Topical Issues in Communication Arts

Solomon O. Unoh (ed.)

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ADVERTISING AND CULTURAL POLICY REPORTING STYLES IN ENGLISH

VOLUME TWO

CHAPTER TWO

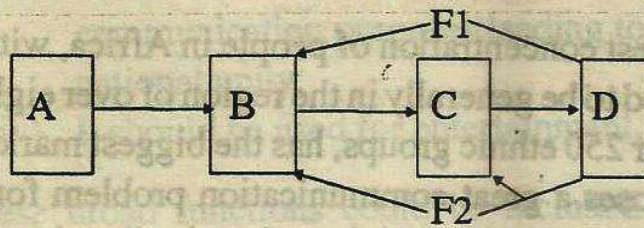# A SURVEY OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA IN OLD CALABAR

Desmond Wilson and Solomon Unoh

TRADO–MODERN COMMUNICATION: A DEFINITION

Trado–modern communication is the combination of traditional communication technology and approaches with modern hardware in a manner that both complement each other. Under this system no single approach is considered superior to the other since effectiveness is the objective of the system. The trado–modern system would combine at various levels the following traditional and modern media of communication:

(a) wooden drum, gong, skin drum, woodblock, flute, ivory tusk, young palm fonds, carved bamboo splinter.

(b) radio, television, telephone, telex, public address system, siren, loudspeaker, etc.

Simply put, trado–modern communication is a combination of traditional Nigerian media, and in our case those media instruments which have been identified in the former Cross River State in particular with modern Euro-American media for the purpose of reaching rural societies more effectively and thus making the communication process meaningful and relevant to about eighty percent of Nigeria's population which resides in these rural communities. This approach manifests itself through the process of a four-step model which may begin from either system—traditional or modern. For example, the first medium of communication may be through the traditional, i.e., instruments normally used in rural settings may be used to send the message or information and from there a modern medium could pick it up and replicate the message or vice versa. This model is similar to the multi-step flow in information theory.

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              ┌──────── F1 ────────┐
  ┌───┐    ┌───┐    ┌───┐    ┌───┐
  │ A │───▶│ B │───▶│ C │───▶│ D │
  └───┘    └───┘    └───┘    └───┘
              └──────── F2 ────────┘
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A — a modern medium e.g., TV
B — village communication centre (VCC)
C — a traditional medium e.g. Gong
D — the audience
F1 — Feedback from audience to VCC
F2 — Feedback from audience to gongman (newsman) and from audience to VCC through gongman

But in the case of a combination of television pictures and the traditional newsman's efforts, the picture may not be replicable but here the graphic description may be just enough. In any case the newsman would not bother himself with the details of the pictures except where such details are deemed necessary as background to the information. The major advantage of this model is that it allows for immediate feedback using the same media and channel. The process is faster than in western communication strategies whose source of feedback may be dependent on the efficiency or goodwill displayed by the operators of the telecommunication and postal systems of the country, virtues that are hard to come by under our present system.

It must however be pointed out here that the proposed model depends to a large extent on the political organisation of the rural society since its success or failure may be determined by the stability of the political system and level of linguistic homogeneity. Since there is a high degree of authoritarian control of the media of mass information in these societies much of the success of mass communication in fact depends too on the acquiescence of the majority of people to this control. Perhaps a clearer picture may emerge when we take a closer look at the functions of communication in Nigerian society.

FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Nigeria, the largest concentration of people in Africa, with a population figure estimated to be generally in the region of over eighty million, divided among over 250 ethnic groups, has the biggest market in Africa and this in itself poses a great communication problem for the media managers. With most of its essential services in disorder, it is a great surprise that its radio, television, film, newspapers, books and other media facilities even work.

Apart from these man-made problems there are others of even greater magnitude, more mystifying than they are often thought to be. One of these is the lack of an ideological base or philosophy for its motely of a mass communication policy. In order to operate effectively, Nigeria's media of communication must have a basic ideological prop. Whatever this ideology may be it should be articulated in their daily operation.

