



Research Article

Significance of Podcasts in Alternative Journalism

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

The quick growth of digital communication has changed how news is shared in today's world. One big change is the rise of podcasts as a powerful tool for alternative journalism. Unlike traditional news sources that often face political, business, or editorial limits, podcasts offer open space for many different voices, local stories, and strong conversations that question the usual news topics. This paper looks at how podcasts help with alternative journalism, focusing on their ability to include more people, share information more fairly, and give a platform to groups that are often left out. Using ideas from media freedom and communication for social change, it places podcasts in the bigger picture of digital media. The paper also shows how independent podcasters are now more relevant through the use of media talk shows, especially in areas where mainstream media is limited, unfair, or hard to get. At the same time, the study looks at the challenges, like ethical issues, money problems, and the rules that affect this industry, and points out many opportunities for young people, advocacy, and getting involved in society. Drawing from both research and examples worldwide, the paper argues that podcasts do more than just help alternative journalism. They also help make media more varied and are a key tool for supporting democracy in both rich and poor countries.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Journalism has always been considered important for democracy by keeping people informed, checking on power, and encouraging public discussion. But the trust and freedom of mainstream journalism have come under more pressure because of things like big companies owning media, political control, and editorial decisions driven by profit. In many places, these issues stop traditional media from representing different voices, especially those of people who are often ignored. Because of this, the search for new ways to report news has become stronger, leading to citizen journalism, community media, and now podcasts as new forms of alternative news.

Podcast shows shared online have grown a lot since the 2000s. Their popularity comes from being easy to use, low cost to make, and how they connect creators with listeners in a personal way. Unlike traditional broadcasting, which is controlled by gatekeepers, podcasts let individuals and groups make and share content with more freedom. This is especially appealing to people who want to challenge the usual stories or talk about issues that aren't often covered. Today, podcasts cover a wide range of topics, from politics and deep investigations to culture, identity, and justice, making them one of the most active tools for alternative journalism.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Mainstream journalism is widely acknowledged as essential to democracy and public participation, yet it increasingly falls short in delivering inclusive, independent, and representative information because of factors such as corporate ownership, political interference, editorial constraints, and limited accessibility. As a result, many marginalized groups remain unheard and public discourse becomes less diverse. With the advancement of digital communication, podcasts have become an important platform for alternative journalism by offering openness, ease of access, and opportunities for independent storytelling. However, there is still limited understanding of

how effective podcasts truly are, the challenges they encounter, and the extent to which they contribute to media freedom and democratic engagement. The central concern of this study is therefore to examine how podcasts operate as credible channels for alternative journalism, how they encourage participation and representation, and what obstacles hinder their ability to fully perform this role.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives guided the study:

- i. To examine how podcasts contribute to the growth of alternative journalism in contemporary media environments.
- ii. To assess the extent to which podcasts promote inclusiveness of marginalised voices.
- iii. To analyse how podcasts support citizen engagement in democratic participation.
- iv. To identify the regulatory challenges facing podcasters in their role as alternative media actors.
- v. To explore the opportunities podcasts create for independent creators in the developing contexts.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Alternative Journalism in the Digital Age

Alternative journalism tries to challenge the usual ways of media and gives new views that might not be heard elsewhere. In the past, it was in the form of pamphlets, underground newspapers, and community radio. In the digital age, these have moved online with blogs, social media, and podcasts being important ways to share different opinions. What makes podcasts stand out in this is their flexibility and ease of use: they combine the storytelling of radio with the interactive nature of digital platforms, allowing for a closer connection with listeners.

Often made by people or small teams not controlled by big media companies, they give space for local voices to grow. This spread of

control fits with bigger changes in media where people taking part in communication is seen as important for social change. By letting communities that mainstream news ignores speak out, podcasts support the idea of a media world with many different voices.

3.1.1 Relevance and Significance

The importance of podcasts in alternative journalism comes from their role as both media and cultural activities. As media, they provide news, analysis, and stories that might not be covered in traditional places (Bonini, 2015). As culture, they build community, help shape identity, and bring people together through conversations between listeners and creators, which helps people get involved in society (Lindgren, 2016). This is especially important in places where free press is limited or where media being controlled by a few narrows what can be talked about.

