MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

Traditional Systems of Communication in Modern African Development: An Analytical Viewpoint

by Des Wilson*

Abstract

This paper makes a case for the utilization of traditional systems of communication in the development process. The paper underscores the usefulness of traditional systems of communication by noting that they are instrumental in the mobilization of people at the grassroot level for community development and national consciousness; the enlightenment of people in cultural, political, health, and other programmes leading toward self-actualization; public entertainment through arts, cultural festivals, musicals and dramatic performances; and intra-cultural, intercultural and other communication purposes leading to group and national cohesiveness. Contending that the traditional newsman is the only credible source of information for the rural areas, the author urges that his (the traditional newsman's) mobility and hardware be improved to facilitate his work.

Résumé

L'article ci-après est une défense de l'utilisation des systèmes de communication traditionnels dans le processus de développement. Il démontre l'utilité de ces systémes en faisant remarquer qu'ils servent la mobilisation des populations au niveau des communautés de base pour le dèveloppement communautaire et la conscience nationale; leur ouverture à des programmes culturels, politiques, sanitaires et autres devant conduire à d'autres fins intra-culturelles et interculturelles visant à la cohésion nationale et de groupe. L'auteur affirme que la journaliste traditionnel est la seule source d'informations crédible dans les zones rurales et lance un appel afin que soient améliorés sa mobilité et ses moyens pour faciliter son travail.

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Introduction

There is often a certain degree of semantic and conceptual confusion and misapprehension surrounding what constitutes traditional communication, arising from the use of 'traditional' as a qualifier in discussing communication systems generally. The general notion or implication, also arising from this confusion and misapprehension, is often that of outdated or perhaps primitive systems of communication which still have surviving relies in most Third World countries. This same view often envisages traditional systems as being mutually antagonistic to what is generally known as modern systems of communication. But the truth is that although the systems may be old and different, in their principles, from the new systems introduced from abroad, they remain what essentially sustain the information needs of the rural which represent over 70% of the national populations of most Third World states.

The underlying fallacies behind such thinking are based on certain assumptions regarding what is traditional and what is modern. The basic assumption here as Gusfield (1973:333) has pointed out is that of seeing 'existing institutions' and values, the content of traditional 'as impediments to changes' and obstacles to modernization'. Other related and rather fanciful theories include the view that old traditions are usually displaced by new changes, and that traditional and modern forms of a culture are always in conflict. Although scholars on both sides of the opinion divide often sound as if tradition and modernity were mutually exclusive in content, there is very little to bear them out as practical support for such extreme views. It is important to note that in social contexts, conflicts often arise not necessarily because one form is old and the other new, but because human beings usually resist change of any sort.

The truth is that there will always be social conflicts irrespective of the chronological age of the concepts involved. It is therefore the view of this paper that what constitutes traditional communication is not necessarily a matter of 'age', civilization or 'technology', conflicting with change, but rather a system which can be viewed within a communication continuum of the type suggested by Ray Browne and reported by Michael Rael (1977). Browne refers to this continuum as the 'Cultural Lens' where culture is viewed from a focal perspective which delineates

four spectrums: folk, elite, popular and mass. Browne's categorization is faulty and restrictive from the point of view of a sense of distance created by the 'lens'. It is perhaps more rewarding to view this traditional/modern communication dichotomy from the point of view of a series of concentric circles with the folk (or traditional) communication occupying the innermost circle and mass communication the outermost circle. With this the limiting sense of distance is replaced by a sense of convergence and sharing of characteristics which is the point of view shared by this paper.

MASS
POPULAR
ELITE
FOLK
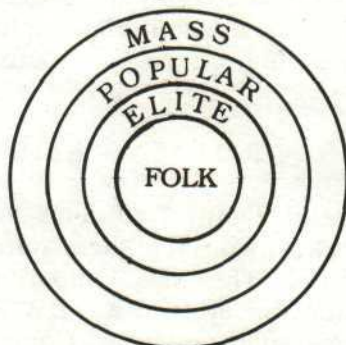
Thus it is useful to see the system as traditional from the standpoint of an on-going, long-standing and 'modernized' (modified) practice. There is also a need to see traditional media systems as those which have defied all efforts by western media to cannibalize them and perhaps supplant them.