In addition, the system should be run in such a way that it is formally organised while specialization and professionalism are encouraged in order that the floodgates might be shut against charlattans who might want to take advantage of its openness to abuse the practice. But this claim against modern media practice in Nigeria as lacking ideological base and a sound and clear policy cannot be extended to include traditional media practices. Rural areas have always had clear-cut communication policies quite articulate and dynamic but different from the urban elite's approach adopted by the operators of our modern media. Before we take a close look at our proposed scheme it is necessary to find out what is traditional society's communication needs. Certainly the citizens in the rural areas cannot share the same interests with their urban counterparts.

It is for this reason that the following general functions of mass communication in rural areas are highlighted here:

(i) It should mobilize the people at the grassroots towards national consciousness.

(ii) It should be a source of education and enlightenment for the masses leading them towards self-fulfilment and national development.

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       (iii) It should be for intracultural, intercultural and other communication purposes leading to group cohesion and national unity.

       (iv) It should be used for entertainment.

Under these broad functions could be included other categories as highlighted by Schramm (1964): agricultural plans, health campaigns, literacy drives and as support for formal education, thus making tools out of mass communication media.

These functions roughly coincide with Lasswell's (1948) and Wright's (1975) examples of mass media functions but divested of an important Western function which is to make profit. It is perhaps this profit motive which has engendered some or all of mass media's negative attributes. Eventually this single factor may determine the course of a trado-modern system and its success considering the fact that both traditional and modern communication policies and strategies do not share this function. In order to stave off a possible source of conflict arising from incompatibility of ideology which in this case is the intrinsically capitalist western media, accommodation should be sought for the profit motive only in the western media segment of the proposed system; that is, if we do intend to run the western media under present policies and strategies. Nevertheless, as the society grows and becomes more complex perhaps a more indigenous media technology would be invented or a more advanced media technology based on present traditional forms would be invented to carry out the functions of mass communication in a society that will continue to be different from Euro-American society in more ways than one.

Thus the media in a developing society like Nigeria cannot afford the luxury of American-type freedom simply because the majority of the people are not enlightened and educated enough to understand some of the economic, social and political issues that are frequently discussed in the media. Perhaps the media can at this moment function only as 'collective propagandist and...agitator and also be collective organizer for the state' (Lenin, 1901) irrespective of what political party is in power. At least this function agrees with our cultural habits which still flourish today. As long as we have the obong, obi, oba and emir who

are still reminders of our traditional authority we cannot allow political pretentions towards American presidential practices blind us to the fact that we are first and foremost Nigerians with our different value systems. The truth that emerges here and lends support to our thesis is that even the presidential system with all its ceremonial protocols has the trappings of traditional monarchy despite its now less potent authority. The need for the mass media to serve the interest of society becomes more revealing when one realises that a licence to fractiousness could only bring about the retardation of progress in the society. Thus Marcuse (1965) argues for an acceptance of a unidirectional approach to the attainment of truth within a nation when he says:

> All this babbling of voices ... merely weakens the communication system from performing its essential function in the revolutionary process.

and argues further that

> ... the free market place will merely permit false concepts to develop greater vitality thus prolonging the attainment of truth.

To bring about this propagandist, agitator, and organizer role, the media do not necessarily have to be owned by government. The most important point that should be written into a communication policy should be that the federal and state governments should have direct access to all media for the propagation of information that is for the good of the masses. Thus no media establishment should be allowed to exist for the selfish desires of the owner or owners.

TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

In the Old Calabar area as in all other states in the country there have existed several traditional media of communication for several centuries. The only difficulty lies in the documentation of historical facts and determining exactly when the people started using the different media and from which community a particular medium originated. This lack of knowledge due to the recency of our historical documentation has led to a lot of half-truths and near conjectures from both com-

munication historians and pure historians. Origins can best be established in the present context through archaelogical sources related to the use of metals like iron, bronze, brass, gold etc. Thus Nwuneli's (1981) conclusion that 'Records show that the concept of the town crier dates back to the Ashanti Kingdom in Ghana' is a hasty one, and not even Ugboajah's (1972) assertion could be used as evidence to support this as the writer claims. In spite of this historical lacuna, we must nevertheless take cognisance of the fact that communication is an activity that is common to all cultures except in those cultures (if any) without a language.