In parts of the world where people don't have much access to books or newspapers, podcasts have become a popular way to talk about important issues like how governments work, fairness for all people, and equality between men and women. These shows let people share stories and discussion without needing to read or write, which makes them especially useful in places where it's hard to get information through traditional ways. In other parts of the world, podcasts have also become a powerful way to challenge what the mainstream media says, especially when it comes to politics and investigations. This shows that podcasts are becoming a big part of how news is shared around the globe.

This paper looks at how podcasts are used in alternative journalism. It talks about what makes podcasts special, how they deal with ethical issues, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they offer. The paper places podcasts within some important ideas about media, like how media can be more open and public, and how communication can help bring about social change (Couldry & Curran, 2003). It

uses examples from around the world to show how podcasts are making a difference. The paper also talks about the good and bad sides of using podcasts in journalism, especially when it comes to making sure everyone's included, being reliable, and being able to keep going over time. Overall, the paper says that while podcasts aren't the perfect solution, they help make journalism more diverse and accessible, which is very important in today's news world. To understand the role of podcasts in alternative journalism, it's helpful to look at some key theories.

Alternative journalism isn't just about making different kinds of news; it's about changing how news is made and who gets to tell the story. Podcasts fit into this by supporting ideas like media being more open and participatory, and media that helps bring about social change. Media democratization is about making sure that everyone has a chance to share their voice (Banda, 2010). In the traditional media system, big companies control most news, which makes it hard for ordinary people to contribute. But podcasts are different because they are cheaper to make and share. This lets people, groups, and activists create their own content without needing big organizations. This supports a more open and inclusive media environment where people both make and receive news from each other. Also, the way listeners can interact with podcasts through feedback and social media.

This makes them even more powerful tools for media democratization. Radical media theory, as described by Chris Atton, is about creating media that challenges the way mainstream media is run. It focuses on values like being inclusive, diverse, and involving the community. Podcasts show these values by giving a voice to people who are often left out of traditional news. Unlike regular news shows that are controlled by big companies, podcasts let people from all walks of life share their stories. This includes groups that talk about fairness between men and women or communities that share their culture. These podcasts change who controls the media, which shows how powerful alternative journalism can be.

The idea of the public sphere, first described by Jürgen Habermas, is about people coming together to talk about important issues. While mainstream media used to help with this, it's now often influenced by money and politics, which makes it hard for real discussions to happen. Alternative journalism, including podcasts, creates what Nancy Fraser calls “counter-publics”, which are spaces where people who are not heard in mainstream media can share their views and fight back against unfair ideas. Podcasts do this by covering topics that aren't from the mainstream news, like support for people who are LGBTQ+ or efforts to make things fairer in communities. This means that podcasts help people have meaningful conversations that challenge the bigger stories that are told by the powerful.

Communication for social change is about giving people the tools to tell their own stories and create their own solutions. Unlike top-down ways of sharing information, this approach puts the community in charge. Podcasts support this by letting people share their own experiences in their own language. For example, health podcasts in local languages help people understand medical information better, and environmental podcasts can encourage people to take action. This kind of storytelling not only shares news but also helps communities come together and make change. In this way, podcasts are more than just a way to report news, they are also a way to drive social change.

3.1.2 Podcasting as a Medium

Understanding how podcasts fit into alternative journalism means looking at what makes podcasting different from other media. Podcasts aren't just like radio on the internet, they are a unique way of creating and sharing content, influenced by technology, culture, and money.

1. Origins and Evolution of Podcasting

Podcasting started in the early 2000s when internet tech and audio broadcasting came together. The name comes from "iPod" and

"broadcasting," showing how early podcasting was linked to portable MP3 players. It began as something tech lovers did for fun but grew into a big worldwide trend. More people got online, smartphones became common, and platforms like iTunes, Spotify, and SoundCloud helped make podcasts popular.

Unlike regular radio, which plays live, podcasts can be listened to anytime. This makes them great for people who like to choose when they listen, especially younger audiences used to customizing their media. Over time, podcasts have grown into many types, including comedy, entertainment, and serious news, making them a popular but different kind of media.