These traditional systems are also trusted and the majority of the people seem to believe in what comes out of them and usually use them and supplement them with whatever additional information may filter through opinion leaders about events elsewhere.

The word system is used here to refer to an assemblage or combination of media and channels to form a complex whole: a coordinated body of methods of communication used within a society. Here the constituent parts have certain attributes which relate them to one another.

Thus the traditional system of communication is a continuous process of information dissemination, entertainment and education used in societies which have not been seriously dislocated by western culture or any other external influence as is the case in many parts of the world. The system even operates in urban centres which have accepted to manipulate western media system for the purpose of enhancing the socio-economic development of these areas. Thus some methods of communication which hitherto belonged to the traditional system no longer operate because social and economic activities have

made it possible to create the contexts of them. For example, communication with fire as a means of attracting attention or notifying a neighbouring community of an event does not seem to have a place today in any of our societies except perhaps among the mountain tribes and among hunters and adventurers in some places.

Finally, the traditional system of communication also refers to the mode of control (ownership) and model. It is important to note here that under the traditional system, ownership of the means (media/channels) of communication lies with the society. The village/clan head only acts as a trustee and head of the gatekeeping process.

TAXONOMY OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA SYSTEMS

Studies and research into traditional media systems are relatively recent. Earlier mention of these systems were limited in scope and superficial. The most important early study of traditional communication systems was L.W. Pye's (1963) 'Models of Traditional, Transitional and Modern Communication System'. Subsequent references to this all-important but neglected aspect of communication were also by Euro-American scholars like Hachten (1971), Ainslie (1966), Head (1974, Wilcox (1975), and Doob (1966), who though not deeply interested in the subject except for its anthropological value, nevertheless acknowledged the existence and use of traditional systems in most of the Third World.

Nonetheless, serious academic efforts, though noticeable in undergraduate project reports in some Nigerian Universities, did not come into the fore until the early seventies when Ugboajah (1972) began to call attention to this neglected but powerful communication systems that the western media barons have refused to recognize. It was not until 1981 when Wilson working in the Cross River area of Nigeria approached this virgin land through a systematic study, classification, analysis and understanding of the various media processes and content within the traditional context. The Theatre Workshop experimentation recommended by experts in Botswana in 1979 and recent studies by Nwuneli (1981) have also contributed to our knowledge of the traditional media system. It is becoming clearer to scholars on both sides of the socio-economic divide (The First and Third Worlds) that a clear understanding of the structures, patterns, processes and uses of such media could enhance the multiple application of such channels for human and national growth.

The town crier, a popular misnomer for the traditional

emissary newsman, is perhaps the most ubiquitous and electric in terms of his role in the traditional society and so-called modern society which will become to-morrow's 'primitive' or 'traditional' society. The persons who function under this umbrella term perform various other mutually dependent and self-defining roles. They are news reporters, correspondents, news agents, messengers (emissaries), spokesmen (or women), envoys (ambassadors), contactmen, couriers, postmen, broadcasters, heralds and also perform other related roles.

There are numerous traditional forms of communication in Nigeria's old Calabar province. These are the various forms which the fabled town crier employs in his different communication roles. They can be broadly divided into eleven classes,namely:

(i)	Idiophones
(ii)	Membranophones
(iii)	Aerophone
(iv)	Symbolography
(v)	Signals
(vi)	Signs
(vii)	Objectifics
(viii)	Colour Schemes
(ix)	Music
(x)	Extra-mundane communication
(xi)	Symbolic displays

(i) *Idiophones:* These are self-sounding instruments or technical wares which produce sound without the addition or use of an intermediary medium. The sound or message emanates from the materials from which the instruments are made and they could be shaken, scratched, struck, pricked (pulled) or pressed with the feet. In this group we have the gong, woodlock, wooden drum, bell and rattle. (see page 102)

(ii) *Membranophones:* These are media on which sound is produced through the vibration of membranes. They include all varieties of skin or leather drum. These drums are beaten or struck with well-carved sticks. Among the various Nigerian groups, skin drums of various sizes and shapes abound. Perhaps the most popular, because it is the most exposed and intricate in its craftsmanship, is the Yoruba talking drum, locally called 'dundun' (see page 103).

