

THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE MEDIA IN THE PROVISION OF DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION TO PEOPLE IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

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ABSTRACT

The private media can contribute immensely to meeting the development information needs of any nation by providing the much needed information for development. While a number of studies have examined the relationship between media and development, few have investigated the link between the private media and development information. Information is essential as it ensures that citizens make responsible, informed choices rather than acting out of ignorance or misinformation. Information serves a “checking function” by ensuring that activities taking place carry the wishes of the majority in the nation. The media whether public or private have the potential to provide that access. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether private media provided development information to people in Lusaka, Zambia. Seventeen private media institutions participated in the study. These included print, online and broadcast private media. The results are reported and include the participants’ types of development information they provide; format and language in which they provide development information; target group for development information; the times development information is presented; and policy for the provision of development information.

Keywords: Media; Press; Independent media; Private media; development; Zambia; development information; developing countries.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 1991, Zambia’s economy changed from centralized to a liberalized free environment. The liberalization of the media provided new opportunities for individuals and organizations to own and operate their own press and media facilities. Until in 1990, the print and electronic media were owned by the Government. The only truly independent newspaper that existed and challenged the policies of the government was the National Mirror (Cheraw, 1997). The Government undermined a purely business arrangement by preventing other private newspaper being printed.

During the second republic, political events such as food riots and looting predominantly on the Copperbelt and Lusaka provinces, demonstrations by University of Zambia students, and the attempted coup in Lusaka by Lt. Mwamba Luchembe in June, 1990 essentially engendered calls for a radical change from one party state to multi-partyism (Chirwa, 1997). It was these events that gave rise to the need for some suitable media for free expression of political thought and speech. The establishment of these private media provided the public with a wider choice of newspapers and consequently higher quality formats and greater density of information than was the case in both the first and second republics. In fact,

Internews (2009) claims that countries with a free press have a 70% chance of controlling corruption, while those without a free press have only a 10% chance of doing so.

As Zambia moved from the state-owned media to privately owned ones, the need to make money through selling media products severely challenged from that of service to society. As the private newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations compete for readers, viewers and listeners, the country entered a period in which the yardstick in media work was increasingly becoming the ability to sell media products and make money (Kasoma, 1994). Additionally, Kasoma (1994) observed that there was a general feeling among the private media practitioners that developmental reporting was dull, drab, uninteresting and therefore, could not sell; that those media involved in it risked becoming bankrupt. It was argued that if they wanted to make money and survive, the private media were advised by proponents of this type of thinking to engage in more exciting reporting that would sell their newspapers, radio and television programmes such as crime, corruption, sex scandals and other human interest stories. Thus, even currently developmental reporting by the private media has not received the amount of priority and importance as it should have in Zambia. It is not as pervasive as reporting human interest stories. Dua and Gupta (1994) claim that in newspapers, developmental reporting is by and large confined to an inside weekly page and that too is only done by selected newspapers and magazines. While in electronic media, developmental reporting rarely feature as top stories. One therefore, wonders why this apathy towards reporting developmental subjects.

The mammoth role and contribution of media to the development of any nation has been widely recognized. The media are fundamental tools for development. Dua and Gupta (1994) claim that no task in the world of today can be accomplished successfully and adequately without media support. Consequently, any country or organization which ignores media power does so at its own peril. In fact, Chirwa (1997) observed that media today is as important as government at all levels of human society, local or global. Of even greater significance is the media's importance in the provision of information necessary for development. Media plays a significant role in communicating new information and skills for development to people including mobilizing them for their participation in various development programmes and activities. Additionally, media motivates and encourages popular participation, information and knowledge sharing and empowerment to facilitate efforts for development and growth by individuals, groups and communities and hence acts as a catalytic agent in national development (Dua & Gupta, 1994). The media are also ideally supposed to play the role of education, information, entertainment and agitation or mobilization. Thus, Kasoma (1994) argues that it is unethical to deny people developmental information on the pretext that they do not need it when the real reason is that one is wrongly assuming that he or she cannot make money by publishing it. This information should be timely and accurate and relevant to targeted audience. The people should be told the truth so that they wake up to the reality of their development situation. Therefore, development communication should mean the critical examination, evaluation and report of relevance, enactment and impact of development programmes (Kasoma, 1994).

