



The Role of Alternative Media in Rural Agricultural Development and Sustainability in Nigeria

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Abstract

Original Research Article

In recent times, Agricultural development and sustainability have been global concerns because food insecurity threatens the core of human existence. Scholarly efforts in media and agricultural development have focused primarily on the role of mainstream media in disseminating information to support agricultural productivity in rural areas of Nigeria, with insufficient attention to alternative media, which tend to address more specific issues. This has given rise to selective media attention to sustainable agriculture in Nigeria over the past two decades. This chapter highlights the role of alternative media in agricultural development and sustainability in Nigeria, focusing on the concept, characteristics, and examples, using a desk review methodology and the Uses and Gratification Theory as the framework. The chapter reiterated that alternative media is crucial to rural agricultural development and sustainability in Nigeria because it addresses the peculiarities of rural settings that mainstream media may not address effectively. In rural settings, folk media enhances participation in both the media production process and the acceptance of the disseminated message or information. Thus, folk media, as an alternative form of media, should be prioritised alongside community radio and television for rural agricultural development and sustainability.

Keywords: Folk Media, Community radio, Agricultural development-sustainability, Alternative media.

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Introduction

In today's global world, the media play a role in virtually all aspects of life. With advances in information and communication technology, the media horizon continues to widen. The present generation appreciates media that has a direct impact rather than a general one. This situation makes some media relevant or irrelevant depending on where the impact is most

significant (Okorie & Oyedepo, 2011). There are two distinct types of media: conventional media and alternative media (Kenix, 2011). Both serve different purposes and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development. However, alternative media is fast evolving, responding to new trends and specialised cases (Kenix, 2011). On the other hand, conventional media is also responding to change. However, because it is



professionally streamlined and guided by conventions, the level of control in practice is higher than that of alternative media (Kenix, 2011). As the name suggests, it refers to a situation in which conventional media fail to make an impact, and an alternative takes over. Alternative media can take any format, as long as it addresses specific audiences beyond mainstream media. It can include print, audio, film/video, online/digital, street art, and drama.

Importantly, the media is a key player in sustainable development, which encompasses many areas of human endeavour (Pingali, 2010). Sustainable agriculture has become an increasingly important concept in recent decades as the world grapples with the challenges of feeding a growing population while protecting the environment (Sarker et al., 2019). The concept of sustainable agriculture encompasses a range of practices and goals that aim to meet current and future societal needs for food and other agricultural products, while ensuring profitable farm incomes and supporting the sustainable use of natural resources (Walter, 1992). As illustrated in Figure 1, the three pillars of sustainability in agriculture are economic, social, and environmental (Fischer et al., 2020). Achieving truly sustainable agriculture requires taking a holistic systems approach that integrates economic profitability, social equity and environmental health. It aligns agricultural production with long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability. Sustainable agriculture considers the health of the entire agroecosystem, including the people who live and work on farms. Economic sustainability in agriculture means that farms are financially viable and contribute to robust local and regional economies (Berti & Mulligan, 2016). Farmers need access to fair markets, reasonable profits and wages, financial planning tools, and support during hard times (Valkila, 2009). Value can be added through processing, marketing, agritourism and farm-to-table initiatives. Infrastructure like storage facilities, roads, and broadband internet enables market access.

Agriculture is a viable and sustaining force of human existence. Today, many nations struggle to achieve agricultural development and

sustainability, while many are plagued by food insecurity. These matters have made agrarian development and sustainability a front-burner concern, especially in many developing nations (Nwalieji, Ezeakunne, Enwelu, Okeke, Udemezue & Uzuegbunam, 2019). Agriculture is absolutely important to man. Without it, humanity would not exist. Economically, agriculture is a viable contributor to GDP. It is responsible for sustaining a large portion of the world's population. Even agro-allied materials depend largely on agriculture—dominant Subsectors. Apart from the above, it is a major source of labour. That is to say, it is a major employer of labour, especially in Africa. However, the majority of farmers in Africa still operate small-scale farms. This situation equally contributes to food security. For instance, Nigeria, a major supplier of crops such as cassava and maize, faces challenges in achieving food security due to low yields and reliance on imports for some food items.

Nigeria depends largely on rural agriculture, although the mechanised type is gradually taking root. By inference, subsistence farming remains the primary source of agricultural produce, catering to over 223 million people. Given the vast linguistic and cultural diversity, one cannot rule out communication issues, even though English is the official language. Over 520 languages are spoken by more than 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, the dominant ethnic groups include Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo.

