



Research Article

**Oramedia as A Tool for Mobilising Women for Community Development during August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria**

Ozumba Emeka<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Nwammuo Angela Nkiru<sup>2</sup> and Prof Venatus Agbanu<sup>3</sup>

About Article

Article History

Submission: December 10, 2025

Acceptance: January 15, 2026

Publication: January 28, 2026

Keywords:

*Oramedia, August Meetings, Women Mobilisation, Community Development, Participatory Communication*

About the Author

**Ozumba Emeka<sup>1</sup>**  
**Prof. Nwammuo Angela Nkiru<sup>2</sup>**  
**Prof Venatus Agbanu<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State.  
E-mail [eo Zion@gmail.com](mailto:eo Zion@gmail.com)  
+2348032889909

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State  
E-mail : [an.nwammuo@coou.edu.ng](mailto:an.nwammuo@coou.edu.ng)  
+2347083020888

<sup>3</sup>Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.  
Email [vn.agbanu@coou.edu.ng](mailto:vn.agbanu@coou.edu.ng)  
+23408033078351

ABSTRACT

The study dealt with the role of oramedia as a tool for indigenous communication such as folk songs, drama, storytelling, and traditional dances in mobilising women for community development during August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria. A mixed-method research design was employed, the study integrated quantitative survey data from 270 women leaders chosen from a population of 2770 across Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu States with qualitative insights from 24 purposively selected in-depth interviews. Findings indicate that performance-based oramedia, particularly traditional dance, folk songs, and folk drama, remains the dominant and most effective tool for mobilization. Oramedia effectively conveys development messages on health, sanitation, unity, peacebuilding, and economic empowerment, translating complex information into culturally resonant, emotionally engaging, and actionable forms. However, declining participation among younger women, attributed to generational shifts toward digital media, emerged as the most significant challenge affecting its impact. The study used Participatory Communication Theory, to highlight its capacity to foster dialogue, collective action, and community ownership. The findings noted the continued relevance of culturally grounded communication strategies while emphasising the need for strategic adaptation, integration with digital platforms, performer capacity building, and resource support. The study contributed to development communication scholarship by demonstrating that oramedia is both functional and adaptable, capable of sustaining women-led mobilisation in evolving socio-cultural and technological contexts.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Community development in Africa relied on participatory, culturally grounded communication systems that resonate with local realities. In Southeast Nigeria, women's August Meetings constitute one of the most enduring grassroots platforms for mobilisation, collective action, and socio-economic development. These meetings bring together women across age groups and social strata to deliberate on issues affecting their communities, including health, sanitation, education, economic empowerment, peacebuilding, and infrastructure development (Adekunle, 2017).

Central to the effectiveness of August Meetings is the strategic use of *oramedia* indigenous communication forms such as folk songs, drama, storytelling, traditional dances, proverbs, and communal announcements which facilitate shared meaning, emotional engagement, and collective ownership of development initiatives (Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2019; Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021). Within development communication scholarship, it is recognised as a people-centred communication system fundamentally anchored in orality, performance, and communal participation. Unlike modern mass media, which often operate through one-way transmission, *oramedia* thrives on interaction, immediacy, and cultural familiarity. Through music, dramatization, and storytelling, development messages are simplified, culturally localised, and embedded within everyday social practices, thereby enhancing accessibility and comprehension, particularly among non-literate and semi-literate audiences (Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021; Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2019).

However, Nigeria's contemporary communication environment is experiencing significant transformation driven by the expansion of digital media, social networking platforms, and mobile technologies. These shifts have reshaped patterns of information access and

engagement, especially among younger women and urban populations (Waisbord, 2019; Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2020). As a result, questions have emerged regarding the continued relevance, adaptability, and communicative efficacy of *oramedia* within women-led development platforms such as August Meetings. Although these meetings remain active across Southeast Nigeria, generational transitions, urbanisation, and increasing preference for digital communication channels appear to be redefining modes of participation and levels of engagement (Servaes, 2020; Madianou, 2018).

