



The usefulness of Community Media in Promoting Domestic Tourism in Tanzania

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Abstract

Domestic tourism in the African perspectives has for a long time being considered as a foreign oriented practice. Despite of its significant contributions to the economy; Tanzania is still amongst the African countries which seem to have a very scant evidence to support for the existence of a vocal domestic tourism industry in the country. Likewise, the media as one of the agents of social and economic changes in the country cannot also go unnoticed.

The focus of this article is to shade light on how the community media particularly the Community Radios can be useful agents in promoting domestic tourism in Tanzania and other developing countries. The article vividly cites a number of authenticated case studies across globe to sustenance for the usefulness of community media especially community radios in endorsing domestic tourism in Tanzania.

Keywords

The usefulness, Community Radio, Promoting, Domestic Tourism, Tanzania

1.0 Background Information

1.1 The Concept of Tourism

The word tourism has been defined in diverse perspectives by different scholars. According to Demunter and Dimitrakopoulou (2011), the word tourism means the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for a specific period of time for leisure, business and other purposes. On the other hand, the word domestic tourism is the situation whereby people or residents of a given country travelling to and staying in places only within their country but outside their usually environment (Demunter and Dimitrakopoulou, 2011). In general perspectives, the concept of tourism appear to have been considered as an international phenomenon whereby it involves people travelling outside their own countries for

leisure, business, holidays, or simply to enjoy a mild climate for a week or so.

Unlike in developing nations, domestic tourism has been one of the sources of income in the developed countries. For example, in 2011, residents from the Netherlands, Slovenia, Belgium and Luxembourg were reported to have spent their leisure time within their own countries. Likewise, it was recorded that more than three out of four holiday trips made by residents from these countries were within their home countries.

Moreover, in 2010, residents of the European Union have been reported to have made more than one billion holiday trips, amongst those trips, over 800 million were domestic trips (77 %) and almost 250 million were outbound trips (23 %). In addition to the trips made, it is estimated that in the same period, households in the European Union spent an estimated 192 billion euro during domestic holiday trips, as compared to 181 billion euro on outbound holiday trips.

2. Domestic Tourism in Tanzania

According to Tanzania Tourism Sector Report (2008), Tanzania's tourism sector is amongst the fastest growing sectors in the country and is considered to be amongst the sources of foreign exchange in the country. It is reported that during that period (in 2008) the earnings from tourism sector was about 1,288.7 million USD compared to 770,376 in 2007. This confirms that the tourism sector brings much foreign exchange in the country. According to Luhanga (2014), the tourism sector directly accounts for about 16% of the GDP and nearly 25% of total export earnings. The sector also plays a major role in enhancement of national and international peace and understanding.

Apart from earning foreign exchange, the tourism sector in Tanzania is also considered to be amongst the job creator sector after the agricultural sector. It is reported by the World Travel Tourism Council (2009) that the sector had created about 19, 000 jobs by 2008.

Moreover, apart from bringing much foreign exchange in the country, the tourism sector has also been experiencing some dropdown on the number of international tourists whereby between January and June 2009, the number of international arrivals dropped by 16.5 percent to 303,819, compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

As an effort to strengthen the tourism sector in the country, Tanzania has somehow tried to put some emphasis on domestic tourism though there is still a low response amongst residents in the country. Among other efforts put forward by the Tanzanian government to boost domestic tourism in the country is through the recognition of the contribution of domestic tourism in the economic growth in the country, as such, both public and private sectors have somehow increased efforts to promote domestic tourism. Among the efforts to promote domestic tourism include advertisements through the media and participation in local fairs such as “Karibu Travel Fair”, “Nane Nane” and “Saba Saba”.

Moreover, as a way of encouraging residents to visit the national parks, museums’ and other attraction areas, the government of Tanzania has made sure that the entrance fees have remained low to the local Tanzanians compared to the international tourists. Currently, adults pay about 1,500 Tanzanian Shillings (less than one US Dollar) whereas children pay 500 Tanzanian Shillings to visit the parks, while for museums and antiquities the entrance fees for adults and children are 500 Tanzanian Shillings (adults) and 200 (children), respectively.