Looking closely at the dominance of Nigerian Pidgin English, one could argue that it is actually bridging the communication gap, given the high prevalence of illiteracy in rural areas. However, with the use of Pidgin English, communication and education continue to take root. Arguably, there are several customs, traditions, and religious beliefs across the country, and all of these contribute, in one way or another, to agricultural practices. For instance, the country's population creates a demand for food. Meanwhile, the major source of agricultural produce is subsistence or rural farming. Also, the nation's economy cannot survive without the agricultural sector. For instance, it is the largest employer and contributes significantly to

GDP. Even so, it has huge potential, which many scholars see as an untapped sector in need of further exploration. However, the agricultural sector has both immense potential and significant challenges, including low productivity, reliance on subsistence farming, and vulnerability to climate change. Others include: Access to Resources: Limited access to quality inputs, credit, and markets affects smallholder farmers.

Unfortunately, conflicts and banditry in some regions disrupt farming activities and threaten food production. The persistence of these issues has hurt the economy, the people and the nation at large. Thus, there is a need for Agricultural sustainability in Nigeria. Agricultural sustainability in Nigeria is crucial for both economic growth and food security, but it faces numerous challenges. Climate change, soil degradation, and inefficient farming practices are hindering productivity and threatening long-term viability. However, there is a growing push for sustainable agriculture, with initiatives focused on conservation agriculture, organic farming, and technology to improve yields and resilience.

Unfortunately, several factors have significantly contributed to the current situation, which requires action. These include a lack of knowledge of new agricultural practices, poverty, government policies, and inadequate extension services for farmers across Nigeria's vast landmass. This chapter examined how communication has shaped agricultural development and sustainability in Nigeria, with an emphasis on the role of alternative media.

Over time, the emphasis has shifted toward the role of conventional media in agriculture and sustainable development in Africa, particularly in Nigeria. The reason for this is that conventional media have been the dominant channels through which information is provided to farmers for many years, with little attention paid to challenges such as language barriers, farmers' educational backgrounds, and the actual assessment of how the spread of media knowledge through conventional media impacts agricultural practice. The assumption that conventional media have a wider reach

(Mbamalu & Okoro, 2021), especially in rural areas, and that farmers are exposed to new agricultural knowledge has driven several studies. However, a close examination of the impact of conventional media and the need to evaluate the adoption of other media to foster inclusiveness and participation have opened new channels to enhance agricultural productivity in several developing countries, including Nigeria (Madaki, Muench, Kaechele & Bavorova, 2023). The recent adoption of a horizontal communication paradigm, rather than a top-down approach, suggests that conventional media may be unable to address all agricultural communication challenges in Nigeria, especially in rural areas (Pingali, 2010). To this end, scholarly engagement with alternative media is evolving, opening new avenues for addressing agricultural challenges that affect development and sustainability in Nigeria. This paper examines the role of alternative media in agricultural development and sustainability in Ilora Local Government Area, using the Uses and Gratification Theory as the framework. The objectives were to identify various alternative media used in agricultural development in Nigeria, discuss the role of each alternative media in agricultural development and ascertain the challenges of alternative media.

This paper is beneficial to several groups, including farmers, policymakers, and agricultural extension officers. Interviews with farmers will reveal a lot about the relevance of conventional media. This helps other farmers understand how they benefit from alternative media for assessing and consuming information. It will also be possible to understand why farmers may prefer alternative media outlets to mainstream media. Findings in this direction will help policymakers in media and agricultural sustainability understand when and how to ensure agricultural policies reach farmers effectively through alternative media sources. Importantly, this paper focuses on the Ilora Local Government Area of Oyo State. Ilora is an agrarian town with a teeming population of farmers and extension offices. Food produced in Ilora includes maize, yams, millet, and corn. The town is one of the major producers of agricultural produce in Oyo, alongside Saki, Ogbomoso and

Iseyin. Conceptually, the focus is on alternative media, agricultural development and sustainability in Nigeria.

Conceptualising the Alternative Media

In the current media landscape, many boundaries are slowly dissolving. This makes it tricky to define alternative media clearly. This part clearly distinguishes between the two media platforms. Holt, Ustad Figenschou, and Frischlich (2019) claim that any media opposed to mainstream media is alternative media. In this case, knowing what conventional media does is important, as it informs approaches that run counter to it. For instance, conventional media is governed by checks and balances, but when professionalism and strict adherence to rules are not required in practice, what remains is alternative media. Because of this, scholars have scrutinised alternative media, leading them to conclude that it cannot contribute meaningfully to development. This may not be entirely tenable, given that development requires a mix of approaches for diverse audiences. To summarise, alternative media is a substitute for mainstream media (Obot & Obasuyi, 2025; Obot, 2025). To illustrate the above statement, people seek alternatives when a given option is unsatisfactory. Alternatively, when people are disappointed with a given medium, they switch to another to satisfy their gratification. This is one of the tenets of the Uses and Gratifications Theory of the media.

