

## ASSESSING THE RESTRUCTURING OF SOCIAL REALITIES THROUGH RADIO DRAMA IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

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*The uproar and drive for restructuring in Nigeria has been an ongoing topic for sometimes. This can be connected to numerous factors one of which is the situation of the state displeasure. Under this condition, unity must exist before sustainable reorganization can be reached. The issue facing Nigeria now is of integration consequently, our unity has been fragile and has become a hazard. Thus, the objective of this article is to find out how effective radio drama is in restructuring our society and to determine how a well-presented radio drama can bring about a desired social change. The paper was anchored on development media theory, also this research drew on secondary data to demonstrate how radio might be utilised to address challenges that brings development. Findings from this article suggest that radio drama can be used in reforming and bringing harmony in the society. It proposes that for restructuring to take place in a society, media practitioner needs to raise knowledge on societal occurrences, national unity, and understanding to bring about change in society.*

**Key words:** Radio drama; Restructuring; Social reality.

### INTRODUCTION

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The conversation around reconstructing Nigeria has been a pressing issue for decades. Politicians, intellectuals, and critics alike have continuously offered varying solutions for the progress of the nation, ranging from economic

reforms to political realignments. One of the most frequently discussed aspects of this conversation is the modification, revision, or complete overhaul of the constitution to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving Nigerian society (Davis and Christmas, 2020). While these

discussions around constitutional restructuring are undoubtedly crucial, they often overlook an equally important factor such as social integration among others.

Social integration refers to the process through which individuals or groups from different ethnic, cultural, religious, or social backgrounds come together to form a cohesive and unified society. This process emphasizes equal participation, shared values, and mutual respect, encouraging harmonious interaction among diverse groups while offering equal rights and opportunities for all members. Social integration is seen as essential for fostering social cohesion and resilience, as it helps bridge divisions within a society and reduces social inequality (Ager & Strang, 2008). In multicultural nations, such as Nigeria, social integration is particularly critical for national unity, as it helps to mitigate ethnic tensions, build trust, and contribute to national development (Ibrahim, 2014).

While discussions around restructuring often focus on the constitution, power distribution, or economic reforms, there is a notable gap in examining the role that social integration plays in national progress. Most scholars and policymakers emphasize legal and political changes but often fail to recognize that without a socially integrated populace, these changes

may not be sustainable in the long run. For instance, restructuring efforts focused solely on decentralizing power or adjusting fiscal policies may not address underlying social divisions that contribute to national instability. In a country as ethnically and culturally diverse as Nigeria, ignoring the role of social cohesion could hinder the effectiveness of restructuring measures (Alapiki, 2010).

Based on the foregoing, without fostering a sense of unity among the diverse ethnic and cultural groups in Nigeria, any effort at constitutional or political restructuring may fall short of achieving lasting progress. Perhaps, this forms the reason for the pivotal role of the media in promoting social integration. The media is often seen as a tool for disseminating information, but its power extends beyond this. It has the potential to shape attitudes, influence behaviors, and foster cohesion in a divided society (Curran & Gurevitch, 2005; Silverstone, 2007; Downing, 2010). This implies that focusing on the role of the media, this study acknowledges that media outlets are more than just vehicles for entertainment or news. They play an essential role in shaping the narrative of national identity and can actively contribute to uniting a fragmented society (Downing, 2010). If the media consistently broadcasts messages that promote inclusiveness, equality, and shared national

identity, it can foster stronger social bonds among Nigeria's varied ethnic groups. These stronger bonds, in turn, can create a more stable environment for the implementation of any restructuring effort.

Furthermore, despite the significant influence of the media on shaping public opinion and fostering dialogue, there is insufficient literature focusing on its potential role in promoting social integration within the context of restructuring. This gap underscores the need for a deeper exploration of how media can serve as a bridge, fostering understanding and trust across Nigeria's diverse ethnic and cultural groups. The significance of this study lies in its focus on social integration as a necessary precursor to successful restructuring efforts. It builds on the notion that nation-building is not merely a legal or political task but also a social one. The more integrated the society, the more resilient it becomes in the face of challenges, such as ethnic conflict, political instability, or economic inequality. Social integration fosters trust, and trust is essential for any form of national restructuring to succeed. Without a cohesive society, constitutional changes or political reforms may only have temporary effects, failing to address the root causes of disunity.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The media plays a vital role in our daily lives. However, despite the media's significant influence on shaping public opinion and fostering dialogue, there is a lack of sufficient literature exploring its potential role in promoting social integration within the context of restructuring. This gap highlights how imperative it is modifying societal behaviour. Thus, this study aims to fill the existing gap in the discourse by providing a comprehensive analysis of how media can support social integration and, by extension, contribute to the long-term success of restructuring efforts in Nigeria.

