (Ofori-Birikorang & Aggrey, 2018). Community information dissemination centres were introduced by information-poor communities to fill the information gap and to complement information dissemination by traditional and modern media. Also, the fact that Asante Akim South Municipality have access to only one community radio station, Ahwenepa radio, makes it challenging to get programmes that suit communal life especially when the urban media facilities are commercialized. With community information dissemination centres becoming common with rural communities, there is the need to observe them to see if such facilities are actually doing the information dissemination

and feeding the information needs of an agrarian and information-poor communities as they espouse.

This study is therefore an exploratory one to look into how Community Information Dissemination Centres disseminate development information to the communities they are situated in. The study was also undertaken to examine how Community Information Dissemination Centres help the development of their communities now that rural people have accepted them as one of the major information disseminating outfits.

1.3 Research Objectives

Community information dissemination centres are generally set up to fill the information gap that rural areas in Ghana face (Ofori-Birikorang & Aggrey, 2018). The centres receive, manage, recreate and disseminate information to rural folks. The general objective of this study is to assess the role of Community Information Dissemination Centres in the development of rural Ghanaian communities. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the setup of Community Information Dissemination Centres
2. Analyse the developmental issues Community Information Dissemination Centres disseminate or are involved in
3. Assess the possible challenges Community Information Dissemination Centres face in community development.

1.4 Research Questions

Community information dissemination centres have gained root in Ghana. Though some are found in the urban centres, they are normally found in rural communities. Their main purpose is to fill the information gap that pro-urban and pro-elite radio stations create due to commercialization of the airwaves. Specific questions that the researcher used to get answers to fulfil the research objectives are the following:

1. How is the setup of Community Information Dissemination Centres in Ghana?
2. What developmental issues do Community Information Dissemination Centres disseminate and/or take part in?
3. What challenges do Community Information Dissemination Centres face in doing their work?

1.5 Research Significance

This study has the following significance:

The study will add up to academic discourse. The findings of the study will complement to knowledge. Findings that will come out of the study will add up to the data on community information dissemination centres and community media as a whole. It will give insight into how rural and information-poor people access, package and disseminate information among themselves.

The findings helped in ascertaining the type of developmental issues that Community Information Centres in Ghana communicate to the rural populace. It provided answers to what goes on at Community Information Dissemination Centres that help in developing the communities. They find themselves in.

The findings will help redirect national focus and attention on the Community Information Centres and make necessary policies to regulate them. The findings will inform Government on how to regulate the work of information centres. Government will aid institutions responsible for regulating information dissemination and communication in Ghana to make laws and policies to regulate the set-up, management and operations of community information dissemination centres.

The findings of the study will also inform state institutions in Ghana, such as the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDCE), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), and the Information Services Division (ISD) to know how to help train operators of Community Information Dissemination Centres on the everyday issues that are discussed on the centres.

Findings of the study will inform state institutions, religious denominations and traditional leadership of the relevance of information dissemination centres, and will prompt them to partner inhabitants of communities to set up standard Community Information Centres in especially rural and information-poor communities to disseminate vital information to inhabitants

1.6 Limitations to the Study

The study was limited by time, resources and COVID-19 scare. Due to the academic calendar, there was limited time for me to select a sample that would let me investigate indepthly the phenomenon under study. Limited time made me purposefully select only one community information centre which would not have been the case if there was enough time. Limited time frame also made select few respondents to answer the research question set. The study was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Observation of work in Ebenezer information centre was limited because of adhering to COVID-19 prevention protocols. This limited the number of times and I could observe proceedings of the managers of Ebenezer information centre. In addition, the

study was limited by inadequacy of resources. As a student, getting resources to take up this study was difficult. Transportation, printing of questionnaire, paying a translator, and other expenses had a toll the study. Rescheduling of interview sessions due to financial challenges had an effect on the study.

1.7 Chapter Organization

The study will be put under five chapters and it will follow the following pattern;

Chapter one is the introduction. This chapter has the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and chapter organization of the study. Chapter two presents the theoretical frameworks and conceptual underpinnings of the study. These include Technology Acceptance Theory and Media Advocacy Theory. The concepts that were reviewed in relation to the study include Communication, development, development Communication; Community Media; Community Information Dissemination Centres; and Communication for Social Change. Chapter three deals with the methodology used for this study which includes the study design, study location/area, study population, sampling method, data collection techniques, and data processing/analysis. Chapter four presents the findings. Chapter five presents discussion of findings, summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the objective for which the study on the role of community information dissemination centres in the development of communities was undertaking. It demonstrated the gaps in literature that ignited setting up certain objectives that will help fill the gap. It also stated the significance of the study when it is completed. The next chapter is the review of relevant literature relating to the study and the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings on which the study hinge.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Various studies have been done on health communication and community media by different researchers. Some of the topics reviewed under this study are Communication, Health, Health Communication, Communal living, Community Media, Community Information Centres, and Communication for Social Change. The Theoretical framework under which the study was done. Theories like Technology Acceptance theory and Media Advocacy Theory were reviewed.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This section espouses the theories on which the study was underpinned. It includes the Media Advocacy Theory and Technology Acceptance Theory

2.1.1 Technology Acceptance Model

Modern communication is hinged on equipment and personnel. Information dissemination will be near impossible without the two. The type of equipment that personnel in a media or information dissemination facility use depend on the level of technological development that permeates that area. Technologically advanced communities may be prone to using more sophisticated communication equipment than less technologically advanced communities. For instance, while a communication facility in a technology advanced community may use enhanced photography gadgets including drones to take aerial view of an area, someone using a less advanced photography technology might resort to storey buildings or cranes. Technology, therefore, plays a

very important role in modern information dissemination, especially since the era of town criers or gong-gong beaters faded out.

Technology Acceptance Model, as introduced by Fred Davis in 1989, is an information systems theory that explains how people accept and use a particular technology to advance local cause. The theory explains how people adopt a particular phenomenon to suit situations. Davis' (1993) usage of the theory in studying how technology users adopt a new technology is premised on two beliefs: usefulness and application. The theory expresses that when people come into contact with a new technology, they are influenced by the perceived usefulness and perceived ease in using that technology. Davis (1993) explains perceived usefulness as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system shall enhance their work output. The acceptance of new technology to enhance communication is perceived usefulness. Perceived ease of using technology was described as the degree to which a person or group of people believe that using a particular technology to achieve target outcomes will be with less or no effort. One basic feature of Technology Acceptance Model is adaptability. Communities or groups must learn to be adaptable to the adopted equipment.

Two of the foundations that Technology Acceptance Model stands on are adoptability and adaptability. The theory expresses that users of technology should adopt equipment that they can use with ease and that can help achieve expected outcomes. Hence, adopted technology should be easy to use so that people would have positive attitude towards it and would actually love to use it. People in rural and information-poor communities have adopted equipment that is easy to use, suit communal style and help them disseminate information to people who, hitherto, would not get such information. Adaptation is using available resources to enhance human survival. People adapt to technology available to enhance information flow that is crucial for development and human survival. Adoption and adaptation enhance compatibility to new technology. It also allows

for thorough observation of technology while using it. Adoptability gives room for trials that consequently leads to optimum use of new technology. Adaptability enhances relative advantage in the use of new technology (Monami & Jamous, 2017).

One aim of Technology Acceptance Model is use what is available to get results. Rural and information-poor communities use the technology and equipment available to them to get, create and disseminate information to their people. Technology is used by rural and information-poor communities is to promote social harmony and bring about change that will enhance stability and communal development. Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018) explain that similar CIDs in the Central Region of Ghana have adopted a simple technology using few equipment such as amplifier, tuner, microphone and speaker horns to create and disseminated much needed information to rural and information-poor communities. Studies show that knowledge in a particular technology enhances its use and yields greater productivity. Thus, confidence in the use of gadget or technology leads to increase in control, dexterity and competent information dissemination. Technology acceptance theory enhances the understanding of the adoption and use of a particular, especially new or emerging, technology.

Modern communication pattern also follows, besides technology, economic and socio-cultural directions. Advanced media facilities such as Television, radio, press and, of late, internet is used by socio-culturally modernized urban as well as economically developed communities. However, simple and traditional (sometimes, with few reforms) equipment are preferred by rural and information-poor communities in disseminating information, apart from still using the face-to-face form of communication. One reason why rural communities use simple gadgets in information dissemination is that they do not have the financial capacity to purchase modern and technologically advanced gadgets (Karikari, 2000). Adopting of simple and less sophisticated

equipment to disseminate information in rural and information-poor communities stands on Technology Acceptance Model.

Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018) explain that similar CIDs in the Central Region of Ghana have adopted a simple technology using few equipment such as amplifier, tuner, microphone and speaker horns to create and disseminated much needed information to rural and information-poor communities. Hence, information-poor people in Asante-Akim South using few equipment such as microphones, amplifiers, and horned speakers to enhance communication and help develop their communities such as Obogu affirms the perceived acceptance and usefulness of technology. The ease of using simple technological setup through Community Information Dissemination Centres to expand the frontiers of information dissemination in Asante-Akim buttresses Technology Acceptance Theory in this context.

2.1.2 Media Advocacy Theory

Humanity is always finding solutions to issues that affect them. New initiatives are designed to solve challenges and meet the needs of people. Solutions to challenges can be by one individual, a group or a whole community. People, people need to be in the known of the happenings and issues in their environment before action can be taken. The conscious effort of highlighting social issues to grasp people's attention is advocacy. Advocacy can be done through the media. Using the media or any information dissemination outlet to highlight societal challenges and championing comprehensive approach to solve them enhances the solution process. The theory requires, among other things, the mobilization of resources, groups and ideas to incite the interest of the public to act on national or general issues. (Brown, et al., 2019; Dorfman & Krasnow, 2014; Wallack, et al., 1993).