Additionally, Cushion (2023) explains that alternative media is a large, accessible, and participatory platform that offers broader opportunities for public opinion to be expressed. The interesting aspect of this explanation is the accessibility and participatory opportunities that alternative media offer, even though many believe they are somewhat unprofessional and not run by skilled professionals. Alternative media (AM) is generally acceptable in rural areas, where sophistication and strict adherence to professional ethics are often not applicable due to the characteristics of the people there. Here, illiteracy and identification with traditional or cultural values and practices are factors to

reckon with. Given these realities in rural areas, where agricultural work is widely practised, participatory media is highly praised. Participation in alternative media can occur during the production process, in aesthetics, content, and distribution. By doing so, it creates a sense of ownership, which makes it more effective in several cases. Another point to note is that alternative media can be produced independently or by smaller organisations, relying on citizen reporting and connections to social movements. Interestingly, alternative media can utilise diverse platforms, including print, audio, film, online, and even street art, folk media - drama performance/community theatre (Obot, 2022), and community radio and television. These create room for a closer relationship with the audience and instigate dialogue, fostering participation and ownership.

The above statement illustrates the strength of alternative media over conventional media, including newspapers, radio, and television, in a more professional, vertical style (Odun & Utulu, 2016). Vertical in the sense that information is top-down, meaning that the recipient of the information provided has little or no input in the production process. Succinctly, the programme package is one-sided and not horizontal. It is also known as one-way traffic. The mass media are a perfect example. This form of media, although it features prominently in rural development, may not always yield effective results, perhaps because it functions optimally in urban or semi-urban areas (Onuoha, 2012).

Undoubtedly, Nigeria is Africa's largest country by population. It is home to over 250 languages and diverse cultural practices that cut across all endeavours. The second language is English, which may not be spoken across several rural areas, where agricultural sustainability is very high. A significant number of people in these areas are illiterate or unfamiliar with modern lifestyles, especially farmers, who may be reluctant to abandon their traditional agricultural practices despite the introduction of new technologies and methods. Can new agricultural methods and practices thrive favourably with farmers' acceptance and participation? The answer is obvious: no. Not too well when the

media landscape is unfamiliar; at this point, the local media must receive equal attention from all involved in rural agricultural development and sustainability. Media that people trust will often generate participation and acceptance. The idea of mass media reaching a larger audience may not be feasible in these circumstances; audience inclusion must be carefully considered.

Agricultural Development and Sustainability

The concept of sustainable development (SD) is global today. Many countries have backed it constitutionally, having accepted it as an economic policy framework, following the United Nations, the European Union, etc. The essence of sustainable development was to create a “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations General Assembly, 1987). Over time, several definitions have emerged in different fields. The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) defines sustainable agricultural development as development that improves resource efficiency, strengthens resilience, and secures the social equity/responsibility of agriculture and food systems to ensure food security and nutrition for all (HLPE, 2016). The Brundtland Report (1987) added the dimension of carrying forward such developments to future generations without any compromise. The essence of agriculture is to produce food for humanity and sustain it effectively by using resources, workforce, constitutional reforms, and technology, without harming the environment and ecosystems.

Indeed, to achieve sustainable development, the local or folk media play key roles, especially in ensuring participation (Kanayo, Nancy & Jumare, 2015) and creating room for ownership, which is important for sustenance. Sustainability is for the well-being of people and does not stop with the present generation; it must extend to the future; the priority must be for all to contribute meaningfully. A more vivid explanation is that people must be part of development and must work very hard to keep the trend. Moreover, the media must play a role; one-sided (top-down)

approaches must be discouraged, especially in rural areas, because people there have different characteristics from those in urban areas. If it is not given priority, development here is seen as top-down (Okwu, Kuku, & Aba, 2007).

Part of what can promote sustainability is people's choice of media that puts them in perspective. This is where Uses and Gratifications theory can be explicitly applied to deepen understanding. The Uses and Gratifications Theory examines why media audiences use media. The theory underscores the fact that different audiences use media that satisfy their needs (Okunna, 1999). For instance, certain members of the audience who want to engage with issues in real time with prompt responses and feedback prefer social media to conventional media. The same occurs in rural areas, where farmers choose more inclusive and friendly media, such as folk media, community radio, and television (Kanayo, Nancy, & Jumare, 2015).

