

**NON-FORMAL EDUCATION: PERCEPTION OF RURAL  
WOMEN ON THE IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA ON THEIR  
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the perception of rural women on the impact of mass media (radio, television, and newspapers) on their social, economic, and social development. Participants were 144 rural women engaged in farming and trading drawn from nine Yoruba speaking villages in Kwara State, Nigeria. The data collected, using a researcher-developed interview guide, were analysed using percentages, means, and chi-square statistics. Findings revealed that the majority of the women in the rural areas had access to the three media and agreed that these were effective in their social, economic, political development. The women in rural areas identified poor electricity, limited financial resources, and lack of technicians to repair spoilt media, among the factors militating against effect use of mass media. No significant difference was established between the literate and the illiterate and between farmers and traders who are rural women in their perception of the impact of mass media on their development. These findings have implications on the use of mass media in informal education of women, particularly rural women in the developing nations.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Women are indispensable in the social, political and economic development of any nation. Women make up 49.20 percent of Nigeria's total population (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009). Nigerian women, like their counterparts in other parts of Africa, form the majority of the nation's labour force. Most Nigerian women are informal in micro enterprises with little or no access to credit to build their capital base. In spite of women's contributing to agricultural production, they remain mainly invisible to the country's planners (Nwoye, 2007). In most cases, women themselves are quite often unconscious of the value of their productive roles in national development; consequently agricultural development policies are hardly targeted at generating high productivity. Africa Partnership Forum Support Unit [APFRU] and the NEPAD Secretariat (2007) observed that African women own less than 1% of the African continent's landmass, receive only 1% of total credit to agriculture, have fewer economic rights and lower access to economic opportunities, average workday lasts 50% longer than that of men, and they shoulder the burden of unpaid activities. It also noted that only 51% of females over age 15 in Africa are able to read and write compared to 67% of males. This situation informed the assertion that women's entrepreneurship represents an untapped reservoir for job creation, economic growth and social cohesion (Nwoye, 2007).

In Nigeria, women play a dominant role in agricultural production; in fact, they make up 60–80 percent of the agricultural labour force in Nigeria, depending on the region, and they produce two-thirds of the food crops. Yet, despite the facts, based on the widespread assumptions that men make up the bulk of farmers in the country, the key farm management decisions, and agricultural extension services in Nigeria (as in other African countries) have been focused on men and their farm production needs, while neglecting the female who

constitute more than half of the production force. Extension messages albeit targeted at women focused on their domestic roles like child care and family nutrition (Saito & Gadzama, 1996)

These discriminations, in spite of the importance of women's contribution to the social, economic and political development of their communities have engendered specific international protocol and declarations. For instance, the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003 recognised the economic value of women, and covered such issues as equal pay for equal work, control over land and other productive resources and equitable inheritance of properties. Also, the G8 countries at Kananaskis in 2002, promised to work and support African countries to promote property and resource rights and also the mainstreaming of gender issues into all agricultural and other economic issues. Similar declarations were expressed at the at Gleneagles 2005, G8 countries' meeting, 2007 G8 summit in Heiligendamm, and the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), among others (APFRU & NEPAD Secretariat, 2007).

Like their counterparts in most African countries the bulk of Nigerian women live in the rural areas because fewer than 25% of Nigerians are urban dwellers (Wikipedia, 2009). More than 70 percent of women in Kwara State live in the rural areas. They are innovative, and though most of their farming techniques are labour intensive and ancient, they paddle the economic boat in the rural areas. The State Women Commission was set up by the government to ensure the integration of women in development and to remove the obstacles in their way. At various levels, women organisations had existed to look after the interests of women. Examples of such are Women Farmers Clubs, young Women Christian Association, Women Cooperative Societies, Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Ilorin Descendant Women Progressive Union (IDWPU), Ifelodun Ladies Club, and so on. Like their counterparts in cities, towns and other urban areas, mass media can be used to play a significant role in social, political and economic development of women in rural areas. This is because geographical terrain may not be a barrier for the use of mass media. However, most of these women organisations are based in urban or semi-urban areas of Kwara State. The rural women remain isolated in most cases from their activities.

To achieve personal and integrated rural development, information becomes a necessary ingredient. Information is very critical in strengthening the link and in achieving the integration of various social groups, so that they can develop together as a cohesive and well-organised community. For a long time, a lot of media organisations, government information units and bodies have tried to carry information to the rural dwellers. These include the government information ministers, agricultural extension workers, social welfare and community development officers, rural health personnel, adult education and local school teachers. Rural women must be empowered through literacy.

The mass media because of its prevalence in rural and urban areas are indispensable in information dissemination. Mass media can ensure rural women participation in social, economic and political processes thereby influencing and sharing in control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (The World Bank, 1996).

Mass communication is any message sent by a person or a group of people through a medium to a large audience, and mass media is any medium used to transmit mass information. Until recently mass media comprised the eight mass media industries: books, newspapers, magazines, recordings, radio, movies, television, and the Internet, however, digital technology has expanded the scope of the term mass media (Lane, 2007). Message through mass media reaches large numbers of the public, that is, mass audience.