Media advocacy aspires to stimulate public debate on a social initiative or challenge through constant promotion on the airwaves. Advocates believe that constantly raising and discussing on a social policy, initiative or challenge popularizes it and create public awareness. Advocacy is primarily used to incite public decisions on policies and programmes. It is a tool for skewing people's thoughts and opinions about social issues and motivate them to act towards the issue. Media advocacy is a continuous process. It is done through constant highlighting on societal issues, promoting collective ideas and strategies, and championing the deployment of personnel and equipment for effective outcomes. During the advocacy period, advocates make sure that they participate in effecting outcomes through unceasing hammering on the issues, enhancing mobilization of resources and personnel, and being part of the solution process. Unlike agenda setting which might cease after the issue, initiative or challenge is mentioned on the airwaves, advocacy is a continuous process and can take several weeks, months and even years to complete; until the desired outcome is achieved. support of certain issues and policies to change public opinion and decisions (Atkey, et al., 2016).

Advocacy is a social campaign. It espouses changes in the social space that can lead to changes in certain individual behaviours. It also reinforces the social acceptance of pressing social issues and normally opines ways of dealing with such issues. It generally complements the struggles of humanity; and helps find solutions to societal negatives Advocacy concentrates on social or community issues or highlights initiatives or challenges that affect the masses than an individual due to its scope of work in political and social space. For example, media advocacy on getting a good country would concentrate on themes like fixing the economy than concentrating on changing individual behaviours of political activists. This explains that if the laws and institutions of a state are made to work perfectly, it would deter and practically stop corruptible practices that drain the system. Media advocacy is used to achieve social justice but not individual satisfaction.

Advocacy therefore blends well with social mobilization to achieve expected outcomes. While promoting and raising public awareness to a social issue, advocates most often help with the gathering of every accessible and practical ideas and personnel from different sectors of society and together assemble gadgets, draw strategies, and find a plan to execute it (Chapman, 2004).

Common activities in advocacy include monitoring the social structure and gathering information on topical issues affecting them. This helps create a relevant campaign and leads to drafting a good message that can attract attention and subsequent debate. Advocacy also involves getting experts or persons with respectable level of knowledge on the issue at hand to speak on it or lead the discussion. This helps to enhance people's understanding. Advocacy should have a diary of things to do in the whole campaign. The systematic arrangement of a campaign keeps advocates focused. Campaign dairies contain dates and themes to discuss, resource people to invite, delivery of the message, and deadlines, among others. Campaigners should also be ready to respond to and address misleading schemes, skewed thoughts and conscious propaganda on the message. This clears doubts in people's minds and make them believe in the campaign. Other activities that advocate can do include lobbying with and obtaining endorsement from decision makers such as community, religious and opinion leaders, and bringing in related foreign news to spice credibility (Chapman, 2004)

Increase in media advocacy should result in a proportional rise in the awareness and, possibly results, of the initiative, policy or challenge advocated for. There are instances where mass media advocacy on abortion, especially through social media, had seen a sharp increase in abortion. When there is no increase in especially awareness and debate in a social issue after advocacy, then that particular advocacy failed. For instance, if after a month of constant campaign of the presence of COVID-19 vaccines in Ghana, and, later, a survey showed that majority of Ghanaians did not know, and consequently did not take the vaccine, then advocacy has failed. Media advocacy,

therefore, expresses that some level of urgency must be put into the process (Chapman, 2015; Wallack, et al., 1999).

Notwithstanding the high rates proponents and users of media advocacy put on the theory, some schools of thought and scholars oppose it based on the following factors. Firstly, media advocacy is difficult to measure empirically. Measuring its advocacy is challenging. Evaluating how effective a campaign is, is subject to individual projectors and analysis. Hence, a successful campaign to one might be a botched one to another. Media advocacy is also opposed on the grounds that reliance on journalists to change public issues might not work well, especially when the media does not have a wider platform. This limits the advocates' capability to reach policy makers and citizens. Promoters can also feel that the message is saturated and thus stop the advocacy (Gibson, 2010).

Allocating already scarce resources of a country or community for advocacy might create some form of difficulties, especially in countries with deficit budget. Advocacy is pushed with financial and resource backing. Even in areas where volunteerism is dominant, there is still the need to raise money and resources for social campaigns. Countries with low or deficit budget already have challenges raising money for national issues. It would be difficult for such countries to raise substantial amount, even when they are able to raise something, for other social issues like campaigns. Subsequently, issues concerning rural and neglected areas and minor sectors are often neglected. Again, media advocacy can fail when the appropriate resources, experts and forces that are needed to drive the campaign is lacking or inadequate. Giving half-baked practitioners and non-experts health campaign might not get the expected results. Advocacy cannot be successful when funds and resources are lacking, inadequate or inappropriate. Therefore, advocacy can be successful in areas where funds and resources are available; and not the mere mention of it (Devlin-Forltz, et al., 2012). Finally, media advocacy is opposed on the wide difference between

the theory and its practice. Thus, the advocacy does not reach people that could not access the media at the point in time when the advocacy was done Gibson (2010).

Media advocacy is very important to this study because it will help assess if Community Information Dissemination Centres in Asante-Akim South Municipality actually advocate development and other community-related issues in their part of the country. The theory will also help analyze how advocacy on health related and other issues is done by Information Dissemination Centres in Asante-Akim South Municipality. Again, the theory will help analyze if advocacy programmes disseminated or rolled out Community Information Dissemination Centres helped changed perceptions and lifestyles and and/or helped addressed communal issues in the communities they are found in.

2.2 Conceptual Review

This section expresses the concepts and themes that are related to the topic. It includes communication, Community Media and Communication for Social Change.

2.2.1 Concept of Communication

Communication may be defined generally as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another. The word communication was derived from the Latin word, “communis”, which signifies common. The derivation underscores the fact that unless a common understanding results from the exchange of information, there is no communication. Argenti, (2009) defines communication as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another. According to Díaz, (1998), communication denotes a systemic process through which individuals interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings. Communication is expanded to denote a two-way information sharing process which involves one party sending a message that is easily understood by the party that is

receiving. From the afore-mentioned definitions and insight into communication, communication could be conceptualized as the exchange of information within an organizational or project setting. Notwithstanding, from the contemporary perspective, communication is understood as multidimensional and is much more than message exchange, information flow or providing information about people's work. It is also about relationships and creating a respectful atmosphere for all the people within the organization or a project setting (Argenti, 2009).

Communication formerly assumed a primary function of information dissemination and persuasion. It used the one-way, linear process of source-to-receiver(s); usually for the purpose of having an effect on individual receiver(s). Feedback was infused into the linear communication process and these models became 'knowledge of effect'. Communication based on dialogue, equitable participation, local ownership, empowerment, and social change evolved in the 1990s; and provided stronger decentralization of authority and increased access to new forms of communication and technology (Díaz, 1998).

The Aristotle Communication Model is one of the earliest recorded models of communication. It is attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle represented communication as might an orator who speaks to large audiences. His model incorporates few elements such as a speaker, message and listener (Dissanayake, 1988). Strictly speaking, the Aristotle model expresses that the communicator actively transmits messages or information to a passive audience who are not communicators. This way at least at present does not seem real because in reality an act of communication does not simply start, like turning on a tape-recorded message, and go through stages to a point where it stops and the switch is turned off (DeFleur et al. 1993). In Aristotelian model, the objective of communication is to influence or persuade the receiver (listener) in a manner that is considered appropriate by the communicator (speaker) (Dissanayake, 1988).

The Schramm Model of Communication, which was initially proposed by Charles Osgood in 1954 expressed that communication is not linear but circular. It was later amended by Schramm who explains the flow of communication as a constant two-way path with the message continually been exchanged between the sender and the receiver. This model is a cyclical one that has its origins in the Shannon-Weaver model of communication. The elements of Schramm's model include a sender, message, receiver, and interpreter. It involves the source, receiver, message, feedback and semantic noise. This model explains that message can be sent back from the receiver to the sender which is called role reversal. Under role reversal, the sender becomes the receiver and the receiver becomes the sender. Communication is not complete under the Schramm's model if the sender does not get a feedback from the receiver. One advantage of the Schramm's model is that it allows both the sender and receiver to send and receive message. The model emphasizes on decoding messages because it recognizes the concept of noise. The model has more practicable usability than Aristotle's model. However, the model does express the assistance of external source in encoding and decoding of messages (Bhasin, 2021).

Lasswell (1948) also explains communication in a different mode. He states that communication model encompasses considerations of a broad spectrum of parameters being considered to determine the impact of a communication which are communicator, message, medium and audience (Lasswell, 1948). Considering the fact that the previous ten years had witnessed such speakers as Adolph Hitler and Winston Churchill communicating both live and over radio, it is not surprising that a more sophisticated model would appear without relying on a political scientist to deliver the goods (effective communication). With respect to the illustration encompassing the significance of each element of the model, try visualizing what effect some dynamic speaker would have if the medium were print, or what would happen if the audience didn't speak the same language (Lasswell, 1948).

To Figueroa, et al, (2002), communication can originate from a third source such as television or radio, or a person or institution. And, they believe that information emanating from the media to the citizenry is highly received due to people's trust in the media as a credible source of information. They explain that the media in their communication role should interpret and reinterpret issues until a sufficient degree of mutual understanding and agreement has been reached for collective action to take place. That would allow the development communication process to be efficient, effective and appreciated. In the communication process, "Information' is preferred over the term 'message' to allow for both verbal and nonverbal information, unintended as well as intended information. For example, if women suddenly show up at a community meeting for the first time, this action by itself conveys information that can be stronger than all of the verbal comments made about 'allowing women to participate'" Figueroa, et al, (2002: 4).

Communication techniques used to disseminate information in Ghana do affect its usability to a varying degree. The different techniques include radio, television, on-farm field demonstrations, community gatherings/for a like churches and mosques), face to face interactions in addition to the effective utilization of mobile phones and social media (BBC World Service Trust, 2010). The internal attributes associated with these information techniques, forms and formats influence their usage. To buttress this point, Muchunku et al. (2014) argue that when information is communicated to local communities in the lingua franca at the expense of indigenous dialect, it is extremely arduous for communities to comprehend and relate to the information been communicated.