(iii) *Aerophones:* These are media which produce sound as a result of the vibration of a column of air. They comprise media of the flute family, whistle reed pipes, horns and trumpets. (see Apendix B:1, B 4).

91

(iv) *Symbolography:* This simply means symbolic writing or representation. Communication takes place when an encorder uses graphic representations to convey a message which is understood within the context of a known social event and an accompanying verbal message. It is a descriptive representational device for conveying meaning. There are three main kinds of symbolography used among the Cross River people (the Efik-Ibibio-Igbo) namely:

(a)   the fresh unfolding frond of the palm tree usually with a greenish yellow colour. It is tied and shaped in different ways to convey different meanings. (Apendix B:3)

(b)   a decorated stick make from the outer part of the dry branch of the raffia palm tree. It is called Nsadang among the people of old Calabar (Apendix B:2)

(c)   the third is a kind of cryptic writing used among the Cross River people and in the border areas of Western Cameroun.

The following 'uli' (Igbo) writings are examples which are used in wall painting as well as on cloth:

) = woman   (= man   )(= love   )|(= quarrel
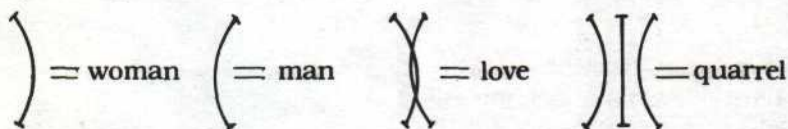
(v) *Signals:* These are the physical embodiments of a message. Many ancient signals are still being used for modern communication today.

For example, in Nigeria, there is hardly a broadcasting station which does not utilize drum signals to draw the attention of its listeners to the fact that they are about to begin transmission for the day, deliver their main news broadcast or announce time, close down or prepare for the broadcast of the local or national leader. Some of the signals include fire, gunshots, canon shots, drum (wooden or skin).

(vi) *Signs:* Marks which are meaningful, or objects or symbols used to represent something are signs. It is a construct by which organisms affect the behaviour or state of another in a communication context. Sign language (i.e. a system of human communication by gestures) has been developed for the deaf. While signs are more likely to be symbolic in certain contexts, symbols are not signs. Signs are associated with specific denotative meanings while symbols usually carry along with them connotative meanings as well. Ross (1962: 164-165) says 'symbols ... require an interpreter who knows something of the system by virtue of which the symbol has meaning. Natural signs require an interpreter who

knows a theory, or general law, in terms of which the sign is an index of the existence of something else.

(vii) *Objectifics:* Media presented in concrete forms which may have significance for a specific society only or may be universal through their traditional association with specific contextual meanings. These include: kola nut, the young unopened bud of the palm frond, charcoal, White Pigeon or fowl, white egg, feather, cowries, mimosa, flowers,sculptures, pictures,drawing, the flag etc.

(viii) *Colour schemes:* This is the general conception and use of combination of colours in a design to convey some meanings. Colour uses the advantages of pictorial communication by combining the speed of its impact and freedom from linguistic boundaries to achieve instant and effective communication. Among the prominent colours used to communicate different meanings among the Cross River people are: red, white black, green, yellow, brown and turquoise. Combinations of these colours produce certain significant meanings for the society. Since colours play an important role in modern advertising, greater attention will continue to be given to them in the fields of science, industries, advertising, public relations and social communication.

(ix) *Music:* Itinerant musical entertainment groups sing satirical songs, praise songs, and generally criticise wrong doings of individuals in society. Names of those being satirized or praised may be mentioned or descriptions of their physical or personality attributes, where they live, or what they do may form part of such songs. Grapevine stories concerning events that are being planned for the society may be featured as a way of alerting the generality of the people. Such groups as itembe, kokoma, ekpo, ekong and age grade choral groups perform these functions. They are potent sources of information and the latest gossip. This is as Jacobson (1969:334) points out 'an unconsummated symbol which evokes connotation and various articulation, yet is not really defined'.