## **AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This paper aims to reveal how radio drama is a vital tool in restructuring our society. The specific objectives for this paper are;

4. To find out how effective radio drama is in restructuring our society
5. To determine how a well-presented radio drama can bring about a desired social change.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data was gathered using secondary sources. The secondary sources were used to gather information about assessing the restructuring of social realities through radio drama in Nigeria,

from both print and internet sources such as books, journals, etc. The data were then analysed using theme.

### **THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE SOCIETY**

The term media originates from medium, signifying a carrier. Media refers to a conduit specifically engineered to engage a vast audience. It also makes reference to a tone of other links, including web, print, and broadcast media all of which are significant information sources. Inuwa (2007) sees the media as a communal mode of communication through which the general public are kept informed about the day-to-day activities in the society. He goes on to say that it is a compilation of all channels of communication that employ methods that create a great deal of direct personnel contact between the communicator and the audience. This shows that the media possess huge potentials often employed to enlighten people about the event and concerns in their diverse contexts, consequently it plays a key part in practically all facets of everyday life. According to Uchenna as mentioned in Inuwa, (2007), the function of media lies in their capacity and capability to instruct, manipulate, sensitize and mobilize people through information transmission. Even more, Kumur (2013), believes that the media is the most powerful weapon of communication in

emerging globe since it has assisted in growing awareness and presents the true stage of the society. He further states that:

the media is all around us in this decade of knowledge and awareness because it has a huge and grand role. Without the media people in the society will be isolated, not only from the rest of the world but also for total formation of creditable world (p.23).

From the above, we can deduce that the media is one of the most powerful instruments of communication because it can help to promote the right time and further portrays a real as well as strong aspect of the world. It also expresses how we can store and distribute the views because the world is moving towards progress in every step of life. Given these circumstances, Global Advocacy Project,(2005) has it that society without the right attitude to communication would find itself in incessant conflicts.

Furthermore, among the various medium of communications, radio is one of the most effective when it comes to reaching a large number of people especially those in the rural areas. In fact, the mass media in the form of radio is an effective way to persuade the target audience to adopt new behaviours especially issues dealing with social integration as it is

pertinent in restructuring (Kumur, 2013). Momeka,(2005) further states that radio can be used with great success as an integration tool. Not only they are cheaper readily available in rural areas, their programmes can be also adapted to suit local needs in terms of language, culture, and values. Hence, it helps in increasing the role of public awareness and collect the views, information and attitudes towards their programmes; this is to say that offering solutions to problems is crucial role of the media. Therefore, it should be understood that the relevance of the media in almost all spheres of human endeavour cannot be overemphasized; this because asides informing the public about new developments, they can also keep the public updated on social related issues.

Accordily, Tosanwumi,(1994) has observed that radio educates, entertain, and inform but beyond these functions, they also persuade and catalyze social mobilization. This suggests that radio keep both literates and non-literates' populace will be well informed of issues and other important events affecting peoples welfare. This lies in the fact that radio has the major advantage of immediacy more than other media of communication.

Be that as it may, the need for social integration is of great concern because for restructuring to

occur, the citizens must understand and each other hence need for the media to help in creating awareness concerning negative consequences of disunity and its detriments. This gives credence to the words of Adunwoke,(2015) who asserts that one of every homes possess a radio set hence, its importance in packaging messages that uplifts and unites the citizens. Therefore, there is need to evolve better methods of public enlightenment on crucial issues hence; radio is a medium with immense power which its users reach out to their audience through the language of programming.

