

ACCESSIBILITY AND USEFULNESS OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN ADDRESSING SUSTAINABLE SAFE DRINKING WATER PRACTICES IN AGBOWA COMMUNITY IN EPE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study sets out to assess the extent of the availability, accessibility and usefulness of community radio in addressing sustainable safe drinking water practices in Agbowo community in Epe Local government area of Lagos State. The study takes a critical look at the challenges as well as the factors inhibiting the use of the radio in sustainable developments programmes in Nigeria. The population of study comprises residents in ten (10) streets to include; Ajebo, Ibelefun, Idi oparun, Onijawajawa, Ibelefun, Iganke, Imope, Imoru, and Abute Marine. A sample of 40 residents from each of the ten streets was purposively selected, giving a total of 400 residents in Agbowo community were selected for the study. The study adopted Survey research design. The sample size of 396 was determined using the Taro Yemane formula and primary source of data was achieved through the use of well-structured questionnaire. Simple percentage and frequency tables were used to interpret the data collected. The findings of the study revealed that information on safe drinking water practice is inadequate for Agbowo residents as radio stations only give priority to other programmes. The result discloses that radio is a reliable tool for the dissemination of safe drinking water practices which provided information on what people can do to safe guard and sustain safe drinking water in the community. The outcome of the finding discloses that residents participate in radio development programmes in order to make their opinion known to government, so that Government take the health of the community with utmost seriousness in providing safe drinking water for people in the community. The study identified some major challenges faced by residents in Agbowo community to include non-availability of purification chemicals, inadequate information on matters regarding the health of the people and lack of funds. The study concluded that radio stations should as a matter of urgency create effective awareness on safe drinking water practices among the residents of Agbowo community even as the dry season sets in. The study recommended that government at all levels should ensure that measures are put in place to provide safe drinking water for all and create awareness on radio stations to promote healthy living among Nigerians.

Keywords: Sustainability, Community Radio, Agbowo Community, Awareness, Information.

Introduction

Safe and readily available water is important for public health, whether it is used for drinking, domestic use, food production or recreational purposes. Improved water resources, can boost countries' economic growth and can contribute greatly to poverty reduction (WHO, 2022).

Water is connected to every form of life on earth and is the basic human need, equally important as air. It is interesting to note that goal number 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focuses on clean water and sanitation. The goal is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all and this initiative can only be achieved through the use of community radios (Amaliya & Kumer, 2013). The radio is increasingly being used as a robust tool in promoting water and sanitation governance. It provides an opportunity for the marginalized population to complain, demand and discuss their rights (Amaliya & Kumer, 2013).

Megersa, (2017), describes radio as a mirror in the society and accelerates pro-poor people's attempt to arouse the response and accountability for service delivery in society by local administration, politicians and service providers. Community Radio is also a mouthpiece of the general public especially the poor to enhance their participation (Jemal, 2013).

Research shows that visible water clarity is the single largest factor defining 'safe drinking water' (Sedlak & Schojor, 2013). Yellow coloured or brackish (salty) water is considered unsafe for people and not used for drinking purpose as well as taste or palatability of drinking water can outweigh other parameters (Sedlak et. al, 2013). Contamination of water sources is also identified by water logging, poor drainage and inadequate practices for the disposal of garbage. People also relate contamination with depth of the source vis-a-vis the nature of contamination (Retz and Hasbullah, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

There is inadequate awareness of safe water practices among people living in local communities in Nigeria. While substantial progress has been made in increasing access to clean drinking water and sanitation, billions of people mostly in rural areas still lack these basic services. Worldwide, one in three people do not have access to safe drinking water, two out of five people do not have a basic hand-washing facility with soap and water, and more than 673 million people still practice open defecation (UNICEF/WHO, 2019). Maintenance of water infrastructure is a critical issue and too often do not have a comprehensive plan or adequate access to technical support to maintain assets. The general view is that since the government is responsible for providing and maintaining safe drinking water, people would not want to contribute in kind nor in cash (Nabembezi, Nabunya, Abaliwano and Ddamulira, 2015). Therefore, this study sought to investigate the accessibility and usefulness of community radio in addressing sustainable safe drinking water practices in Agbowo community in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State in the wake of constant floods in some parts of Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to;

- i. Find out the level of awareness of residents in Agbowo community on safe drinking water practices.
- ii. Assess if residents in Agbowo community are exposed to messages on sustainable safe drinking water practices.
- iii. Find out the sources of messages on safe drinking water practices among residents in Agbowo community

- iv. Investigate the factors militating against the effective utilization of communication to propagate safe drinking practices among residents.