Empirical evidence on the contemporary functioning of *oramedia* within August Meetings including the specific communicative forms employed, the nature of messages conveyed, contextual challenges, and the conditions under which *oramedia* remains effective remains limited. Existing scholarship is largely dominated by conceptual analyses of indigenous communication systems or fragmented case studies, with insufficient integration of quantitative data and in-depth qualitative community perspectives. This empirical gap restricts evidence-based policy formulation and undermines efforts to strategically strengthen women-centred development communication in Nigeria and comparable contexts (Asemah et al., 2021; Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2019; Waisbord, 2019).

Against this background, the present study investigates the role of *oramedia* in mobilising women for community development during August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria. By combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interview insights from Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu States, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the forms, functions, challenges, and enabling factors associated with *oramedia*-based mobilization. The study contributes to contemporary development communication scholarship by situating indigenous media practices within

changing socio-cultural and technological contexts.

### 1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Women's August Meetings have historically served as important platforms for grassroots mobilisation and community development in Southeast Nigeria. Central to these meetings is the use of *oramedia* indigenous communication forms such as songs, drama, and storytelling which traditionally support inclusive participation and culturally relevant message dissemination.

However, Nigeria's contemporary communication landscape is increasingly shaped by digital media, changing social values, and shifting generational preferences. Although development communication literature recognises the relevance of indigenous communication systems, existing studies are largely theoretical or historically focused. There is limited empirical evidence examining how *oramedia* is currently utilised within August Meetings, the forms it takes, the messages it conveys, and the challenges affecting its use in present-day contexts. This lack of systematic, context-specific evidence constrains informed policy decisions and weakens efforts to adapt women-centred communication strategies to evolving media realities. The study therefore addresses the problem of insufficient empirical understanding of the contemporary role and effectiveness of *oramedia* in August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of *oramedia* communication forms in mobilising women for community development during August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria, in specific terms, this work intends to:

1. Identify the dominant *oramedia* forms used for mobilizing women during August Meetings.

2. Examine the types of development messages conveyed through *oramedia* during August Meetings.
3. Assess the challenges affecting the effective use of *oramedia* for women's mobilization during August Meetings.

### 2.1 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What *oramedia* forms are used for mobilizing women during August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria?
2. What development messages are conveyed through *oramedia* during August Meetings?
3. What challenges affect the use of *oramedia* in mobilizing women for community development during August Meetings?

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Oramedia and Indigenous Communication in Development Contexts

Indigenous communication systems have long been recognised as foundational to participatory development processes in Africa. Scholars argue that development initiatives are more likely to succeed when communication strategies are culturally embedded and socially legitimised, drawing on locally meaningful forms of expression that resonate with community values (Onyenankeya & Salawu, 2018; Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021). Indigenous communication forms often termed traditional media, folk media, or *oramedia* include locally produced, culturally situated practices such as storytelling, song, drama, and communal performance, which are rooted in collective memory and social life (Okocha, Onyemечи, & Okujeni, 2024; Onyenankeya & Salawu, 2018).

Wilson (2008) conceptualised *oramedia* as "people's media," emphasising its reliance on oral traditions, performance, and communal participation. Through songs, drama, dances, and

storytelling, communities articulate shared values, negotiate social norms, and mobilize collective action. Unlike externally driven communication campaigns, oramedia allows communities to define development priorities in their own voices and symbols (Ugbajah, 1995).

Recent empirical studies indicate that indigenous and performance-based communication forms enhance audience attention, message recall, and emotional engagement, making them particularly suitable for behaviour-oriented communication such as health promotion, sanitation, social cohesion, and community mobilisation (Tufté, 2017; Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021). Participatory folk drama, music, and communal performances enable audiences to identify with familiar characters and culturally grounded narratives, thereby encouraging reflection and collective action rooted in everyday social experience (Waisbord, 2019; Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2019).

Within women-centred development contexts such as August Meetings, performance-based oramedia continues to be emphasised in the literature as a key mobilisation strategy due to its capacity to foster unity, stimulate participation, and reinforce shared responsibility for development initiatives (Servaes, 2020; Madianou, 2018). These forms remain central to participatory development communication frameworks that prioritise dialogue, cultural relevance, and community ownership over top-down information dissemination.