In rural areas, radio television, newspapers/magazines play a vital role in spreading information, conducting propaganda, educating and enlightening people, strengthening national integration, and creating national identity. Mass media moulds opinions, thinking attitudes and behaviour. Because of their reach, mass media are far more powerful and their impact is greater than that of other media (Saxena, nd.). There are two major usage patterns for mass media. Serban (2004) quoting Rubin (1984) identified these as primarily ritualised and instrumental. The primarily ritualised usage deals with habitual use of the mass media for diversion or in order to consume time accounts for health, education, and political information gathered by individuals through passive exposure to mass media. The instrumental usage is purposive or utilitarian for informational reasons, through seeking media content.

The mass media has the potential for information, inspiration, and instruction for rural women. From the definition of rural dwellers, most will be illiterates and few literates, engaged in the production of food fibre and raw materials. Those engaged in agriculture would no doubt require information on specific supplies required on their farm. They need to know where, when and how to begin to plant seeds, use pesticides, use mechanical equipment, etc. They also need to know the process, names of suppliers and how to satisfy the conditions for obtaining them. People who are engaged in rural non-farm economic activities need information on food processing, banking, textile, weaving, raffia work and tailoring, among others. They also require information on wood works, metal work, repair services for radio, vehicles and watches and other miscellaneous activities like soap making. Rural people also need information on the importance of good source of drinking water and the prevention of common diseases. Mortality and malnutrition of children are particularly prevalent in rural communities; therefore, a lot of information on childcare is required. Rural dwellers also require information on social participation in any programme for rural development.

Egbule and Njoku's (2001) study on mass media's support for adult education in agriculture in Delta State, Nigeria revealed, among other things, that the mass media have performed poorly in disseminating requisite agricultural information to farmers, although there is a positive correlation between mass media usage and farm yield. In Saxena's (nd.) finding in India, a majority of women respondents opined that, at present, mass media is inducing vulgarity in the society; directly or indirectly mass media has increased crime against women, as well as exploiting of women at work places. One third of females maintained the view that due to mass media, people try to imitate, especially children do imitate some socially undesirable acts like violence and deceit. It noted further that that mass media have raised aspiration of the people through exposure to materialistic world.

There are quite a number of other areas where information can be provided for the development of rural dwellers and some of this information has always been provided for the rural dwellers through mass media like radio, posters, newspaper, television, and so on.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study was designed to find out about the perception of rural women regarding the influence of mass media on their social, political and economic development. Specifically, the study investigated:

1. The type of mass media available to rural women.
2. The influence of such mass media on rural women's social, economic and political development.
3. The problem militating against the utilisation of mass media for rural women's social, political and economic development.
4. The moderating influence of vocation and level of literacy on the influence of mass media on rural women's social, economic and political development.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the purpose of the study, the following questions were addressed in the study.

1. What type of mass media do women in rural areas have access to?
2. Do the mass media have any influence on rural women's social, political and economic development?
3. What type of problems do rural women encounter in their use of mass media?
4. Will there be any significant difference in the responses of literate and that of illiterate rural women regarding the influence of mass media on their social, political and economic development?
5. Will there be difference in the responses of women in various vocations (farmers and traders) regarding the influence of mass media on their political, social and economic development?

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

Based on research questions four and five, the following hypotheses were developed.

1. There is no significant difference in the responses of literate and that of illiterate rural women regarding the influence of mass media on their social, political and economic development.
2. There is no significant difference between the responses of rural women farmers and those who are traders in their responses on the impact of mass media on their social, political and economic development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

The target population for this study consisted of all the women in the rural areas of Kwara State. The selection of rural women in Kwara State was purposive because the state has enough rural settlements. However, the study covered a sample of 144 women who were selected through the use of stratified random sampling techniques.

The sixteen local government areas in the state were stratified along the four major ethnic groups in the state. These are Baruba, Batsnu, Nupe and Yoruba speaking people. The four non-Yoruba speaking areas were excluded because of the following reasons: (i) There are no newspapers in the three languages (Baruba, Batsnu and Nupe), (ii) Few programmes are broadcast in the three languages on the television and radio stations in the state, (iii) Most of the people of the ethnic origins from the four local governments areas who are resident in the Yoruba local government areas understand the Yoruba language and thus were not excluded from the final sampling. The 12 Yoruba speaking local government areas were further stratified into the three major dialectical groups of Ilorin, Ibolu and Igbomina. A table of random numbers was used to select one local government from each of the three Yoruba dialectical groups. Also, from each of the local government area sampled, three rural villages were randomly selected by using a table of random number. And the following villages were sampled: Asa (Egbejila, Owode, and Laomi); Oyun (Aperun, Budo Alfa, And Ago Mayaki); and Ifelodun (Ajibowo, Afin and Idera).