2. Accessibility and Low Entry Barriers.

One big thing about podcasting is how easy it is to start. You don't need expensive equipment. All needed is just a microphone, some basic editing software, and internet access. It's also simple to share your podcast on platforms like Anchor and Podbean, which help upload and spread your episodes across different apps.

This ease of use makes podcasting a good choice for alternative journalism. People like activists and independent reporters can start sharing their stories without needing the money or support that traditional media often requires. The way podcasts are made also feels more personal and direct, which helps build trust between the speaker and the listener, making the content more believable and engaging.

3. Global vs. Local Adoption

Podcasting is a global medium but it works differently in different places. In the US and Europe, podcasts are common and get a lot of money from ads. In places like the Global South, there's been slower growth, but it's still making an impact. Some areas have weak internet and high costs for data, but more people are using phones, and local platforms are helping podcasts grow. For example, in parts of Africa, podcasts are used to talk about government, gender issues, and culture. In Latin America, they help people discuss politics and social problems. These

examples show how podcasts can change to fit different situations and become important tools for people who want to share news and ideas outside of mainstream media.

4. Characteristics of the Medium

Podcasts have several things that make them different from traditional news and other online platforms.

- **Intimacy:** Because it's audio, it feels like someone is speaking directly to you.
- **Niche Focus:** Podcasts often focus on specific groups or topics, allowing for deeper stories.
- **Interactivity:** Even though they're one-way, podcasts can link to social media, feedback, and events to build a community.
- **Archival Value:** Episodes are stored online, so listeners can go back and listen whenever they want.
- **Multimodal:** Podcasts can go with blogs, transcripts, or videos, making the content easier to reach more people.

These features help podcasts work well for alternative journalism, where the goal is not just to share news, but also to bring people together, start discussions, and keep people interested over time.

5. Economic and Cultural Dimensions

Podcasting is both about money and culture. Some podcasts make money through ads or support from listeners, while others don't make any money and are run for love of the subject or because they care about a cause. This mix lets podcasts work in both commercial and non-commercial ways. Culturally, podcasts are full of different voices. They include many languages, different stories, and styles of telling things, which helps them reach people from all over the world. In places where stories are passed down by word of mouth, podcasts feel natural and are very useful for sharing news and ideas in a different way.

3.1.3 Podcasts and Alternative Journalism

The rise of podcasts has changed how alternative journalism is made and experienced (Bonini, 2015). Unlike traditional newsrooms, podcasts allow people to create content freely, connect with communities, and explore different topics through the following ways:

1. Challenging Mainstream Media Logics

Mainstream news often follows rules set by advertisers, popularity, and big companies. This leads to news that focuses on popular topics while leaving out issues that are too risky or not profitable (McChesney & Pickard, 2011). Podcasts, on the other hand, work outside these rules. Their flexible structure lets creators talk about issues that most news outlets don't cover and present stories in new, challenging ways.

For example, "The Daily" by The New York Times shows how big media is starting to use podcasts, while "Democracy Now!" by Amy Goodman shows how alternative news works through this format. The latter covers movements led by ordinary people, stories about indigenous groups, and anti-war efforts and other topics that are often left out of newsrooms run by big companies. The way podcasts are structured, without set time slots or ads, allows for in-depth, complex stories that offer more than just quick news updates.

2. Amplifying Marginalized Voices

One of the best things about podcasts is how they give a voice to groups that are often ignored in mainstream media. Have you ever noticed how some communities are rarely covered or are shown in a negative light? Podcasts change that by letting these communities share their own stories and challenge unfair ideas (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020). Take

"The Nod", a podcast from the U.S. that focuses on Black culture and history, or "QueerAF", a UK podcast that gives LGBTQ+ creators space to share stories that are often not covered in traditional media.

In places like Kenya and Nigeria, podcasts have also helped by giving people a place to talk about topics like gender, sexuality, and health, which are often hidden or stigmatized. These examples show how podcasts can help groups take control of the story and make the public space more open and welcoming for everyone.

3. Political Engagement and Activism

Podcasts are also powerful tools for political action. Their format lets them mix news, opinions, and personal stories, making them great for people who care about politics. In Latin America, podcasts help young people speak up for justice. "Radio Ambulante", made in different countries, shares stories about migration, inequality, and human rights, reaching millions of people who speak Spanish. By telling the real stories of everyday people, podcasts build understanding and support across borders. In countries where the media is controlled, podcasts are a safe way to share information (Mutsvairo, 2018).