Thus the various traditional media may have been developed independently in the various pockets of culture all over the country until better transportation and other communication facilities made it possible for the people to travel long distances beyond their cultural milieu or warfare took them to different lands. For as Peacock (1820) says,:

> The natural desire of every man to engross to himself as much power and property as he can acquire by any of the means which might makes right, is accompanied by the no less material desire of making known to as many people as possible the extent to which he has been a winner in this universal game. The successful warrior becomes a chief; his next want is an organ to disseminate the fame of his achievements and the extent of his possessions...

So it was with traditional society.

From this standpoint we can then say that the Cross River and Akwa Ibom States people especially those resident in the Old Calabar Province have developed various mass media technology which today are seen to be common also in other Nigerian cultures, eliciting identical symbols and meanings even if the languages are different. These traditional instruments shall be discussed shortly.

The traditional communication system (TCS) exists primarily to serve the economic, social, religious and political functions as are determined by the leaders at a given time. Before any information is transmitted through any of the traditional media by the newsman, there

is an editorial conference attended by the village or community leader (chief), other chiefs and selected elders and it is here that the news items are deliberated upon at the end of which the newsman is then asked to go out and deliver the news to the people. The medium used for the delivery of any news report is determined by the nature of the news itself. Besides, the newsman has a limited number of issues or news items to handle at a time. It is this smallness of the number of news items that enables the newsman to be more effective and reliable since he has to memorize the information and then deliver it in as close as possible a language to the original.

The newsman's participation in the gatekeeping processes raises an important point about the nature of traditional communication process which Pye (1963) describes as tending 'in general to be closely wedded to social and political processes' and thus making the 'act of receiving and transmitting messages' an act which calls 'for some display of agreement and acceptance'. This unanimity is so because mass communication is not considered as a process that involves any democratisation of opinions or the submission of higher decision processes to what Marcuse (1965) describes as a 'babbling of voices'. As a direct result of this socio-political structure, traditional communication is structured 'to reflect partisan view' (Pye, 1963), which is the view of the state. There is no neutral point of view for discussing, judging and evaluating political events. Under the traditional systems no person is permitted to disseminate news on behalf of the community if he is not the appointed newsman of the society. Thus all media of mass information are controlled by the state. The word 'state' is used here loosely to refer to any autonomous entity organised under its own laws and customs. Under this pattern of ownership the king and his council of elders hold these powerful media of information in trust for the people whose interest it is for them to protect and represent as the case may be.

Yet it must be noted that the traditional system is people-oriented and this also gives it the image of the mass audience although not in a strictly western or modern sense. It is à system in which everyone as it is the case in traditional theatre, is a participant observer, that is, he is communicating and being communicated with.

The following have been identified in field studies in the Old Calabar area as potent instruments of communication:

INSTRUMENTAL MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION:

Instrumental media of communication include idiophones, aerophones, and membranophones. These instruments when beaten, blown or scratched produce diverse sounds and messages based on the expertise of the traditional newsman and on the nature of his message. Idiophones found in the area include: wooden drum, woodblock, ritual rattle, bell, metal gong, xylophone, hand shakes, pot drum; while the membranophones include skin drum. Aerophones include whistle, deer horn, ivory tusk, reed pipe; while a fourth instrumental medium found in the area was the symbology which includes the decorated bamboo rind (nsadang), nsibidi writing, tattoo, chalk marks.

DEMONSTRATIVE MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION:

This is the form which uses mainly the aural medium to achieve its communication function. The two main modes under this category are music and signal.

ICONOGRAPHIC MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION:

Iconographic communication involves the communication of ideas or information through the use of objective or concrete reality in inaminate or animate form. The two main forms which fall under this category are objectified and floral communication.