However, Internews (2009) observed that in some cases, media may fail to play that role due to political or financial pressures, lack of knowledge of the subject, lack of interest in developmental coverage, lack of understanding of subjects. Dua and Gupta (1994) also observed that the media may lack encouragement and information on the subject. Additionally, the private media face many constraints ranging from restrictive legal environments to physical attacks on journalists. Thus, the real influence of the media in

national development will depend on the media themselves, the societies in which they operate, and the audience they reach. None of these factors are the same everywhere, at all times, or under all conditions. The media in dictatorships, for example, are not likely to exercise the same influence as those in democratic societies. Even among similar types of government, other factors, such as technology, the target audience and the message, may influence the extent of media impact in the society (Center for Democracy and Governance. (1999).

2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Generally, the kind of information the private media provides has not been taken seriously. Although a number of studies have examined the relationship between media and development, few have investigated the link between the private media and development information. It is against this background that questions arise as to whether they do provide development information to people. Can their programmes have a desired developmental impact upon the lives of people? What is their role in fostering development? A number of studies have examined the role of media in development. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of the private media in the provision of development information to people in Lusaka, Zambia.

2.1 Research Hypotheses

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the private media in the provision of development information in Zambia. It specifically explored the type of development information they provide, the format and language in which they provide this information, their target group for this information, the times this information is presented to the target group by broadcast media and whether they have a deliberate policy for the provision of development information. Based upon the research questions, six hypotheses are generated to investigate the private media which include:

H1 Private media in Lusaka, Zambia provide development information.

H2 Private media in Lusaka, Zambia have a deliberate policy for provision of development information.

H3 Private media in Lusaka, Zambia provide development information in both electronic and paper

H4 Private media in Lusaka, Zambia provide development information in English

H5 Private media in Lusaka, Zambia target development information to the general public

H6 Broadcast private media in Lusaka, Zambia presents development information during the day

3.0 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Development: *Development* refers to: “a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the wellbeing of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free, and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting there from.” (Fors and Moreno, 2001)

Information: *Information* has many definitions but for the purpose of this study, *information* refers to “intelligence and knowledge that contributes to the social, economic, cultural and political well being of society” (Lundu, 1998, p.11).

Development information: *Development information* in this study refers to information that is required or used for or in development. Examples of such information include information on health, education, agriculture, good governance, freedom, human rights, environment, water and sanitation and gender issues (Mulauzi & Albright, 2009).

Media/ Press: This study used the terms media and press interchangeably to refer to channels of communication which gather, process and disseminate news and information to the public. The channels are in categories which include: (1) print media and (2) electronic media (Kasoma, 1994).

Private/independent media: This study used the terms private and independent media interchangeably to refer to institution of mass communication whose reporting of news and views is not influenced by political alignment. Such media are owned by private people and not the government (Kasoma, 1994)

Developmental reporting: *Developmental reporting* refers to “critical reporting about the empty promises of government, failed projects, mis-channeled funds, corruption, mismanagement, imposition of projects on communities, parochialism, tribalism, racism, sexism, neo-colonialism, natural and human disasters, greediness by those in government, poverty, ignorance, environmental degradation, poverty datum-line, inflation, unfair wages and other bad conditions of service” (Kasoma, 1994).

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 The role of information in development

Information and communication play an important role in economic, social, political and cultural development (Karelse and Sylla, 2000). Information is a prerequisite for individuals to make informed social, political and economic decisions and actions at individual, institutional, national and global levels. Information has the potential to address three primary concerns of development: poverty, disease and ignorance. ICTs provide access to vital information that is needed in order to address these obstacles to development (Mulauzi & Albright, 2008).