In Egypt, some podcasters used secret tools to spread news about what was happening under the government. Even though it's risky, these efforts show how podcasts can help people speak out even when it's dangerous. In the U.S., "Pod Save America", hosted by former Obama officials, shows how podcasts can shape political discussions and get people involved in making change, even if they have a particular point of view.

4. Community-Building and Participatory Culture

Podcasts are more than just news, they also help build communities. Unlike traditional media, which is often distant and formal, podcasts feel more like a conversation. Listeners often feel like they are part of a group rather than just receiving information. This sense of connection is strengthened by the way podcasts engage with their audience. Podcasters often talk to fans through social media, emails, or live events. For example, the creators of "The Guilty Feminist", a UK podcast, meet listeners in person to discuss gender equality. This helps build a community of people who care about the issues and shape what's talked about. This kind of interaction fits with the idea of alternative journalism that values inclusivity and working from the bottom up. By removing the barriers between who makes the news and who listens, podcasts help create shared spaces where people come together around common values (Fairchild, 2012).

5. Journalism Education and Capacity Building

Podcasts are also changing how journalism is taught. Schools and training programs are using podcasts both to help students learn and as a way for students to create their own content. Through podcasting, students learn to tell stories in different ways, edit digital media, and connect with audiences. These skills are important in today's media world (Banda, 2010). In places like South Africa and India, journalism schools use podcasts to explore local issues. These projects help students learn and also raise awareness about stories that most news outlets don't cover. In this way, podcasts act as places for innovation in journalism, helping shape the next generation of alternative media creators.

3.1.4 Podcasts and Alternative Journalism in Nigeria, Africa, and Beyond

Nigeria has become a key place for podcasting and alternative voices in the last ten years. Digital creativity has grown a lot, and podcasting is one of the most exciting ways for alternative journalism to develop. With more people having access to mobile internet and platforms like Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts, it's easier than ever for Nigerians to make and share audio content (World Bank, 2022). Unlike traditional media, which often faces strict rules, controlled ownership, and political influences that limit freedom of speech, podcasts offer a more open, affordable, and flexible space for people to share their own stories and opinions.

Podcasting in Nigeria has shown how alternative journalism can bring attention to issues that mainstream media often ignores. For example, the show "I Said What I Said" (ISWIS), hosted by FK Abudu and Jola Ayeye, has become a big hit among young people. It combines entertainment with discussions on topics like gender inequality, politics, and social justice. This type of podcast gives a voice to people who are not often heard in traditional newsrooms, showing how podcasts can change the way journalism works. Another example is "The Tony Doe Podcast," which looks at the media industry in Nigeria and helps independent creators navigate the challenges of working in the local media environment. These podcasts not only engage listeners but also encourage people to take part in civic discussions and think critically about news.

One of the most clear examples of podcasting's role in journalism happened during the #EndSARS protests in 2020. While mainstream broadcasters were either hesitant or restricted from covering the protest against police brutality, podcasts and digital platforms helped spread the stories of those affected. Shows hosted by young Nigerians captured the emotions, politics, and social impact of the protests, keeping the voices of the people involved alive. In this way, podcasts

became tools for resistance journalism, helping to preserve the memory of the event and hold those in power accountable.

Podcasting has also taken off in other parts of Africa; In South Africa, the online newspaper Daily Maverick has started using podcasts to make their stories more detailed and engaging. The podcast "Don't Shoot the Messenger" explores stories published in print, adding interviews and behind-the-scenes information to give more context. This approach helps build trust with audiences who are looking for more than just headlines. It shows how podcasts can work along with traditional media to cover the same issues in a different way, especially in areas where people don't trust the mainstream press.