EXTRA-MUNDANE MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION:

The media of communication which fall under this category include incantatory and graphic modes of communication. Incantatory communication includes ritual, libation, vision and many of the forms of metaphysical communication. Graphic communication includes obituary and in memoriam notices published in various ways and channels.

VISUAL MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION:

This form of communication involves the use of colours and appearance in communicating with persons within a culture. Colours mean so many different things to different peoples and cultures. White cloth and red cloth mean certain things within the culture of the people in the area studied. The appearance involves mode of dressing and other forms of cultural stylization.

INSTITUTIONAL MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION:

This involves the use of cultural and traditional institutions to communicate symbolically and as an extension of the extra-mundane mode of communication. These institutions could be social or spiritual. Among the social institutions include marriage, chieftaincy and other societies. The spiritual societies include the shrine, masquerade and others. Some examples include the following:

Eyei — This can be used to send as many as five different kinds of information ranging from the personal to the general. Wilson (1981) identifies five functions of the eyei namely,

  (a)   it could be issued to offenders banning them from participating in community activities, or preventing them from leaving the area until the accused are found guiltless or guilty.

  (b)   it could be used as a warning that there is a shrine nearby and strangers are normally not expected to go near the area where it is displayed.

  (c)   it could be used as a general warning to people to keep off areas that non-initiates are not supposed to get to, most especially areas reserved for secret cults.

  (d)   it could serve as warning to disputants over a piece of land.

  (e)   it could be used for arbitration in times of quarrel and thus it is used to stop combatants from continuing in their feuds.

But it could, in addition, be used to send special messages from one king to another. (Illustration)

Nnuk Enin	—	It is not often used but only during periods of grave events and matters of royal significance. (Illustration)
Obodom	—	There are two main types, the obodom ubong and those used by the various masquerade groups. But there is a third type which is used specifically for information dissemination, obodom ikot, and it normally speaks a language generally understood by members of the community. (Illustration)
Nkwong	—	This gong is still commonly used in rural communities along with the smaller ekere, depending on the type of message or occasion. (Illustration)
Ntakrok	—	This is used by newsmen to announce less important events. (Illustration)
Uta	—	This is used mainly by masquerade groups and societies for their information matters. (Illustration)
Obukpon	—	It is used within the same context as the uta but the scarcity of the game may now place some restrictions on its popularity. (Illustration)

Nkom/Ikpeti — These are effective drums used for announcing social and community events. (Illustration)

The various communication media are as effective in reaching the populations of the rural areas as modern media are capable of reaching the teeming populations of the urban or more richly endowed centres. In spite of the presence of the modern media in all sections of the society, the traditional rulers still serve as gatekeepers in the information dissemination process mediating between the larger machinery of the state and the gentle but audible murmurs of traditional media, since most of the people do not have the funds to buy newspapers, radio and television sets.

The need to review our present attitudes towards these traditional media is pointed out by Ugboajah (1972) who states clearly the significance of the traditional communication system in the following term:

> The most important thing about Africa's traditional communication is that the audience has learnt to attach great significance to it. Traditional media has force and credibility. They put stability into Africa's indigenous institutions.

a point of view also shared by Pye (1963) who adds that its striking characteristics is that it is not organised 'as a distinct system sharply differentiated from other social processes'. Thus the traditional communication system is invested with a dual function: political and informational.

But unfortunately for the traditional communication system most of those who have commented about it have tended to talk about it as history. And this has tended to underplay its importance. As Eschenback (1979) has pointed out, the argument as to whether traditional communication is necessary in rural development is uncalled for as it is also,

...unnecessary to describe how fast, far and precisely the 'bush-drum' can work. Nor is it necessary to mention that the traditional ways and means of communication have been underestimated so far.