The Role of Alternative Media in Sustaining Agriculture and Development in Nigeria

Alternative media play a crucial role in agriculture by disseminating information about new technologies and practices in an easy-to-understand manner. The essence of the alternative media is not to reach a wider audience but to reach the target audience (Emas, 2015). In rural agricultural development, farmers are the target audience. Using mainstream media can be helpful, but it might not be effective given the audience's specific needs.

Interestingly, conventional media can reach a wide audience, informing farmers about innovations that can boost productivity and educating them on improved techniques and sustainable practices. It also provides them with weather forecasts and market trend updates. Beyond this, the need for concentration can only be met by folk media, which bring people closer together for participation (Obot, 2026). This approach picks up where the mainstream media left off.

It is important to note that productivity in all

human endeavours hinges on information. They say information is power. However, without adequate information, many farmers may struggle to practice agriculture effectively. For instance, the 21st century has brought several climate change issues that have challenged farmers over the past two decades. For farmers to make the best of their occupation, they must adopt climate-smart agriculture, which involves following vital information (Mintzer, 992). This is one of the roles of the alternative media in assisting farmers in this regard (Okorie & Oyedepo, 2011).

Importantly, through folk media, farmers can be informed about new technologies, practices, and government schemes (Obot, 2026). They can also be educated on improved farming techniques, pest management, and sustainable practices. Although radio and television can provide information to illiterate farmers in ways they understand, they may not be able to reach a specific audience. For instance, some farmers are not literate enough to understand the general language and content of the mass media. What is good for this group is the use of alternative media, such as drama performances, which can capture their attention and give them room to air their views at their own level. This approach gives them that sense of ownership, which eventually drives participation at the local level.

Furthermore, understanding local content is within the purview of alternative media. Through the town crier, drama performances, house-to-house visits, and other channels, local content can be delivered to farmers in their communities. This is somewhat difficult using conventional or mass media. Local content can expose farmers in rural areas to new agricultural innovations, raising their awareness of potential benefits.

Agricultural Challenges in Nigeria

There are several challenges facing agriculture in Nigeria that many scholars have recently focused on. They include: climate change, soil degradation, inefficient farming practices, and infrastructural deficiency, among others (Egamberdieva & Adesemoye, 2016). In recent times, droughts, floods, and erratic weather

patterns have affected agriculture in Nigeria, especially since the country's agricultural system relies on rain. Because of this reliance, climate change greatly affects agriculture. Importantly, technological advancements have brought new knowledge about how to practice agriculture in unstable weather conditions. However, most rural farmers do not understand these new practices (Mbagwu, Benson & Onuoha, 2017). Many farmers practice traditional agricultural methods they have used for decades. These methods do not align with current realities or meaningfully contribute to food sustainability. Many farmers rely on traditional, less sustainable methods, contributing to environmental problems and lower productivity (Mbagwu, Benson & Onuoha, 2017). It has been observed that farmers in rural areas' inability to adopt modern agricultural practices stems from illiteracy and strict adherence to customs and traditions. This challenge is largely attributed to illiteracy and poor communication. This also limits the impact of conventional media, such as radio and television, used in these areas.

Another challenge worth examining is soil degradation, which is associated with over-farming and the failure to allow soil regeneration (Mbamalu & Okoro, 2021). Many farmers do not have enough land for agriculture, so the little they have is continuously in use, leaving no room for regeneration. The application of fertiliser may help considerably, but may not boost yield over time. Land needs to regenerate through the following. Deforestation.

Infrastructure deficiencies have also negatively affected agriculture. For instance, poor access to electricity, irrigation, and transportation networks is known to impact productivity negatively. Access to electricity is crucial for farming practices, even in remote areas where subsistence farming thrives (Masambuka-Kanchewa, Rumble & Buck, 2021). Farmers in these areas resort to using generators to pump water and perform other tasks, incurring higher costs. Irrigation is necessary in areas where rainfall is not adequate. Rural farmers often lack easy access to irrigation, which can limit productivity. A good road network partially controls the transportation network. Most rural

roads are impassable, making it difficult to transport goods from farms to the warehouse on time for processing and marketing. These challenges are a nightmare for farmers in rural areas and are equally affecting urban food security.