As intimated by Hansen et al., (2007), quite a few of the information been communicated through these channels includes seasonal forecasts such as the onset of rains targeting agricultural productions, early premonition of an impending disastrous occurrences like thunderstorm, landslides, tornadoes, seismic sea waves among others, focuses on reducing disaster

consequences, and also foster public awareness, in addition to the stimulation of emergency responses. More often than not, this information originates from the mainstream sovereign and integral state corporate entities such as the Ghana Meteorological Authority (GMA) and National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO). Through the effective utilization of indigenous dialects, information on climate change is broadly understood by the masses of recipients, associated with radio appears to be the most frequently utilized climate change communication strategy among local communities from the African and Asian perspective (BBC World Service Trust, 2010).

Communication denotes a shared experience (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1998). Because sharing involves a group, it is always important to involve everyone in a given community in the communication of a development programme like health. Local people must therefore be encouraged to involve themselves in the development process of their communities. They should be involved in all the phases of the development process: planning, designing and the delivery stages (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Information communicated through face-to-face interaction fora like workshops, community meetings or through the absolute reliance on intermediaries, including frontline extension workers enhance the usability of the information. Agunga (1997: 11) actually sees communication as synonymous to development as he quotes “development or more broadly, social change is a communication activity”.

It is therefore clear that through communication, a society projects its ideals, objectives, and usages and traditions collectively. Opoku-Amankwa (1998) supports this by elaborating that communication breeds an effective channel for a group of people to achieve the common goal through collective solution of social issues. UNESCO (1965) summarizes the importance of communication in development by stating that Effective communication with rural people and their active participation in the life of their country are essential for all developing societies.

Communication gives a mouthpiece to people to talk about and assert their rights. It helps people to get information. communication makes people get information and knowledge, and this in turn makes people powerful. Communication enhances people's frontiers to make informed decisions that help in the development of state and society.

2.2.2 Community Media

Tabing (2000) sees a community media as a communication facility that is in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. A community media, thus, entails any information dissemination outlet that allows communal people to access information. Community media is devoted to the social, political and cultural interests and aspirations of identifiable groups that reside in a particular geographical area. Community media is the platform that informs the communal people and allows them to participate in the development process. Community media should therefore be integrated into the community it finds itself in order to have in-depth knowledge of the issues affecting the people and help find solutions to those issues. Integrating the media into the community involves the media involving itself with the communal struggles and being part of the solution seekers. Presumably, community media is one of the most effective (and not very costly) means of communication, especially in rural communities. Community media also creates the platform for social participation, of information and advice on literacy, health, child care, improved agricultural methods, vocational training and protection of the environment.

To Karikari (2000: 47), 'community media' are defined as those that are devoted to the social, political and cultural interests and aspirations of identifiable groups resident in particular geographical areas within a country or within its provinces; and/or sharing common specific social, economic, cultural or political experiences and interests. This community, however, refers

to those that are: geographically physically remote from centres of governmental and economic decision-making and development; economically deprived or poor; culturally marginalised or alienated from dominant cultures; socially subordinated and or discriminated against or persecuted; or politically victimised or disempowered.

Karikari (2000), argues for the strong presence of community media, in the absence or ineffectiveness (though present) of the public and commercial media. To him, the community media is more participatory and addresses the needs and desires of the communal Ghanaian. He explains that the community media brings all the citizenry on board to uncover a problem, find a solution, and collectively solve that problem. However, community media has its peculiar challenges as it is being practiced in the Ghanaian media terrain. This emanates from the fact that there are few community media stations in the country; and there are even some facilities that started as community media but diverted to commercial in terms of programme design and content. The shift in focus is due to stiff competition with the public and commercial forms of media. The cost of operation (securing frequency and equipment, maintenance, and allowances to volunteers) makes it very hard for the efficient and effective work of the community media with its desire to reach the local masses (Larweh, 2015).

According to Tabing (2000), community media depicts some characteristics, These characteristics include being relatively small; having a community ownership and control; being established with a non-profit making aim; run the facility at a low cost: having a two-way communication process (being interactive); being autonomous; having a limited coverage; using indigenous machines and resources; having programmes that reflect community needs and interests; and preserving local culture and tradition. For this study, a community is the information-poor areas in Ghana, and the media is the Community Information Dissemination Centres.

Community Information Dissemination Centres (CIDs) have been the new occurrence in information dissemination in Ghana. It is believed that these Community Information Dissemination Centres have come to fill the gap created as a result of the urban-bias of the Ghanaian media. Commonly found in the rural and information-poor localities, it is assumed that these Information Centres will replace the erstwhile gong-gong beater in the various communities. The core idea of CIDs is to get information, prepare information and disseminate information to the local people. This is done with simple equipment including speaker horns that tower over the roof of the structure that houses the centre, microphone, speaker horns, tuner and amplifier which are usually set up by resourced persons in rural and 'information poor' communities (Ofori-Birikorang & Aggrey, 2018).

The roles of CIDs include supporting economic activities in the rural areas by providing ready information; addressing community information needs and enhancing national integration; (provision of ICT services); disseminating developmental information particularly on health, agriculture, environment and local government & rural communities; providing the platform for grass-root education on communal and national issues; and providing public communication and education support for community-based development organizations (Ofori-Birikorang & Aggrey, 2018; GIFEC, 2015).

UNESCO has helped in promoting Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs) that aim to integrate Community Radio and Tele-centres in multipurpose communities since 1996. The CMC assists Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with information, communication and knowledge with the aim of improving lives through an approach that is cost-effective, country differentiated and empowerment- oriented (Tabing, 2000). Community media depicts some characteristics, according to Tabing (2000). These characteristics include being relatively small; having a community ownership and control; being established with a non-profit making aim; run the

facility at a low cost: having a two-way communication process (being interactive); being autonomous; having a limited coverage; using indigenous machines and resources; having programmes that reflect community needs and interests; and preserving local culture and tradition. Community information dissemination centres are seen as community media due to the characteristics they depict.

2.2.3 Community Information Dissemination Centre

Community information dissemination centres are facilities that are innovatively established by local people to receive, create and disseminate information to people in their communities. Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018) referred to such facilities as Rural Information Dissemination Technology Centres (RIDTCs) when they did a study on such facilities in the central region of Ghana. Popularly referred to as Information Centres by most community.

However, the concept of community information centre was introduced by the Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC, 2015). GIFEC originally set up community information centres to generally provide information to rural people using technology. Among the roles of Community information centres include

1. Supporting economic activities in the rural areas. The centre was supposed to provide ready information on economic issues such as marketing, production practices, extension services, credit facilities, among others. This was to help educate local people so as to get them unto the global business scene. The community information centres had information on computers that community people could use to enhance their knowledge about the economy, production, business, loans, among others. The main roles of community information centres as expressed by Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communication are:

2. Addressing community information needs and enhance national integration. Communities, especially the rural areas were deficient in information. The community information centres were thus created to give local people information and let them be abreast with other in the urban centres. It was also set to give information that suit the agrarian style of local communities. News portals were made available on the computers to aid community folks in accessing news stories at any time. Students also used the community information centres to enrich their academic status.
3. Provision of Information and Communication Technology. Community information centres were sited in rural centres, specially to enhance technology use in such areas that were lacking the gadgets to access modern technology. It was also used to create other avenues to disseminate developmental information particularly on health and healthcare, agriculture, environment and local government & rural communities. Such information helped enhanced the knowledge and living standards of rural dwellers.
4. Providing the platform for grass-root education on communal and national issues. Community information centres provided the avenue for communal people to also access the online education (distance education) on planetary terms. It aided communal people to enhance their knowledge and skill on world systems where ever they are.
5. Providing public communication and education support for community-based development organizations. Community information centres were also used to disseminate information to communal people.

In evaluating community information centres in Dodowa and Saltpond, Abisath (2011) agreed that despite the challenges faced by these Information centres, they are still on course doing their best in educating, entertaining and informing their audiences in their catchment areas. Information and communication Technology and equipment were defined as the major problems confronting the

efficient and effective delivery of the Zebilla Community Information Centre by Ayanore (2011). Currently, more than 120 Community Information Centres have been constructed nationwide covering over 99 Districts/Municipalities. Under a cost-sharing agreement between the Ministry of Communications and the United Nation Development Programme, 92 Community Information Centres have been equipped with network infrastructure and trained Centre Managers, making them operational. Work on equipping 26 Community Information Centres is in progress (GIFEC, 2015). For Information Centres to be effective in the society, Schramm (1964: 123) explains their existence, function, and mandate better by saying that “they should be as local as possible”. “Their programmes should originate no farther than necessary from their audiences; the programs should be prepared by persons who understand the culture to which they are speaking, and means should be available for the audiences to report back to the media” (Schramm, 1964: 123).

Community information dissemination centres work on the premise of the fifth point of the roles of community information centres as stated by Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communication. Community information dissemination centres create and disseminate information for people living in the catchment area.

2.2.4 Communication for Social Change

“The guiding philosophy of Communication for Social Change can readily be traced to the work of Paulo Freire (1970), the Brazilian educator who conceived of communication as dialogue and participation for the purpose of creating cultural identity, trust, commitment, ownership and empowerment (in today’s term)” (Figuroa, et al, 2002: 2). The Integrated Model of Communication for Social Change (IMCFSC) (cited in Figuroa, et al, 2002: 5) describes Communication for Social Change as “an iterative process where ‘community dialogue’ and ‘collective action’ work together to produce social change in a community that improves the

health and welfare of all of its members”. This depicts that social change is ingrained in communication; and can occur through various processes including externally generated change, individual behaviour change, social influence, community dialogue and collective action. For change to happen in the community it needs some catalyst that will trigger it. These catalysts are stated by the IMCFSC as an internal stimulus, a change agent, an innovation, an effective collective policy, availability of technology, and the ever presence of the Media (Figueroa, et al, 2002).