All in all, radio has recommended itself and has been more embraced than other media forms because of its characteristics as the most accessible and effective medium of communication, particularly in developing societies where most people cannot read and write, but can speak and listen. Thus, the most effective means through which radio can disseminate issues dealing with social integration is the radio drama hence, a tool that can be deployed as a weapon of change (Fardon and Furniss, 2018; Myers, 2020).

### **Radio Drama and Restructuring of Social Realities**

Social reality refers to the common views, attitudes, values, standards, and practices that

exist within a society or a social group. It involves the ways in which individuals within the society comprehend and interpret the world around them, including their interactions with others, institutions, and broader social structures. Sanders (2019) defines sociality as the consensus of attitudes, ideas, and beliefs held by members of a group or community. It is separate from biological reality as it depicts a phenomenological level formed via social interactions transcending individual intentions and acts. Onyekwere(2015) asserts that it is a reality or fact of existence peculiar to a certain civilization; specifically a phenomenon such as social class, religion, and culture as experienced by a particular social group reliant on their customs and beliefs. Radio theatre is crucial in expressing the social reality of a social group as its major purpose is entertaining. It teaches the society by sharing experience and creating a context for contemplation and action. According to Moemeka (2009), radio drama plays encourage participation and the expression of popular concerns and analysis, dispelling people's fears and rationalisations and fostering a sense of self-worth and identity. They also spark critical thinking and a discussion of the issues, contradictions, and structures that underlie everyone's reality, elucidating the options and tactics for taking action, arousing people's emotions, and

ultimately inspiring them to take action. Radio theatre can be thus be used to enhance awareness of rural populations, employing local media in the form of songs, dancing, proverbs (Ubong, 2009 mentioned in Okeke, Nwosu and Okpala, 2022). Radio play is therefore suited as a medium of social transformation, conflict resolution, discussion on human right, democracy and gender-related problems as it affects a society. Gipson (mentioned in Okeke, Nwosu and Okpala, 2022) believes that through radio dramas, local community Stations can express local identity and culture of the people, reflecting various demographics and interests in a community with an inclusion marginalized and minority groups.

Radio theatre are kind of entertainment and education. The cornerstone of entertainment education also known as edutainment is to blend entertainment and education, to achieve the purpose of communication, to inspire a change attitude, and validation of advocated views. Edutainment basically give the audience with fun and amusement while sending crucial message over, at the same time. Reason why the Nigerian mass media frequently broadcast dramatic works in English, the Nigerian pidgin, and Nigerian indigenous languages, as major entertainment items in their programming menu. Hence, Nigerians most effective social efforts focused at development have employed

dramatic formats, the attributes of which creative contents have been potent in gaining, and awakening audience engagement and interests (Folarin,2012).

### **Radio as an Advocate for Change in Nigeria**

In every corner of the world, radio is utilised for many purposes; news, entertainment, education, information, and music. In Nigeria, one might consciously employ radio for the goal of helping people to better their life. Radio could be utilised educationally, or in a community development, religion, or for commercial goals to bring about the essential development. In any of these sectors, the objective should be to bring about change to Nigeria. The emphasis should be to work for change. To this Ralph believes, if we are going to change some of behaviours and practices of our people, we must know how these changes happen. It will not help merely make more shows, or to put more radio sets among the people or to have more people to listen to our programmes. These may help, but they cannot create change by themselves (Ralph, 1978). By this expression, it suggests change cannot be brought about through the provision or availability of facilities just but much. This is where Wilbur Schramms opinion on how changes in culture becomes eminent. Schramm concisely states that, one culture has touch with

another for a long length of time, a conqueror or a ruler pushes people to change, or when more information and better education make people to change. Schramm (cited in Abuku and Iorngurum, 2017). It is this greater information and better education of bringing about change that radio fits in. Through radio one can make individuals become aware that they need something which they do not have. Then when they know of this requirement, they must devise or mimic some way of meeting that need.