### **3.1.1 Oramedia as a Tool for Mobilization and Collective Action**

Mobilisation remains a core objective of development communication, referring to processes that stimulate collective participation, shared responsibility, and community-driven action in development initiatives (Tufté, 2017; Waisbord, 2019). Contemporary scholarship emphasises that effective mobilisation depends on communication strategies that are inclusive,

dialogic, and capable of strengthening collective identity and social cohesion (Servaes, 2020). Indigenous communication forms such as oramedia align with these requirements by embedding messages within culturally familiar spaces, shared histories, and everyday social practices, thereby enhancing communal ownership and participation (Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021; Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2019). Contemporary development communication scholarship underscores the capacity of participatory performance-based communication to reposition audiences from passive message receivers to active participants in social change processes (Tufté, 2017; Waisbord, 2019). When embedded within familiar cultural contexts, folk songs, drama, and communal performances function not only as channels of information but also as catalysts for dialogue, collective reflection, and coordinated action (Servaes, 2020; Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021). This perspective aligns with evidence from community-based communication studies, which show that performance-oriented indigenous media can stimulate immediate collective responses such as communal sanitation efforts, resource pooling, and cooperative development initiatives (Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2019).

However, scholars caution that the effectiveness of oramedia is contingent on participation rather than mere performance. Recent development communication scholarship cautions that when indigenous or traditional media are deployed in a mechanistic or top-down manner, their participatory potential may be undermined, resulting in reduced community ownership and limited developmental impact (Servaes, 2020; Waisbord, 2019). Contemporary studies emphasise that the effectiveness of such media depends not merely on symbolic performance but on dialogic, action-oriented engagement that allows community members to shape both the message and the process (Tufté, 2017; Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2021).

Qualitative evidence from community-based communication research similarly highlights the importance of participatory facilitation over performative display alone in sustaining meaningful mobilisation outcomes (Nwabueze & Ebeze, 2019).

### **3.1.2 Oramedia and the Communication of Development Messages**

Beyond mobilisation, oramedia plays a crucial role in conveying development messages in accessible and relatable forms. Singhal and Entertainment–Education (EE) remains a widely endorsed communication framework for social change, emphasising the strategic use of storytelling, dramatisation, and performance to combine entertainment with educational content (Shen, Han, & Niederdeppe, 2018). Contemporary studies demonstrate that narrative-based and dramatised communication can significantly enhance audience engagement, message recall, and behavioural intentions, particularly in health and environmental communication contexts (Tukachinsky, Walter, & Saucier, 2020; de Graaf, Sanders, & Hoeken, 2016).

Recent empirical research further suggests that culturally embedded performances are especially effective for communicating health and sanitation messages because they translate technical information into familiar social experiences and everyday practices, thereby improving comprehension among diverse audiences (Kreuter et al., 2019; Dutta-Bergman, 2020). Within community-based development settings, folk songs, drama, and participatory performances have been shown to foster emotional involvement and collective reflection, which are critical precursors to behaviour-oriented communication outcomes (Obregon & Tufte, 2017).

However, current development communication scholarship cautions that communication interventions regardless of how culturally resonant cannot independently guarantee

sustainable social change. Scholars emphasise the importance of supportive leadership structures, institutional backing, and material resources in reinforcing communication-induced behavioural shifts (Waisbord, 2019; Servaes & Malikhao, 2020). This perspective underscores the need to situate oramedia practices within broader socio-institutional contexts to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness in women-led development spaces.

### **3.1.3 Challenges Facing Oramedia in Contemporary Contexts**

Despite its strengths, oramedia faces several challenges in the contemporary communication environment. One of the most frequently cited concerns in the literature is the generational divide in media preferences. Younger audiences, exposed to digital and social media platforms, may perceive traditional communication forms as outdated (Servaes, 2008; Waisbord, 2014). The quantitative findings of this current study indicate that declining participation among younger women constitutes the most significant challenge to oramedia use during August Meetings. Qualitative narratives corroborate this result, highlighting preferences for WhatsApp, Facebook, and video-based communication. However, other potential constraints such as language differences and lack of trained performers were not identified as significant, suggesting that cultural familiarity remains strong across communities (Waisbord, 2014).

## **4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is anchored on Participatory Communication Theory. It embraces foregrounds dialogue, mutual learning, and community ownership as central to sustainable development processes (Servaes & Malikhao, 2020; Obregón & Tufte, 2017). The theory challenges linear and top-down models of communication, arguing instead for horizontal interactions through which communities actively define their development priorities and collectively negotiate solutions (Waisbord, 2019).