“The capacity to acquire and communicate knowledge is the foundation of development. If development depends on empowering people and communities to take control of their lives, access to information through improved communication is an essential component of growth” (Morna and Khan, 2000: 2)

Information and knowledge are basic resources (Fors and Moreno, 2001); like food, air and other necessities of life, without them individuals cannot perform well (Rasmussen, 2001) and it is impossible for any sector or economic activity to function effectively (Yumba, 2002). Mchombu (2003) claims information and knowledge are the most basic of all human basic needs because they have the power to solve the social and economic problems of any society. Yumba (2002) claims that information is an essential ingredient in the socio-economic development process of any society. He contends that the power of information and its applicability in every human activity is so decisive that economic resources such as land, labour and capital appear to be losing their value. Mchombu (2003), however, maintains that information is just a new factor of production that is critical in human development, comparable to traditional production of land, labour and capital. He believes that the potential value of information in underdeveloped countries has not yet been realized.

Because information is accorded a low status, one of the reasons for underdevelopment is due to lack of reliable and timely information to support development planning, programming, implementation and evaluation. He states, “It is now a cliché to pronounce that Africa is the most underdeveloped continent in the world, where the majority lack access to development-oriented information” (Mchombu, 2003:111).

Information enables the planners to not only choose superlative alternatives in a given environment but also resolve doubts in the process of decision-making and problem solving. In addition, adequate, timely and accurate information enables decision makers and planners to plan, allocate and utilize all types of resources effectively (Mulauzi& Albright, 2008).

Rasmussen (2001) alleges that the crucial role of information in development is based upon three premises. First, prospective consumers of information are able to make realistic options based upon cost-benefit analysis or related coherent processes. This suggests that information should enable users to critically examine issues and make informed choices, actions and decisions. Second, ideal information is readily available. For information to have a desired effect, it must be the right information provided at the right time and in a desired form. Third, there is no cost involved in accessing information. Information must be available at almost no cost to all who need it. ICTs promote these premises by making available a global pool of accurate, reliable and timely information and knowledge potentially available for anyone to access and use it rapidly and cheaply to make informed decisions and actions.

Rasmussen (2001) identified five aspects of development to which information can contribute including: social and democratic development; cultural enrichment; education and research; micro-economic development; and macro-economic development. Albright (2002) found positive effects of information on economic and social development in addition to political and cultural change.

Kenney (1995) observed that information is often one of the missing components in some development strategies. He outlined the factors of a development strategy as including health, education and environment, good governance, freedom and respect for human rights, and wealth (Figure 1). Each of these factors is described below.

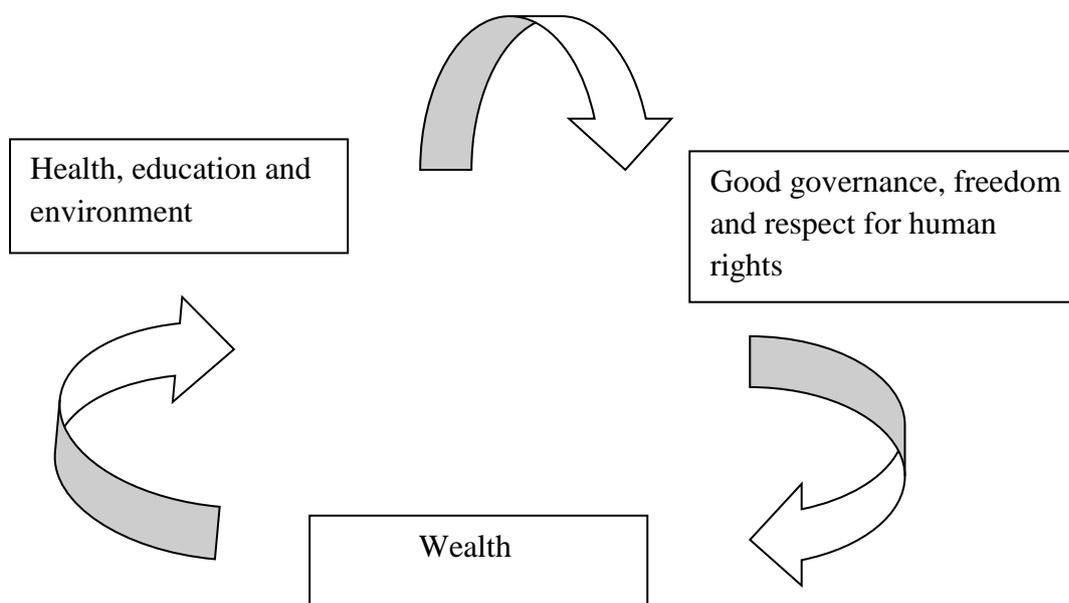


Figure 1: Based on Kenney (1995)