Radio plays are a successful method for promoting government policies and engaging communities in Nigeria. One notable example is the radio drama series "Story, Story, created by BBC Media Action in conjunction with the Nigerian government (BBC Media Action, 2014). The show aired on various local radio stations and aimed to promote health and social policies, notably focused on family planning, maternal health, and child nutrition. It brilliantly mixed storytelling, relatable characters from everyday Nigerian life, and culturally important discourse. Another example is the BBC radio program "Talk Your Own: Make Naija Better." Created by BBC Media Action, this program was broadcast across numerous Nigerian radio stations, encouraging civic participation and creating public discourse on governance, economic policy, and development efforts (BBC Media

Action, 2017). Additionally, the radio drama series "Labe Orun" (Under the Heavens), created by the Society for Family Health (SFH) with support from USAID, aims to promote public health policy, specifically focused on HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, and reproductive health in Nigeria. *Dadin Kowa* is another example, a radio drama made by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and aired in northern Nigeria. It focuses on educating listeners on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and the perils of violent extremism (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). Finally, "Ka Oso So" (Go Forward), created by the Development Communications Network (DevComs), is a radio series committed to improving mother and child health in Nigeria. In conjunction with the Nigerian Ministry of Health, the project distributed essential information on maternal healthcare, child immunization, and the avoidance of diseases like malaria (Development Communications Network, 2016).

### **Achievement of Restructuring of Social Realities Through Radio Drama**

Radio drama has historically served as a potent medium for restructuring social realities, particularly in contexts where other forms of media are less accessible. Radio dramas have

been instrumental in disseminating narratives that challenge prevailing social norms, address cultural issues, and catalyze social change (Myers, 2020). As noted by Tosanwumi, (1994) Radio drama has continued to influence social restructuring by offering diverse audiences a platform for engagement with critical social issues, such as gender equality, health education, and political awareness.

One significant way radio drama restructures social realities is by facilitating discussions on sensitive topics, particularly in regions where direct conversations on such matters may be taboo or dangerous. Studies have shown that radio dramas effectively foster community dialogue on topics like women's rights, domestic violence, and public health, leading to shifts in public perception and behavior. For example, research by Myers (2020) highlights how radio dramas in sub-Saharan Africa have been instrumental in altering social attitudes toward HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence by providing relatable storylines that model progressive social norms in accessible ways. Furthermore, radio dramas are a cost-effective medium for reaching marginalized populations, often bypassing the barriers posed by illiteracy and geographical isolation. This broad reach enables radio dramas to restructure social narratives by presenting alternative realities and encouraging listeners to imagine different

futures. As noted by Masuku and Chabata (2017), radio drama has been used effectively to challenge patriarchal structures and advocate for gender equity in Zimbabwe, presenting new role models and fostering social change at the grassroots level.

Additionally, radio dramas often incorporate local languages, cultures, and storytelling traditions, which makes them powerful tools for both preserving cultural heritage and advocating for modernization (BBC Media Action, 2017). In post-conflict settings, radio drama can contribute to peace-building efforts by promoting reconciliation narratives, fostering empathy, and offering models of conflict resolution. A study by Fardon and Furniss (2018) observes that radio dramas in conflict zones, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, have provided a platform for victims and ex-combatants to navigate the complexities of post-war reconstruction. In conclusion, radio dramas continue to play a significant role in restructuring social realities, particularly in communities with limited access to other forms of media. By facilitating dialogue on taboo subjects, reaching marginalized groups, and integrating local storytelling traditions, radio drama has become a powerful tool for social transformation in the contemporary world.

### **Problems of Restructuring of Social Realities Through Radio Drama**

Radio drama, as a form of storytelling and communication, has historically served as a powerful tool for reshaping social realities by promoting certain ideologies, educating audiences, and offering reflections on contemporary issues (Myers, 2020; Fardon and Furniss, 2018). However, restructuring social realities through radio drama encounters several significant challenges that hinder its effectiveness in modern times. Firstly, there is the problem of audience divisions. With the rise of digital media, podcasts, and other forms of entertainment, traditional radio dramas struggle to maintain a large, diverse audience. This segmentation limits the scope of influence that radio dramas can have in restructuring social norms and behaviors, as they no longer command the widespread attention that they once did (Wang, 2017). Additionally, cultural diversity of audiences makes it difficult for radio dramas to offer universal messages. What resonates with one community may be irrelevant or even offensive to another, complicating efforts to create content that can alter social realities on a broad scale (Bondebjerg, 2016). Secondly, narrative limitations of the radio format itself pose another problem. Unlike television or film, where visual elements enhance storytelling,