He avers that 'Without them the development process has no chance to take place'. This fact has to be borne in mind by any policy maker who intends that his policies should be extended to rural communities. Folarin (1979) was arguing on this score when he said that,

> ...an important aspect of traditional communication in Africa is participation. People demand that they be effectively involved in decisions that affect them.

and quoting from Coleman (1965) who posits the view that,

> Villagers like to listen to their own kith and kin, they have more faith in the broadcast when they hear one of their own people talk about his experience.

he concludes that the lack of this rural involvement is responsible for much of the guerrila wars being fought in parts of the continent. This fact is no longer in doubt. The real problem is how to make the process of news/information dissemination between the urban and rural areas much faster than it is at the moment and perhaps to establish once and for all a more meaningful cultural dialogue between traditional and other cultures in recognition of the fact that two or more cultures do not necessarily have to be at loggerheads with each other or stand in opposition to themselves when they meet. Perhaps we should now move away from the era of just talking about the problem to that in which more concrete solutions are evolved to overcome it.

WESTERN MEDIA

The contact between the whites and blacks on the shores of Nigeria was a big mass communication event paralleled today by such feats as trips to other planets by today's astronauts. That contact had its unsavoury sides like the devastating effects of the slave trade which still exists today through racial symbolism; but it has also brought about a cultural mix which has been very helpful in many ways to the people.

One of such advantages was the introduction in 1846 of the first printing press in Nigeria by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland (Carnie, 1974). This invariably led to the development of books even though they were mainly religious materials at the beginning. This development also led to the emergence of a literate class.

The missionary societies that visited many parts of the Old Calabar Province in addition to the Presbyterians, also went in search of those to assist them in the spread of the gospel. This warranted the establishment of missionary schools and eventually other kinds of school. Even though the area did not produce the first known newspaper, it may have produced the first book or tract; in short, the first printed matter in Nigeria. It also produced a well-respected literate class which eventually necessitated the growth of books.

BOOKS

Books as media of communication have often been ignored in discussions of mass communication as a discipline. It is not that their function as mass media is not known but perhaps the new technologies especially in the area of electronics have tended to reduce their significance. Barker and Escarpit (1973), Escarpit (1971), Cherry (1978) and Bradley (1982) have all stressed the importance of books as media of mass communication even though they acknowledge the limitations posed by production cost, sparseness of rural communities, low economic levels of potential readers and illiteracy problems which are almost non-existent in radio broadcasting, for example.

There are numerous publishing houses operating in the Old Calabar area only one of these can be said to be significant enough to stand up to the challenges of the bigger ones located in Ibadan and Lagos. This is the Paico Press which is located in Calabar and has a branch office in Lagos. A second firm, Scholars Press, which specialized in educational and scholarly publications, has recently ceased to function. Yet the problems mentioned earlier have made it difficult for these publishers to make serious impact in spite of their efforts.

NEWSPAPERS

Almost all of the problems which afflict the book publishing business affect newspapers. There are currently four major newspapers in the Old Calabar area namely, **The Nigerian Chronicle,** (and her sister paper, the **Sunday Chronicle**), **The Pioneer** and **The Guide** (both of them weeklies). These papers are based in Uyo and Calabar and sometimes reflect varying political interests perhaps an exception being the government-owned **Chronicle** and **Pioneer** which still make some pretensions at objectivity and maturity in their coverage of national issues.

Nevertheless, the first newspapers in the area were established through missionary endeavours and were principally set up at the time to foster evangelization. The first known newspaper in the area was the vernacular publication known as **Unwana Efik** and it began publication in 1885 and survived for only a few years and was later replaced by **Obukpon Efik**. Other publications that have emerged in the area at various times include: **Ibibio magazine, The Nigerian Lutheran, The Nigerian Daily Standard, COR Advocate, Chronicle, Nigerian Freedom, Catholic Life** and others. Although strictly speaking, it was not published in the Old Calabar area the **Eastern States Express (Aba)** focussed on the activities of the area since its proprietor was an indigene of the area. **The Nigerian Chronicle** and the **Sunday Chronicle** which were established in 1974 are in terms of unbroken years of existence the two oldest newspapers in the Cross River State. With a circulation figure of about 70,000 (1979) **The Nigerian Chronicle** has a probable readership of 280,000 out of a population of 3.4 million (1963) and it is easily the largest selling newspaper in the area.