According to Michael (2009), the number of domestic tourists in Tanzania is very low and dominated by foreign tourists. One of the major reasons which has led to the low number of domestic tourists Tanzania is due to lack of enough knowledge and because many residents see tourism attractions as solely for foreign visitors. This is quite different from countries like Namibia which is said to have done well in domestic tourism whereby the number is domestic tourists and its contribution to the economic growth of the country is somehow visible (Moseley, Sturgis, & Wheeler, 2007). Thus, it is paramount then for all stakeholders in the tourism sector to play part in encouraging Tanzanian residents and local communities to be part of the domestic tourism in the country. Moreover, it is imperative to note that involvement and participation of these communities in the domestic tourism is central to the sustainable development of the tourism industry in the country. As such, the use of community radio would be an appropriate channel to make this participatory model work properly.

There are so many advantages of encouraging domestic tourism in the country. This is because domestic tourism could aid in stimulating the economy and has the potential to create jobs for Tanzanians to help alleviate the high level of unemployment, which is currently climbing up.

According to Mariki, Hassan, Maganga, Modest, & Salehe (2011), the tourism industry in Tanzania to become successful, domestic and international tourism should complement each other though it sounds like domestic tourism in Tanzania is very low. This is because domestic tourism in Tanzania is negligible with local residents mainly visiting friends and relatives (Musonda, 2000) despite that some can afford the park fees and may have time to travel around.

3. What is Community Radio?

Currently there is no consensus on the definition of community radio. According to the *Guide for the Civil Society* (2015), a community radio has been defined as a radio for the people in a community. It is a radio of the people because it is a two-way process that is considered to empower people in the community to have opportunities to identify various problems around them and also create solutions to those problems. It enables the most vulnerable to participate in decisions for positive change in their lives.

Moreover, community radio allows people to collaborate in producing programs on the radio which focuses on their local concerns and priorities. Moreover, a vibrant community radio is expected to help the remotest communities to participate not only into the national and global economies, but also to the development of knowledge-based economies. It is known to sharpen and improve governance by empowering people to hold both local and governments leaders accountable.

One of the common components of community radio stations is that they are people centered whereby they are established to serve a specific community or area. Gray (2002) argues that vibrant community radios are normally established and operated by community members themselves. They are sometimes established by Non-Governmental Organizations, while others are started as developmental projects, and some are started by community radio activists and supporters for community discussion and participation in their communities. Based on their nature, community radio stations serve a very significant role in providing various information in the areas they operate.

According to AMARC Africa (1998), vibrant community radios in an ideal world allow

members of a community to gain access to information, education and entertainment just like what the mainstream media does. Moreover, vibrant community radios which are well utilized by the communities can serve as a platform for debate, exchange of ideas and reactions to plans and projects in a given community. Apart from being used as platforms for debates, community radios are also able to accommodate people's ideas and satisfy their spiritual and psychological wellbeing much better than any other form of broadcasting such as main stream media (AMARC Africa, 1998).

White (2013) observes that until 1985, there were fewer than 10 community radio stations in all of Africa but in 1990s Africa was shaken by rapid and profound political and social change whereby until 1998 they were hundreds of independent radio stations and community radio stations on the continent. It should be noted that amongst the first African countries to establish a community radio per se was Kenya where Homa Bay community radio station was established in May, 1982.

One of the aspects which differentiate community radios from other mainstream radio station or commercial radio stations is the issue of community participation (White, 2013). Community radios have a sense of belonging whereby all members of a given community have a feel of ownership. Amongst the key requirement of community participation in community radios ensures that members of the community are involved in the running of the station. Thus, community members may be fully or partially involved in the board members or trustees, policy-making, management, selection and provision of programming, and production of programs on the stations.

4. Community Radio in Tanzania

Tanzania just like other countries in the world has got a few number of community radio stations across the country. However, based on the various definitions of what a community radio is, Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA, 2018) has categorized community radios into two: (i) *community radio commercial* and (ii) *community radio non-commercial*.

4.1 Community Radio Commercial

The community radio commercial in Tanzania are those radio stations which have some features of community radios but in nature they are commercially oriented. Most of their programs appear not to target the needs of their listeners or communities. Their major concentration is to maximize profit and not to serve the people in their localities, in other words, they are less to people participation like the purely community radios. Most of the community radio commercial in Tanzania are established at district level and thus they serve very few people in the country. Thus, there is a need for the government and or any other stakeholders in the country to invest more in community radios in order to allow majority of community members in other district participate to the developmental goals of the country through the various programs aired by community radios.