In Kenya, podcasts like "Otherwise?" and "The Spread" are talking about important issues like political accountability, governance, and sensitive topics like sexuality and reproductive health (Nyamnjoh, F. B, 2005) These shows are examples of alternative journalism because they discuss things that mainstream media often avoids because of advertising, government rules, or cultural norms. They're particularly popular with younger people who are losing faith in traditional media. These podcasts use storytelling that makes listeners feel involved, turning big issues into personal experiences that encourage discussion and debate. In Ghana, the podcast "AccraWeDey" is a great example of how podcasting can shape the way people see their country. It focuses on urban life in Ghana and challenges global stereotypes that often portray African cities as only places of conflict, poverty, or exoticism. Though not always focused on politics, these kinds of podcasts serve an important journalistic role by helping communities define who they are and resist outside opinions.

Across the continent, it's clear that podcasts often grow in areas where mainstream media doesn't cover a wide range of voices. They are especially

popular among young, urban audiences, but they also face challenges when it comes to staying sustainable and reaching more people. Despite these issues, podcasts have become an important part of how journalism is being done in African countries, mixing old oral traditions with new digital tools (Lindgren, 2016).

Looking at other parts of the world, similar patterns can be seen; In the United States, the podcast "Serial," which started in 2014, changed how people think about investigative storytelling. By digging into a cold case with detailed reporting, it not only won a large audience but also sparked discussions about justice and the legal system. Another example is "Pod Save America," created by former White House staff, which has become a key voice in political discussions outside main cable news networks.

In Latin America, where press freedom is often under threat, podcasts have become a way for journalists to report on issues like human rights abuses, corruption, and struggles within authoritarian governments. In countries like Mexico and Venezuela, independent podcasters use the low cost and portability of digital audio to bypass censorship and connect with people who live outside the country, helping them spread their message further.

In Europe and Russia, podcasts have also been important for journalists. In Russia, where there's a lot of censorship, podcasts like those from Meduza serve as important sources of news for Russian-speaking audiences. These podcasts highlight how journalists can keep working and sharing their stories even when they're forced to leave their home countries.

From these examples around the world, there are some common themes.

1. Podcasts are generally cheaper and easier to make than other forms of journalism,

which allows more people to participate in the news. They often focus on specific groups, like feminists or young activists, creating a sense of connection between the creators and the audience.

2. Unlike mainstream media, which tries to appeal to everyone, podcasts can have deep and meaningful conversations that let listeners feel like they're part of something bigger.
3. Resistance to Censorship: In places like Nigeria, Kenya, or Russia, podcasts are harder for authorities to control than radio or newspapers. While governments can block radio signals or stop newspapers from printing, online podcasts on international platforms are more difficult to stop. However, there are still some risks involved.
4. Ethical and Professional Challenges: The open nature of podcasting brings up questions about truth, accuracy, and responsibility. Although podcasts make it easier for people to share news, they can also spread false information if the creators aren't properly trained or follow ethical guidelines.
5. Youth-Centered Innovation: In Africa and around the world, podcasts are mostly made by younger people who are skilled with technology and unhappy with traditional media. This change shows how podcasting is becoming both a form of reporting and a cultural movement, showing the growing need for better representation, identity, and a stronger voice in society.

3.1.5 Challenges and Limitations of Podcasts in Alternative Journalism

1. Digital Divide and Accessibility: Podcasting is often seen as an easy way to share information, but in Nigeria and much of Africa, it's not equally available. Internet access is not the same

everywhere. Rural areas have much less access compared to cities. In Nigeria, for example, Lagos and Abuja have better internet, but many northern and rural areas have limited connections and expensive data. Since podcasts need mobile data or Wi-Fi to play and download, this cost issue limits who can listen. As a result, podcasts mainly reach middle-class, urban, and younger people. Even though podcasts offer new ways to share news, they can also make information access more unequal.

2. **Financial Sustainability and Monetization:** Making money is hard for podcasters in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. In places like the US or Europe, there are many ways to earn money from podcasts, like ads, donations, or subscriptions. In Africa, it's hard to get enough support. Advertisers often choose radio or TV because they have bigger audiences. Even when brands support podcasts, they prefer shows that are fun and popular over ones that are serious or political. This makes it tough for podcasters to keep going without steady income. Many create podcasts while working other jobs, which can lower the quality and consistency of their work.
3. **Regulatory Ambiguities and Censorship:** Podcasting is known for being free from government control. But governments are slowly realizing how much power digital media can have. In Nigeria, the 2021 Twitter ban shows how quickly authorities can act to stop unwanted online voices. Although there are no big rules against podcasts, groups like the National Broadcasting Commission have tried to include online content in their rules. Podcasters who talk about important issues or criticize the government risk being harassed, watched, or even arrested because of unclear cybercrime laws. Without clear laws to protect them,

podcasters are at risk of being threatened by the government.