Health, Education and Environment

Sustainable socio-economic development in any country requires a healthy and educated populace (Kenney, 1995). Information enables individuals to learn how to take preventive measures against diseases and improve their health and quality of life. The costs of healthcare are increased when people get sick and have to be treated; prevention is less costly overall. Information is useful in prevention and leads to a healthier populace; it enhances the knowledge state of individuals about health matters. A healthy populace contributes effectively to poverty alleviation in terms of increase in productivity and wealth creation, disease prevention, access to safe drinking water, knowledge of proper disposal of wastes, hygiene and nutrition - “much more than clinics, doctors and drugs, which are costly curative solutions than prevention against disease” (Bartle, 2007). Raising the awareness of potential health problems significantly improves the health of individuals in society, reduces costs, and increases economic productivity.

Similarly, information is critical in ensuring an informed and educated populace in any society. For the reason that developed countries are rich in information, their citizens are well informed about their social, cultural, political and economic environments. Societies that are well-versed adjust promptly to varying social and economic situations; thus, they find ways in which to overcome developmental challenges such as poverty (Republic of Zambia, 2005).

Information enables individuals to gain knowledge of available options or opportunities and the risks involved in taking those options. Information and education increase levels of economic productivity and enable individuals to gain knowledge, skills, self confidence and opportunities, lowers the birth rate while decreasing child and maternal mortality rates, increases life expectancy, and generates income. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) states, “Information is life” (UNECA, 1999: 2).

While human health requires a healthy social environment, it also requires a healthy natural environment. Information is an indispensable resource that raises awareness and changes people’s attitudes towards their environment. It enables individuals to gain knowledge on how to effectively manage and conserve their natural resources, fight desertification and deforestation, avoid pollution and ensure the preservation of biodiversity among other things (ITU, 2006). Productivity and the generation of wealth are dependent upon improvements in health, education, and the environment.

Good governance, freedom and respect for human rights

Sustainable socio-economic development goes hand in hand with good governance, freedom and respect for human rights. Good governance implies the formulation of good policies that address mobilization and include the involvement of all stakeholders (Kenney, 1995). Information sharing between those in power and the governed is imperative. The information flow between the governing and the governed is vital in promoting the equitable participation, involvement and mobilization of all stakeholders. Information is necessary for the design of policies and plans, which should consider the needs of the people so that they can participate in the development process. Through information the public is empowered to gradually take charge of and influence the running of their daily lives. Corruption and

mismanagement are less likely to occur if there is proper information flow between the government and the governed.

Good governance goes hand in hand with basic human freedom and rights. Ochieng (1999) suggests that information is a crucial component of the right to freedom of expression, and necessary for the protection of all other human rights. It is also fundamental to the attainment of a democratic society and to the inherent dignity and development of every human being. Ochieng purports that without information governments and individuals cannot be held accountable for their actions. Consequently, they are able to commit violations with impunity. Such violations are common in many African societies and suggest that many people, particularly women, lack this fundamental basic human right.

Wealth

Information and knowledge are prerequisite for wealth creation (Republic of Zambia, 2005). Information (e.g., scientific and technical information) about available resources and the means to utilize them is critical in order for individuals to know how to create wealth, control exploitation, and make informed decisions.

4.2 The median and development information

The use of media all over the world has not only reduced the information gap, but has also contributed to the development of nations (The Role of Media in National Development).

As a collective means of communicating information, media plays a significant role in keeping the general public or populace informed about the day to day happenings in society. Media also have the potential to communicate and disseminate information to a large audience and influence public opinion and action as well as attitude change. The media more especially electronic media can operate from a distance and cover large areas. The media too have the capacity and capability to teach, manipulate, sensitize and mobilize people through information dissemination” (Inuwa, 2007). Media does not only ensure that information circulation is not confined within members of the public but also coordinates the information flow between government and the public and vice versa (Inuwa, 2007).