In each of the sampled villages, women were further stratified along variables of type of vocation (traders and farmers) and their literacy level. After the women had been stratified into various occupations and literacy levels, random sampling technique was used to select sixteen women from each of the selected villages. Therefore, 144 rural women constituted the respondents for the study.

Women in these areas have access to the following national, state or privately owned mass media: radio (Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State, Harmony FM, Midland FM, Niger Radio, Okin FM, Osun Radio, Orisun FM, Radio Kwara, etc.), television (NTA Ibadan, NTA Ilorin, NTA Osogbo, Osun Television, New Dawn Television, etc.), and newspapers (Nigerian Tribune, The Herald, The National Pilot, The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation, *Alaroye*, *Iririyeye*, *Akede*, *Olokiki*, etc.).

## Survey Instrument

A researcher-developed interview guide entitled “Interview Guide on the Influence of Mass Media on the Social, Economic, and Political Development of Rural Women” was used to collect research data. The Yoruba translation of the instrument was also prepared with assistance from lecturers in the Department of Linguistics, University of Ilorin, Ilorin. The instrument consisted of six major sections, section A, B, C, D, E and F.

Section A was designed to obtain information on the personal bio-data or characteristics of the respondents. The respondents were required to supply information on their levels of literacy, ages, names of the village and occupations. Section B contained 6 major sections with questions structured in both open-ended and close-ended forms. It was designed to obtain from the respondents information on their use and access to specific mass media. The close-ended questions have responses of “Yes or No”, or responses ranging from “Daily to Not at all” viewing, listening or reading of television, radio and newspapers respectively. The open-ended questions elicited information on the television or radio stations being received or available in the respondents’ villages and the programmes listened to, viewed or issues read in newspapers in order of preference. It also contained close-ended Yes or No items regarding whether post programme discussions took place among rural dwellers.

Section C elicited information from rural women on the influence of mass media on their social, political and economic development. The section contained a total of three major items and sub-items under each of the major items. All questions had closed-ended Yes or No; Very Effective, Effective, not Effective and I Do Not Know responses modes. The fourth section, Section D, dealt with the perception of respondents on the value of mass media. It contained six major items with response modes of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Section E elicited information on the constraints faced by rural women in their use of mass media. It contained a total of six close-ended questions with the response modes of Yes or No. The final section, Section F asked for general information or comment on the use of mass media for the development of rural women, and it was structured in an open-ended form.

The instrument was developed after an extensive review of literature on issues related to the use of mass media, and women and rural development. To test the instrument’s validity and reliability, the initial draft was administered to 20 women rural dwellers in Bolorunduro Village in Ilorin East Local Government Area of the State. This local government was not selected for the final study. The feedback obtained from this first administration was used to revise the final instrument. Based on the revision after the pilot testing, copies were used to interview 144 volunteers who were randomly sampled during visits to the villages. The interviews were conducted mainly in the evenings when the women had returned from their farms or market places. The respondents were asked to respond to questions which were read out by the researcher. Responses to the

interview guides' items were equally scored and recorded using magnetic tape recorder for ease of data collection. The data collection lasted for two weeks.

The respondents' responses were tabulated and descriptive analysis using frequencies and percentages. The responses were scored from 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, and 1-5 for items with two to five response modes. Furthermore, Chi-square statistics was used to test the two hypotheses generated in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

The demographic information of the participants is as presented in Table 1. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on education and occupation. The results indicate that out of 144 respondents, majority 96(66.67%) were literate (could read and write in English and/or Yoruba Language), 48 (33.33%), were illiterates (could not read nor write in English or Yoruba Language), 84 (58.33%) were involved in one form of trading or another, while 60 (41.67%), were farmers involved in subsistence farming (crop production). In addition, all the respondents engage in free range animal husbandry.

Table 1: Biographical Distribution of Respondents

Item	Education		Occupation					
	Literate	Illiterate	Traders	Farmers				
	96	66.67%	48	33.33%	84	58.33%	60	41.67%

### Research Question One

*What type of mass media do women in rural areas have access to?*

The analysis related to this research question is as shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Mass media women in rural areas have access to

Item	Education		Occupation					
	Literate	Illiterate	Traders	Farmers				
TV	96	66.67	48	33.33	84	58.33	60	41.67
Radio	58	40.28	86	59.72	64	44.44	80	55.56
Newspapers	98	68.06	46	31.94	104	72.22	40	27.78

As shown in Table 2, 96 (66.67%) of the literate rural women responded that they had access to television sets, while 48 (33.33%) of the illiterate women had access to a television. Most rural communities in Nigeria lack basic facilities like electricity which could readily support the use of a television set. Furthermore, most illiterates do not see anything good in watching a television set, that is why most of them do not have a television set at home. Also, 86 (59.72%) of the illiterate rural women indicated that they had access to radio set, while 58 (40.28%) literate rural women indicated they had access to a radio set. Radio sets are somewhat cheaper than television sets and they could be powered by batteries which are available in most remote communities. It is little wonder therefore that a high proportion of the illiterate rural women had access to a radio set.

