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***A BRIEF HISTORY ON BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA***

The term broadcasting evolved from its use as the agricultural method of sowing seeds in a field by casting them broadly about it. It was later adopted for describing the widespread distribution of information by printed materials or by telegraph. Broadcasting is an essential act of sending out information through TV or radio stations to a huge audience. The concept of broadcasting primarily covers radio and TV channels but many observers have asserted that newspapers also serve as realistic platforms through which information can be transmitted to a massive audience of readers. By reason of this, it is reasonable to highlight the origin of newspapers while tracing the evolution and history of broadcasting in Nigeria.

Nigeria’s history of broadcasting dates from the 18th century when ‘Iwe Iroyin fun Awon Egba Ati Yoruba’ was introduced in the former Southern Protectorate of the country. Basically, broadcasting is a formal means of sending out information to a massive audience and for this objective to be achieved, media platforms such as newspapers, radio and TV stations are always required. In discussing Nigeria’s history of broadcasting, it is important to discriminate between the origins of the three commonest broadcasting mediums being the newspapers, TV and radio stations. Therefore, this article has been designed to discuss the history of broadcasting in Nigeria beginning from the evolution of newspapers to the emergence of TV stations.

***NEWSPAPERS***

Newspapers are one of the major sources of knowledge and news. Sometimes they even become a powerful tool in the fight for independence and freedom. The history of newspapers can tell a lot about the general issues and views in the country.

The life of newspapers in Nigeria started in the 19th century when the European missionary from Presbyterian Church Rev. Henry Townsned established the first printing press in 1854. Five years later, the first newspaper came out, called ‘Iwe Irohin Fun Awon Ara Egba Ati Yoruba’

His main idea for this newspaper, was to build up a literacy programme for the Yoruba and Egba. Nigerian elites were the first people who enjoyed these publications. ‘Iwe Iroyin’ was only the beginning of the newspaper industry in Nigeria. It encouraged Nigerians to produce other publications like; Nigerian Tribune, The west African pilot, African Messenger etc. These newspapers started a brief history of broadcasting in Nigeria. They also sparked the era of journalism in Nigeria. A lot of journalists began their fighting career against the colonial rule in the country. The pioneer writers who contributed a lot to the Nigerian freedom were; **Mokwugo Okoye, Dutse Mohammed Ali. Anthony Enahoro, Obafemi Awolowo, Ernest Okoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Herbert Macaulay etc**

They all fought for the Nigerian Independence. After the proclamation of the independence, Nigeria started a new era of journalism. Some of the Nigerian newspapers transformed into the Nigerian TV. One of the interesting facts about broadcasting in Nigeria shortly after the independence is the pressure on the press. Some individuals, who were in power in the country, did not desire the development of free press, Therefore, the media was monopolized by the government and all the attempts to write something against the government were dangerous.

Nigerian media today faces several problems. The major one is the lack of funding. To stay afloat, the papers have to publish advertisements, which influences the quality of the articles. The problem is that often exclusively powerful individuals or companies place the ads. Therefore, sometimes the newspaper clearly misleads readers, for example, by covering up the apparent corruption. With the emergence and spread of the internet in the country, the online newspapers appeared. More and more Nigerians rely on online publications. Plus, online media increases the prompt submission of information and can deliver texts on various topics.

Most of them cover daily political and economic issues in Nigeria, offer reports and analytical articles, produce a lot of entertainment content. Newspaper growth in Nigeria continues. The media industry faces challenges, but persist in fighting them, and the development of printed and online press carries on.

***RADIO***

Nigeria can boast a big number of radio stations. Some of them are owned by the government, others are privately owned. A good number of radio stations air programmes in the local languages and this is a big advantage to tribes and communities. Let’s get into the brief history of radio in Nigeria to understand how this telecommunication method was introduced and developed through decades.