Literature review

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the critical importance of sanitation, hygiene and adequate access to clean water for preventing and containing diseases (WHO, 2019). According to the World Health Organization (2019), hand washing is one of the most effective actions you can take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including the COVID-19 virus. Yet billions of people still lack safe water sanitation, and funding is inadequate. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, (2020) says *Community radios are in the best position to contribute effectively in furthering the Sustainable Development goals (SDGs), as they play a crucial role in creating awareness in terms of access to information and knowledge, enabling community participation and facilitating an active development process through governance, civic participation and dialogue.*

Community radio is a third tier broadcasting along with public and private radio broadcasting which is managed, run, controlled, and owned by a community for the betterment of the community and cater the needs, interests and aspirations of a community (Nirmala, 2015). Many rural communities around the globe do not have access to the conventional mass media, hence cannot share their needs, complains or successes with mass people. Community radio is a medium that gives a voice to the voiceless and serves as a platform of the marginalized (Okaka, 2016). Community radio is non-profit, non-commercial and assisted by its listeners and communities Therefore, UNESCO defines CR as ‘a broadcast station that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community (WHO, 2013). Community radio can facilitate the underprivileged and vulnerable groups by raising their voice, exploring their problems, sharing their innovative ideas and thinking for the development community as well as the whole nation (WHO, 2013).

Community radio provides a means for individuals, groups and communities to become active creators of and contributors to the media (Al-hassan et al., 2011). Hence, it can play a significant role in the rural development of third world countries like Bangladesh focusing agriculture, education, health and sanitation, recreation and social problems of a target community (Khan et al., 2017). Radio has contributed to improved awareness and knowledge of solutions to community development problems ranging from culture, rural development, education, water hygiene and sanitation, agriculture, local governance, among others. Okaka (2016) claimed that Community Radio Stations (CRS) are crucial for rapid information diffusion of health policy innovation. Hence, community radio is the best nexus of community media for healthcare policy communication based on gender mainstreaming.



Source: UN SDGs, 2022

Drinking Water Safety and Access

Water is connected to every aspect of human day-to-day activities directly or indirectly. At a basic level, everyone needs access to safe water in adequate quantities for drinking, cooking, personal hygiene and sanitation facilities that do not compromise health or dignity. Therefore, access to safe and dependable (clean and fresh) water is the fundamental/basic right of humans (Samra and Fawzi, 2011). The UN and other countries declared that access to clean, safe drinking water is a basic human right, and an essential step toward improving living standards worldwide (TWAS, 2002). Globally, it is estimated that 89% of people have access to water suitable for drinking (WHO, 2017). According to UNDP (2014) report, one out of six people do not have access to clean water, that is, about 1.1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water. In some countries, especially in Africa, almost half of the population do not have access to safe drinking water and hence, is afflicted with poor health. The number of people without safe drinking water is more than the number reported by UNDP (2015). This is due to the fact that most of the water supply facilities initiated during the MDGs in developing countries are not functioning properly.