This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant to the study of oramedia, as indigenous communication forms are inherently dialogic, performative, and community-driven. Through storytelling, call-and-response songs, dramatisation, and collective performances, community members do not merely receive messages but participate actively in meaning-making and mobilization processes (Servaes & Malikhao, 2020). Such interactions position communication as a social practice embedded within everyday cultural life rather than as an external intervention.

Participatory communication theory also provides a useful lens for understanding contemporary challenges facing oramedia-based mobilisation. Declining youth participation and competition from modern media platforms reflect shifts in communicative spaces rather than the irrelevance of indigenous media forms. Recent scholarship suggests that adaptive integration where culturally rooted communication practices coexist with digital and hybrid platforms may enhance inclusiveness, relevance, and sustainability without eroding community ownership (Waisbord, 2019; Obregón & Tufte, 2017).

## 5.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method research design, combining survey and in-depth interview (IDI) methods to examine the effectiveness of oramedia in mobilising women for community development during August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria (Creswell, 2022). The survey captured quantitative insights on forms of oramedia and their perceived effectiveness, while IDIs provided rich, contextual qualitative perspectives. Mixed enhanced validity, credibility, and analytical depth (Flick, 2018).

The study was conducted across four states in Southeast Nigeria, such as Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu States, selected for their enduring August Meeting traditions and well-

established women's associations. To ensure adequate representation of both urban and rural contexts where August Meetings are actively practiced, specific local government areas were purposively selected in each state.

In Abia State, the study focused on Umuahia North Local Government Area, representing an urban setting, and Bende Local Government Area, representing a predominantly rural community with a strong history of women-led collective action. In Anambra State, Awka South Local Government Area was selected to reflect urban-based August Meeting activities, while Aguata Local Government Area was included for its vibrant rural women's associations and sustained use of indigenous communication practices. In Ebonyi State, the study covered Abakaliki Local Government Area, representing an urban center, and Afikpo North Local Government Area, known for its culturally grounded women's groups and active community mobilization through August Meetings.

In Enugu State, Enugu East Local Government Area was selected as an urban hub with organized women's networks, while Nsukka Local Government Area was chosen to represent rural and semi-urban communities where August Meetings remain central to grassroots development efforts. These selected areas provided a balanced and context-sensitive platform for examining women's participation, communication practices, and community mobilisation across the Southeast geopolitical zone.

The study population comprised 2,770 registered women leaders coordinating community development activities. A sample of 270 respondents was drawn using Dusick's (2014) adaptation of Yamane's (1967) formula, ensuring proportional representation. Twenty-four women leaders were purposively selected for qualitative interviews. The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique for the survey and stratified

purposive sampling for qualitative participants. Four states in Southeast Nigeria, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu, were purposively selected for their strong August Meeting traditions and active women's associations. From these, one senatorial district per state was selected: Abia Central, Anambra Central, Ebonyi South, and Enugu North. Within each district, one Local Government Area was purposively chosen based on active August Meeting structures: Umuahia North, Awka South, Afikpo North, and Nsukka. Two communities were selected from each LGA, yielding a total of eight communities: Umuahia Ibeku and Nkwoegwu (Abia), Awka Town and Amawbia (Anambra), Afikpo Town and Unwana (Ebonyi), and Nsukka Town and Obukpa (Enugu). In each community, respondents were selected using systematic random sampling from attendance lists and local registers of women who participate in August Meetings. For the qualitative component, stratified purposive sampling ensured representation across senatorial districts, age groups, leadership roles, and length of

participation, capturing diverse perspectives on oramedia and community mobilization.

The study utilised a structured questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale to measure the forms, effectiveness, and challenges of oramedia, complemented by an in-depth interview guide containing semi-structured questions to explore participants' experiences and the contextual factors influencing their engagement.

Content validity was ensured through literature review and expert input; construct and face validity through pilot testing. Reliability was verified with Cronbach's alpha = 0.82 and inter-rater reliability for qualitative coding.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 20 with descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation, t-tests, regression). Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, integrating deductive and inductive coding.