radio dramas rely solely on sound. This restriction can limit the effectiveness of nuanced depictions of social issues, especially in today's media landscape, where visual storytelling dominates. Without the aid of visual symbols and imagery, the process of challenging entrenched social norms through radio drama can be more abstract and less impactful (Heise, 2019). Moreover, there is the issue of political and commercial pressures. Many radio stations are funded by corporate sponsors or are subject to government regulation, which can lead to censorship or the promotion of specific agendas. This makes it difficult for radio dramas to tackle controversial or revolutionary social issues authentically, as they are often influenced by the interests of these external parties (Mendy, 2018). Such constraints dilute the potential of radio dramas to foster genuine societal transformation. Lastly, technological advancement also presents a barrier. Younger audiences, in particular, are more inclined to engage with interactive and visual forms of media, making radio dramas seem antiquated by comparison. This shift to more dynamic forms of media consumption has relegated radio drama to a niche audience, thereby diminishing its capacity to restructure social realities on a wide scale (Stiernstedt, 2019). In conclusion, while radio drama has a rich history as a medium for

social commentary and restructuring, it faces significant obstacles in the modern era. Audience fragmentation, narrative limitations, political and commercial pressures, and the rapid evolution of technology all pose challenges to its continued efficacy in shaping social realities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This work is grounded on the development media theory which was developed by Dennis Mcquail in 2013. The notion holds that the media must at all times assist an existing political regime and its efforts to bring about a nation's development. It is a normative theory which posits that the government will employ the media for the purpose of supporting national development goals which may be economic or social till the nation economic is well advanced (Baran & Dennis, 2012). McQuail (2010) contends that the central thesis of the theory is that the mass media in developing countries should be used for the primacy of the national development task (economic, social, cultural and political); the pursuit of cultural informational autonomy; support for democracy; and solidarity with other developing countries. The key assumptions of the theory as outlined by McQuail include that the media should embrace and fulfill specific responsibilities in society. These commitments are mainly to be satisfied by adopting high

standards of truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance. In embracing and applying these commitments, media should be self-regulating within the framework of the law and existing organisations. That is to say that the media in developing countries ought to be actively involved in the job of nation building by assisting to promote awareness and organising the population for national progress. However, one key weakness of development media theory is its tendency to be overly state-centric, often leading to media being used as a tool for governmental propaganda rather than empowering independent voices or fostering genuine democratic participation (McQuail, 2010). Additionally, the theory can overlook the diverse needs of local communities, focusing instead on top-down approaches that may not address grassroots concerns or allow for sufficient public engagement (Hamelink, 2015).

The notion therefore makes it important to emphasize the role and relevance of the media and what it can do if properly utilised to bring about achieving national progress. This theory is pertinent to this study since the use of radio drama to restructure social realities of a society in order create awareness on very essential societal issues, correct perceived ills, mobilize the citizenry for national development and foster unity between members of a community

is a sure step to ensuring and bring about national development. Here, radio is the development media tool which actively participated in the work of nation building.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper emphasizes the importance of behavior change and social unity for effective restructuring in any country. Radio dramas, known for creating social awareness, play a significant role in educating and enlightening listeners on critical social issues, contributing to social integration and national development. The study highlights radio's role in reforming citizens' minds to advance social unity and integration, regardless of individuals' backgrounds. To foster this, inclusive policies aimed at reducing poverty and economic disparity are recommended. However, modern challenges such as audience fragmentation, political pressures, and technological evolution may limit the impact of radio drama in shaping social realities, although it remains a vital tool for transformation, especially in marginalized communities.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made in order to restructure Nigeria by the use of radio drama.

1. Radio drama platform that bring more about development messages to the people should be utilize by relevant government stakeholders and development experts.
2. Messages that address topics beneficial that bring about desired modifications to the society should be delivered by radio drama makers.
3. It has been shown that radio dramas aid in driving about the needed change in the society, so media stakeholders should reintroduce radio dramas to our airwaves.
4. No citizen of a society should be left out of growth process. Radio drama messaging should accommodate for all part of the society.

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