(x) *Extra-mundane communication:* This is the mode of communication between the living and the dead, the supernatural or supreme being. This is usually done through incantation, spiritual chants, ritual, prayers, sacrifice, invocation, seance, trance, hysterics or liberation. This is a multi-dimensional communication transaction which has become more pervasive in all societies most especially in Africa. Cultural ritual performance evokes intensity of emotion which may lead to a temporary spiritual transmigration of the participants as in religious or spiritual ceremonies. Such a performance conveys the elements of

a cultural celebration, dedication and consecration as is often witnessed in marriage and funeral rites. Modern forms of extra-mundane communication are found in obituary and in memorial notices published in newspapers, magazines or on radio and television.

(xi) *Symbolic displays:* These would be cultural-specific or may have universal significance and some of their characteristics are shared even with primates e.g. smiling, sticking out the tongue, expression of anger, disgust, happiness, and fear, the way we walk, or sit, gestures we use, voice qualities and other facial expressions.

In addition many traditional institutions, clubs or societies are also used for the purpose of disseminating information, passing on gossips, rumours and at times highly confidential information. These institutions operate in both urban and rural areas. But most prominently some of them are found in urban and rural areas especially the following: cooperative societies, esusu (Osusu), clan/town/village/family unions, ethnic unions, voluntary organisations, drinking clubs, old students associations, market women's associations, traders associations, religious groups, men only, and women only clubs, secret societies, cults, sports clubs, recreational clubs, age traders, choral groups, self-help group, occupational groups and many others which may fall within any one or more of the groups listed and whose objectives may not be for communication purposes but whose activities are directly linked with communication.

Perhaps it is important to note here that such international organisations as the Rosicrucian (Amorc) order, Rotary, Lions, Inner-Wheel, Lodges, Religious denominations, Pyrates or the National Association of Seadogs, and the Palm Wine Drinkers Clubs scattered all over educational institutions throughout Nigeria are such powerful social, religious and political organisations that some of them even run newspapers, magazines, or newsletters which circulate widely among members and non-members. This in addition to the communication transaction that takes place when the members of the organisations meet. Some of them have other means by which members communicate among themselves either for good or for bad. It is however possible for one man to be a member of almost all the clubs around him, some of whose activities he may not necessarily participate in. The most important aspect of these organisations is that they are engaged in a lot of communication activities. It is however clear from the examples given that opinion leadership plays a vital role in the communication transaction that takes place within each

94

organisation. In some cases members get advanced information on policy matters before the Government officially makes its stand known.

The merits and demerits of these societies can only be seriously considered within the impersonal context of national security and development and perhaps then can the personal interests of groups be seen to make sense if their activities in no way threaten the existence of the larger society.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

In the rural-urban setting there is at times very little difference between formal and informal channels of communication.

Nevertheless, some channels are more formally structured than others. While some remain to foster the goals and objectives that dictated their being set up, others disappear almost as soon as they appear either after fulfilling the initial aims of their originators, or incompatibility of ideologies, or certain drastic political and economic changes taking place in the society, cut their lives short. For example, in the wake of the assassination of General Murtala Muhammed in 1976, the Nigerian Mourners Association emerged under the leadership of an Ibadan-based printer-publisher. Soon after funds were collected and expended not much was heard from the mourners. Also before party politics returned to Nigeria in 1978 there were several Committees of Friends all over the country. Such organisations are usually informal but occasionally formality may set in if coordinators want to introduce other elements which are hinged on formality. For example, the committees of friends became political parties which are more formal groupings.

Generally the following channels which are not mutually exclusive can be grouped into nine categories.
A) Economic Interest Groups:
   Esusu (osusu), Cooperative Societies, Market Women Associations, Traders Associations, Self-help Groups, Development Unions, Chambers of Commerce, Market Places, Trade fairs.
B) Political Interest Groups:
   Village/Clan/Town Unions, Ethnic Unions, Political Parties, Alumni Associations, Akwaesop Imaisong Ibibio Council for the Defence of the 1979 Constitution, Nigerial Mourners Assocication, Women in Nigeria (WIN), Village Squares, etc.
C) Voluntary Organisations:
   Rotary Club, Lions Club, Innerwheel Club, Lioness, Akwaesop Imaisong Ibibio, Peoples Club of Nigeria, Zonta International, Mka Nkaiso. ets.