Benefits of Safe Drinking Water

Water of satisfactory quality is the fundamental indicator of health and well-being of a society and hence, crucial for the development of a country. Contaminated water not only has the potential to pose immediate threat to human, but also can affect an individual productive rate (Mpenyana-Monyatsi, Momba, 2013). According to the WHO (2012) report, an estimated 1.1 billion people in the world drink unsafe water. Approximately 3.1% of the global annual death (1.7 million) and 3.7% of the annual burden (disability) (54.2 million) are caused by the use of unsafe water and lack of basic sanitation and hygiene. According to the report by WHO and UNICEF (2017) through their Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for water supply and sanitation, about 2.3 billion people have gained access to an improved drinking water. The report indicates an impressive gain has been made in the past two decades, but much has to be done. Millions of people die due to water-related diseases like cholera, diarrhea, malaria, dengue fever, and so on. Globally, water-borne diseases kill more than 25,000 people per day and about 5000 children die per day due to water-related diseases (mainly diarrhea), most of them can be easily prevented. Diarrhea and related diseases kill about 1.8 million children every year, most of them are in developing countries (Johnston, Berg, Johnson, Tilley, Hering, 2011).

Theoretical Perspective

This paper is hinged on uses and gratification theory. Uses and gratifications theory of mass communication is the theoretical framework of this study. Blumer & Kharz (1974) uses and gratification theory suggest that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Users take an active part in communication process and are goal oriented in their media use. The uses and gratifications theory originated in the 1970s as a reaction to traditional mass communication research with emphasis on the sender and the message sent. It looks at psychological orientations, focusing more on needs, motives and gratifications of users. This theory has implication for the study in the sense that media users have personal preferences and choices when it comes to selection and usage of media for gratification of needs.

Methodology

The researcher adopted survey method which is a sub-category of descriptive research. Wimmer & Dominick (2000), cited in Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafu & Okpanachi (2012) argued that it can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings adding that the method is also more economical. Questionnaire was designed which elicited general information about the study objectives from residents of Agbowo community. The choice of using the questionnaire was based on the effectiveness of the instrument to obtain diverse opinions and feelings from the sampled respondents. Agbowo community was selected as the area for this study. Meanwhile, the residents' population as projected by National Bureau of Statistics in 2017 is one hundred and seven thousand, two hundred and eighty-three (107, 283) residents. The population of study comprises residents in ten (10) streets to include; Ajebo, Ibelefun, Idi oparun, Onijawajawa, Ibelefun, Iganke, Imope, Imoru, and Abute Marine. A sample of 40 residents from each of the ten streets was purposively selected, giving a total of 400 residents. The decision for using purposive sampling technique is justified by Gupta (2002) who observed that when only a small number of sampling units are in the universe, simple random selection may miss the more important elements, whereas, purposive selection would certainly include them in the sample. This gave an overall sample size of three hundred and ninety-six (396) respondents. Data gathered were analyzed using tables of frequency and simple percentages to show the distribution of results and understanding of analysis

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Access to Information on Safe Drinking Water Practice

Variable	Respondents	Frequency
Very high	135	35.1%
High	112	28.2%
Low	94	23.7%
Can't tell	55	13.9%
Total	396	100

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents representing 35% of the population have access to information on safe drinking water practices. This shows that most of the respondents have access to the campaigns.

Table2: Safe drinking water is paramount to the health of Agbowa residents

Variable	Respondents	Frequency
Very High	136	34%
High	111	38%
Low	67	16%
Can't Tell	82	20%
Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The data in the above table says majority of the respondents representing 34. % say safe drinking water is paramount to their health. This shows that safe drinking water is paramount to their health.

Table 3: Government takes the health of the community with utmost seriousness

Variable	Respondents	Frequency
Strongly Agreed	92	23.2%
Agreed	102	25.8%
Disagreed	137	34.6%
Undecided	65	16.4%
Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 above shows that respondents representing 34.6% were of the opinion that government is less concerned about the health of residents of the community. This implies that most of the respondents believed that Government do not take the health of the community with utmost seriousness.

Table 4: Sources of messages on safe drinking water practices among residents in Agbowa community

Variable	Respondents	Frequency
Radio	292	73.7%
Television	71	17.9%
Newspaper	27	6.8%
Billboards Advertisement	6	1.5%
Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4 displays the respondents' sources of information on safe drinking water practices. According to the table, the majority 292 (73.7%) of the respondents access information from

radio stations in the community. The implication of the data is that the residents of Agbowa community listen to radio more.