RADIO BROADCASTING

Radio broadcasting came to Nigeria in 1932 (Mackay, 1964) but did not get to the Old Calabar area until 1947 when the Radio Distribution Services (RDS) initiated a redifussion service in the area. Radio broadcasting has gone through several stages of evolution from the Provincial Studio Centres, Provincial Broadcasting Houses, through Nigerian Broadcasting Service and later Corporation and then to its present status as Cross River State Broadcasting Corporation with AM transmitters

capable of reaching the remotest parts of the state. Currently the station is owned by the state government and broadcasts for a little over $18\frac{1}{2}$ hours daily. There is also the Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation station at Abak. This was formerly a booster station of Cross River Radio.

There is also a Christian Radio Station at Obot Idim near Uyo, but this is a purely religious radio station. It generates programmes for broadcasts in other stations but does not itself broadcast any programme since it possesses no transmitters. Some of its programmes are broadcast at the following radio stations:

Radio Ondo (Akure),	Radio Rivers (Port Harcourt)
Bendel Radio (Benin),	Radio Plateau (Jos)
IBC (Owerri),	Radio Bauchi (Bauchi),
Radio Nigeria (Kaduna).	

After the creation of Akwa Ibom State in September 1987, the new state improved on its transmitting facilities and capabilities. It now broadcasts under the identification name of AKBC–Radio, Abak to all parts of the state and beyond. A Frequency Modulation transmitting facility is currently being installed at the television transmitting station at Ntak Inyang in Itu and is expected to commence service this year. A similar facility is being provided by the Cross River State Government in Calabar to serve the people of Cross River State. There is also a Cross River Radio AM booster station in Ogoja.

TELEVISION & MOTION PICTURES

Television and motion pictures are the most recent of the mass media in operation in the Old Calabar area. Motion pictures came much earlier through the former Eastern Nigerian Information Service (ENIS) and later the South Eastern now Cross River State Department of Information. There are also regular film shows at cinemas like Patsol, reputably the second oldest cinema house in Nigeria, National and Maryland cinemas all in Calabar; Dikko Cinema in Uyo, while some urban areas like Eket, Ikot Ekpene, Ikom and Ogoja have their own occasional shows at night clubs.

Regular television programming did not begin in the Old Calabar area until 1978 and network programmes could be received clearly only in 1979. Television is the most expensive of the mass media in operation in the Old Calabar area, yet in the Western sense of the concept 'mass media', the medium has not and cannot yet be regarded as one. Its operation is still too limited to be so considered. But within the context of our discussion it rightly forms a veritable strong force in the scheme of trado-modern communication. Like all stations established before 1977, it is currently under the control of the Nigerian Television Authority. It originally had community viewing centres at Ikot Omin near Calabar and Ikot Akpaden in Mkpat Enin Local Government area. Today there are numerous community viewing centres in all the local government areas of the two states.

In addition, Akwa Ibom State has the AKBC-TV, the television arm of the state's broadcasting corporation which was formerly known as CROSS RIVER TELEVISION (CRTV). The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) has a substation at Ikom (outside Old Calabar) and a new station at Uyo (NTA 7). This station is expected to commence transmission this year. Yet all these media are assisting in the information dissemination process in the rural and urban centres but they are more visible in the urban centres where the economic level of the citizens determines the ownership of any media. They are gradually becoming a potent new force in the communication network of the state. It will only be a matter of time before they are fully integrated into the system of trado-modern communication that is being proposed for rural communities.

TRADO-MODERN APPROACHES

Rural societies require a system of communication that will not place too much burden on their economic resources, one which will take into account their social, cultural life as well as utilize those aspects of their technology which have been a source of their effective communication strategy. This can best be seen in the context of a four-step model of trado-modern mass communication strategy. This model when applied to existing media will certainly lead to a greater appreciation of modern media in the lives of the people of the rural areas. The four-step model

(Wilson, 1981) consists of the use of a combination of traditional and modern mass communication instruments towards the achievement of the communication goals of the nation.