Radio technology uses special ‘radio waves’ transmitted through space. Its background goes back to the 1830s when scientists and innovators used wireless telegraphs and improved them. It took several decades to figure out all the forms of electromagnetic waves to deliver a signal at distances. The theory was proved in 1888 (by Heinrich Hertz who conducted an experiment to transmit the future radio waves), but it still wasn’t until 1893 when ‘Hertzian waves’ could finally become the basis for transmitting signals wirelessly. The first system that could transmit signals was proposed by Tesla in 1893, and a year later Gugliemo Marconi (the genius from Italy) began working on the world’s first wireless telegraph which became the first radio transmission. Radio was used in communications between marine and military workers before it reached the public.

The radio broadcasting started in Nigeria in the year 1933. The very first radio distribution system was installed in Lagos. It was governed by the Department of Post and Telegraphs. The primary goal of the radio system was to serve as the BBC reception base. In 1935, the system was changed to the radio diffusion system, which later served in the Second World War. A few years later, in 1939, the Ibadan Station was created. The first real establishment of the Nigerian Broadcasting service was launched in 1950. It covered: Kaduna, Enugu, Kano, Ibadan, Lagos, etc.

Thanks to the Bill of the House of Representatives, Nigeria got its first broadcasting corporation in 1956. Then twenty-two years later, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria was established. The first external radio service was created in 1990. It was called the voice Of Nigeria.

Nigeria has over sixty radio stations. It includes forty government-owned radio stations and more than twenty belongs to the private organisations. Nigerians can also enjoy international transmissions since 2007.

***TELEVISION***

Television is very popular among children and adults nowadays. The colourful pictures, various entertaining TV shows, cartoons, news, TV series, and movies give us many fun moments to share and enjoy. Do you know the history of television in Nigeria? Let us recollect how it all began and what the first local TV station was.

**FIRST TV STATION IN NIGERIA**

This is the most common question asked when it comes to the history of television in Nigeria. The story began in 1959. It was the end of October (the very last day of the month, October the 31st) when the regional Nigerian government revealed the first TV station in Nigeria. The first tv station in the country was called WNTV. These four letters are an abbreviation that stands for Western Nigeria (WN) Government Broadcasting Corporation (TV). This broadcasting company was located in Ibadan.

WNTV was not only the first TV station in Nigeria. It was also the 1st Tv station in Tropical Africa. Western Nigeria Tv was created with a goal to promote education and introduce citizens to the whole world, but the station became the voice of the opposition who needed to broadcast its ideas to Western Nigerians.

The example of WNTV was contagious. Governments of the other parts of the country also wanted to broadcast their ideas so they established regional television stations in the 1960s. The country, independent since 1960, saw the rise of RKTV (Radio Kaduna Television) and NBC (Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation) in 1962. Two more stations were established 10 years later: BPTV (Benue-Plateau Television Corporation) and Mid-west television. All these regional broadcasting companies were mostly used by politicians and served the government needs. The division of Nigeria into states in 1973 gave the way to forming a TV station in each state.

**TELEVISION SITUATION**

Television broadcasting seems to be the most cherished medium of broadcasting in Nigeria. Its history can be tracked back to the late 1950s when the former Western Region launched Nigeria’s foremost TV signal. Precisely, 1959 marked the beginning of television broadcasting in Nigeria with Western Nigerian Television being the first TV station established in the country.

Nigerian Government operates about 70 federal channels. Nigeria also has more than a dozen privately owned channels. We have also been able to enjoy satellite subscriptions since 2007. The biggest TV and Radio companies are: Nigerian Television Authority, Federal Radio Corporation. While the most noticed private players in Nigeria are: Channels Television, Africa Independent Television, Silverbird Television.

***FILM***

Film as a medium first arrived into Nigeria in the late 19th century, in the form of peephole viewing of motion picture devices. These were soon replaced in the early 20th century with improved motion picture exhibition devices, with the first set of films screened at the Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos from 12-22 August 1903. The earliest feature film made in Nigeria is 1926s Palaver produced by Geoffrey Barkas: the film was also the first film to feature Nigerian actors in a speaking role. As of 1954, mobile cinema vans played to at least 3.5 million people in Nigeria Film Unit were screened for free at the 44 available cinemas. The first film entirely copyrighted to the Nigerian Film unit is Fincho (1957) by Sam Zebba; which is also the first Nigerian film to be shot in colour.