Díaz Bordenave (1998) posits that the social change process starts with the ‘identification of a problem’. Then, if community dialogue and collective action are implemented systemically, there would be not only an improvement in the health status of the members of the community in question, but also an increase in the community’s sense of collective self-efficacy, a sense of ownership, some level of social cohesion, and a collective capacity. For communication to effect social change, a common platform for dialogue should be available. Information should emanate from a common trusted source to the community in general. This platform promotes the local history, culture, identity, indigenous lifestyle, and even the religion of a group of people. One basic component of social change communication is the usage of channels and themes that suit the needs and wishes of the target audience and address their questions. These channels include media facilities like community information centres; and they communicate on themes such as health that suits the agrarian lifestyle of a communal people. Denise Gray-Felder (as cited in Figueroa, et al, 2002: i) expresses that “communication for social change is valued as a process in and of itself. The act of community problem identification, group decision making, action planning, collective action and implementation are critical to how a community grapples with a serious issue”. Gray-Felder continually explains that “when a village or group uses the communication for social-change process to address a critical issue they have already affected positive outcomes. They have

shown people how to think critically at a group level, they have worked together to identify problems and to come up with solutions” (Figueroa, et al).

Moemeka (2009) iterates that any action taken to reduce or eliminate the problems of rural populations is action taken towards fostering development in the rural area and towards relieving the burden of poverty and underdevelopment on national development. And the most important action would seem to be setting up an interactive communication system in order to build understanding and create active participation. Setting up Community Information Dissemination Centres in information-poor and rural communities with the aim of dissemination relevant information to enhance the development of the people and their communities is practicalizing communication for social change.

2.2.5 Development

The United Nations defines development as the Multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. This buttresses other definitions and insights of development including Chambers’ (1983) definition which is still relevant today. Chambers (1983) explains development to be all efforts to offer welfare programs, aids, and resources toward the alleviating poverty, transforming rural areas, and provision of the basic needs of the poor to ensure continuous survival of their race through posterity. The current definition of development by the United Nations (2021) and the old definition by theorists such as Chambers (1983) underline three equally important aspects. Firstly, the living standard of the people should be raised. This can be seen through the rise in incomes and consumption, levels of food, medical services, and education, etc. The second aspect is the creation of conducive conditions for the growth of peoples’ self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions. The last is the freedom of choice in varieties of goods and services. The World Bank

(2006) advocates for development in two levels: the individual and the social. The individual level comprises of the improvement in the lives of the citizenry in a particular state; whilst the social level involves the rise in GDP, GNP, Per Capita Income, and improvement in social infrastructure as roads, health-care, water, education, among others.

Society needs to change to suit the ever-changing development process on the globe. Thus, social change is part of the development process. The term social change, in *Sociology Guide (2014)*, therefore, is used to indicate “the changes that take place in human interactions and interrelations. Society is a web of social relationships and hence social change means change in the system of social relationships”. These are understood in terms of social processes, social interactions and social organization.

2.2.6 Development Communication

Communication researchers introduced educational, political, and economic information into the global social system with the desire to transform individuals and societies from traditional to modern. Development communication involves creating mechanisms to broaden public access to information on reforms; strengthening clients’ ability to listen to their constituencies and negotiate with stakeholders; empowering grassroots organizations to achieve a more participatory process; and undertaking communication activities that are grounded in research (*World Bank, 2006*). The debate about development and Social Change process through the use of communication had two main approaches, Western and Latin. However, one central theme that connects these opposing ideologues is that of Third World Development. All of them believe there should be development and social change amongst the people and countries of the under-developed world. However, these bloc-oriented Scholars part ways on the bases of philosophical and ideological assumptions on the role of communication in development and social change, the processes and channels of

achieving these ideologies and programmes, policy and planning, and implementation and evaluation.

Western Communication Scholars believed that development and social change could only be achieved through the Top-Down Development Communication approach: that is, the system whereby a modernized country or people would impart knowledge and programmes unto a less-developed country or people. **Rostow (1960)** projects Modernization and modelled his theory after Western Capitalist countries, which had already industrialized and urbanized. He illustrates the desire not only to assist lower income countries in the development process, but also to assert the West's (United States especially) influence over that of communist Russia. **Rostow (1960)** believes that development is of stages: The Traditional Society, Preconditions to Take-off, the Take-off stage, the Drive to Maturity, and the Age of High Mass Consumption. And these could only be achieved systematically by learning from how the industrialized worlds followed these stages.

Rogers (1962) became one of the most influential modernization theorists. He posited five stages through which an individual or society passes in the adoption of innovations after a reviewing of about 500 studies in the early 1960's. These stages are awareness, knowledge and interest, decision, trial, and adoption/rejection. He elaborates on the transfer of knowledge from a source to a receiver with the intention of changing behaviours. He believes that there should be the alteration of already known knowledge (which is unsuitable for development) and accepting a new one through persuasion. **Lerner (1958)** expresses the dynamic of the social development as: a nucleus of mobile, change accepting personalities; a growing mass media system to spread the ideas and attitudes of social mobility and change; the interaction of urbanization, literacy and industrialization; among other themes of modernization. Schramm supported Lerner's modernization ideology. He states that "... growth in one of these spheres stimulates growth in

others, and all spheres of society moved forward together toward modernization” (Schramm, 1976, p. 45-46)

Based on the above discourse, common themes ran through the works of the Western Communication Scholars on their position of the role of communication in the development and social change process. One basic theme that runs through the works of these Western Communication Scholars is that of ‘individual attitudes and value’. They all expressed that the people in the developing countries are backward, barbaric traditional, primitive and unproductive. They projected that the problems of the under-developed countries are caused by these internal factors, not external ones; but could be solved by external experts. They also agreed that people in the developing countries need to change their attitudes, and even culture, first before development could really take off (Weiner, 1966). Another theme that is projected in their individual works is Modernization of the Third World Countries. They posited that development is all about Modernization which can be achieved through industrialization and urbanization. They expressed that least developed countries should learn from the already developed (Western) countries the ideal processes of modernization in order to also develop. (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

All of them also advocated that communication, in helping a state or people to develop or change, should be unidirectional. They postulated that the communication of development projects and social change programmes should be from the informed source (top) to the uninformed receiver (down). And, thus, the people of the developing countries should depend on the mass media for the diffusion of the programmes and projects from the developed countries (Defleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1975: 26). Again, they all believe, in unison, that policy planning, implementation and evaluation should be formal and static; and should follow a rigid laid down blue-print procedure. Thus, they advocated for technical-economic experts, authority-centred, monologue, paternalistic

and problem-solving communication approach to the local issues (Defleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1975).

Latin American Scholars purposely came to oppose the dominant paradigm that the Western Scholars had earlier espoused through their works. They, therefore, envisioned different philosophical and ideological concepts that would, to them, fit the development and social change process of the developing countries; though they believed there should be development and social change in the developing countries too. Frank (1967) criticizes the dominant paradigm of modernization by the Western Communication Scholars. He believes that the problems of the Third World Countries, as affiliated to internal causes by the Western Communication Scholars, are caused by external artefact factors like colonialism and foreign domination. He posits that the under-development of the Third World Countries is caused by the development of Europe and other Developed nations. He finally settles on the fact that, since Third World Countries and the developed States did not experience the same past (like colonialism), the processes and schemes for developing both blocs should not and cannot be the same.

To Dos Santos (cited in So, 1990), there has been a dependence on the Capitalist World by the Third World in their quest to Develop. Dos Santos also backs Frank's claim of the West under-developing the Third World Countries. Freire (1970) advocated for participation in the quest to develop the Developing countries. To him, a successful development and social change process is the one that brings the recipients together with the source. He reiterates that, as all the other Latin American Communication Scholars did, the development of the Third World Without the involvement of inhabitants of those countries are worthless; in that it will bring social changes that will not suit the needs of the local people and eventually will never last.

Three development communication forms were advanced by [Servaes \(2003\)](#). The first perspective is communication as a process: an unending process that keeps on serving and addressing the needs of the people of Third World Countries. He posited that the means of production and transmission, extension, reception, evaluation and use of media messages; from whatever source should be a continuous process achieved by the interaction of communication in a network of social relationships. Secondly, communication media should be a mixed system of mass communication and interpersonal channels, with mutual impact and reinforcement. And, lastly, development communication should be inter-sectoral and inter-agency activity. That is, it should extend to all sectors, and should depend to a large extent on the adequacy of mechanisms for integration and co-ordination for its success in influencing and sustaining development.

The Latin American Scholars in their quest to use communication to develop the Developing countries posited the following philosophical and ideological factors. One basic theme that is espoused by the Latin American Communication scholars is the fact that the problems of the developing countries are not internal but external. To them the problems of the developing countries are not that of attitudes, beliefs and culture; rather systems like colonialism and neo-colonialism massively caused the under-development of the Third World. To them the development of the now developed countries ruined and under-developed the now developing countries ([So, 1990](#)). They further reiterated for participation in the development process; and that the participation should be an unending process. To them, because the development projects are meant for the wellbeing of the 'backward' people, these 'backward' people need to be involved in the development of their societies. They should be involved in all the phases of the development process: planning, designing and the delivery stages. ([Melkote & Steeves, 2001](#)). They posit that involving the Third World Populace in the development of their countries will empower them.

That communication, in helping a state or people to develop or change, should have a two-way dimension. They espoused that development communication should be horizontal; and that there should be the usage of mixed and integrated media, especially interpersonal communication. To them, popular literacy and education is necessary to emancipate the Third World populace from bondage and deprivation; not industrialization under capitalism. They criticize the traditional development approaches of ‘understanding reality’ through the unilateral definition of problems, objectives, and solutions as violating the very essence of communication [So \(1990\)](#). Again, these Latin American Communication scholars advocated that the planning, implementation and evaluation of communication policies and projects should be all-involving, be open-ended, have problem posing agenda, should have educational-organizational face, should involve dialogue, have informal and dynamic way of transferring knowledge, should be transformational, should be continues, and have long term effect ([Servaes, 2003](#)).