Further, the informational role of the media entails furnishing the public with necessary information to not only take charge of their lives but also participate in the wider development process in a nation. Thus the media has the potential to provide the much needed information required in the development process in any society. Such information includes information on health, education, democracy, environment, agriculture and gender issues.

4.2.1 Health

Media are very important means of shaping health attitudes and behaviours. They are used to conduct public health campaigns and disseminate information especially for the fight against epidemics and other fast spreading diseases such as HIV/AIDS; children diseases; and communicable diseases. Additionally, media are used to provide information that promotes a healthy environment as well as women and children health and rights and democratization activities. Through media, it is also possible for doctors to receive and render advice on complex medical issues. It also possible for patients to consult, receive advice and guidance with the availability of medical journals, films, video programmes and radio presentations (Dua & Gupta, 1994).

4.2.2. Education

Media also plays an educative role (Kasoma, 1994). It is useful in delivering education mostly to people located in remote areas especially where limited educational resources, teachers or schools exist. Media also has the potential to deliver education and training to schools, disadvantaged societies and individuals with special needs, efficiently and cost-effectively. Individuals can benefit directly through access to educational information made available through the media that will enhance their educational and literacy skills, thereby bridging the educational divides. The educative roles of the media enable individuals to participate in decision making process.

4.2.3 Democracy

According to Center for Democracy and Governance (1999) access to information is indispensable to the health of democracy because it ensures that citizens make responsible, informed choices rather than acting out of ignorance or misinformation. Additionally, information serves a “checking function” by ensuring that elected representatives uphold their oaths of office and carry out the wishes of those who elected them. Thus, media are potential tools that foster democracy and good governance. They are an important and influential bridge between government and people. Media further enables the public make informed electoral choices; have effective input into public affairs; ensure that the rule of law is upheld; and that the mechanisms designed to check abuses of power can function properly. The media can make the political system more transparent by helping people understand the operations of government, participate in political decisions, and hold government officials accountable (Center for Democracy and Governance, 1999).

Thus free press and hence independent media are both pre-requisites and co-requisites of Multi-party democracy. Multi-party democracy for instance, would not have come in Zambia in the 1990’s and would certainly not last without the enabling role of the independent media (Kasoma, 1994). Kasoma further observed that in modern governance, it is virtually impossible to develop a democratic government without the support of free and independent media.

4.2.4 Agriculture

Kaniki (1989) argues that agricultural development depends upon effective dissemination and transfer of utilizable information to meet the needs of the user. Media have the potential to effectively provide reliable and comprehensive agricultural information that would empower individuals to make sound agricultural decision; to exchange ideas and indigenous knowledge with other farmers in different parts of the world, and improve their quality of life and that of society by becoming more productive. Individuals can be provided with information on agricultural inputs (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides, seeds), market prices, transportation systems, product potential, new environmentally sound production techniques and practices, new agricultural technologies, new markets (both local and international), food processing and preservation, the resource base, trade laws and trends in food production and demand across the globe and sustainable agricultural approaches. Additionally, the media have the potential to provide agricultural information on soils, hydrology, and rainfall and improved socio-economic value ratings, communication and utilities to support decision making and planning at various administrative levels in the agricultural sector. They can also play an influential role in developing human capability for food security in a nation, by providing individuals with the knowledge and skills they require to put agricultural science and production inputs to best use.

Media also play significant role in information transfer which may involve results of research, which, if found to be appropriate, should be disseminate; interpretation and repackaging of research findings to appropriate target groups; eventual dissemination of results to the practitioner via the intermediaries e.g. extension agents; and finally feedback from practitioner which could pave way for new areas of research (Kaniki, 1989).