Materials and Methods

The present chapter employed a qualitative research design, focusing on In-depth Interviews. This choice is based on the present chapter's focus on the role of alternative media in sustaining agricultural development in Nigeria. By default, the pointer is towards qualitative methodology, as it entails gathering in-depth thoughts and perceptions. In this regard, Leedy (1997) likens research design to a map that researchers use to find answers to their study. Creswell's (1994) opinion tilts towards research design as a research blueprint. Furthermore, qualitative research becomes pertinent when there is a need to understand and address core social or human challenges by gathering people's views and perceptions (Creswell, 1994).

Apparently, the study employed face-to-face interviews, which afforded the researchers the opportunity for free exchange of ideas and enabled them to ask more complex questions, eliciting more detailed responses (Lee & Ormrod, 2005).

Population

Farmers constitute the population of this study. Ten (10) Farmers and three (3) Extension Officers were subjected to an In-depth Interview (IDI) in Ilora Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Instrument of Data Collection

The research instrument used was an In-depth Interview (IDI). This is an interview conducted with persons who have practical knowledge of the research subject. Thus, farmers and extension officers were knowledgeable about the role of alternative media in agriculture and provided

data to analyse its contribution to agricultural development and the impending challenges. In summary, the In-depth Interview (IDI) served as the primary data-gathering method, leading to the research findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Also, secondary sources such as journal articles, books, and Internet materials were consulted to generate ancillary data for "introduction", "review of related literature" and "theoretical framework".

Method of Data Analysis

IDI data were transcribed from audio recordings into text and thematically organised for analysis. This was done in line with the research objectives.

Presentation of Data

The first objective of the study was to identify various alternative media used in Ilora for sustainable development. **Question One:** *What alternative media are available in Ilora, apart from radio, television, and newspapers?*

An in-depth Interview with an Agriculture Extension Officer revealed thus:

In recent times, we have used alternative media to reinforce the worth of conventional media. They include: social media, mobile phones, extension workers, farm field demonstrations (FFD), and interpersonal communication. These other forms enable closer contact among farmers, extension officers, and facilitators from other agencies to provide information. The essence is that rural farmers need information now more than ever before because of the factors and realities that they face daily (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

In addition, a farmer explained that:

One interesting aspect of this new change in communication is that I

can easily receive vital information about agricultural practices on my phone via text messages. For a rural farmer, this development is good. One does not need a sophisticated mobile phone; a simple working phone will suffice, since the messages come through text. Well, others who have phones that use WhatsApp also receive messages on it. This approach brings information to farmers' doorsteps with ease (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

Another former farmer commented on the Farm Field Demonstrations (FFD). He observed thus:

Alternative media have changed agricultural practice in so many ways. To be specific, we say positively. Extension officers regularly organise farm field demonstrations for us, which have helped us improve agricultural practices and appreciate new technologies. Please remember that this programme is carried out right on our farms. That is to say, the officers demonstrate these things to us practically. This is what radio, television and newspapers cannot achieve (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

Objective Two: The role of alternative media in agricultural development

Question: *Do you think alternative media play any role in the development and sustainability of agriculture in Ilora?*

In response to the above questions, a farmer stated thus:

I strongly believe that alternative media have played significant roles in sustaining agriculture in Ilora Local Government and Nigeria as a whole. In the first

instance, traditional media have tried to disseminate agricultural information to a very large audience, but they often neglect special cases (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

To support the above statement, another interviewee reiterated:

Passing information to the people who need it most may not be possible if you consider everyone. This is what the conventional media stand for. A particular message, in the form of a programme, is designed for a large population without regard to the specific challenges to be addressed. That is to say, one man's problem may not be what is disturbing another person. What alternative media has done is to bring specificity to the table. For instance, we, farmers in Ilora, face specific challenges, and extension officers often deploy targeted measures to address them. So, sensitivity to the particular needs and plight of farmers can help resolve a challenge, and that is what alternative media can achieve (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

Another farmer added during an interview that:

Alternative media gives room for practical application and experience. Let me use a field demonstration approach for an example. I can recall a couple of times when extension staff members have taken us (farmers) through intensive field practice on planting skills and other practices that we needed to adjust to. The good thing is that extension officers live among us, understand our specific challenges, and develop solutions. This is what the

conventional media may not have achieved effectively (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

Objective Three: Alternative Media: Challenges

In response to the challenges of alternative media, one of the extension officers stated thus:

You see, when you share information with certain people, misinformation tends to crop up. This does not mean that alternative media do not have developmental impacts on farmers; rather, misinformation can sometimes occur, which may jeopardise overall efforts because some alternative media sources may not be properly scrutinised by professional or regulatory bodies (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