As regards Yoruba Newspapers like Akede, Okiki, Alaroye, Iriri Aye 98 (68.06%) literate rural women indicated that they had access to Yoruba newspapers, while 46

(31.94%) do not had access to the newspapers. The literate rural women are more in number. This is due to their level of literacy while the illiterate ones 46 (31.94%) do not know how to read because of their lack of education, but in this study most of them who purchased or borrowed the Yoruba newspaper found someone to read to them.

In the case of occupation, 84 (58.33%) of the traders had access to television sets, while 60 (41.67%) of the farmers had access to television sets. Most of the traders used television as a form of entertainment for their customers; the rural women were part of this. The farmers only watched television programme after they had returned from their various farms. As regards radio, 64 (44.44%) of the traders had access to radio set, while 80 (55.56%) of the farmers had radio set. The farmers do not joke with radio; most of them even carried it to their farms' places. This is to make the rural women farmers aware of what was going on around them. There are numbers of programme like '*kebi ma palu*', related to their occupation and other programmes like '*Agbeloba*' to improve their work on the farm.

As regards the Yoruba newspaper 104 (72.22%) of the traders had access to Yoruba newspapers. In fact most of the rural women carried the papers to their market places. This is because there are interesting stories in most of the Yoruba newspapers also, there are relevant columns on how to improve on their market sales. As for rural women farmers only 40 (27.78%) indicated that they had access to Yoruba newspapers. The likely reason why they did not have interest may be due to their level of education and the cost of the Yoruba newspapers.

## Research Question Two

*Do the mass media have influence on rural the women social, political and economic development?*

Table 3: Impact of radio on rural women's social, political and economic development

Development Levels	Item	Very effective		Effective		Not effective		Do not know	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Social	Enhancing your literacy level	48	33.33	36	25.00	25	17.36	35	24.31
	Self discipline	45	31.25	37	25.69	30	20.83	32	22.22
	Family planning	58	40.27	62	43.06	18	12.50	6	4.16
	Preventing and curing diseases	54	37.50	44	30.56	34	23.61	12	8.33
	Environmental sanitation	50	34.72	54	37.50	30	20.83	10	6.94
	Effecting changes in social belief	30	20.83	44	30.56	40	27.78	30	20.83
	Simple hygiene	48	33.33	32	22.22	38	26.39	26	18.06
	Family care	52	36.1	32	22.22	12	8.33	48	33.33
Political	Performing your civic duties such as voting	43	29.86	47	32.63	15	10.42	39	27.08
	Respecting law and order	50	34.72	30	20.83	26	18.06	38	26.39
Economic	Enhancing your economic activities or professional career	48	33.33	32	22.22	35	24.31	29	20.13
	Community self-help project	35	24.31	30	20.83	45	31.25	34	23.61
	Cooperative society	38	26.38	37	25.69	30	20.83	39	27.08
	Animal husbandry	30	20.83	48	33.33	36	25.00	30	20.83
	Elementary agriculture	49	34.03	34	23.61	30	20.83	31	21.53
	Food processing	37	25.69	36	25.00	31	21.53	40	27.78

The women were asked to rate how effective each mass media was in promoting their social, political and economic development. The results of their responses were as shown in Table 3. By the perception of rural women, radio was very effective in enhancing their literacy level. This is because 48 (33.33%) agreed to this. Thirty-six (25%) said it was effective, 25 (17.36%) said it was not effective, while 35 (24.31%) said they did not know. On family planning, 58 (40.30%) agreed that radio was very effective in promoting their social development, while 62 (43.06%) agreed that it was effective, 18 (12.50%) said it was not effective and 6 (4.16%) did not know. Here, we discover that radio was a good means of promoting social development of the rural women.

As regards prevention and cure of diseases, 54 (37.50%) agreed that radio was very effective in promoting social development of rural women, while 44 (30.56%) said it was effective, while 34 (23.61%) opined that it was not effective and 12 which is (8.33%) did not know. On environmental sanitation 50 (34.72%) opined that radio was very effective, while 54 (37.50%) said it was effective, 30 (20.83%) said it was not effective and 10 (6.94%) did not know. On effecting change in social belief 30 (20.83%) said radio was very effective, 44 (30.56%) said it was effective, 40 (27.78%) agreed it was not effective and 30 (20.83%) responded that they did not know. On simple hygiene, 48 (33.33%) opined it was not effective and 26 (18.06%) did not know. As for family care, 52 (36.11%) agreed that it was very effective, 32 (22.22%) said it was effective, while 12 (8.33%) opined it was not effective and 48 (33.33%) did not know.

As regards political development, in performing civic duties such as voting, 43 which is 29.86% of the rural women agreed that radio was very effective in promoting their political development, 47 (32.63%) said it was effective, 15 (10.42%) said it was not effective, while 39 (27.08%) said they did not know. On respect for law and order, 50 (34.72%) agreed that radio was very effective, while 30 (20.83%) said it was effective, 26 (18.06%) said it was not effective and 38 (26.39%) indicated that they did not know.

