



AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS OF INVOLVEMENT AND CHALLENGES: BROADCAST MEDIA AND FLOOD RISK COMMUNICATION IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

Flooding ranks among the most destructive natural disasters facing North-East Nigeria, a region already stretched thin by conflict, displacement, and weak infrastructure. Broadcast media are widely seen as central to disaster risk communication, yet a persistent gap between what gets broadcast and what audiences take in raises questions about how well that engagement works. This study examines how audiences in Borno, Adamawa, and Bauchi States perceive broadcast media's role in flood awareness and prevention messaging, focusing on audience involvement and the barriers to effective delivery. Drawing on a review of empirical and theoretical literature alongside a survey of 583 respondents across three states, the study applies Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory as analytical lenses. The findings show that audiences generally view broadcast media as credible and useful for flood awareness but see their actual involvement in prevention work as thin. More than half of the respondents rated media involvement as low or exceptionally low, and broadcasters lean toward reactive coverage once flooding hits rather than proactive education beforehand. Infrastructure gaps, political interference, tight budgets, and a shortage of trained staff undercut messaging effectiveness and audience trust, with political interference standing out as the most damaging factor. Better flood risk communication requires varied programming, real infrastructure investment, reduced political interference, and stronger training for media professionals. The study offers a regionally grounded account of the gap between what broadcast media could contribute to disaster communication and what audiences perceive as actually delivering.

Keywords: Broadcast media, audience perception, flood risk communication, North-East Nigeria

Introduction

Flooding is now one of the most common and costly natural disasters worldwide, responsible for approximately 44% of all weather-related disasters between 2000 and 2019 and affecting more than 2 billion people (UNDRR, 2020). Much of this rise can be attributed to climate change, which has shifted rainfall patterns and made extreme downpours more likely (IPCC, 2022). This trend makes strong disaster risk communication systems more urgent than ever, as they are among the main tools available for cutting down loss of life, economic damage, and social disruption. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 places early warning systems and public awareness, delivered through accessible communication channels, at the center of disaster resilience efforts (UNISDR, 2015). Nigeria has felt this trend acutely, with recurring floods leaving deep human, economic, and social scars. The 2012 floods long stood as the country's benchmark disaster,



but 2022 eclipsed it, becoming the worst flooding event in Nigeria's recorded history. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2022) put the toll at over 603 deaths, 2,400 injuries, and more than 1.4 million people displaced nationwide, with widespread damage to homes, infrastructure, and over 300,000 hectares of farmland (Abubakar, 2021; NEMA, 2022; Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2023).

North-East Nigeria (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe States) is at the intersection of nearly every imaginable risk factor. Its position within the Benue and Gongola River basins leaves it geographically exposed, and the region has paid for it disproportionately. NEMA (2023) data show that between 2020 and 2023, North-East Nigeria accounted for a large share of the country's flood displacements, with Adamawa and Taraba recording floodwater depths exceeding 3 metres in 2022 alone. Over that four-year stretch, more than 500,000 people were displaced and over 500 died from flooding across the region (NEMA, 2023). Layered on top of this is the ongoing insurgency tied to Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), which has produced one of the world's most severe and complex humanitarian crises. As of 2023, over 2.2 million people remained internally displaced (IOM, 2023), many of them living in camps found in flood-prone areas. Natural disasters and armed conflicts overlapping like this create a layered emergency where standard disaster communication approaches are not built to manage well. IDP communities often have fractured social networks and little trust left in formal institutions, face barriers to receiving and acting on information (Ahmed et al., 2021; Ayeni & Mohammed, 2022).

Given all this, communicating flood risk effectively becomes central to managing the disaster, and mass media everywhere carry a core responsibility to inform, educate, persuade, mobilize, and entertain audiences. These functions sit under what is often called the media's social responsibility role, one that scholars have long identified as a constant across societies (Amanawa & Amanawa, 2023; Governor et al., 2025; Ezebuonyi et al., 2020). Broadcast media, specifically television stations, conduct a wide range of these roles, rooted in the normative idea that public service media should inform, educate, and entertain in ways that address issues affecting their audiences (Governor et al., 2024). With adult literacy at approximately 62% nationally (NBS, 2018) and considerably lower in rural North-East Nigeria, audio-visual media becomes, for much of the population, the only realistic conduit for life-saving information. Radio carries weight here: over 500 licensed stations operate nationally, with penetration above 80% in rural areas (NBC, 2022). Its low cost, battery-powered portability, and use of local languages such as Hausa, Kanuri, and Fulfulde make it a lifeline, especially in conflict zones where movement is restricted and digital infrastructure barely exists (Gambo & Usman, 2019; Eze & Ologun, 2020; Ogunjimi et al., 2023). And yet, flooding kept getting worse between 2020 and 2023 despite these communication efforts, which points to a real disconnect somewhere in the chain. Sending out a warning is not the same as being received, understood, or acted on. Lindell and Perry (2012) make this point in their disaster communication theory: a warning system's success ultimately comes down to what protective actions the public takes, and that depends on how they perceive the threat, the message, and the messenger. Studies from South Asia and the United States back this up; public compliance with evacuation orders tracks closely with how credible, relevant, and clear a warning feels to the people receiving it (Ahmed et al., 2019; Mileti & Sorensen, 2015). This conceptual paper asks how audiences across North-East Nigeria perceive broadcast media's role in spreading flood awareness and prevention messages. Two questions drive the analysis: How involved do audiences feel broadcast media are, and what stands in the way of effective delivery? Drawing on Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory, the paper works toward understanding the gap between what media could contribute to disaster



