Tanzanian Media Environment

Current Access, Potential for Growth and Strategies for Information Dissemination

Chapter 1: Media Access and Use

There are close to 47 FM radio stations, 537 registered newspapers and a dozen television stations in Tanzania, as reported by Freedom House in 2010.¹ The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) reports that there has been a definite increase in media outlets since the introduction of a multi-party democratic system of government in 1992.² In this chapter, we profile those with access to the three dominant mass media – radio, television and newspapers. We also track those who regularly use mass media and look for signs of communal use of media.

Given the many sources available, it would seem that Tanzania has a varied media environment, with diverse and plural sources of information for all citizens. But some Tanzanians face significant obstacles in their access to information due to location of residence, income level and gender inequality.³ The African Media Barometer’s 2010 report on Tanzania says:

Despite the relatively high number of newspapers, and radio and television stations in the country, media content largely fails to effectively meet the information, educational and entertainment needs of the various sectors of the population. As such, it is clear that Tanzania still lacks a diverse broadcasting sector essential to a functioning democracy that can contribute


³ Tanzania Report 2010 African Media Barometer. Published by the Media Institute of South Africa and FES Media Africa. Available here: http://www.misa.org/programme/mediamonitoring/AMB%20Tanzania%202010.pdf, Pg 5
to the public interest.\textsuperscript{4}

It is thus equally useful to understand non-users -- such groups are often of interest to media development practitioners, and our research can show who they are and what barriers to information access they face. For broadcast media such as radio and television, the unreliability of electricity and high costs of batteries hamper access for poorer Tanzanians. For another type of mass media – newspapers – poor circulation in remote areas, coupled with low literacy levels are formidable barriers.

\subsection*{1.1 Access}

Household access to radio (defined as the percentage of respondents who said they have access to a radio set in their households) is fairly widespread, though there are some differences between income tiers (see Figure 1).

The disparities are more pronounced for household TV access. Household access to television more than triples between income Tier 3 and 4 (highest). For mobile phones, access increases more gradually with each rising income tier. At the highest income tier, radio, television and mobile phone access becomes identical; that is for those at the highest income tier, broadcast media and mobile phones are equally accessible.

\textbf{Figure 1}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{tanzania_household_access.png}
\caption{Tanzania: Household Access\newline
Percentage of respondents who said they have access to the following media at home\newline
Tier 1 (Lowest income group) \quad Tier 2 \quad General Population \quad Tier 3 \quad Tier 4 (Highest income group)}
\end{figure}

Computer and internet access at home is very low and only a few of those in income Tier 4 can claim to enjoy these services at home.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid
Similar disparities in household access to television and mobile phones are also seen when we break down access by location (urban or rural, see Figure 2). Television access varies greatly with location – it is double the average for urban residents and is less than half that for rural residents. Regarding mobile phone access, rural residents are only slightly behind the national average although access levels are considerably higher for urban residents.

Radio access remains pretty uniform in both urban and rural areas, making it the most consistently available medium to reach Tanzanians across income levels and locations.

**Figure 2**

**Tanzania: Household Access**

Percentage of respondents who said they have access to the following media at home

- **Radio**
  - Urban: 85%
  - General Population: 85%
  - Rural: 84%

- **Television**
  - Urban: 59%
  - General Population: 27%
  - Rural: 14%

- **Computer**
  - Urban: 8%
  - General Population: 3%
  - Rural: 1%

- **Internet**
  - Urban: 8%
  - General Population: 4%
  - Rural: 2%

- **Mobile Phone**
  - Urban: 62%
  - General Population: 54%


Among the regions\(^5\) of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam enjoys the highest level of television access (71 percent) of any region. Other regions with moderately high access include Arusha (43 percent), Kilimanjaro and