As regards economic development, the rural women agreed that radio was very effective in enhancing their economic activities and professional career because 48 (33.33%) and 32 (22.22%) said it was very effective and effective respectively, 35 (24.31%) opined it was not effective, while 29 (20.13%) agreed they did not know. On community self-help project, 35 (24.31%) agreed that radio was very effective, while 30 (20.03%) said it was effective and 45 (31.35%) said it was not effective and 34 (23.61%) did not know. On cooperative society matters, 38 (26.38%) said radio was very effective, 37 (25.69%) also said it was effective, 30 (20.83%) said it was not and 39 (27.08%) said that they did not know.

As for animal husbandry, 30 (20.83%) agreed that radio was very effective, 48 (33.33%) said it was effective, while 36 (25.00) said it was not effective and 30 (20.83%) said they did not know. On elementary agriculture, 49 (34.03%) agreed that it was very effective, 34 (23.61%) said it was effective, while 30 (20.83%) said it was not effective and 31 (21.53%) said they did not know. As for food processing, 37 (25.69%) said radio was very effective in promoting economic development of rural women, 36 (25.00%) said it was effective, 31 (21.53%) said it was not effective and 40 (27.78%) responded that they did not know.

Table 4: Impact of television on rural women social, political, and economic development

Development Levels	Item	Very effective		Effective		Not effective		Do not know	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Social	Enhancing your literacy level	54	37.50	56	38.89	20	13.89	14	9.72
	Self discipline	48	33.33	52	36.11	24	16.67	20	13.89
	Family planning	46	31.94	56	38.89	30	20.83	12	8.33
	Prevention and cure of diseases	45	31.25	47	32.64	36	25.00	16	11.11
	Environmental sanitation	55	38.19	60	41.67	15	10.42	14	9.72
	Effecting changes in social belief	68	47.22	48	33.33	10	6.94	18	12.50
	Simple hygiene	70	48.61	42	29.17	20	13.89	12	8.33
Political	Performing your civic duties such as voting	70	48.61	50	34.72	10	6.94	14	9.92
	Respect for law and order	62	43.06	48	33.33	12	8.33	22	15.28
Economic	Enhancing your economic activities or professional career	48	33.33	38	26.39	32	22.22	26	18.1
	Community self-help project	62	43.16	38	26.39	28	19.44	16	11.11
	Cooperative society	52	36.11	54	37.50	30	20.83	28	19.44
	Animal husbandry	74	51.39	36	25.00	24	16.66	10	6.94
	Elementary agriculture	84	58.33	48	33.33	43	29.86	10	6.94
	Food processing	60	41.67	32	22.22	30	20.83	22	15.27

The result of the analysis on the effectiveness of television in the social, economic and zpolitical development of rural women is as shown in Table 4. In the case of television, the rural women perceived that television was very effective in the promotion of their social development. In enhancing their literacy level, 54 (37.50%) opined that it was very effective, 56 (38.89%) said it was effective, 20 (13.89%) said that it was not effective, while 14 (9.72%) said they did not know.

As regards self-discipline, 48 (33.33%) agreed that television was very effective, 52 (36.11%) opined it was effective, while 24 (16.67%) said it was not effective and 20 (13.89%) said they did not know. On family planning 46 (31.94%) agreed that television was very effective in promoting social development of rural women, 56 (38.89%) said it was effective, while 30 (20.83%) said it was not effective and 12 (8.33%) said they did not know.

For prevention and cure of diseases, 45 (31.25%) opined that television was very effective, 47 (32.64%) said it was effective, while 36 (25.00%) said it was not effective and 16 which is (11.11%) said they did not know. As for environmental sanitation 55 (38.19%) of the rural women agreed that television was very effective and 60 (41.67%) said it was effective, while 15 (10.42%) said it was not and 14 (9.72%) said they did not know. In effecting change in social belief 68 (47.22%) agreed that television was very effective, while 48 (33.33%) said it was effective, 10 (6.94%) said it was not and 18 (12.50%) said they did not know. On knowing simple hygiene 70 (48.61%) agreed that television was very effective, while 42 (29.17%) said it was effective and 20, that is, (13.89%) said it was not effective and 12 (8.33%) said they did not know.

As for political development, like performing civic duties such as voting and payment of taxes, 70 (48.61%) of the rural women agreed that television was very effective; while 50 (34.72%) said it was effective 10 (6.94%) said it was not effective and 14 (9.92%) said they did not know. As regards respect for law and order, 62 (43.06%) of the rural women agreed that television was very effective in promoting their political development, while 48 (33.33%) said it was effective, 12 (8.33%) said it was not and 22 (15.28%) said they did not know.