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the theories on which the study was done. Two theories were looked at: Technology Acceptance Theory and Media Advocacy Theory. The researcher used these two theoretical frameworks to assess CIDCs. Four themes related to the study – Communication, Information Poor Communities, Community Media and Communication for Social Change, were reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used for the study. The Methodology sums up the various processes and methods that were used in collecting, collating data and analysing data. The methodology, to Nsikan and Uwem (2014: 465), is the outline of the steps and procedures used in conducting a survey. The various units that make up the research methodology (Research Design; Sources of data; Study Area; Population of the Study; Sample Size and Sampling Procedure; Data Collection procedure and pre-testing; and Data Analysis) in a survey are examined as follows:

3.1 Epistemological and Ontological Approaches

The epistemological foundation to research is based on knowledge which can be intuitive which stems from beliefs and faith. Empirical knowledge refers to anything that can be described and proven objectively (Gray, 2014). Ontology is the study of being and it deals with the science of nature (Blaikie, 2010). Ontology asks whether a phenomenon should be perceived as objective or subjective. Objectivism asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an independent existence of social actors (Bryman, 2012). Subjectivism expresses that social phenomenon and its meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2012). It reflects interpretation about what constitutes a fact. It revolves around subjectivism and objectivism. Ontology deals with hermeneutic or interpretivist form of approach. The study was done under the interpretivist approach to epistemology where the researcher was part of the research and was interested in specifics and contextualized environments. Interpretivism acknowledges subjectivity

to study and therefore does not rule out biases. It therefore cannot generalize phenomenon as the positivist researcher does (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015).

3.2 Research Approach

The study was done on qualitative approach of enquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define qualitative research approach as an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. Some of the approaches used include interviews, focus group discussion and observation. Interpretations were also drawn from actions of stakeholders (government and forest zone communities) towards the forestry policy.

3.3. Research Design

Nsikan & Uwem (2014, 466) explains a research design as “the technique of investigation adopted by the researcher to find out the facts that were hitherto unknown or bleak. Under this study, Qualitative case study was used in the research design. This is to give chances to both observation and statistics. Case study is an intensive descriptive analysis of an individual, unit, or phenomena selected for its typicality or uniqueness. Case study design allows the researcher to focus on the specific unit of analysis in examining the approaches of community information dissemination in Ghana. According to Kuranchie (2016), the research problem directs the design to be adopted. Kuranchie (2016) opines that the type of research design adopted for a study should be in sync with the research objectives and questions of that particular study. It also has implications for the quality of data that is collected and analyzed. In essence, the design is appropriate to aid in answering the research questions. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to carefully select the appropriate design that addresses the research questions of this study. Ebenezer information centre in Obogu was used as a case study. Case studies are used for multiple methods of information gathering such as interviews, documents and observations (Creswell, 2013). This

study is a multiple case study because it used multiple data collection methods such as interviews, observation and document analysis to help achieve the aim of in-depth understanding of how deforestation policy was communicated to communities in forest zones.

3.4 Sampling

Osuala (2007) defines sampling as taking any portion of a population or universe as representative of that population or universe. Sampling becomes important when the population of the study is too large for a complete census to be taken. Qualitative research sampling does not stand on large representation of phenomenon. It looks at how reality or experience can be gotten from respondents. Qualitative research sampling relieves the researcher from starting data collection on a specific number of respondents. The researcher recurrently collects data until a saturation point is reached or information from respondents become repetitive. This form of qualitative design hinge on in-depth interviews, discussions and observations that take a lot of time to get the required responses. A larger sample size drags the data collection process that makes it very challenging to meet deadlines (Nsikan & Uwem, 2014).

3.4.1 Sampling Technique

Due to time limitation and financial constraints, Ebenezer information centre was purposefully selected for the study. The selection was done based on the fact that Ebenezer Information Centre in Obogu demonstrates all the qualities of Community Information Dissemination Centres as described by Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018). Purposive sampling was used to select the community in which the study was conducted and respondents that the researcher believes can give in-depth analysis into the phenomenon being investigated. Obogu was purposively sampled because it is active, traceable and have residential address. Obogu also has communal characteristics like every Ghanaian community. Respondents, including the owner and manager of

Ebenezer community information dissemination centre were purposively selected based on Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey's (2018) assertion that the people who manage, use, directly or indirectly benefit, and have knowledge of a phenomenon are to be selected when an interviewer wants an in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon.

3.5 Data Collection

Under qualitative research, Creswell (2013) posits that data collection involves the procedures and tools, getting approvals, obtaining a rational and worthy sample size, and getting information through ethical foundations of research. This section outlines the methods, procedures, tools, validity and ethical procedures that were employed in collecting data for the study.

3.5.1 Data Collection Methods

Qualitative method of data collection was used in this study. Under qualitative research, Creswell (2013) posits that data collection involves the procedures and tools, getting approvals, obtaining a rational and worthy sample size, and getting information through ethical foundations of research. This section outlines the methods, procedures, tools, validity and ethical procedures that were employed in collecting data for the study. Data collection methods for the study included in-depth interviews and document analyses. The primary data collection method were interviews. Information from the documents complemented the primary data. Interviews were used to gather information from the respondents selected to be interviewed. The reason for choosing Face-to-face in-depth interviews for this study is hinged on a study done by two Senior Lecturers in the Department of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Education, Winneba, Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018). Their study used similar methods for direct operators or managers of the phenomenon under study; and explained that "Face-to-face interviews are appropriate for participants who operate, man, supervise or manage phenomenon under study and

have enough information and operational history of the phenomenon (p.300). Document analysis implies scrutinizing documents that are relevant to the study and contain information about the phenomenon being studied.

3.5.2 Data Collection Procedures

The procedure used to collect information to fulfil the objectives of the study started with distribution of introductory letters to appropriate institutions and personnel, Ebenezer information centre, the owner of the centre and the manager of the centre. The letters were granted by my department, School of Graduate Studies, Ghana Institute of Journalism. I organized and scheduled the interview meetings with selected respondents myself. Interviewing each of the respondents lasted between 35 and 50 minutes. All Interviews were done in Asante- Twi. They were recorded, translated into English language, and subsequently, transcribed. Translation was done by an Akan language expert with a Master of Philosophy Degree in Ghanaian Language, Asante-Twi option and teaching Ghanaian language in Asanteman Senior High School.

3.6 Data Analysis

Raw data were initially coded thematically. Themes were generated from the interviews, discussions and observation. Limits were not put on the emergence of sub-themes. Findings were then compared with the findings from the literature reviewed, analysing events and supporting arguments or finding contrary arguments.

Findings were then presented. Presentation of findings was done on the opinions from interviewees and discussants and observations on the field. Presentation of findings also hinged on the theories reviewed in chapter two.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

I selected an area suited for the study. During the interviews and discussions, I took time to explain very well the objectives of the study and what I want from them before starting. I was personally present and led all interviews and discussions. I sought the consent of participants for every stage of the process as espoused by Dewing (2007). I assured participants of their anonymity when presenting the findings of the study (Creswell, 2013). I also avoided leading questions or guess work during the interviews. I also did not show personal dints, or imposed my views on any participant, or skewed the interviews and discussions to favour my pre-determined mind-set.

3.8 Validity and Trustworthiness

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) express that validity is an important key to effective research. Yin (2009) espouses testing the validity of a study through internal validity, external validity, and construct. However, due to Yin's (2010) assertion that internal validity is good for causal case studies, and not appropriate for descriptive studies such as this, internal validity is not appropriate. Validity of the study was, therefore, based on construct and external validation. External validation was through peer-review, supported by Lincoln and Guba (2000) that the external peer reviewer's honesty, asking hard questions about methodology, meanings, interpretations and places in reviewing another's work validates a study. The peer reviewer for this study obtained MPhil in communication a year ago and understands the rigorous nature of conducting research. Also, as espoused by Creswell (2013), I bracketed myself from the study such that my biases and prejudices were limited and could not in any way shape approach, procedures and findings of the study. Finally, the raw data, final findings and analysis were sent

back to respondents to assess the accuracy and credibility of the issues and themes expressed during the interviews or discussions.

3.9 Conclusion

This section of the study discussed the methodology used to collect, present and analyze data. The methodology included the study area, study design, study population, sampling procedures and rationale, sample size and justification, method of data collection, data presentation and analysis, ethical considerations, limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This study was embarked on to ascertain the role of Community Information Dissemination Centres in community development; and the study was limited to Ebenezer Information Centre in Asante-Akim South Municipality in the Ashanti Region. One Community Information Dissemination Centre, Ebenezer information centre, was purposefully selected for the study. This was to give room for in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under study. The results were gathered from the interviews, observations and focus group discussions done based on the objectives of the study. Data was presented thematically because the study is a qualitative one.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the setup of Community Information Dissemination Centres in Ghana?
2. What are the developmental issues Community Information Dissemination Centres communicating to rural people?
3. What challenges do Community Information Dissemination Centres face in doing their work?

4.1 RQ1: How is the setup of Community Information Dissemination Centres in Ghana?

Ebenezer Information Centre located behind the community market in the centre of the Obogu community. Health issues disseminated by the centres have local touch. Herbal practitioners use the community information centres to sell their herbal products and advertise their trade to the communal folks.

Ownership and Management

Ebenezer Information Centre was established by Elder John Kwadwo Darko, an indigen of Obogu in September, 2010. Elder Darko, as the owner is popularly called in the community, is an elder of the local Church of Pentecost and a farmer. Ebenezer information centre was an inspiration after the owner had encountered similar facility in Ejisu-Besease. Elder Darko stated that:

I attended a funeral at Ejisu-Besease one day. My friends had I had gone out to buy something, then I beheld a facility that was unusual to me. I was overwhelmed with the site and told my friends to join me to go see the facility. The owner explained to me how the facility was set up after I enquired. You will not believe that my mind was filled with the thoughts of getting such a facility in Obogu, because the community was having challenges with information dissemination, especially community announcement.