4.2.5 Environment

The media are crucial for spreading awareness and information on various aspects of environmental issues. Owing to their strong readership and viewership, the media are ideal for spreading the message of environmental education that include proper management of the social, natural, and cultural environment, including natural resource preservation and conservation for sustainability purposes. They also have the ability to provide information that is essential for averting natural disasters, environmental degradation and desertification, ozone depletion, global warming, depleted supplies of fresh water and promote sustainable land management. The media are also important in bringing the defaulters of environmental rules and regulations to book and also highlighting the ill-practices that might be carried out by such individuals or organizations. By giving adequate publicity to the defaulters' actions and the steps taken against them or penalties charged therein, the authorities can manage to set a good example for others who might default at some other time. The media have the ability to spread awareness regarding government's rules, regulations and any direction regarding environmental issues. The public in general remains quite unaware of any new legislation or order declared by the government unless people are made aware through the media which can cover millions of people in a nation and across the globe. Individuals can also utilize the media to air their grievances regarding environmental issues and also share important tips or guidelines for environmental protection.

4.2.6 Gender

Dua and Gupta (1994) claims that the media plays a vital role in discussing gender issues especially in reflecting women's issues and helping ameliorate their conditions. Such women's issues include problems of women such as child marriages, girl child education, and discrimination against women, violence against women and numerous other issues. Thus media have ably accelerated women's empowerment and created awareness about issues agitating women in particular and the society in general (Dua and Gupta, 1994).

5.0 METHODOLOGY

The research design was centered on a quantitative methodology, surveying the private media in Lusaka, Zambia on their role in providing development information to people. The main data collection instrument employed for primary data was a self-administered questionnaire. Seventeen private media institutions that included the print, online and broadcast were purposely selected out of the 27 private media institutions existing at the time of the research. The print media included: The Post, Monitor and Digest Weekly, the Weekly Guardian and The New Vision. The online media included: Tumfweko, Lusaka Online and Lusaka Times. While the broadcast media included: Phoenix, Q-FM, Choice FM, University of Zambia radio, Hone FM, radio Yatsani, Christian Voice, Hot FM, Muvi Television and Mobi Television. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data.

6.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1 *Type of development information the private media provides*

The findings regarding the type of development information the private media provides are depicted in table 1. A total of 88.2% of the respondents reported providing information on health. 64.7% of the respondents indicated that they provide information on agriculture. Another 64.7% of the respondents reported providing information on democracy. Interestingly, 100% of the respondents indicated that they provide information on education. Furthermore, 88.2% of the respondents indicated that they provide information on environment. A total of 76.5% reported that they provide information on gender.

Table 1: Type of development information the private media provides

<i>Response</i>	<i>Health (%)</i>	<i>Agriculture (%)</i>	<i>Democracy (%)</i>	<i>Education (%)</i>	<i>Environment (%)</i>	<i>Gender (%)</i>
Yes	88.2	64.7	64.7	100	88.2	76.5
No	11.8	35.3	33.3	0	11.8	23.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

From the results above, it is clear that the private media do provide development information to people in all subject areas. The findings above concur with Dua and Gupta (1994) who observed that the media play significant role in communicating relevant development information. Thus they claim that media is used as a means to break out of the poverty-ignorance trap. In most cases developing countries including Zambia face the worst form of poverty in today's information society-*Information poverty*. By providing relevant information, the media bridges the gap between the 'information have' and the 'information have not'. The Zambian populace is further characterized by wide spread ignorance. The majority of the people for instance lack knowledge or information on health issues, existing laws and rights and obligations i.e. their freedoms and entitlements. It is only through the media that individuals can access such information. In addition, Dua and Gupta (1994) contents that the media have the power to remove illiteracy through dissemination of educational information that helps people gain literacy skills. The ability to read and write is essential because it enables individuals to contribute in the workforce and be active socially and politically or defend one's interests. Through the media, it is also possible to provide medical care services, communicate major political developments and influence voters' choice. Media is further used as a channel for reflecting on gender issues especially on reflecting women's issues and helps ameliorate their condition. Overall, the media play a major role to enlarge aspirations, increase social status; and lead to overall national progress and prosperity (Dua and Gupta, 1994).