As regards economic development like enhancing their economic activities or professional career, 48 (33.33%) agreed that television was very effective in promoting their economic development, 38 (26.39%) said it was effective, while 32 (22.22%) said it was not effective and 26 (18.06%) said they did not know. For community self-help projects, 62 (43.06%) agreed that television was very effective, 38 (26.39%) said it was effective, while 28 (19.44%) said it was not effective and 16 (11.11%) said they did not know. As regards cooperative society, 52 (36.11%) agreed that television was very effective, while 54 (37.50%) said it was effective, 30 (20.83%) said it was not effective and 28 (19.44%) indicated that they did not know.

As for animal husbandry, 74 (51.39%) of the rural women agreed that television was very effective in promoting the economic development, while 36 (25.00%) said it was effective and 24 (16.66%) said it was not and 10 (6.94%) agreed that they did not know. For elementary agriculture 84 (58.33%) of the rural women agreed that television was very effective in promoting their economic development, 48 (33.33%) said it was effective, while 43 (29.86%) said it was not and 10 (6.94%) said they did not know. As regards food processing, 60 (41.67%) of the rural women agreed that it was very effective, 32 (22.22%) said it was effective and 30 (20.83%) said it was not and 22 (15.27%) said they did not know.

**Table 5:** Impact of newspapers on rural women’s social, political, and economic development

Level	Item	Very effective		Effective		Not effective		Do not know	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Social	Enhancing your literacy level	48	33.33	36	25.00	25	17.36	35	24.31
	Self discipline	45	31.25	37	26.69	30	20.83	32	22.22
	Prevention and curing diseases	54	37.50	44	30.56	34	23.61	12	8.33
	Environmental sanitation	50	34.72	54	37.50	30	20.83	10	6.94
	Effecting changes in social belief	30	20.83	44	30.56	40	27.78	30	20.83
	Simple hygiene	48	33.33	32	22.22	38	26.39	26	18.06
	Family care	52	36.11	32	22.22	12	8.33	48	33.33
Political	Performing your civic duties such as voting	43	29.86	47	32.64	15	10.42	39	27.03
	Respecting law and order	50	34.72	30	20.83	26	18.05	36	25.00
Economic	Enhancing your economic activities or professional career	48	33.3	32	22.22	35	24.31	29	20.14
	Community self-help project	35	24.31	30	20.83	45	31.25	34	23.61
	Cooperative society	38	26.39	37	25.69	30	20.83	39	27.09
	Animal husbandry	30	20.83	48	33.33	36	25.00	30	20.83
	Elementary agriculture	49	34.03	34	23.61	30	20.83	31	21.53
	Food processing	37	25.69	36	25.00	31	21.53	40	27.78

Analysis on the effectiveness of Yoruba newspaper in the social, economic and political development of rural women is as shown in Table 5. In the case of Yoruba newspapers, the rural women agreed that socially Yoruba newspaper was very effective in enhancing their literacy level. This is because 48 which is (33.33%) said it was very effective, while 36 (25%) agreed it was effective, 25 (17.36%) said it was not and 35 (24.3%) said they did not know. As for self-discipline, 45 (31.25%) agreed that it was very effective, while 37 (26.69%) said it was effective and 30 (20.83%) said it was not, while 32 (22.22%) said they did not know. For prevention and cure of diseases, 54 (37.50%) said it was very effective 44 (30.56%) said it was effective while 34 (23.61%) said it was not effective and 12 (8.33%) said they did not know. For environmental sanitation, 50 (34.72%) of the rural women agreed that Yoruba newspaper was very effective in promoting social development, while 54 (37.50%) said it was effective, 30 which (20.83%) said it was not effective and 10 (6.94%) said they did not know.

For effecting change in social belief, 30 (20.83%) agreed that newspaper was very effective, while 44 (30.56%) said it was effective and 40 (27.78%) said it was not

effective and 30 (20.83%) said they did not know. For simple hygiene 48 (33.33%) said it was very effective, 32 (22.22%) said it was effective, while 38 (26.39%) said it was not and 26 (18.06%) said they did not know. For family care 52 (36.11%) said it was very effective, 32 (22.22%) said it was effective 12 (8.33%) said it was not effective and 48 (33.33%) said they did not know.

In the area of political development, the rural women agreed that in performing civic duties such as voting 43 (29.86%) agreed that it was very effective, 47 (32.64%) said it was effective while 15 (10.42%) opined that it was not effective and 39 (27.03%) said they did not know. As for respect for law and order, 50 (34.72%) of the rural women agreed that Yoruba newspaper was very effective in promoting political development, 30 (20.83%) said it was effective, 26 (18.05%) said it was not effective and 36 (25.00%) said they did not know.

