

**PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF PRESS COVERAGE OF RURAL ISSUES IN NIGERIA
(A STUDY OF IKOT ABASI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, AKWA IBOM STATE)**

BLESSING JACKSON UDOH

MATRIC NO: 1103030008

**DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES,
SAMUEL ADEGBOYEGA UNIVERSITY, OGWA, EDO STATE.**

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ABSTRACT

The study examines Public Perception of Press Coverage of Rural Issues in Nigeria. The underlying reason behind the study is to find out the public opinions about press coverage of rural issues; how the public assess press coverage of rural communities and how rural issues are reported by the Nigerian press. Survey research method was adopted for the study and the questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The population of study was Ikot Abasi Local government area of Akwa Ibom State, which has a total population of 132,608 and Taro Yamane formula was used to draw a sample size of 204. The simple random sampling technique was used in the study and Development Media Theory propounded by Denis McQuail in 1978 was used to anchor the study. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings showed that rural issues like; health, education, government programmes, and agricultural related issues and many more were not properly covered and negative events were mostly covered than positive events in rural communities. Findings further showed that the rural people were not happy with press coverage of rural issues in Nigeria because they rarely read news contents on rural issues and no easy access to information in the rural communities. The study further revealed that people cannot read or afford newspaper on daily basis due to poverty, illiteracy, lack of establishment of local media firm by the government in the community, lack of government support, lack of access to daily newspaper in the community etc. The researcher therefore concludes that rural issues and events in the communities were not properly covered by the Nigerian press. The researcher therefore recommends that the government, NGO and the Nigerian press should put in their best to solve the identified challenges.