\(^5\) Tanzania is divided into 26 regions (mkoa), 21 on the mainland and 5 in Zanzibar. Tanzania’s regions are: Arusha · Dar es Salaam · Dodoma · Iringa · Kagera · Kigoma · Kilimanjaro · Lindi · Manyara · Mara · Mbeya · Morogoro · Mtwara · Mwanza · Pwani · Rukwa · Ruvuma · Shinyanga · Singida · Tabora · Tanga · Zanzibar (Zanzibar is further divided into Pemba North · Pemba South · Zanzibar Central/South · Zanzibar North · Zanzibar Urban/West, but for this survey was taken together, making a total of 22 regions covered).
Mwanza (41 percent for both). Other regions are far behind. Household access to mobile phones is also highest in Dar es Salaam (91 percent). Other regions with high mobile access include Rukwa (81 percent), Dodma (79 percent), Tanga (79 percent) and Mwanza (73 percent; more regional analysis in Chapter 3).

Access levels are not greatly affected by other demographic factors -- such as gender and age. Only slight variation exists where men are more likely than women to have access to mobile phones (65 percent versus 59 percent), and among age groups, those between 25-34 and 35-44 are most likely to have mobile access.

1.2 Weekly Use

In addition to having household access to a mass media device, the frequency with which respondents say they use a medium\(^6\) can illustrate evidence of shared use of media -- such as communal television viewing, sharing newspapers among households, etc. It can also point to instances of limited use of a medium despite its availability in the household, thus giving a more holistic view of media reach.

Measures in the survey of weekly television viewership -- the frequency with which respondents said they watch television -- suggest that viewership outside the home is an important factor. In other words, there is a difference (27 percent have household access, 41 percent watch weekly) between the percentage of people saying they have household access to a given medium and the percentage of people who say they use that medium regularly (compare Figure 3 with access levels in Figure 1 above).

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\(^6\) Regular users are defined in this report as those who use a medium at least weekly.
Communal watching is higher among those with lower tier incomes, and reduces as income levels increase.

When broken down by location, as Figure 4 shows, rural viewers are more likely to watch TV outside their homes than urban viewers.

Figure 4
Analyzed by location, newspaper readership increases rapidly with increased income and is higher for urban residents. Both richer and more urban residents have higher access to education (and thereby literacy) as well (Figure 5).

**Figure 5**

*Tanzania: Media Use*
Percentage of respondents who said they use the following media at least once a week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Mobile and Internet for Accessing Mass Media

Media Convergence Still in Nascent Stages

Throughout Africa, the rise in access to mobile phones also represents a potential boost for access to broadcast media. Those who have access to mobile phones can also listen to radio via their phones (through fitted FM radio receivers, easily available in Africa). Among more urban and affluent Tanzanians, watching video and live television on mobile phones is prevalent. This is important for overall media development in the country -- it could increase access to and consumption of traditional mass media (radio, television and newspapers) via new platforms (mobile and the internet). Being able to consume mass media in this way also gives access to those who are either travelling or otherwise not close to a radio or television set.

AudienceScapes survey results in Tanzania show that only 13 percent of all weekly mobile phone users listen to the radio on a mobile phone (see chart below and compare with neighboring Zambia where 30 percent of all mobile phone users listen to the radio on their phones). With 62 percent of the population in Tanzania saying they are weekly mobile users, there is still ample potential for growth for this method of radio listening.

### Tanzania: Using Mobile Phones to Access Radio/Television

**BY LOCATION**
Percentage of MOBILE PHONE USERS who said they do the following activities on their mobile phones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making Calls</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send SMS</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to Radio</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch Live Television</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*AudienceScapes National Media Survey Tanzania, 2010. N =1298, who use a mobile phone at least weekly*

In general, using mobile phones to access radio is slightly more common among urban respondents than their rural counterparts; very little variance was observed between men and women. The proportion of listeners increases as income increases. **Listening via mobile phones is highest for those 34 and younger (16 percent of mobile users listen this way) and decreases as age increases (between 8 and 9 percent for those 35 and older).** Accessing television via mobile phones is very rare, even among those Tanzanians who have high incomes.
Internet penetration is still very low in Tanzania; only 3 percent of respondents say they used the internet in the past week. Among these, only 7 percent said they use the internet to listen to radio (see chart below: Compare this with neighboring Zambia where 37 percent of internet users listen to radio online).