He expressed that he discussed the idea with several people in and outside his community and to jointly purchase the equipment for setting up a community information centre when he decided to set up similar one after the Ejisu-Besease experience. However, no one was willing to partner him in such a venture, especially on doubts of how they would recoup the resources they would invest. It was found out that elder Darko bought the first set of equipment from the sale of dried cocoa beans from his farm. “My family forfeited the celebration of one Christmas because I used the proceeds from the sales of harvested cocoa beans from my farm to purchase the items.”

Ebenezer Information Centre is fully owned by elder Darko. It is a family property which he will leave as a legacy to his children. “This is my property. I sweated to get it. I am happy my children will inherit something from me when I die.” Maintenance on the machines is borne by him either from proceeds accrued through announcements on the facility or through other means. The facility, however, has a communal belonging. Elder Darko stated that “this facility is also for the whole community. That is why prices are very low when my people patronize it. It is for the good of the community that I set it up”. He added that the approval was sought from the traditional and

political authorities of the community before the facility was set up. Ebenezer information centre is co-managed and co-operated by elder Darko and his eldest son, Kofi Kobiri, a high school graduate waiting to further his education. Each of them manages the facility based on availability. Yet, they make sure that one of them is always available to operate the facility. Operating the facility involves making announcements and playing music.

Setup of Ebenezer Information Centre

Ebenezer information centre is run in a rented single-room store in Obogu in the Asante-Akyem South Municipality. The facility has a Pentium-four desktop computer, an amplifier, two microphones and a cd-player inside. Outside, two medium horned-speakers are fixed on a metal pole of about 15 metres. Each speaker faces an opposite direction. A cord connects the amplifier to the horned-speakers to disseminate the sound produced by either the computer or through the microphones. It runs on electricity. There is no standby generator to power the machines when lights go off. The facility has a ceiling fan which to Elder Darko cools down the machines when they heat due to continuous use. two plastic chairs stand are situated behind a table on which the amplifier, microphone, computer monitor and the tuner stands.

Running the Centre

Ebenezer information receives information, processes information and disseminates information to suite communal needs. Operators get information through morning or evening news bulletins on radio stations. They sample the stories to choose the ones that needs to be transmitted to Obogu community folks. The operator turns on the microphone and disseminates the information in the local dialect. Sound from the centre through the speaker horns can reach a one-kilometre square radius. Operators play music when there is no announcement to make. Local music and gospel are the most common genre of music played on the facility.

Ebenezer information centre is run mainly on the token that people who patronize the centres pay. People pay cash to advertise, make announcements and preach. Again, religious organizations and other philanthropists occasionally donate to help sustain the community information centres. Ebenezer information centre relies on the fees people pay for doing announcement on funerals, lost items, birthday parties, marriage ceremonies and outdooring to run the centre. Elder Darko stated that he sometimes needs to chase people for payment for announcements they contracted his centre to do. “You will not believe I can chase people for more than three months after they have made their announcement. For some of them, it even ended in loggerheads; yes, we do not talk again”, elder Darko explained. Elder Darko also expressed that the biggest amount for announcement comes from Government bodies such as the Municipal Assembly.

Receiving and processing information

Ebenezer information centre feeds on a number of information outlets. From elder Darko stated that Ebenezer information centre gets information from radio programmes like news and talk shows. He explained that he and his son like listening to morning news on Peace 104.3 fm. He expressed that he goes on to listen to the ‘kokrookoo’ morning show hosted by Kwame Sefa Kayi. He stressed that they listen to almost every programme of essence to the human life. elder Darko explained that they pick some topics for discussion on radio and develop them to suit local content.

Again, it was found that Ebenezer information centre get their information form the local inhabitants in Obogu. Findings pointed to the fact that the behaviour of the local people give many leads to topics and themes to discuss every week. He explained that if the women and girls throw refuse everywhere instead of the main community refuse dump, he shall talk about when realizes it. Kofi Kobiri stated that he and the father get information on farming through the District

Agricultural officer. Both respondents explained differently that they seek people's opinion in processing of information received. Kobiri said that the father could send him to the Medical Assistant in the community clinic to clarify an information before they can use them.

Community information dissemination centres therefore gather information from everyday life of the local people, or nature or on radio. Information is processed by elder Darko and disseminated by himself, the son or other people who will love the do their own thing.

4.2 RQ2: What developmental issues do Community Information Dissemination Centres involve in?

Ebenezer information centre involves itself in some developmental issues in communities such as Obogu. Issues disseminated reflect the predominant lifestyle of the people. Among the themes that are mostly disseminated.

Announcement

It was found out that Ebenezer information centre does regular announcement in Obogu. The announcements are based on topics such as funerals, marriage ceremonies, communal labour announcement, church programmes, among others. Funeral announcements are disseminated on Ebenezer information centre regularly. This is done to inform inhabitants of Obogu community about impending funerals in or outside the community. Funeral announcements are used to inform and organize communal folks for incoming funeral rites. Announcements are also done to inform communal folks of marriage ceremonies.

Announcement to organize folks for communal labour is done on Mondays. Occasionally, announcements are made on Ebenezer information centre to instantly organize communal members for a visitor like an agricultural extension officer, officers from the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), among others. People also announce their lost items.

Citizens pay a token for announcement. Announcement done for or on behalf of the community is free. Through community information centres, community members could be easily and instantly summoned for communal activities.

Health and healthcare issues

Ebenezer information centre also involve themselves in health issues. Firstly, information centres disseminate information on health to the communal folks. Elder Darko explained that staff of Obogu Health Centre occasionally treat health issues on Ebenezer information centre. Health topics that officials of Ebenezer information centre disseminate to Obogu inhabitants include malaria, cholera, diarrhoea, sexually transmitted infections, among others. These sicknesses are the ones that affect the inhabitants. Communal folks are also advised to keep their environments clean for healthy living. Women are also educated on keeping the home. Health workers use the facility to advise or prescribe measures to ailments and other health conditions. Such announcements are made on Sundays and Tuesdays when most of the inhabitants are at home. This findings buttress [Stacks & Salween's, \(2008\)](#) assertion that health communication research identifies and provides better and more effective communication strategies to improve the overall health of society

Herbal medicine practitioners also promote their services and products through Ebenezer Information Centre. Some of the herbal products that are normally promoted include 'dahiada' (ointment), 'wo bête wo kaka nka' (tooth-ache cream), 'kanfo yehowa' (blood tonic), 'yaabodonkuaa' (balm), 'kaakyire samina' (soap), 'nyame akwan m'abotoyamu' (cream), 'akatoakatoa' (cream for sexually transmitted infections among females), and obaatanpa (cream). These products are very popular in the community. Plentiful of these herbal products are those that alleviate pains. Almost all of the herbal products do not have the seal of license of the Food

and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Standards Authority, or the Centre for the Scientific Research into Plant Medicine. Traditional healers who promote their spiritual prowess and herbal potency through the information centre are not also registered with or licensed by any organization or body. All these people (advertisers and promoters) pay a token to the centre to help run the place. To the Obogu inhabitants, Ebenezer information centre is their 'locally-made media' facility that meets their demands.

Agricultural issues

Topical agricultural issues are treated on Ebenezer information centre. Since Obogu is an agrarian community, government and non-governmental agencies use Ebenezer information centre to educate and sensitize the local people on better modern agricultural practices including how to maximize yield. Information on better clearing of farmlands, best planting and harvesting practices are constantly disseminated by either local leaders or external organizations to help build the expertise and skills of farmers in Ghanaian communities. Predominant farming explained are rice farming, cocoa production, oil palm and citrus growing and subsistence farming. International best practices in farming are treated on Ebenezer information centre. Agricultural experts from the Asante Akim South Municipal Assembly periodically visit Ebenezer information centre to educate the Obogu community on best farming practices. When officers are to train farmers, they use Ebenezer information centre to make announcement on where and when the training will occur in the community.

Announcement on sharing of seedlings from COCOBOD is done on Ebenezer information centre. Elder Darko states that such announcements are very dear to him because his family and community largely benefit from such announcements. He takes such programmes very seriously as he expressed that "I am very particular about such programmes. Agriculture is what feeds my

family and my community. I support anything that helps sustain and develop my people”. Announcement is also made on Ebenezer information centre when government is sharing agricultural inputs. Sometimes, the officers from the Municipal Assembly share the inputs in front of the facility.

Social issues

Social issues are also projected by community information centres. Elder Darko explained that Ebenezer information centre is used to educate local people on marriage, divorce, childbirth, traditional rites, child abuse, among others. He stated that traditional and religious leaders in Obogu help in the education and sensitization. Sometimes, local political leaders are invited to explain government policies and programmes to the local people. “Influential Women in the community use my platform to educate and address certain social norms.” Marriage issues are treated on Sunday evenings with the anchor normally being the wife of a pastor or a traditional leader. They explain how married couples can stay happy and live without the prospects of divorce. Customs, conventions, usages and traditional principles are explained on Tuesdays. Guests take their time to explain the reasons for certain rites in the community, district, region or the country. On one observation day, the guest talked about the reason accounting for why people are barred to go to farm on Tuesdays. Simply, he stated that the spirit of the community river was created on Tuesday. So the community rests on Tuesday so that the river god can also roam the land without any interference from humans. The guest, a fetish priest, expressed that failure to abide by such a simple rule might put one into trouble.

Development issues are also discussed on Ebenezer information centre. Issues concerning education of the children, sanitation and, sometimes, religion are also discussed. Topics on the state of a school building, children’s attitude towards education, pass rate of the candidates of the

basic schools in the community, teachers' attitude towards teaching, among other educational issues are discussed on Ebenezer information centre on Saturdays. Sometimes, the district directorate of the Ghana Education Service patronize Ebenezer information centre to disseminate information to the community on their children's education or government policy on education. During Independence Day celebrations, 6th of March, an enlightened community member discusses issues on Ghana's independence on Ebenezer information centre.