6.2 Policy on provision of development information

Table 2 reports the findings on policy for provision of development information. Half of the respondents (47.1%) reported having a policy for provision of information on health. A total of 17.6% indicated that they have a policy for provision of information on agriculture. The findings also suggest that 47.1% of the respondents have a policy for provision of information on democracy, 47.1% for provision of information on education and another 52.9% for provision of information on environment. Over half of the respondents (58.8%) reported having a policy for provision of development information on gender.

Table 2: Policy for provision of development information

<i>Response</i>	<i>Health (%)</i>	<i>Agriculture (%)</i>	<i>Democracy (%)</i>	<i>Education (%)</i>	<i>Environment (%)</i>	<i>Gender (%)</i>
Yes	47.1	17.6	47.1	47.1	52.9	58.8
No	52.9	82.4	52.9	52.9	29.4	23.5
Missing	0	0	0	0	17.6	17.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

The findings suggest that the private media do have policies for the provision of development information overall though not in all subject areas. Some of the reasons advanced for this were lack of funds and encouragement to have policies for the provision of development information. In addition, it was noted that some private media organizations were established to accomplish goals and objectives not related to development information. Because of that, they tend to have weaker policies for the provision of development information.

A policy is a guiding tool. From the findings above, weak policies entails that there is little or no direction at all in most private media in as far as provision of development information is concerned. As a result, anyone can present any type of information that suits his/her own interests in the absence of a policy and seriousness on provision of development information.

6.3 *Format in which the private media provides development information*

Table 3 reports the findings for format in which the private media provides development information. 23.5% of the participants indicated that they provide development information in paper format while 76.5% reported that they provide development information in electronic form. It was further revealed that only 5.9% of the respondents reported providing development information in both paper and electronic form.

Table 3: Format in which the private media provides development information

<i>Format</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Paper	4	23.5
Electronic	13	76.5
Both paper and electronic	1	5.9
Other (s)	0	0

From the above, it is clear that the majority of the private media provide development information in electronic format. This could be attributed to the fact that the majority of them are broadcast media. This implies that the majority of the people are able to access development information considering the fact that the majority of the people in Zambia are illiterate. Therefore, they are unable to read information presented in paper format. Besides, the poor reading culture in Zambia entails that most people can hardly read developmental information presented in paper format. Mwendadal (2005) argues that with the reading culture fading away among Zambians, there is a rise in preference of electronic information.

6.4 *Language in which the private media provides development information*

Findings regarding the language in which the private media provides development are depicted in Table 4. 94.1% of the respondents reported providing development information in English, 41.2% in Bemba, 47.1% in Nyanja/Chewa, 23.5% in Lozi, 29.4% in Tonga, 5.9% in Kaonde and another 5.9% in Luvale.

Table 4: Language in which the private media provides development information

<i>Language</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
English	16	94.1
Bemba	7	41.2
Nyanja /Chewa	8	47.1
Lozi	4	23.5
Tonga	5	29.4
Kaonde	1	5.9
Luvale	1	5.9
Other (s)	0	0

The findings reveal that the private media provide development information both in English and local languages. However, English seem to be the most popular language through which development information is provided. This entails that it is difficult for the majority of the people who are do not know how to read and write to access the information. For development information to reach out to a larger population, it has to be presented as much as possible in the country's seven major languages. Localness is an important aspect in the provision of development information by private media. Certain individuals can quickly and easily get convinced when information is presented in a local language. Development is not only about literate people only. It should involve even the illiterate ones. Thus, it is important to empower the illiterate people with information so that they take charge of their lives and participate effectively in the development process. Information is a powerful tool for combating poverty, empowering poor people and facilitating income generation.

6.5 *Target group (s) to which the private media presents development information*

Table 5 reports the findings for target group (s) to which the private media presents development information. 40% of the respondents indicated that they target information on health to adults while 50% reported targeting information on health to the general public. Some participants reported targeting information on agriculture on adults (30%) while 40% of the respondents indicated that they target information on agriculture to the general public. Others reported targeting information on democracy to adults while 40% is targeted to the general public. Whereas 40% of the respondents indicated that they target information on education to adults, 60% of the respondents indicated that they target information on education to the general public, Further, 30% of the respondents indicated that they target information on environment to adults and 50% of the respondents indicated that they target information on environment to the general public and only 10% indicated that they target the youths. A total of 10% of the respondents indicated that they target information on gender to adults while another 10% of the respondents indicated that they target information on gender to the general public. The majority of the respondents indicated that they target information on gender to both women and men.