4. **Ethical Standards and Professionalism:** Podcasting gives people the chance to share stories, but not everyone does it right. While anyone with a phone and microphone can start a podcast, not all creators follow the rules of careful reporting and balanced facts. In Nigeria, some podcasts are very well-researched, while others spread rumors or false information. Without strong rules or groups to help set standards, the trust people have in podcasts as a news source can go down. The idea of whether podcasts are real news or just opinion shows is a big debate.
5. **Audience Fragmentation and Reach:** Podcasts are good at reaching small, specific groups, which is a plus and a drawback. They can build strong connections with their audience, but they don't reach as many people as radio, which is the most popular way to get news in Africa. In Nigeria, stations like Wazobia FM or Raypower reach millions daily, while even the best podcasts only get thousands of listens. This makes it harder for alternative news to have a big impact on national conversations compared to traditional radio.
6. **Security and Personal Risk:** Podcasters who talk about politics or corruption face dangers, especially in places where freedom of the press isn't safe. In Nigeria, reporters who investigate corruption or abuse of power have often been threatened or arrested. Even though podcasts can offer some hiding, the people making the shows are often known, putting them in the same danger as regular reporters. Without support from organizations or unions, these independent creators are more at risk.
7. **Cultural Perceptions and Legitimacy:** In Nigeria and other African countries, radio

has long been trusted as the “people's medium,” respected by all generations. Podcasts, on the other hand, are still seen as entertainment more than news. This mindset makes it hard for people to take podcasts seriously as a way to report on important issues. Older people, who often have more power or money, may not listen to podcasts at all, limiting the influence to younger groups. For podcasts to be respected as real news, people's views on what's credible need to change.

8. **Language Barriers:** Most Nigerian and African podcasts are in English because it's the official language and it's used worldwide. But this leaves out people who are more comfortable with their native languages like Yoruba, Hausa, or Igbo. Radio has always been good at reaching these communities by using local languages. Even though there are efforts to make podcasts in native languages, English still makes it harder for people in rural areas to access digital news.
9. **Global Platform Dependency:** Most Nigerian and African podcasters use big international platforms like Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. These platforms offer a global audience, but they also make podcasters rely on foreign companies. This dependency can be risky, like being hidden by algorithms, not getting fair money from the platforms, or suddenly getting new rules that affect their work. Unlike community radio, which is controlled locally, podcasters are tied to big global companies that may not care about African voices.
10. **Cross-Cutting Implications:** Together, these issues show that podcasting can be both weak and strong as a form of alternative news in Nigeria and Africa. The problems aren't impossible to fix, but they require big changes. Support is needed for cheaper internet, local podcast tools, training on good reporting, and rules

that protect podcasters. Without improving these areas, podcasts might stay as a popular but small part of the media scene, not a real force for change.

3.1.6 Opportunities for Podcasts in Alternative Journalism

1. **Expanding Access to Public Discourse:** Podcasts offer a great chance to make public discussions more accessible in Nigeria and across Africa. Mainstream media often limits people's ability to participate because of rules, business goals, or biased opinions. Podcasts, on the other hand, provide a more open space where various voices can be heard. This is especially important in Nigeria, where traditional media have often been shaped by political influences and who owns the media. Podcasts let citizens talk about important issues like corruption, governance, gender equality, and climate change.
1. **By making it easier for people to join,** podcasts give more people a chance to speak and listen. Anyone with a phone and internet access can get involved, either as a creator or a listener. This sharing of media power supports the idea of alternative journalism, which aims to have many different opinions coexist.
2. **Youth Empowerment and Civic Engagement:** Africa has the youngest population in the world, with Nigeria having more than 60% of its people under 25. This makes podcasting a powerful tool for getting young people involved in civic activities. Young people are often frustrated by the formal style and bias in traditional news. They are turning to podcasts that speak their language, reflect their experiences, and address their concerns. For example, Nigerian youth-led podcasts covered the #EndSARS protests, showing how young voices can shape national conversations, highlight injustices, and build support networks