After independence in 1960, the cinema business rapidly expanded, with new cinema houses being established. As a result, Nigerian content in theatres increased in the late 1960s into the 1970s, especially productions from Western Nigeria, owing to former theatre practitioners such as Hubert Ogunde and Moses Olaiya transitioning into the big screen, in 1972, the indigenization decree was issued by Yakubu Gowon, which demands the transfer of ownership of about a total of 300 film theatres from their foreign owners to Nigerians, which resulted in more Nigerians playing active roles in the cinema and film. The oil boom of 1973 through 1978 also contributed immensely to the spontaneous boost of the cinema culture in Nigeria, as the increased purchasing power in Nigeria made a wide range of citizens to have disposable income to spend on cinema going and on home television sets. After several moderate performing films, Papa Ajasco (1984) by Wale Adenuga became the first blockbuster, grossing approximately 61,000 naira (approx. 2015 21,552,673 naira) in three days. A year later, Mosebolatan (1985) by Moses Olaiya also went ahead to gross 107,000 (approx. 2015 44,180,499) in five days.

After the decline of the Golden era, Nigerian film industry experienced a second major boom in the 1990s, supposedly marked by the release of the direct-to-video film Living in Bondage (1992); the industry peaked in the mid-2000s to become the second largest film industry in the world in terms of the number of annual film productions, placing it ahead of the United States and behind only India. It started dominating screens across the African continent, and by extension the Caribbean’s and the diaspora, with the movies significantly influencing cultures and the fil actors becoming household names across the continent. The boom also led to backlash against Nigerian films in several countries, bordering on theories such as the ‘Nigerialization of Africa’.

Since mid-2000s, during the decline of the video-film era, the Nigerian cinema has undergone some restructuring to promote quality in output and professionalism in the industry, with *the figurine* (2009) widely regarded as marking the major turn around of contemporary Nigerian cinema. There has since been a resurgence in cinema establishments, and a steady return of the cinema culture in Nigeria. As of 2013, Nigeria cinema is rated as the third most valuable film industry in the world based on its worth and revenues generated.

***MODERN BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA***

Without doubts, Nigeria is in the trend of modern broadcasting as practiced in many parts of the world. Digital technology has integrated the idea of broadcasting and Nigeria is not lagging behind in exploring the benefits associated with this. No learned person would doubt the fact that digital technology has made it possible for people to enjoy broadcasting regardless of where they are in the world. Today, information travels rapidly across media platforms like TV, radio, and newspapers.

The rapid growth of modern technology has facilitated the spread of TV channels and radio stations. Interestingly, Nigeria is not excluded from the countries that have taken the advantage of modern technology to improve broadcasting. Over the years, Nigeria’s broadcasting industry has grown massively with a plethora of media channels like daily newspapers, TV systems and radio stations. Today, radio stations are found in every of Nigeria’s 36 states. Reports from reliable sources imply that there are more than 60 radio stations in Nigeria with some states having multiple radio stations. More than 20 of these radio stations are under private ownership while 40 are owned by the government. International transmission is obviously one of the exciting features of modern broadcasting and Nigerians have been gaining access to it since 2007.

TV broadcasting is considered the most popular aspect of broadcasting in Nigeria and there is barely a Nigerian household-especially in cities- where you won’t find at least one TV set. In Nigeria, TV broadcasting is much more admired than radio broadcasting and there are a significant number of TV channels in the country. A bout 70of Nigeria’s entire TV channels are owned by the Nigerian government while a considerable number of other TV channels are under private ownership. Also noteworthy is that Nigerians have been gaining access to satellite subscriptions since 2007.

Some of the prominent privately-owned TV channels in Nigeria are Silverbird television, AIT (African Independent Television) and Channels Television. The most popular government-owned radio station is Federal Radio Corporation while the most poplar TV counterpart is Nigerian Television Authority.