Spiritual issues

Spiritual issues are discussed on Fridays on Ebenezer information centre. Issues concerning spirits, dead persons, gods and other supernatural phenomena are discussed. This, to Elder Darko, is to let Oboguo inhabitants know and appreciate the existence of other Beings on earth so as to be careful in anything they do. "There are spirits, gods, witches, ghosts, among others. If we do not tell our people, some might take things light in this world", elder Darko explains. The programme puts some fear in people and curtails some sort of social miscreants. Spiritual people such as Imams, Prophets, and witch doctors are invited by Elder Darko on the Friday spiritual show to give insight into the 'other world'. This programme also gives people the opportunity to have free consultation with the spiritually inclined and any spiritual bondage, such as spiritual marriage which the inhabitants strongly believe in, is broken.

4.3. RQ3: What challenges do Community Information Dissemination Centres face in doing their work?

Elder Darko expressed some of the challenges he faces in running the Ebenezer information centre. His first challenge in running the information centre is erratic power supply in the community. Elder Darko stated that electricity power cut off derails their work. He explained that because they do not have a generator set, power cuts make it impossible to disseminate

information. Again, it was also found out that the information centres face financial challenges. Kofi Kobiri, the eldest son of Elder Darko, explains that the tokens that people pay to patronize the facility is not enough to maintain the facility. Elder Darko buttressed his son's claim by explaining that he sometimes needs to pay electricity bills from his own pockets since the facility cannot generate more funds to sustain the itself.

Another challenge that the owner touched on was faulty and dilapidating machines. It was found out that it is hard to replace worn out machines due to limited finances. Elder Darko stated that he sometimes needs to close the facility for some time when any of the equipment is not instantly repaired when fault. He also stated that some patrons of the facility do not pay their fees. Kofi Kobiri stated that the facility is in debt because some clients would never pay their bills after contracting their services.

He expressed that the community members also harbour some level of sentiments against community centres. Elder Darko expressed that community people believe they make noise, especially with their dawn broadcasts. "People living around this area have reported me to the royal palace several times. In some instances, they report me to the police. One man who attended a funeral here one day nearly lynched me with a club because he said I disturbed his dawn sleep", Kofi Bobiri explained. Elder Darko substantiated his son's claim with "sometimes, a group of young men come to me in the evening to stop our announcement because they say we are disturbing their programme". they expressed that it has not been easy dealing with the same people they serve due to the perceive noise the inhabitants say they make. Elder Darko, however, believe that though they make noise, theirs is productive noise. He asserted that without their facility, many people would miss out on important information. he even believed that it is the presence of the facility that has helped reduced crime in the community due to the dawn preaching he and other preachers do on the facility. A one-day observation of the centre buttressed this

claim. It was observed that Ebenezer information centre starts operating at 4am in the morning and automatically wakes up people sleeping in homes within hearing distance.

He expressed worry in thievery of their equipment stating that “thieves have broken into my shop twice. On one occasion, they took the amplifier and the microphones. On another occasion, because they did not get anything tangible, they cut the wires and cords into pieces”. He explained that it takes him almost a month to gather money to buy a spoilt or stolen equipment due to the fact that he does not get enough proceeds from patrons who used the facility.

4.4 Summary

Findings of the study, with the topic ‘The role of community information dissemination centres in community development: a case study of Ebenezer information centre in Obogu in Asante-Akyem South municipality’ were presented in this chapter. Findings were generated from responses to three questions: How is the setup of Community Information Dissemination Centres in Ghana?; What are the developmental issues Community Information Dissemination Centres communicating to rural people?; and What challenges do Community Information Dissemination Centres face in doing their work?. It was found out that Ebenezer Information centre is owned by one person. It is also a family-managed facility. Again, Ebenezer Information Centre does announcements on marriages, community gatherings, communal labour, among others. The facility is also used to educate the people of Obogu on social, agricultural, health and spiritual issues. It was also found out that management of the facility faces challenges such as power fluctuations, non-payment of debt by patrons of the facility and thievery.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion that is generated from the findings of the study. The chapter is also used to recommend ideas to help solve the challenges that were found out from the study.

5.1 Conclusion

It is concluded that information centres play a vital role in the collection, creation and dissemination of information to communal people in Ghana. This is seen from the studies that Obogu people patronize community information dissemination centres.

Community information centres help in educating communal people on health, agriculture and social issues. Information centres are also used to announce issues to communal people.

It was however found out that information dissemination centres face financial challenges and power cuts in their work. Inability of patrons to pay their bills after using the facility has created financial challenges for information centres. Also, power cuts sometimes make the work of community information centres hard.

Lastly, community information centres create nuisance with noise disturbing people's sleep at dawn. They have been an irking phenomenon which the local people are battling.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that:

Government should regulate the work of information centres. Community Information Dissemination Centres are communication facilities that need regulations as to what, how and when to disseminate information. this sanitizes the information they disseminate. Government should task institutions responsible for regulating information dissemination and communication in Ghana to make laws and policies to regulate the set-up, management and operations of community information dissemination centres.

State institutions in Ghana, such as the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDCE), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), and the Information Services Division (ISD) should help train operators of Community Information Dissemination Centres on the everyday issues that are discussed on the centres. This can be done on Metropolitan, Municipal or District basis with the Metro/Municipal/District Assemblies supporting with logistics and space for the training. Metropolitan, Municipal or Districts can be zoned to enhance facilitation. Operators of Community information dissemination centres can perform their roles better if they are educated and fine-tuned in dissemination of social, health and agricultural issues.

State institutions, religious denominations and traditional leadership should partner inhabitants of communities to set up standard Community Information Centres in especially rural and information-poor communities to disseminate vital information to inhabitants.

5.3 Summary

The study was done to examine how Community Information Dissemination Centres help in community development. Community information centres help in educating communal people on health, agriculture and social issues. Information centres are also used to announce issues to

communal people. It was however found out that information dissemination centres face financial challenges and power cuts in their work. The study recommended that government should regulate the work of information centres. Also, state institutions in Ghana should help train operators of Community Information Dissemination Centres on the everyday issues that are discussed on the centres. Again, state institutions, religious denominations and traditional leadership should partner inhabitants of communities to set up standard Community Information Centres in especially rural and information-poor communities to disseminate vital information to inhabitants.

REFERENCES

- Abissath, M. K. (2011). *An evaluation of community information centers of Dodowa and Saltpond*. A Dissertation presented to the Ghana Institute of Journalism in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications Studies.
- Agunga, R.A. (1997). *Developing the Third world. A communication approach*. Commack, NY: Nova Science.
- Agyedu et al. (1999). *The Role of Customer Relationship Management in the Implementation of E-Banking*. Master's Thesis.
- Ansu Kyeremeh, K (1998). (Ed) *Perspectives on Indigenous Communication in Africa, Vol. II, Dynamics and Future Directions*.
- Argenti, P. A. (2009). *Corporate communication* (5th Ed.). Boston. New-York: McGraw-Hill. Irwin.
- Atkey, K. M., Raine, K. D., Storey, K. E., & Willows, N. D. (2016). A Public Policy Advocacy Project to Promote Food Security: Exploring Stakeholders' Experiences. *Health Promotion Practice, 17*(5), 623-630. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839916643918>
- Ayanore, J. (2011). *The Operations of Zebilla Community Information Center*. A Dissertation presented to the Ghana Institute of Journalism in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications Studies
- Blaikie, N. (2010). *Designing Social Research*. Polity Press.
- BBC World Service Trust, (2010). *Research briefing. Africa talks climate, Ghana. Research Briefing, 32*. Retrieved from <http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/MediaBroad/04-Ghanatalks-Climate.pdf>

- Best, J. W., & Kahn, J. (1989). *Research in education (2nd ed.)*. Englewood: Prentice – Hall International Inc.
- Bhasin, H. (2021). Schramm’s Model of Communication: Elements, Advantages and Limitations. <https://www.marketing91.com>
- Boafo, S. T. (2000). *Promoting Community Media in Africa*. Accra: sankofa
- Brawley, E.A. & Martinez-Brawley, E.E. (1999). Promoting Social Justice in Partnership with the Mass Media. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 26(2), 63-86.
- Brown, H. M. (2015). *An analysis of risk perceptions and attitudes towards climate change among residents of Southeastern Louisiana*. LSU Master’s Theses, 2962. https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/2962
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. Oxford University Press.
- Chapman, S. (2004). Advocacy for Public Health: A Primer. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 58(5), 361-365. <https://doi.org/10.1136/jech.2003.018051>
- Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2014). *Doing action research in your own organization (4th Ed.)*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Conrad, C., & Poole, M. S. (2012). *Strategic Organizational Communication in a Global Economy*. 7th ed. Wiley &Blackwell.
- Cooper, C.R., & Schindler, P.S. (2008). *Business research methods (10th Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (3rd Ed.)*, London: Sage Publications, Incorporated.

- Creswell, R. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, USA: Sage Publications.
- Curtis, B., & Curtis, C. (2011). *Social research: a practical introduction*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Croteau, D., Hoynes, W. & Milan, S. (2011). *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences*. 4th Ed. Los Angeles. Sage.
- Davis, F. D. (1989). *Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology*. MIS Quarterly 13(3): 319-340, doi:10.2307/249008
- Davis, F. D. (1993). User Acceptance of Information Technology: System Characteristics, User Perceptions and Behavioural Impacts. *International Journal of Man-Machine Studies* 38(3), 475-478
- DeFleur, M. L., Kearney, P., & Plax, T. G. (1993). *Mastering communication in contemporary America*. Mountain View, CA; Mayfield.
- DeFleur, M. L. & Ball-Rokeach, S. (1989). *Theories of mass communication (5th ed.)*. White Plains, NY: Longman
- Defleur, M. L. & Ball-Rokeach, S. (1975). *Theories of Mass communication (3rd ed)*. David McKay company, Inc. New York, pp. 261-275.
- Díaz, B. J. (1998). Relation of Communication with Community Mobilization Processes for Health. Beltrán Luis Ramiro and González S. Fernando. *Community Mobilization for Health: Multidisciplinary Dialogue*, p.94-98.
- Dissanayake, E. (1988). *What is art for? Seattle*. University of Washington Press.