As has already been shown at the beginning of this chapter, the four-step model provides for feedfront and feedback and is a linear model. But a more comprehensive scheme, based on this model will show an unparalleled network of communication that can ever be established for the rural areas. This scheme is based on the concept of total communication hinged on the formal approaches that still operate in these rural communities. Although the scheme is expensive considering the cost of acquiring each of the media facilities and personnel to run them, this may well be more than worth the expense when it is considered that this comprehensive scheme would serve other functions as literary centre, cinema house, town hall etc. In fact, the traditional element of rural society are still preserved within this framework especially the spirit of sharing experience. Rather than be cut off from others by the individualism of the modern home the trado-modern system aims at bringing culture to the people.

Through this system the media can be made to reflect the political, cultural and economic backgrounds of the people and in this way it can be made to grow out of, serve and help mould its environment (Paulu, 1974). Building upon an authoritarian tradition of information dissemination the system can work more effectively if it is made to eschew the babble of Western media practice. This system has its merits in the fact that:

     (i)   it tries to maintain traditional society's bond of unity if not cohesiveness.

     (ii)   it has force and credibility at least in the eyes of the rural man.

     (iii) it is not alienating as it tries to keep and spread the culture of the people.

     (iv) it could be modern government's only means of reaching the heart of the people.

and   (v)   there is nothing in the system which is fundamentally different from modern media.

Perhaps one of the ways of diversifying the news and information content of the system would be to strengthen the corps of newsmen who would then take care of the various aspects of the news and information dissemination process. For example, the gongman could take care of more general political matters while the Nkom player could take care of social news and so on. Even so traditional society already has various news and information functions for those who handle the various media. The system could be standardized to such an extent that it could have universal application in Nigeria and elsewhere. The most important point that should be borne in mind is that once the system satisfies the information needs of the society it becomes as valid as any other. What perhaps needs a greater study is the possible development and improvement of traditional media to be able to amplify the message intended for rural communities and to eventually replace certain western media. This can be achieved not through the efforts of the theorists alone but in collaboration with engineering technologists. For example, it should be possible for both the communication theorist and the engineering practician to devise a medium or several media based on the traditional system to take over the functions of the present traditional and modern media in a manner that does not disrupt the present system.
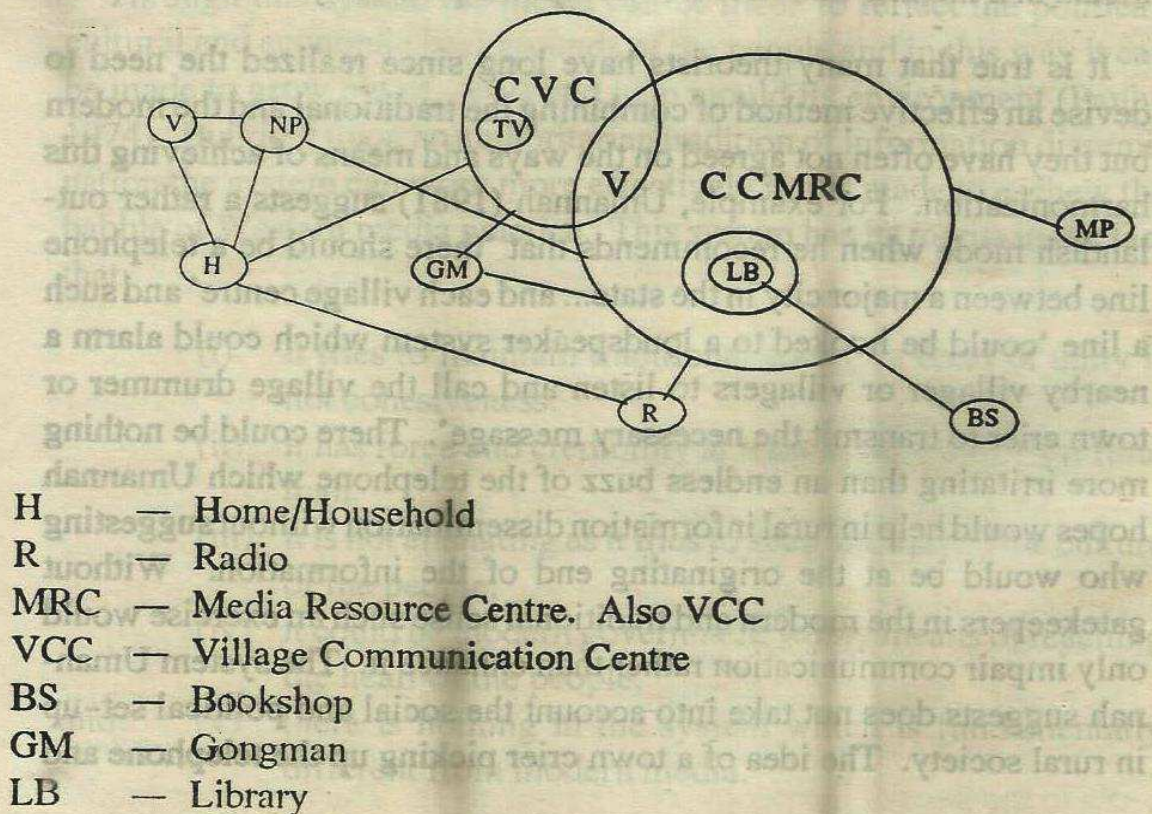
It is true that many theorists have long since realized the need to devise an effective method of combining the traditional and the modern but they have often not agreed on the ways and means of achieving this harmonization. For example, Umannah (1981) suggests a rather outlandish mode when he recommends that 'there should be a telephone line between a major city in the state... and each village centre' and such a line 'could be hooked to a loudspeaker system which could alarm a nearby villager or villagers to listen and call the village drummer or town crier to transmit the necessary message'. There could be nothing more irritating than an endless buzz of the telephone which Umannah hopes would help in rural information dissemination without suggesting who would be at the originating end of the information. Without gatekeepers in the modern and traditional sense such an exercise would only impair communication rather than enhance it. The system Umannah suggests does not take into account the social and political set-up in rural society. The idea of a town crier picking up the telephone and