- both locally and with the diaspora.
3. By involving young people, podcasts help build a culture of awareness and interest in civic issues, which can support democratic progress over time.
 4. **Advocacy and Social Justice:** Podcasts also have a strong role in advocating for justice and supporting marginalized groups. Independent creators are using the medium to bring attention to voices that are often ignored in mainstream Nigerian or African media, such as women, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, and rural communities.
 5. In Nigeria, feminist podcasts like "I Said What I Said" and advocacy shows like "AfriWetu Podcast" have created spaces to talk about gender equality and social change.
 6. In Kenya, podcasts like "The Spread" address sexuality and reproductive health, topics often left out of traditional media. These examples show how podcasts can become platforms for resistance, empowerment, and learning.
 7. **Educational Potential:** Podcasts also offer great chances for learning, both in school and outside of it. In Nigeria, where access to good education is a challenge, podcasts can be useful tools to teach history, science, civic education, and even practical skills. Journalism schools and communication programs can use podcasting to train future reporters to work in digital-first environments. Podcasts are also great for lifelong learning. People can listen while traveling, working, or doing chores, making it easy to learn new things. This flexibility helps spread complex information in easy-to-understand ways. For alternative journalism, it means sharing in-depth and thoughtful content that fits into people's daily lives.
 6. **Local Language Innovation:** Although English is the main language for Nigerian
- podcasts, there is a growing interest in using local languages. This can help reach more people, especially those in rural areas who may not be fluent in English. Using local languages makes podcasts more inclusive and helps keep cultural identity and language traditions alive.
8. For example, Yoruba or Hausa language podcasts could connect urban and rural audiences, making important discussions about governance, health, or human rights available to more people. This echoes the success of radio, which has always been popular because it can cover many languages. Expanding to local languages can turn alternative journalism into a national tool for democratic engagement.
 7. **Collaboration with Traditional Media:** Another big chance lies in working together between podcasts and traditional media. Rather than being rivals, newspapers, radio stations, and TV networks can include podcasts in their plans. For example, investigative outlets like Nigeria's Premium Times or South Africa's Daily Maverick could use podcasts to share their stories in new ways, offering extra details or follow-up discussions. This combined approach improves how information is shared and creates new ways to make money through ads, sponsors, and reaching more people across platforms. For alternative journalism, this means independent stories can be trusted and reach a wider audience without being controlled by traditional media.
 8. **Diaspora Engagement:** Podcasts also offer special opportunities to connect with African communities living abroad. These communities are interested in staying updated about what's happening in their home countries. Nigerian diaspora podcasts often mix global and local topics, sparking conversations on governance, identity, and preserving culture. By

sharing stories with people from other countries, podcasts can get international support for local issues, bring attention to human rights problems, and help shape discussions in global settings. This international angle strengthens the influence of alternative journalism in Nigeria and across Africa.

9. Innovation Through Technology: The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and new audio technologies brings new chances for podcasting. Tools for automatic transcription, translation, and editing are becoming easier to use, making it simpler to make podcasts. For instance, AI could help Nigerian podcasts create written versions of episodes, making content easier to search, quote, and share with people who are hearing-impaired.
9. Immersive audio technologies, such as 3D soundscapes, can make storytelling more engaging, allowing podcasters to recreate environments for investigative or narrative stories. These innovations can help podcasts compete with visual media, making them more popular and influential.
10. Building Communities and Social Movements: Maybe the biggest chance podcasts have in alternative journalism is their ability to build communities. Unlike traditional news, which usually only sends messages one way, podcasts create a closer, more personal connection. Listeners often feel close to the hosts, which helps form loyal groups that are more than just people watching or listening.
11. These groups can turn into bigger movements. For example, podcasts that talked about #EndSARS didn't just share information; they helped people take action. Similarly, podcasts focusing on climate change, gender rights, or corruption can encourage people to work together, raise money, and start local

efforts. This kind of active involvement is key to how podcasts can help make democracy stronger.