4.2 Community Radio Non-commercial

Apart from the presence of about 20 community radio stations in the country, Tanzania also has about 14 (11%) community radio stations which appear to purely accommodate characteristics of a community radio per se.

The difference between these two categories of community radios is that community radio commercial are those community radios which do engage in some advertisements and other strategies to make profit whereas the latter only focuses at serving the community with less attention on maximizing profit. However, there are other categories of radio stations listed by Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) as commercial radios 53 (41%), non-commercial radios 40 (31%), and 2 public radio stations (2%) and commercial radio stations.

Having pointed out the power and influence of the community radio stations amongst community members and surrounding communities, it is imperative to state that the current community radio stations available in Tanzania seem not to be representative for them to have any significant contributions in achieving the “*Big Results Now*” initiative. Likewise, the available community radio stations in the country appear to miss some components to qualify them in the vibrant community radio stations as explained in the previous sections.

It is thus ironical that Tanzania with about a population of 55 million and 150 districts to rely on

only 15 percent of community radio-commercial and 11 percent community radio-noncommercial is neither health for the developmental issues nor the millennium goals. This is because of the expected vacuum of the flow of information from the community radio stations which have been reported to be more close and participatory to the majority of community members compared to the commercial radio station available (41%) in the country which mostly focus at maximizing profits.

The current state of radio stations in Tanzania appears to be dominated by the commercial radio stations (41%), followed by the noncommercial radio stations (31%), community radio-commercial (15%), community radio-noncommercial (11%), and public radio stations (2%). Based on the main characteristics and prime focus of commercial radio stations of making profit, it is likely that these radio stations have very little or no contributions in achieving the sustainable development goals

Likewise, the nature and majority of the noncommercial radio stations (31%) in the country are religious radio stations which are mostly bombarded with religious programs and content. This also is an indicator that there is very little contribution of radio stations in Tanzania towards the achievement of the millennium goals and other social problems or opportunities.

Surprisingly, there are only two public radio stations in the country which represents about 2% of all radio stations available in Tanzania. Therefore, in this regard the focus and interest of this paper is to highlight the need for the Tanzanian government and other media stakeholders on the need for expanding or establishing more community radio stations and if possible public radio stations across the country in order to allow diverse community members across the country use the community radio stations for their developmental, political, economic, and or social issues, hence, meeting the objectives of the *Big Results Now*.

5. The Benefits of Community Radios

Community radios perfectly serve as the means to promote democracy, sustainable development, and peace in communities they operate in (Gustafsson, 2013). It allows community members to share various information surrounding their communities. For example, citizens and non-citizens can develop their political understanding and work to take their problems to the attention of the bigger public.

Moreover, Gustafsson, (2013) reports that the presence of community radio in respective communities have great chance to create and sustain political stability. Maiva further says that community radios are very significant in the communities due to the fact that they act as platforms for discussion of various issues found in such communities. Since most of these radios are concentrated in rural areas and in needy localities of cities where almost members from those communities are always excluded from decisions, simply because they lack awareness, therefore community radios are very vital in such communities as they fill that vacuum of such uninformed communities (Sarr, 2014).

Furthermore, community radios are so useful amongst community members. They act as voice of the voiceless by allowing community members to participate and use the radio stations to give out their views on issues affecting their communities. For example, they may discuss on how they can manage their natural resources, raw materials, community affairs and many other issues. Moreover, community radios are tools for social justice because they effectively respond to a real need to be informed, which is a fundamental right of all members in such communities (Sarr, 2014).

The establishment and existence of community radio stations have also been very vital in the communities where such radio stations operate because members in those communities have a greater chance to increase the partisan and social power, knowledge, and experience of those who participate (Sourou, 2013). According to Sourou (2013), community radios have a significance role to play especially in the rural areas. This is because they have power to reach out to people in rural settings, people who may not meet or converge in any other places. This is a very vital role played by the community radios bearing in minds that much of the population of Africa is rural, and this has been pointed out as a challenge for developmental projects.

Likewise, communities which have community radio stations have very significant benefits as community radios also have the influence to inform listeners and participants to focus on local issues especially those which affects their communities, they can as well mobilize listeners and participants to fully engage in their community developmental issues (Sourou, 2013). In addition, community radios have a greater chance to empower marginalized groups by giving them skills in political communication, helping them develop support networks, and

programming for their basic needs or priorities in the community.