D) Educational Institutions:
   Museums, Schools, Libraries, Bookshops, Department of Information, Debates and Quizes, Cultural Centres, Picture Galleries, Phonograph records, etc.

E) Social Clubs:
   Drinking Clubs such as the Palmwine Drinkers Club, and the Pyrates (or The National Association of Seadogs), Island Club, Fan Clubs, Peoples Club of Nigeria, Television Viewers Association, Village Squares etc.

F) Spiritual Groups:
   Religious groups, churches, mosques, Muslim Students Society, Christian Unions, (Nigerian) Federation of Catholic Students, Idiong, AMORC (Rosicrucian Order), Ogboni, Owegbe Cult, Witchcraft Society, Lodges, Bethels, Temples, Ifa, Pilgrimage, Shrines, etc.

G) Social Class Groups:
   Men only clubs women only clubs, age grades, occupational groups (e.g. Nigerian Union of Journalists), Lioness Club, Inner-Wheel Club, Rotary Club, Alumni Association, National Council of Women Societies, Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association, Cross River Ladies Association, etc.

H. Recreational Clubs:
   Sports Clubs, Yoruba Tennis Club, Reggae Club, Discotheques, African Club, Railway Recreational Club, Sports Festivals, Stadia, Television Viewers Association etc.

I) Cultural Groups:
   Masquerados Groups, Choral Groups, Ekpe Society, Ekpo Society, Akwaesop Imaisong Ibibio, Oro Festival, Marriage Ceremonies, Festivals, Dramatic Performances, Museums, Travelling Theatres, Village Square, etc.

To these can be added incidental forms of communication which arise from the context of each communication. For example the kind of communication that takes place at a live musical-dance performance in the traditional society is quite different from what any form of western communication system can bring about. It can have both a cathartic effect as well as a spiritual one. So also is the somewhat mystical extra-mundane communication (between the living and the 'dead') which takes place at moments when elders pour liberation or when faithfuls kneel to pray.

NATURE AND CONTENT OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION

Communication processes in rural areas of Nigeria are in various forms and are geared toward achieving different

communication goals and objectives. Thus they can be any of the following: directives, news, advertising, public relations, entertainment, education.

(i) *Directives* are given in the form of
    (a) announcements concerning public or commumity works. duties or responsibilities of the collective citizenry which must be carried out or defaulters within the community automatically face certain sanctions.
    (b) instructions to groups or individuals to carry out certain decisions of the traditional authority.
    (c) announcements about forthcoming events. This directive-approach has today been adopted by past civilian administrations and military juntas in their approach to governance and information dissemination, an approach often derided by those who prefer the western democratic approach.

(ii) *News* is often in the form of
    (a) information about events which have taken place.
    (b) information about deaths, usually of very important citizens; in which case some of the seldom used modes of communicating such news is utilized.
    (c) news may be about impending events.

(iii) *Advertising* is done through
    (a) the display of the products on a table, tree stump or flag pole.
    (b) use of peripatetic hawkers, vendors.
    (c) use of fragrance/odours/aroma to announce the products through the prospective consumer's use of his olfactory sense as is the case in food selling; (e.g. akara, foofoo (ntororo)).
    (d) singing and drumming of the name of the product to be sold.

(iv) *Public relations* is carried out through
    (a) person-to-person or person-to-organisation basis where the individual tries to promote the image of his organisation through praise singing.
    (b) performances and announcements made to enhance the
    (c) *Entertainment* is perhaps the most pervasive in nature. This is done through music/dance/drama performances put up to be received free or payed for, in public or private settings.

(vi)   *education* is carried out most often
    (a)   informally but also formally through cultural groups.
    (b)   through membership of certain societies.
    (c)   learning takes place through membership of other socio-cultural groups.

PROBLEMS WITHIN THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

At the present time numerous problems afflict the traditional media system, thereby retarding its growth and development and its consequent adoption as a universal scheme.

Chief among these problems is the lack of a standard technical vocabularly in the description, analysis and conceptualization of the media/channels and processes of the traditional communication system.