receiving information and thereafter disseminating it is like suggesting that anyone could walk into a broadcasting studio and deliver the news.

It is also in this vain that Ugboajah (1972) suggests a 'fusion of the media modern with the media traditional—newspapers, radio, drums, television, market centres, cult societies, the linguist, the elders the politicians, the editors,...everybody working as team toward a social communication objective'. Even here he does not show exactly how this system would work or operate in the model he proposes.

Nevertheless it is gratifying to note that there is a growing interest among African communication scholars in the area of traditional communication most especially in the area of combining traditional and modern media to serve the interest of the larger population of the various countries. It is hoped that our model would be given a practical reception by your policy makers. This would be in the greater overall interest of our people.

A COMPREHENSIVE RURAL COMMUNICATION SCHEME

H   — Home/Household
R   — Radio
MRC — Media Resource Centre. Also VCC
VCC — Village Communication Centre
BS   — Bookshop
GM   — Gongman
LB   — Library

MP	—	Motion Picture
NP	—	Newspaper
V	—	Vendor
TV	—	Television
CVC	—	Community Viewing Centre

GLOSSARY

Ekere	—	a small metal twin gong (also known as akangkang)
Eyei	—	young unopened palm fronds of the raffia or oil palm
Ikang	—	dane gun
Ikpeti	—	a small skin drum found in the Eket area
Nkanika	—	a metal bell
Nkom	—	a small skin drum akin to the ikpeti found in the Ikot Abasi area.
Nkong	—	a big metal hand gong
Nnuk enin	—	the elephant tusk or ivory horn
Nsadang	—	the outer rind of the bamboo
Ntokrok	—	woodblock
Obodom	—	wooden drum made from the log of wood
Obukpon	—	deer horn
Uta	—	long cylinderical gourds shaped like the ivory or elephant tusk but of various sizes and at times of varied shapes.
Obodom ubong	—	the royal drum
Obodom ikot	—	the drum for making calls.

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