Moreover, community radios play significant roles in providing civic education during election periods to the prospective voters. According to Gustafsson (2013), the community radios fully engage in civic education. Gustafsson gives an example of the 2013 general election in Kenya where community radios played a major role. During the election period the community radio stations in Kenya informed citizens about their civic rights and responsibilities and provided them with the knowledge and information necessary for them to make an informed and sober decision making during the voting process.

Apart from provision of civic education, community radios do also engage in peace building during election periods. Since most of the elections in African countries have been characterized by conflicts and instability, community radios have been fully engaged in airing out peace messages, and sometimes they do invite and give airtime to any peace building agent or institution as a mechanism to restore peace and tranquility during the entire election process. In Kenya for example, during the 2013 general election, most of the community radios invited religious leaders and NGO representatives as an initiative to preach for a peaceful election in the country.

In the same line, community radios play a remarkable role in preventing or minimizing hate speeches during election periods especially in countries where ethnicity is a major problem. Hate speeches are so dangerous and illegal in any democratic countries as they can cause destruction in society. A visible example resulting from hate speeches based on ethnicity was in Rwanda whereby because of hate speeches anchored by the media, thousands of civilians lost their lives in the 1994 genocide. As a result, many community radio stations have devoted themselves in fighting hateful speeches during elections. For example in Kenya, during the 2013 general election, all media, including community radio stations were compelled and sensitized by the government about the use of hate speech. This move played an accredited and credible role throughout the election because the country witnessed a peaceful election compared to the 2007 election.

6. The Usefulness of Community Radio in Promoting Domestic Tourism in Tanzania

Community radio just like any other communication channels has a significant contribution in domestic tourism. According to Kumar (2014), it is accredited that the media both traditional and new media has made incredible influence on the tourism industry within its few years of existence. It serves as a mediator between tourism and society. Kumar (2014) adds that modern day tourism is highly dependent on media reporting. Thus, the use and utilization of community radios towards the promotion of domestic tourism in Tanzania is paramount. This is because the use of community radio is confirmed (Okaka, 2007) to be one of the best channels in promoting domestic tourisms. This is because the community radio or any other media have the capacity to involve planned communication components of programmes designed to change the attitudes and perceptions of individuals towards domestic tourism.

Likewise, since community radios are people's centered radio stations and operate on a participatory model, they are advantaged to influence as many people as possible to participate in the domestic tourism in the country if well utilized. Thus, with such as advantage, community radios should be used to raise awareness and shift public opinions about the concept of domestic tourism whereby it appears that majority of local people in Tanzania consider the concept of tourism as meant for international tourists alone.

Moreover, in order to make best use of community radios in promoting domestic tourism as Godahewa (2011) notes, citizens and all tourism stakeholders should be reminded that the development of tourism in a country is not limited to increasing the number of hotels, restaurants, and other stuff, rather it has far more to do with encouraging and motivation individuals to create a culture of visiting the attractive or tourism places found within their countries. The community radios, in particular, can work closely with the governments and the tourism promotional institutes in achieving these objectives.

Furthermore, Kanyi (2014) says that in order to promote domestic tourism in a country one has to get rid of publicity through the local media. Kanyi explains that publicity is the movement of diverse information and messages with the effects of increasing public awareness of a subject; thus, if such publicity is incorporated in the community radios it can cause positive results on the side of promoting domestic tourism in the country. The idea of Kanyi is justifiable in the sense

that such publicity if well formulated and designed, it can reach direct the local residents who are usually users of community radios in areas where they are found.

7. Conclusion

Communication and dissemination of information is a very significant tool of empowering people to get to know of various things surrounding their environment. Likewise media choices is an incredible element for a successful dissemination of information to the specified and intended audiences.

This article has tried to donate some tips of commendations to the Tanzanian government to see it the need of incorporating community radios if it so need to promote domestic tourism. The article has also shaded light that tourism should not only be left nor considered to be a foreign domain, rather they should vividly encourage their citizens to engage in it. Apart from contributing to the income generation to the country, domestic tourism also gives opportunities for the citizens to have recreation with their families as well as reducing stress and loneliness.

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