## 6.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### Research Question 1 / Objective 1

#### Oramedia Forms Used for Mobilization

**Table 1:** An Inquiry into the Use of Oramedia Forms for Mobilizing Participants in August Meetings

| Oramedia Form       | Mean (M) | Decision |
|---------------------|----------|----------|
| Traditional dance   | 3.14     | Accepted |
| Folk songs          | 3.04     | Accepted |
| Folk drama          | 2.93     | Accepted |
| Storytelling        | 2.61     | Accepted |
| Proverbs and idioms | 2.06     | Rejected |

#### Field work, 2025, SPSS

Traditional dance, folk songs, and drama dominate mobilization strategies. Qualitative accounts confirm that these forms are culturally resonant, emotionally engaging, and action-

inducing. The findings echo recent communication scholarship on culturally grounded mobilization strategies (Sefhera, 2024; Okwuowulu et al., 2023; Oseni, 2024)

**Research Question 2 / Objective 2**  
**Oramedia for Conveying Development Messages**

**Table 2:**“Investigating Oramedia as a Tool for Conveying Development Messag

| <b>Development Message Area</b> | <b>Mean (M)</b> | <b>Decision</b> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Health campaigns                | 3.30            | Accepted        |
| Sanitation and hygiene          | 3.27            | Accepted        |
| Unity and peacebuilding         | 3.08            | Accepted        |
| Economic empowerment            | 2.96            | Accepted        |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>               | <b>2.93</b>     | <b>Accepted</b> |

**Field work, 2025, SPSS**

The findings echo contemporary evidence on entertainment-education strategies—showing that dramatizations, songs, and folk performance translate development messages into shared

understanding and observable behaviour (Yadima, 2025; Okanmelu et al., 2025; systematic reviews of edutainment in health communication in sub-Saharan Africa)

**Research Question 3 / Objective 3**

**Table 3: Assessment of Challenges Facing the Use of Oramedia”**

| <b>Challenge Factor</b>                  | <b>Mean (M)</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>Decision</b> |
|--|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Low participation among younger women    | 3.12            | 1.01      | Accepted        |
| Some women donot take oramedia seriously | 2.78            | 0.95      | Accepted        |
| Lack of trained cultural performers      | 2.42            | 1.07      | Rejected        |
| Differences in dialect or language       | 2.31            | 0.96      | Rejected        |
| Oversimplification of development issues | 2.18            | 0.91      | Rejected        |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>                        | <b>2.56</b>     | <b>—</b>  | <b>Accepted</b> |

**Acceptable means score = 2.5**

**Field work, 2025. SPSS**

Declining youth participation is the main constraint, reflecting generational shifts toward digital media (Servaes, 2008; Waisbord, 2014). Other challenges are less significant. Despite these, oramedia remains relevant when adapted strategically and supported by community leadership and resources.

**7.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study reveals that oramedia remains a central tool for mobilising women during August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria, with performance-based forms such as traditional dance, folk songs,

and drama being the most effective. Quantitative data indicated that traditional dance recorded the highest acceptance (M = 3.14), followed closely by folk songs (M = 3.04) and folk drama (M = 2.93). Storytelling was moderately effective, while proverbs and idioms were least utilized. The qualitative evidence strongly supports this pattern. Across Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu, participants consistently highlighted songs, drama, dance, storytelling, and town criers as culturally resonant and emotionally engaging tools. Abia respondents described folk drama and traditional songs as “most effective,” Ebonyi

participants emphasized town criers, folk drama, and songs accompanied by dance, while Enugu respondents highlighted drama and dance as culturally unifying. In Anambra, short folk songs were particularly valued for their ability to “speak straight to the heart.”

The convergence of quantitative and qualitative data confirms that oramedia's effectiveness lies in its performative, participatory, and emotionally engaging nature. This observation aligns with the characterization of oramedia as “people's media,” rooted in collective participation and communal ownership (Wilson, 2008; Ugbajah, 1995). Furthermore, it corroborates the assertion by Singhal and Rogers (1999) that music, dramatization, and dance enhance audience attention, retention, and identification. However, Kidd (1984) and White (2003) caution that traditional performances may lose their impact if delivered mechanically rather than participatorily, emphasizing the necessity of community engagement for effective mobilization.