Table 5: Target group (s) to which the private media presents development information

<i>Target group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
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Women	1	5.9
Men	0	0
Both women & men	16	94.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>100</i>

Generally, most of the development information provided by the private media is targeted to the general public. Thus, almost all people regardless of age group are catered for in as far as provision of development information is concerned.

6.6 The time (s) the broadcast private media presents development information

Most respondents (76.5%) reported providing development information during the day (Table 6). While 29.4% of the respondents indicated that they provide development information at night. Another 29.4% of the respondents indicated that they provide development information both during the day and at night.

Table 6: The time (s) the broadcast private media presents development information

<i>Time</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
During the day	13	76.5
At night	5	29.4
Both during the day & at night	5	29.4
Other (s)	0	0

The above is a clear indication that most of the broadcast private media organizations present development information during the day. However, the time that development information is presented is generally not suitable for most of the people. The majority of the people are not found in homes during the day when this information is presented. People in most cases go for work during the day or get busy doing other activities. For instance, farmers are normally found in the fields during the day and when information on agriculture is being presented during the day, it means that most of them do not get the information. Similarly, in urban areas, most people especially the adults go for work during the day when development information is being presented.

7.0 CONCLUSION

As the country strives to achieve a middle class country status by the year 2030, the value of information in empowering communities and individuals to take charge of their lives and participate actively in development cannot be over-emphasized. Accessible and relevant information allows people to take advantage of opportunities in terms of their livelihoods, education and health, environment, agriculture, as well as improve their engagement with government and other service providers. Thus an adequate information flow is required for knowledge to be shared between those who have and those who have not in any given subject. An adequate information flow is also needed if the ordinary people of a country are to be brought into the decision process. Media are a force to reckon with in as far as provision of and access to relevant information is concerned.

The findings of this study suggest that the private media in Lusaka, Zambia do provide development information in all subject areas. However, most of the private media organizations do not have policies for the provision of development information in all subject areas. In instances where some private media organizations have policies for provision of development information, they tend to be not strong enough and this act as a barrier for most

of the private media organizations to provide development information in all subject areas. Results from the field further suggest that most of the development information provided by the private media is in English thereby making it difficult for the majority of the people who are illiterate to access the information. In regard to format in which the private media present development information, paper format was the most preferred form by most respondents.

The findings also reveal that most private media organizations provide development information during the day and this is the time when most people are away from homes either at work or busy with other activities. Therefore, they may not have a chance to access development information during this time. It also appears that most of this development information is targeted to the general public.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The reading culture in Zambia keeps deteriorating. As a result, most people miss out on development information that is normally presented in print form. It is therefore, important for people to develop a culture of reading if they are to benefit from this type of information.
2. The government should provide a conducive environment for the private media to effectively participate in the development agenda through provision of development information.
3. The private media in Zambia should develop strong policies for the provision of development information in all subject areas.
4. For development information to be accessed by the many people, there is need to disseminate this information in local languages.
5. In as much as most people may prefer information in paper format, there is need to make development information available in electronic media such as the radio for the illiterate to access the information.
6. It is recommended that private media (especially the electronic media) present development information both during the day and in the evening for the majority of the people to have a chance to access it.

9.0 FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was limited to private media in Lusaka, Zambia. There are several areas for further research involving private media in rural areas and in other countries, regions, both within Africa as well as outside. Research involving the private media in rural areas would assist in identifying the information needs of rural people including choices, usefulness and utility of both the print and electronic media programmes. The role of the private media needs to be analyzed not only by using quantitative but also qualitative approaches. Research in this area would assist in identifying the role of the private media in various aspects of life. It would also assist planners and implementers to design, evaluate and make better uses of private media for provision of development information. Perhaps more importantly, there is a need for more studies on the role of the media in providing development information and also on the importance for people to access development information.

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