He also added that:

Some alternative media outlets may, out of a revenue interest, spread misinformation to draw attention to themselves. This can happen through social media and text messages, both of which were common in the past. This may not be the case with conventional media outlets that are closely monitored (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

In addition,

Some alternative media may circulate information solely to promote a particular agenda without considering its impact on farmers and the broader citizenry. In fact, such outlets can promote an ideology when they feel that information from conventional media is inadequate. Sometimes, the issue of fact-checking comes in. Most farmers lack the digital tools to fact-check information

from alternative media. Whatever comes and sounds good, they adopt. A few cases have shown that this situation has occurred before, and it may continue when there is little fact-checking (*In-depth Interview, Ilora, 2025*).

Discussion of Findings

Results revealed social media, mobile phones and farm field demonstration and drama as the available alternative media used for sustainable agricultural development in Ilora. Government and non-governmental agencies, as well as agricultural facilitators, have disseminated information through social media. They have also used the same media to gather feedback on important issues related to practices and climate change. These findings corroborate those of Mavrodieva, Rachman, Harahap & Shaw (2019), who argue that social media is an instrument for raising awareness of agricultural issues, especially climate change. Social media is so close to people that it is seen as a companion. There is hardly any adult in Nigeria who is not on one social media platform or another. This reality is made possible by the availability of mobile handsets with social media options. With this, farmers in rural areas can easily subscribe and access vital information to improve their farming practices.

Findings showed that the Farm Field Demonstration (FFD) is an available alternative source of information for rural farmers in Ilora. FFD is a practical initiative that agricultural facilitators often organise to train farmers to apply new knowledge in planting techniques and improve crop yields. The goal is to change traditional practices and adopt newer approaches to improve productivity. The field study revealed that government extension officers and NGOs have facilitated a couple of FFD programmes in the Local Government. Interviewees who participated in the study opined that FFD is a workable tool for practical knowledge in rural farming. This aligns with the

study by Warren, Taylor & Edwards (n.d.), which stated that On-farm demonstrations are a powerful tool for farmers to learn new farming knowledge.

On the roles of alternative media in sustaining rural agriculture, two major findings were made. Firstly, alternative media is well-suited to addressing the specific challenges faced by farmers in Ilora. Its approach differs from that of conventional media, which is seen as top-down and unable to take cognisance of the specific needs of a given locality. Secondly, identifying the specific needs of farmers in this area enables targeted interventions and programmes, such as on-farm demonstrations, which have been productive in recent times, especially since extension workers are often available to provide practical guidance and impart new knowledge on key aspects of farming and animal husbandry.

Furthermore, the findings revealed key challenges associated with the use of alternative media in the Ilora Local Government Area of Oyo State. They include: misinformation, lack of checks and balances, funding issues, a technological gap, and biased content. Misinformation is bound to occur when there are no checks to verify the authenticity of information. The study shows that alternative media can create misinformation, especially when outlets have something to gain from such practices. This is unlike conventional media, which must cross-check facts before broadcast.

The study also identified funding as a significant challenge for alternative media, which are often started by facilitator groups that may lack the resources to sustain these projects in the long term. Additionally, alternative media relies heavily on volunteers and paid staff; if payments are delayed or cease, there is a high risk they will abandon the project. The objectivity of alternative media can be compromised by biased content, raising concerns about its use. Farmers accessing information from these sources might not know how to verify the facts or may lack the time to do so. Without verification, such content could lead to negative outcomes and reduced

productivity. The issue of biased content remains a concern when using alternative media.

Conclusion

Alternative media is crucial to rural agricultural development and sustainability in Nigeria because it addresses the peculiarities of rural settings, which mainstream media may not adequately cover. This does not undermine the strength of the mainstream media in terms of wider coverage, which has been effective in urban and semi-urban areas, where an agrarian lifestyle has not thrived. In rural settings, folk media enhances participation in both media production and acceptance of the disseminated message or information. Once acceptance of participation and ownership mindsets emerges within the rural community, much can be achieved in introducing new agricultural ideas and technologies that drive greater productivity and sustainability. The idea is for government and agencies responsible for bringing information to the doorsteps of rural farmers to understand the need for audience-based media, rather than assuming that, because conventional media have a wider reach, rural areas are fully covered in agricultural information and education. Thus, folk media, as an alternative form of media, should be prioritised alongside community radio and television for rural agricultural development and sustainability.

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