As regards economic development such as enhancing their economic activities or professional career, 48 (33.33%) of the rural women agreed that Yoruba newspaper was very effective, while 32 (22.22%) said it was effective, 35 (24.31%) said it was not and 29 (20.14%) said they did not know. For community self-help projects, 35 (24.31%) said Yoruba newspaper was very effective, while 30 (20.83%) said it was effective, 45 (31.25%) said they were not effective and 34 (23.61%) said they did not know. As regards cooperative society, 38 (26.39%) said Yoruba newspapers was very effective, while 37 (25.69%) said it was effective 30 (20.83%) said it was not effective and 39 (27.08%) opined that they did not know. As regard animal husbandry, 30 (20.83%) of the rural women said that Yoruba newspaper was very effective, while 48 (33.33%) said it was effective, 36 (25%) said it was not and 30 (20.83%) said they did not know. In the case of elementary agriculture, 49 (34.03%) of the rural women claimed that Yoruba newspaper was very effective, 34 (23.61%) said it was effective, while 30 (20.83%) said it was not and 31 (21.53%) said they did not know. For food processing 37 (25.69%) of the rural women agreed that Yoruba newspaper was very effective in promoting economic development, while 36 (25%) said it was effective 31 (21.53%) said it was not effective and 40 (27.78%) opined that they did not know.

The results in Tables 3, 4, and 5 generally support the fact that television, radio and Yoruba newspapers have great influence on rural women's social, political and economic development.

### Research Question Three

*What type of problems do rural women encounter in their use of mass media?*

Analysis related to this research question is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Problems encountered by rural women in their use of mass media

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		No	%	No	%
1	Problems of electricity	104	72.22	40	27.78
2	Inappropriate broadcast time on radio and television.	58	40.28	86	59.72
3	Inability to give immediate feedback to radio and television programmes.	90	62.50	54	37.50
4	Lack of money to buy newspapers regularly.	120	83.30	24	16.70
5	Few programmes in Yoruba language.	128	88.89	16	11.11
6	Speed of broadcast too fast for me to comprehend.	57	39.58	87	60.42
7	Newspaper letterings are too small for me to read.	102	70.83	42	29.17
8	Poor reception of broadcast programmes.	64	44.44	80	55.56
9	Late arrival / non arrival sometimes of newspapers.	98	68.06	46	31.94
10	My religious belief prevents me from listening or viewing certain programmes.	54	37.50	70	62.50

As shown in Table 6, one of the problems encountered by rural women was that of electricity. No wonder then that 104 (72.22%) of the rural women agreed that electricity was a problem militating against their effective use of the mass media, while only 40 (27.78%) said electricity was not a problem. Another problem considered was inappropriate broadcast time on radio and television. A high proportion of respondents, 86 (59.72%) of the rural women did not agree that wrong timing of broadcasts militate against effective use of mass media, while 58 (40.28%) agreed that broadcast time was inappropriate for radio. In the case of inability to give immediate feedback to radio and television stations a great proportion 90 (62.50%) of the respondents agreed while 54 (37.50%) disagreed.

A great number of rural women 120 (83.30%) agreed that lack of money was one of the problems militating against effective use of mass media, while 24 (16.70%) disagreed. Programmes transmitted in English and other languages other than Yoruba militate against effective use of mass media. That is why 128 (88.89%) of the rural women agreed on this point, while 16(11.11%) disagreed. The largest number 87 (60.42%) did not perceive that broadcasts were too fast for listeners, while 57 (39.58%) perceived that broadcasts were too fast for listeners. Therefore, majority of the respondents did not see it as a problem militating against effective use of mass

media. Also, 102 (70.83%) agreed that size of printed letters in Yoruba newspapers militate against the effective use of mass media, while 42 (29.17%) disagreed.

Most rural women generally disagreed that poor reception is a problem militating against effective use of mass media. This is because 80 (55.56%) disagreed while 64 (44.44%) agreed. Also, 98 (68.06%) of the rural women agreed that late arrival of Yoruba newspapers was a problem militating against the effective use of mass media, while 46 representing 31.94% opined it was not a problem. Finally, 70 (62.50%) of the respondents disagreed that religious belief prevented them from listening or viewing certain programmes, while 54 (37.50%) agreed.

### **Hypotheses Testing**

The research questions four and five were addressed using hypotheses one and two.

#### **Hypothesis 1**

*There is no significant difference in the responses of literate and that of illiterate rural women regarding the influence of mass media on their social, economic and political development.*

The result of chi-square for the hypothesis is as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Chi-square result on the responses of literate and illiterate rural women regarding the impact of mass media on their social, political, and economic development

S/N	Items	Mean Values		Chi-Square	df.	Table value
		Literate	Illiterate			
1	Yes	37 (33.22)	67.75 (70.78)	2.28	1	3.84
2	No	9 (12.78)	31 (67.22)			

From the results in Table 7, the table value of 3.84 at 0.05 alpha level is higher than the calculated value of 2.28, the hypothesis, which states no significant difference in the responses of literate and that of illiterate rural women regarding the influence of mass media on their social, economic and political development, is therefore accepted. In other words, it means no significant difference exists in the responses of literate and illiterate rural women on the influence of mass media on their social, political and economic development.

## Hypothesis 2

*There is no significant difference between the responses of rural women farmers and that of rural women traders on the impact of mass media on their social, political and economic development.*

The result of the analysis related to this hypothesis is as shown in Table 9.