Related to the above is the absence of an appropriate language which can be universally applied in this description. Since most African countries have one foreign language or another as a medium of general expression along with hundreds of other (indigenous) languages, it is difficult to categorise the system using acceptable linguistic codes. Three options are open to the researcher/scholar namely: (i) retaining and using indigenous names along with descriptive labels in one of the international languages especially the one spoken in the researcher's country. (ii) using only descriptive labels in the former colonial language spoken in the country of the researcher, and (iii) inventing or coining alternative words, perhaps based on known models of related media/channels and then validating these coinages at international conferences and through promulgation.

Another problem which afflicts the traditional system is the diversity in the traditional political system, and the conflict between it and the adopted system which usually requires the use of western media structures, policies and facilities. Political instability which results from the lack of a long tradition of legitimization of the new political processes has also been the bane of traditional communication. The central authority usually undermines the traditional system thereby bringing about a babel of voices. In Iran, for example, even though the reign of the former shah had a legitimate basis, the House of Palavi had certain anti-traditional Islamic practices which eventually led to the people's revolt and the subsequent overthrow of the Shah. With the people in control, and with over 5,000 mosques in Teheran alone, the ayatollahs (high islamic clergymen) used these channels for religious, social and political communication. The ayatollahs are

legitimised through the Islamic process (Islam being a state religion) in spite of the existence of Bahai and Christian faithfuls, and thus the people have been able to exercise control over the activities of the army which is a secular institution. Yet in the political context, messages can be deliberately distorted to reflect the interests of the gatekeepers as so often happens with western media practice (Mowlana, 1983).

The social-economic level of the society dictates the nature of communication that obtains in that society. African societies are at various levels of socio-economic development. The media/channels used in each society depend on what the citizens can create and have chosen as the standard for their own society. The level of socio-economic activity in a society, no doubt, influences the communication activity of the society but this does not support the 'limited reach and effectiveness' thesis which is often bandied to discredit these potent sources and channels of communication in rural societies.

Scientific and technological problems also affect traditional communication. The present level of development of media and channels of communication in society is limited because some of the technical hardware are not easily preserved even though they can be replicated. Here is one area where traditional scientists and technologists have not shown enough creativity and inventiveness to create a dynamic culture. In some cases no two disparate societies are known to use exactly the same hardware for the dissemination of information on related issues. Replicability of message is slower since the system has not been fully developed.

As for now the audience is not as heterogenous, amorphous and widely dispersed as the audience of western media when viewed from western social perspectives. But there is the potential that it can be made so if certain structures and hardware within the system are altered and made more dynamic.

FUNCTIONS OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION

The traditional communication system is a complex one whose functions transcend the ordinary oracular postulations of western theorists. Since the system functions as part of the larger socio-political organisation, reporting on and criticising organs within the system, issuing directives from the legitimate, or in some cases titular, head, and providing education in the areas of the norms and mores of the society, stimulating the emotions and generally providing the light to innovations and helping their diffusion, its functions are more diverse and far-reaching than is often

admitted. The real problem lies in the inability of scholars to detach themselves from western theories, and in turn detach traditional media system in a certain sense from the general current of activities within the society and see it as a unique system which needs a greater study and understanding.

Nevertheless some key functions and characteristics of the system are easily discernible. First, it mobilizes the people at the grassroots level towards community development and national consciousness. No serious mass-oriented programme over succeeds without the active involvement of the practitioners within the traditional system. Much of the failure that attends government mass-oriented programmes are traceable to the fact that policy makers at the national level fail to utilize this powerful and credible system.

Secondly, it is a source of cultural, political, health and other educational and enlightenment programmes for the masses leading them towards self-actualization and national development. As has been pointed out above no real success visits such programmes without the system being involved. Policy makers make some vague pronouncements on this score but they never really see to the execution of their decision.

Thirdly, it is a source of entertainment through arts and cultural festivals, musicals and dramatic performances by choral and masquerade groups and other music and drama-oriented groups. For example, *the Ekpo masquerade group which provides entertainment musically and in the area of dance drama also thrills even in its re-enactment of spiritual ceremonies.* The shrines and oracles are places where the educational function is also performed along with entertainment.