Beyond mobilization, oramedia serves as an effective conduit for conveying development messages. Quantitative results demonstrated strong agreement that oramedia facilitates health campaigns ( $M = 3.30$ ), sanitation and hygiene ( $M = 3.27$ ), unity and peacebuilding ( $M = 3.08$ ), and economic empowerment ( $M = 2.96$ ). Qualitative insights provide further depth: dramatized sanitation messages led to tangible behavioral outcomes such as the construction of waste pits in Abia and community clean-ups in Anambra. In Ebonyi, participants noted health dramatizations and expos, while in Enugu, drama enabled non-literate women to understand proper waste disposal practices. Songs and short plays were repeatedly described as memorable and action-oriented, translating information into collective understanding and practical behaviour. These findings are consistent with recent evidence on entertainment-education and participatory communication, which shows that combining

entertainment and education enhances social change processes and audience engagement (Yadima, 2025; systematic reviews of entertainment-education effects on health outcomes, 2024). Contemporary participatory communication perspectives further affirm that two-way dialogue and active community involvement are critical for translating messages into action (Akinwale, 2023; Fadipe & Molale, 2024).

However, recent critiques note that communication alone is insufficient for sustainable change, highlighting the continued importance of enabling social and institutional structures and addressing power dynamics in development communication practice. Despite its strengths, the study identified challenges that could affect oramedia's continued relevance. Declining participation among younger women emerged as the most significant constraint, reflecting generational shifts in media consumption and preferences for digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and videos. Urban migration, work pressures, funding constraints, and the cost of costumes and rehearsals were also highlighted. Nevertheless, participants consistently affirmed that oramedia remains relevant and effective when appropriately resourced and strategically adapted. These findings echo recent arguments that participatory communication frameworks must adapt to social and technological change to sustain legitimacy and impact, especially as digital platforms and community-driven practices reshape how messages circulate and audiences engage (Liu et al., 2025; participatory communication review, 2025).

The preference for modern media among younger women aligns with broader evidence of generational shifts in media use, where younger cohorts increasingly seek information and connect through interactive and digital communication channels. Overall, the study demonstrates that Oramedia is not merely

symbolic but functional, emotionally engaging, and adaptable; its effectiveness depends on participatory delivery, cultural resonance, and enabling support structures such as community leadership, resource availability, and collective trust factors documented as critical for sustainable participatory communication in development contexts. Traditional performance-based forms continue to play a vital role in mobilizing communities and facilitating development communication, translating messages into shared understanding and collective action

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

Oramedia remains a potent tool for mobilising women and conveying development-oriented messages during August Meetings in Southeast Nigeria. Performance-based forms such as traditional dance, folk songs, and drama are particularly effective, whereas proverbs and idioms play a more limited role. Despite the challenges posed by generational shifts, urbanization, and resource constraints, oramedia continues to retain cultural relevance and emotional resonance.

However, the persistence of development communication gaps in the study area can be attributed to structural and contextual factors. Limited access to resources, insufficient integration with modern communication channels, and uneven participation of community leaders and stakeholders hinder the consistent and widespread impact of oramedia. These factors explain why, despite its demonstrated effectiveness, communities continue to face gaps in health, sanitation, unity, and economic empowerment messaging. The sustained effectiveness of oramedia therefore depends not only on participatory delivery and adaptive strategies but also on addressing these structural barriers, ensuring community ownership, and leveraging both traditional and modern communication channels to reinforce development objectives.

## 9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are the following:

1. **Integrate Oramedia with Modern Communication Channels**  
To address generational shifts and urbanisation challenges, development initiatives should combine traditional performance-based forms with radio, social media, and mobile platforms. This hybrid approach can expand reach and engagement, particularly among younger women who increasingly prefer digital media.
2. **Strengthen Community Leadership and Participation**  
Community leaders and local stakeholders should be actively involved in planning, delivering, and monitoring Oramedia activities. Their participation ensures cultural legitimacy, encourages collective action, and enhances the credibility of development messages.
3. **Provide Adequate Resources and Support Structures**  
Effective mobilization through Oramedia requires sufficient logistical, financial, and technical resources. Policymakers and development agencies should ensure funding, materials, and training are available to sustain performance-based interventions.
4. **Promote Adaptive and Participatory Strategies**  
Oramedia interventions should be continuously adapted to local contexts, audience preferences, and emerging social changes. Engaging women in co-creating performances and content ensures emotional resonance, ownership, and practical relevance of development messages.