Table 8: Chi-square result on the responses of rural women farmers and traders regarding the impact of mass media on their development

S/N	Items	Mean Values		Chi-Square	df.	Table value
		Literate	Illiterate			
1	Yes	50 (49.83)	54 (54.17)	0.0040	1	3.84
2	No	19 (19.17)	9 (20.83)			

As shown in Table 8, the table value of 3.84 and is higher than the calculated value of 0.0040, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the responses of rural women farmers and that of rural women traders regarding the

influence of mass media on their social, political and economic development is accepted.

### **Summary of the Results**

From the results derived from the analysis of the research data the following are the summary of the findings.

1. Majority of the respondents indicated that they had access to mass media (television, radio and Yoruba newspapers).
2. Most of the respondents also agreed that the mass media had positive impact on their social, political, and economic development. In fact, they agreed that they had benefited through the programme presented through the mass media particularly, radio and television.
3. Also, majority of the respondents opined that lack of epileptic supply and lack of financial means, among others, militate against their effective use of mass media, particularly radio and television.
4. The findings also revealed that rural women in Kwara State listened and view programmes aired mostly in Yoruba languages, as a result of their level of literacy.
5. No significant differences were established between rural women who are literate and those who are illiterate and between those who are farmers and those who are traders in their perception on the impact of mass media on their social, political, and economic development.

## **Discussion**

Based on the results of the findings, it is established that rural women in Kwara State had access to most of the mass media discussed in the project such as television, radio and newspapers no matter the level of their education. Majority of them also indicated that mass media were very effective in promoting their social, political and economic development. The social influence could be seen in their enhancement of literacy level, family planning, family care, simple hygiene, prevention and curing of disease, self-discipline, effecting changes in social belief, and environmental sanitation.

In economic development, mass media were established to be effective in enhancing their economic and professional career, community/self help projects, cooperative society, animal husbandry, elementary agriculture, and food-processing. As regards political development like performing their civic duties respondents agreed that mass media were effective in promoting political development of the rural women in the areas of performing civic duties such as voting, and respecting law and order.

The effectiveness of mass media roles is constrained by such factors like limited financial resources, lack of or epileptic electricity supply, lack of technician in rural areas to repair spoilt media (radio and television), religious beliefs, late arrival of newspapers and few nature of programmes (radio and television) and newspapers in Yoruba language.

## **Limitations of the Study**

An interview guide was used to gather data for the study. The information gathered is thus self-report which may not give absolute, correct information about the use and impact of mass media on rural women. This approach could have been strengthened by the use of observation and focus-groups. Also, the study focused on the mass media as primarily ritualised (habitual use for diversion or in order to consume time), it did not specifically addressed instrumental or purposive/utilitarian use for informational, that is, seeking media content.

Furthermore, indexes used in the interview guide were based on the measures available in this study and which were not proved in previous studies. The researchers recognise that other measures examining the impact of mass media on women's political, economic, and development would have been developed before. Despite these limitations, the social, economic, and political development issues addressed in this study are current and relevant in the developing nations, and use of mass media for informal education of rural women are important, Thus, the gains for the research far outweigh the aforementioned limitations.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

There is the need to include the impacts of other mass media like, films, Magazines, on the social, economic, and political development of rural and urban women. Furthermore, research can examine, specifically in detail, the effectiveness of each of these media medium on women development on national scales.

### **Conclusions**

Though change is a complex and difficult phenomenon, changing societal conceptions of women roles and raising the awareness of women, can be brought about most rapidly with the help of mass media. The mass media specialists need to make sure that what they put out for consumption is not at variance with the effort of the government, at giving rural women a positive self image and at raising their level of consciousness, and also equipping to contribute meaningfully to social, economic, and political development of the society.

With the pervasiveness of mass media, human beings do not live in information vacuum; rather, they are part of the complex communicational network which influences their views and interactions with the world (Serban, 2004). With the mass, it is clear that given the opportunity, the rural women, through their collective efforts, can contribute to national development. Rural women are using mass media for their social, political and economic development. The one that has most impact on the rural women social development was radio because about ninety-seven percent of the rural women claimed that they had access to radio and also agreed that it made a greater impact on them.

The analysis of the data presented in the study revealed that rural women's source of information is through extension programmes on mass media. The areas where rural women need information mostly are those of health and agriculture. Contrary to the belief that Yoruba newspapers do not have impact on rural women because of their level of literacy, we discovered that rural women actually used newspapers. According to them, there are many things to learn in the Yoruba newspapers.

The mass media programmes should now focus on the quality and type of education which our rural women receive. This is because the kind of education determines what skills rural women acquire and consequently, in what area and at what level the rural women would feature in their contribution to national growth.

Education should also be given to the masses on the need to possess most of the mass media such as radio, television, newspapers, etc, as well as on utilising it in knowing some of the programmes they broadcast and time of broadcast.

Also, media stations particularly radio stations beaming signals to rural areas should be enlightened on how to explore the cultures of such areas. Thus, the local language of such areas should be used. As a matter of urgency, the researcher is calling on the

Federal Government to encourage state radio stations to embark on rural development programmes.

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