**Tanzania: Using The Internet to Listen to the Radio**
Percent of INTERNET USERS who said they do the following activities on the internet

- Send or receive emails: 57%
- Find out the latest news: 51%
- Research topics: 32%
- Visit a social networking website: 41%
- Listen to the radio: 7%
- Play games: 13%

*AudienceScapes National Media Survey Tanzania, 2010. N = 75, who access the internet at least weekly*
1.3 Barriers to Media Access and Use

It is also insightful to profile non-users: those who do not use television and newspapers and those without access to these media. Often, such groups are the same and thus it is instructive to know about the challenges faced in reaching these people.

For the purposes of this report, non-users are defined as those who have never used a given medium. Figures 6, 7 and 8 profile those who said they had never used radio, television or newspapers.

Figure 6: Radio Non-Listeners

Figure 7: Television Non-Viewers
Figures 6-8 show that rural residents and women are more likely to be non-users than their more urban and male counterparts. In terms of income, both use and non-use trends show a great disparity between the fourth (highest) income tier and the bottom three income tiers. Access and use increase sharply from Tier 3 to Tier 4 (see charts above) and these respondents are least likely to face obstacles to use (refer to Figures 6-8).

Figure 9 lists the common obstacles hindering access and use of television. Common deterrents to television and newspaper use are closely linked to issues of media access. For instance, problems with electricity and not having a television set at home are the principle deterrents to use (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9**

**Tanzania: Obstacles to Television Viewership**
Percentage of those non-viewers who cited the following reasons for non-viewership

- Don't have a television set
- Problems with electricity
- Too expensive to buy television
- No time
- No available television signals
- Not interested
Lack of Available Electricity Sources Poses an Obstacle for Access to Broadcast Media

Close to half of all Tanzanians who say they have never watched television cited “problems with electricity” as one of the reasons for non-use. Lack of stable sources of electricity at home has an impact on the ability to access media and communication devices, and is disproportionately a problem in poorer and more rural provinces. Those in rural locations have much lower access to main power grids than those living in more urban locations (see chart below).

Respondents with Tier 1, 2 and 3 income levels are more likely not to have access to electricity in their households. On the other hand, those with Tier 4 income levels are most likely to have consistent access to the main power grid, and therefore more likely to rely on it primarily to power their media and communication devices. As a result, those with high incomes (and in turn more stable electricity sources) are thus more likely to have access to media.
Newspaper readership is highest in the more developed regions of Dar es Salaam and Rukwa province, where circulation is also higher. The BBC and AMDI report suggests that readership is also high in the urban regions of Arusha, Moshi, Mbeya, Zanzibar and Mwanza. Outside these urban centers, circulation is very poor, and our respondents’ self-reported reasons for non-readership corroborate this.

The largest proportion of non-readers cites non-availability in their area as the prime reason for non-readership. Notice how, “non-availability” is a bigger problem in rural areas (Figure 10). On the other hand, urban non-readers are more likely to say they are “not interested” or “do not have the time.”

Most of the national newspapers such as Nipashe, Majira and Mwananchi publish in Kiswahili, which is spoken and read by most people in the country. As a result, “cannot read” or “too difficult to understand” are not primary reasons for non-readership.

**Figure 10**

![Graph: Tanzania: Obstacles to Newspaper Readership](image)

Due to Tanzania’s large geographical size (364,900 square miles), in combination with low population density, few urban centers and scattered rural population, getting information to citizens has been a historic problem. Newspapers tend to be urban-centered, and sometimes getting radio signals to

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7 BBC AMDI 2005, Pg 21

8 Ibid


remote areas requires capital expenditures that are prohibitively expensive for non-state, private or community radio stations.

(See Chapter 2 for more on individual radio stations in remote areas)