## References

- Akinwale, A. (2023). Participatory communication for sustainable social change. *International Journal of English Language and Communication Studies*.
- Asemah, E. S., Nwammuo, A. N., & Nkwam-

- Uwaoma, A. O. A. (2021). *Indigenous communication systems and participatory development in Nigeria*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers.
- Creswell, J. W. (2022). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dutta, M. J. (2011). *Communicating social change: Structure, culture, and agency*. Routledge.
- Fadipe, & Molale. (2024). Participatory communication for sustainable social change. *International Journal of English Language and Communication Studies*.
- Kidd, R. (1984). The popular theatre movement in Africa. *Media Development*, 31(3), 7–12.
- Liu, X., et al. (2025). Participatory communication frameworks for social change in evolving media contexts. *Journal of Communication for Development*, 12(2), 45–62.
- Luwaga, G. (2025). Participatory communication — empowerment or illusion? *Critical analysis highlighting structural constraints*.
- Madianou, M. (2018). *Migration and new media: Transnational families and polymedia*. Routledge.
- Manyozo, L. (2012). *Media, communication and development: Three approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Mefalopulos, P. (2008). *Development communication sourcebook: Broadening the boundaries of communication*. World Bank.
- Nwabueze, C., & Ebeze, U. C. (2019). Indigenous communication and community mobilisation for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Journal of Development Communication*, 30(2), 15–28.
- Obregón, R., & Tufte, T. (2017). *Health communication in development: Participatory approaches*. Routledge.
- Ojebuyi, B., & Salawu, B. (2020). Digital media and youth engagement in Nigeria. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 12(1), 55–72.
- Okocha, I., Onyemechi, P., & Okujeni, A. (2024). Folk media and social mobilization in Nigeria: Contemporary insights. *International Journal of Communication Research*, 14(1), 101–119.
- Okanmelu, T., et al. (2025). Systematic reviews of edutainment in health communication in sub-Saharan Africa. *African Communication Research Journal*, 9(2), 33–50.
- Okwuowulu, C., et al. (2023). Culturally grounded mobilization strategies in community development. *Global Journal of Communication Studies*, 7(1), 25–41.
- Onyenankeya, K., & Salawu, B. (2018). Indigenous communication and participatory development in Africa. *African Journal of Development Communication*, 6(1), 15–34.
- Oseni, A. (2024). Traditional media for community engagement in Nigeria. *Journal of Media and Development*, 11(2), 67–82.
- Servaes, J. (2008). *Communication for development and social change*. SAGE Publications.
- Servaes, J. (2020). *Communication for development and social change* (2nd ed.). Singapore: Springer.
- Servaes, J., & Malikhao, P. (2020). Participatory communication and sustainable development. *Journal of Development Communication*, 31(1), 12–29.
- Sefhera, A. (2024). Culturally grounded mobilization strategies: Insights from African communities. *Journal of Community Media Studies*, 5(1), 44–59.
- Shen, F., Han, J., & Niederdeppe, J. (2018). Entertainment-education for health communication: A systematic review. *Journal of Health Communication*, 23(6), 569–581.
- Tufte, T. (2017). *Communication and social change: A citizen perspective*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tukachinsky, R., Walter, N., & Saucier, D. (2020). Narrative persuasion and entertainment-education. *Media Psychology*, 23(4), 529–555.
- Ugbajah, C. (1995). *People's media and social change in Nigeria*. University of Nigeria Press.
- Waisbord, S. (2014). *The challenges of participatory communication in a digital age*. Routledge.
- Waisbord, S. (2019). *Communication: A post-discipline*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Wilson, D. (2008). *Communication and social change in developing countries*. University of Port Harcourt Press.
- White, S. A. (2003). *Participatory communication: Working for change and development*. SAGE Publications.
- Yadima, G. J. (2025). Leveraging entertainment education for social change in the media. *EDUMALSYS Journal of Research in Education Management*, 3(1), 100–113.