Fourthly, it is used for intra-cultural, intercultural and other communication purposes leading to group and national unity. The yam festivals in various parts of southern Nigeria, the Oshun Festival in Oshogbo and the Argungu Fishing Festival in Sokoto are all examples of large traditional communication set-ups which bring about intercultural and even mass communication.

Fifthly, it gives expression to cultural and other activities of the different parts of a nation. Through festivals, for example, wide aspects of a cultural system are exposed to other cultures and greater understanding and appreciation of differences takes place. Through this, cross-cultural fertilization takes place and the society and mankind in general becomes better off.

From the above evidence, we can say that the traditional system is not competitive in the scene that individuals or organisations do not scramble for custom through whatever means, ethical or unethical. This is not to say that the different performing groups

do not have their tiffs but these are often on matters more fundamental than the search for profit. The traditional newsman appointed by society operates on a part-time basis as he has other professional trades by which he earns a living. He could be a farmer, or a fisherman or a carpenter. But he is a trained professional who has been schooled in the principles and practices of the system. A current newsman naturally hands over to his son at the age when he can no longer make the rounds or when the role is withdrawn for whatever breach of social norms that may lead to such an action. When the traditional communicator advertises, it is not done to make profit. Traditional advertising is service-oriented not geared towards profit making.

Conclusion

A lot of work and attention need to be given to the study of traditional communication systems. Not much is gained by the system if the pronouncements of government officials are not attended by concrete action. For example, it is fashionable for government information chiefs to make pronouncements in rural communities about the need to utilize the 'town crier', who usually makes suggestions that he knows rural communities, on their own, cannot carry out. When the actual funding is called for, it is western mass media hardware that funds are usually provided for in the budgets. If governments are serious about making the traditional system more effective, and for it to serve the interests of the central government, then money must be provided for the improvement of traditional media.

In order that the traditional newsman may not be confused with our ubiquitous drug peddlers who use the mounted loudspeaker, some special attention must be given to the improvement of his mobility and his hardware.
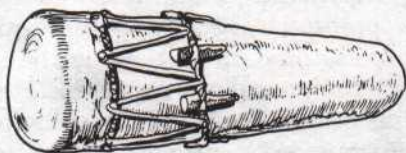
This is the only credible source of information for the rural areas, and no attempt should be made to vitiate the quality of the service rendered by the traditional newsman in the name of innovations. Therefore, all efforts at modernization should be made with the custodians of the culture of the society fully involved in all the processes that may lead to some changes. Thus improvements may be made but the essence of the system that constitutes such a potent force in rural communities should not be destroyed in the process as such efforts in the past have destroyed many valuable aspects of our culture.
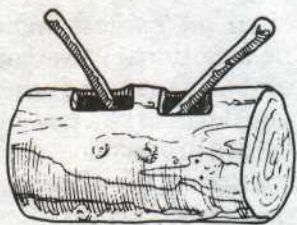
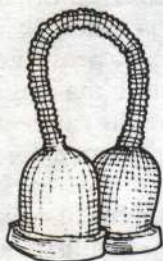**WOODEN DRUM (OBODOM)** — A1

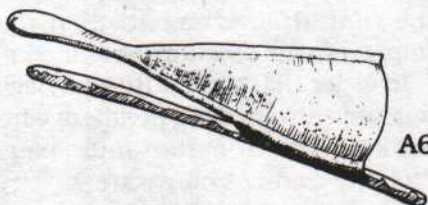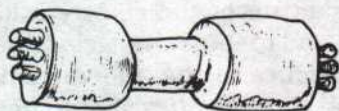**SKIN DRUM (IBIT)** — A2

WOODBLOCK (NTAKROK) — A3

BELL (NKANIKA) — A4

RATTLE (NSAK) — A5

GONG (NKWONG) — A6

RITUAL RATTLE (EKPUT) — A7
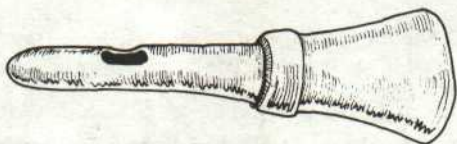
GOURD HORN (UTA) B1

BAMBO RIND (NSADANG)

YELLOW PALM FROND (EYEI)

IVORY HORN (NUK ENIN)

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