10. Global Visibility and Recognition: Also, podcasts give Nigerian and African journalists a way to gain worldwide attention. The success of shows like Serial shows how a podcast can influence national and global conversations. Nigerian podcasters making high-quality investigative content could reach international audiences, breaking down old ideas about African media and showing the world the continent's voice.
12. Working with international partners like universities, NGOs, or media organizations can also bring local stories to a global audience. This helps build trust in African alternative journalism and makes sure stories are told by people from the region, not through outsiders' eyes.

3.1.7 Future of Podcasts in Alternative Journalism

Podcasting in alternative journalism shows a future where more voices are heard, technology is used more closely, and people can get more involved in civic matters. Radio has always been the main way to get news in Africa, but podcasts are becoming popular because they are flexible, easy to use, and can reach people from different places. In Nigeria and across the continent, more people are using smartphones and the internet, which makes podcasts a key way for citizens to learn about news, question power, and share their own stories (World Bank, 2022).

1. Use of new technology is changing how podcasts are made and listened to. Tools like AI, immersive audio, and data about what people like are making podcasts better. AI can help make subtitles in many languages, helping people who speak different languages in Africa. In the future, podcasts might use sound and virtual reality to create experiences where listeners can feel like they're part of the

story. These tools help journalists present complex topics like government, climate change, and human rights in interesting ways (Lindgren, 2016).

2. Podcasts make it easier for people to share news. This means more individuals, activists, and groups from the margins can tell their stories without needing traditional media. In Nigeria, more local podcasts are likely to appear as phones get more common and internet costs go down. Also, groups of people living far from home are creating communities that share podcasts, helping spread voices not often heard in mainstream media. This shows a future where more people are involved in news, not just organizations.
3. Podcasts are playing an important role in teaching and raising awareness. In Nigerian universities, they are being used as tools to help students learn about media, law, and social sciences. Non-profits and advocacy groups also use podcasts to spread messages about gender, health, and the environment. As more people get access to information, podcasts could become even more popular tools for change, especially in places where print media is not widely used or where the government controls the media.
4. Making money from podcasts is still a challenge for many in Africa, but new ways are showing up. Mixed models that include ads, support from fans, and partnerships with organizations might help. Some Nigerian podcasts, like I Said What I Said, have found ways to make a living through sponsorships and loyal listeners. Also, local platforms that focus on African content might give more chances to make money, helping podcasts grow outside big Western platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts.
5. Podcasts are helping make democracy stronger. In Nigeria, where elections can

be confusing or misleading, podcasts are used to educate people about voting, holding leaders accountable, and understanding their rights. They give a voice to people who are often ignored, such as women, young people, and those in rural areas. This helps create informed communities that can challenge corruption and push for change across Africa (Banda, 2010).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Podcasts have become a big change in how alternative journalism works, offering new ways to share and get news outside traditional media. In Nigeria, podcasts give new spaces for discussion, thinking, and innovation, especially when mainstream media is biased or secretive. By letting people who are ignored to speak up, podcasts make news more varied and challenge who controls information. This report shows that podcasts in Nigeria and Africa are more than just entertainment. They are part of a move towards a media culture that is shared, decentralized, and includes everyone. Podcasts like I Said What I Said and The Trouble Maker Podcast show how they cover issues like leadership, fairness, climate change, and human rights, while giving space to stories left out by traditional media.

There are many chances ahead: using podcasts in education and for advocacy, and making models that support independent voices. But there are still challenges like insufficient internet, difficulty to make money, and not knowing the rules. To help podcasts grow in alternative journalism, policies that support them, better internet connections, and teamwork between podcasters, civil groups, and schools are needed. Looking forward, the future of podcasts in alternative journalism is very promising. New tech like AI, immersive sounds, and local platforms will reach more people and have a bigger impact. Most importantly, podcasts made by people will keep journalism as a way to both inform and give power. In places where democratic systems aren't strong, podcasts can help with transparency, teaching citizens, and

uniting people.

In the end, the rise of podcasts shows that news doesn't have to come only from big newsrooms or broadcast companies. It can come from homes, community centers, universities, and villages connected by phones. Podcasts are the spirit of alternative journalism: clever, open, strong, and connected to people's real lives. As Africa moves toward digital change, podcasts will become important tools for changing the media, protecting free speech, and building democratic values. In Nigeria and beyond, their role in alternative journalism is not only big, it is also essential.

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