Table 5: Residents Participate in Radio Development Programmes

Variable	Respondents	Frequency
Strongly Agreed	122	31%
Agreed	95	24%
Disagreed	87	22%
Can't tell	92	23%
Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From above table, 31% and 24% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that residents participate in radio development programmes. This implies that most of the respondents take participation in radio development programmes seriously.

Table 6: Unsafe water cause Cholera and other disease outbreaks in Agbowa community

Variable	Respondents	Frequency
Strongly Agreed	216	55%
Agreed	165	41%
Disagreed	8	2%
Can't Tell	7	2%
Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From above table, 55% and 41% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that unsafe water can cause cholera and other disease outbreak in Agbowa community. This indicates respondents believed that unsafe water causes cholera and other disease outbreak.

Table 6: Challenges faced by residents in Agbowa Community

Variable	Respondents	Frequency
Non access to portable water supply	196	50%
Erratic power supply	96	24%
Political Propaganda	57	14%
Poor attitude of government towards rural development	47	12%
Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From above table, 50% of the respondents show that Agbowa community lacks access to portable water. While 24% of the respondents are challenged with erratic power supply to power their water pumps, 14% and 12% of the respondents decried the increase in government propaganda in providing water for the community and poor attitude of government towards the development of rural communities respectively, as more concentration are given to the urban cities.

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that radio happened to be the communication channel through which residents of Agbowa community mostly accessed the information on safe drinking water practices at a time when the health issue in Nigeria was alarming. The fact that radio is easily accessible to all classes of people in society could be the reason for the high percentage of the residents getting most of their information from radio. The findings also showed that majority of the respondents representing 95% of the population knew about safe drinking water practices while a meager amount of the population of 3.3% did not have idea about safe water practices. These set of category attributed their lack of information on safe drinking water to non-exposure to safe drinking advertisements on different arrays of media available and lack of proper sensitization campaigns on the subject matter. These findings have been corroborated by the reports of Megersa, (2017) that adequate, reliable, clean, accessible, acceptable and safe drinking water supply has to be available for various users. Yet another corroborating findings was Jemal, (2013), report that Community Radio is a mouth piece of the general public especially the poor to enhance their participation in safe drinking practices. Also, Hermansky (2022) reports that Community radio is a community-led broadcasting service that serves as a tool for development for communities around the world.

Furthermore, this current research work revealed that majority of the respondents attributed Cholera and other disease outbreaks to unsafe water in Agbowa community. These findings are in congruent with the claim of Saini, Khitoliya and Kumar (2014) report that access to safe drinking water is a basic need for human development, health and well-being and because of this, it is an internationally accepted human right, noting that there has been encouraging progress with access to safe drinking water & sanitation in both rural and urban areas since the United Nations water decade of the 1980s. Finally, the findings showed that the majority of the residents of Agbowa community claimed that they lack access to portable water due to several challenges ranging from lack of power supply, lack of information on water purification methods and poor management of the water system. 24% of the respondents are challenged with erratic power supply to power their water pumps. 14% and 12% of the respondents decried the increase in government propaganda in providing water for the community and poor attitude of government towards the development of rural communities respectively, as more concentration are given to the urban cities. These findings have been supported by the report of Nabembezi, Nabunya, Abaliwano and Ddamulira, (2015), state that Maintenance of water infrastructure is a critical issue and too often do not have a comprehensive plan or adequate access to technical support to maintain assets. Also, Rouse, (2013) report that rural areas lack the awareness of the benefits of household water purification methods and the need to make treatment routine. However, inadequate management of drinking water is in part due to poor levels of community ownership and involvement in water supply projects

Conclusion and Recommendations

The researcher assessed the views of residents of Agbowo community on accessibility and usefulness of community radio in addressing sustainable safe drinking water practices in Agbowo community in Epe Local Government area of Lagos State in the wake of constant floods in some parts of Nigeria. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that access to safe and dependable clean and fresh water is the fundamental basic right of humans. Based on these findings and conclusion, the researchers recommend that there should be increased exposure of rural communities to campaigns on safe drinking water practices. Also, governments at all levels should make provisions for good water system schemes in rural areas, ensure water logging, poor drainage and practices for the disposal of garbage are addressed without further delay.

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