- Dorfman, L., & Krasnow, I. D. (2014). Public Health and Media Advocacy. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 35. 293-306. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032013-182503>
- Essandoh, M. (2006). *Local Participation in Community Radio: A Case Study of Radio Peace in Winneba*. Submitted to the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements of Philosophy Degree in Communications Studies
- Figueroa, M. E. et al. (2002). *Communication for Social Change: An Integrated Model for Measuring the Process and Its Outcomes*. Rockefeller Foundation. New York.
- Frey, L. R., & Cissna, K. N. (Eds.). (2009). *Routledge handbook of applied communication research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Frey, L. R., Pearce, W. B., Pollock, M. A., Artz, L., & Murphy, B. A. O. (1996). Looking for justice in all the wrong places: On a communication approach to social justice. *Communication Studies*, 47(1/2), 110-127. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10510979609368467>
- Gbaa-Faakye, L. (2010). *Community radio for health communication: a case study of radio progress health programmes*. B.A. dissertation, Ghana Institute of Journalism, Accra.
- Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (2014).
- Ghana Districts .com. (2017). *Map of Asante Akim South Municipality*. Retrieved on 23rd June, 2015 from file <http://asanteakimsouth.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/>
- Ghana Health Digest, (2004). Vol. 4, Issue 1. *Health Foundation of Ghana*. Unik Image, Accra
- Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (2015), Retrieved, 20th April, 2018. http://gifec.gov.gh/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=383

- Gibson, A. T. (2010). The Limits of Media Advocacy. In *Communication, Culture & Critique* 3(2010), 44–65. doi:10.1111/j.1753-9137.2009.01057.X
- Gray, D. E. (2014). *Doing research in the real world*. London: Sage.
- Griffin, E. (1991). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw Hill Inc.
- Hachten, W. (2004). Reporting Africa's Problems'. In C.C. Okigbo and F. Eribo (eds.) *Development and Communication in Africa*. Lanham. Ronman and Littlefield.
- Hansen, J., Sato, M., Kharecha, P., Russell, G., Lea, D. W., & Siddall, M. (2007). Climate Change and Trace Gases. *Phil Trans Roy. Soc. A*, 365, 1925-1954
- Heshmat, M.Y. (1967). 'The Role of Radio in Health Education of the Public'. *Medical Annals, District of Columbia*, 36(11), Washington, D.C.
- Hoepfl M. C. (1997). Choosing Qualitative Research: A primer for technology education researchers. *Journal of Technology Education*, Vol. 9(1). Retrieved on 23rd August 2021 from file <http://mariechoepfl.htc>.
- Hoffman, B. D. & Metzroth, K. M. (2010). *The Political Economy of Decentralization in Ghana*. Center for Democracy and Civil Society, Georgetown University
- Holder, H. D., & Treno, A. J. (1997). Media advocacy in community prevention: News as a means to advance policy change. *Addiction*, 92, 189-199.
- Interview with Elder Kwadwo Darko; the owner of Ebenezer Information Centre; 19th November, 2021.
- Interview with Master Kofi Kobiri, co-manager of Ebenezer information centre. On the 18th of June, 2015.

- Kahlenberg, S. (2012). Designing Health Messages to Promote Social Change. *Theory in Action*, (5) 2, Muhlenberg College, 2400 Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104
- Karikari, K. (2000). The Development of Community Media in English-Speaking West Africa'. In Bofo, S. T.: (Ed) *Promoting Community Media in Africa*. pp 43-60 retrieved 15th August, 2015. <https://www.google.com.gh/search>.
- Katz, E. & Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1955). *Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. New York: Free Press.
- Karikari, K. (2000). *Press, Power and Politics: A Freedom Forum Report on the Ghanaian Media*. Arlington, VA: The Freedom Forum
- Lasswell, H. (1948). The Structure and Function of Communication in Society. Bryson (Ed.). *The Communication of Ideas*. New York.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw. D. L. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187, <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>
- McMichael, P. (2012). *Development and Global Change: A Global Perspective*. London: Sage.
- Mefalopulos, P. (2002). Empowerment communication. In A. Gumocio-Dragón and T. Tufte. (eds), *Anthology: Historical and Contemporary Readings. South Orange, NJ: Communication for social change consortium*, p. 836.
- Melkote S. R., & Steeves, J. (2001). *Communication for Development in the Third World: Theory and Practice for Empowerment* (2nd Edition). Newbury Press, Sage
- Melkote, S. R. (1991). *Communication for development in the Third world*. Newbury Park: Sage.

- Moemeka. A. A. (1987). *Rural Radio Broadcasting and Community Health Practices in Nigeria: A Case-Study of Radio O-Y-O*. PH. D Dissertation, Albany: State University of New York.
- Moemeka. A. A. (1989). Perspectives on Development Communication. *Africa Media Review*. 3(3).
- Moemeka, A. (1996). 'Broadcast Regulation and Society: The Challenges of Access, Participation and Utilization for Ordinary Citizens' in Deregulation of Broadcasting in Africa. *Nigerian Broadcasting Commission*, pp. 140-155.
- Moemeka, A. (2009). Community Radio Broadcasting for Rural Community Education. In Olorunnisola, Anthony A . (2009) (Ed) *Media and Communications Industries in Nigeria: Impacts of Neoliberal Reforms between 1999 and 2007*. Pp. 31-57. Retrieved 18th June, 2021. mellenpress.com/mellenpress.cfm?bookid=7797&pc=9.
- Monami, A. M., & Jamous, M. M. (2017). The Evolution of Technology Acceptance Theories. *International Journal of Contemporary Computer Research*, 1(1), 51-58.
- National Population and Housing Census (2010). *Ghana Statistical Service Authority Report*.
- National Population and Housing Census (2020). Ghana Statistical Service Authority Report.
- Neuhauser, L. (2001). Participatory design for better interactive health communication: A statewide model in the USA. *Electronic Journal of Communication*, 11(3 & 4).
- Neuman, L. W. (1997). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. (3rd Edition), Allyn & Bacon, Boston.
- Nsikan S. & Uwem A. (2014). The Survey Communication Research. *International Journal of Education and Research*. 2(10) October 2014.

- Ofori-Birikorang, A. & Aggrey, K. (2018). Horns Over Roofs: A Study of Locally Designed Rural Information Dissemination Technology Centres (RIDTCS) in Ghana. In *IUCDS/CIUED- Journal of Research Findings/Revue des Resultats de Recherche*, 1(2), 293-321
- O’Gorman, K., & MacIntosh, R. (2015). “Mapping research methods”. In: O’Gorman, K. and MacIntosh, R. *Research methods for business and management*. Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers Ltd.
- Ommani, A. R., & Chizari, M. (2008). Information Dissemination System (IDS) Based E-Learning in Agricultural in Iran (Perception of Iranian Extension Agents). In *International Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 129.
- Opoku-Amankwah, K (1998). *The use of participatory communication in rural development programmes in Ghana: a study of two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) projects*”. An unpublished Master of Arts degree thesis submitted to the school of comm. Studies, Univ. of Ghana, Legon, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of Master of Arts degree in communications.
- Osuala, E. C. (2007). *Introduction to research methodology* (3rd ed.). Onitsha: African – First Publishers Ltd.
- Severin. W. J. & Tankard, J. W. (1979). *Communication Theories, Origins, Methods, Uses*. McCombs and Shaw pp. 246-264
- Sparks, C. (2007). *Globalization, Development and the Mass Media*. Los Angeles: Sage
- Stacks, D. W., & Salween, M. B. (2008). *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*. Routledge Communication Series.

- Tabing, L. (2000). The Development of Community Media in South-East Asia in Boafo, S. T.: (2000) (Ed). *Promoting Community Media in Africa*: pp 75-96
- Tabing, L. (2002). *The Development of Community Media in South-East Asia*. Newbury: sage
- Ugboajah, F. (1972). Mass Media Dysfunctions in Traditional-Urban Media Model: Stock-Taking for African Development. *International Journal of Mass Communication Studies*, xviii(2).
- UNESCO (1965). *Radio Broadcasting Serves Rural Development*. Paris. France.
- UNESCO (2001). *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. Retrieved 22nd July 2021. <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/diversity.htm>.
- UNICEF (1993). *We will never go back: Social mobilization in the child survival and development programme in the United Republic of Tanzania*. New York: UNICEF.
- United Nations (2021). What is Development? <https://research.un.org/en/docs/dev>
- Waisbord, S. (2000). *Family Tree of Theories, Methodologies and Strategies in Development Communication: Convergences and Differences*. New York: Rockefeller Foundation Report.
- Wallack, L., Dorfman, L., Jerniagan, D. & Themba, M. (1993). *Media advocacy and public health: Power for prevention*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Wallack, L. (1989). Mass communication and health promotion: A critical perspective. In Rice, R. E. & Atkin, C. (Eds.) *Public communication campaigns*, 2nd edition. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Wallack, L., Woodruff, K., Dorfman, L. & Diaz, I. (1999). *News For A Change: An Advocate's Guide to Working with the Media*. Sage.

Wilkins, K. G. (1999). Development discourse on gender and communication in strategies for social change. *Journal of communication*, 49(1), 46-51.

Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (2006). *Mass media research: An introduction* (8th ed.). Wadsworth: Holly J. Allen.

Yin, R. K. (2003). Case Study Research: Design and Theory. *Applied Social Research Methods* 5(3). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.