communication and what audiences perceive them as actually doing, in a setting shaped by conflict, displacement, and limited resources.

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Foundations

2.1.1 Audience Perception

The term "audience" is often used loosely, but scholars have pushed back against thinking of it as simply a group of people passively receiving a message. Audiences actively interpret and make sense of media content, filtering it through their own backgrounds, predispositions, identities, and social contexts (Katz et al., 1973). Baran and Davis (2015, p. 257) put it this way in their mass communications text:

"An audience is composed of those people who actually pay attention to a particular medium or media product for whatever reasons, be they entertainment, information or education."

Perception itself is the process of interpreting and organizing sensory information into something meaningful (Cherry, 2024). It is a subjective process, two people can receive identical information and walk away with different conclusions, simply because they are filtering it through different interpretive frameworks (Quick & Nelson, 2017). Meaning is built from sensory input filtered through prior experience and background (Abamba, 2024; David et al., 2025), and that requires not just exposure to a message but some degree of attention before understanding can occur (Ezegwu et al., 2024). Audience perception, in this sense, is how a reader, listener, or viewer makes sense of a text, speech, image, or broadcast based on their own experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and values. The Encyclopedia of Communication Theory (2009) frames it as an active process, where audience members interpret content against what is portrayed and their existing mental frameworks, drawing on feelings, memories, and cultural background to make sense of what they are seeing or hearing.

2.1.2 Broadcast Media

Broadcasting, at its core, is the distribution of audio and video content to a scattered audience through electronic mass communication, mainly radio and television (Udomisor, 2013). The word itself borrows from agriculture, evoking the image of scattering seeds widely, which fits broadcasting's one-to-many model: a sole source sending messages out to a broad public (Folarin, 1999). That model made broadcasting a powerful tool for social and political organizations throughout much of the twentieth century, capable of addressing entire nations at once.

In Nigeria and across Africa, broadcast media carries significant weight. It works as a one-way system, sending content from a central station to many receivers without immediate feedback (Griffin, 2000, as cited in Omale et al., 2024). Radio tends to dominate, especially in rural areas, thanks to its use of local languages, low cost, and wide reach. Television has more pull in urban settings but runs into cost and infrastructure barriers (Udomisor, 2013). Obot (2004) describes broadcast media as a potent tool for spreading information, shaping opinion, and enabling large-scale communication. The way audiences take in these broadcasts is itself an active process. People weigh source credibility, message design, and personal relevance when interpreting what they hear and see (Napoli, 2011). Broadcast news often carries an air of authority, but perceived political bias can chip away at that trust; some audiences come to see coverage as serving an agenda rather than presenting straight facts (Ann & Kim, 2006). This is where media's agenda-setting power comes in: as Asemah (2011) argues, what media chooses to emphasize becomes what audiences' priorities, making it a central tool for both spreading information and shaping attitudes.



2.1.3 Flooding in North-East Nigeria

Flooding has shaped landscapes and ecosystems for centuries, but it is also one of the most destructive natural disasters, capable of wiping out property, taking lives, and upending entire communities (Smith & Petley, 2018). It occurs when normally dry land becomes submerged, whether from natural causes, such as heavy rainfall, snowmelt, or storm surges, or from human factors such as deforestation, urbanization, and poor land management (Gupta & Nair, 2020). North-Eastern Nigeria occupies a distinct place within the country, known for its history, cultural diversity, and complicated geography (Smith, 2019). The region (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe) spans a mix of ecological zones, from the Sahel to the Sudan savanna, which shape its topography and climate (Adebayo, 2021). Ethnically, it is a mosaic, with each group carrying its own language and traditions (Garba & Musa, 2020). Roughly 25 million people live in North-Eastern Nigeria today, and the population skews young (NBS, 2023). However, the region has been hit hard in recent years by the Boko Haram insurgency, which has forced large numbers of people from rural areas into cities or displacement camps and disrupted both livelihoods and daily life (Amnesty International, 2021; UNHCR, 2022).

Agriculture anchors the regional economy (Smith, 2019). Farmers grow millet, sorghum, maize, rice, ground nuts, and beans depending on the ecological zone (Afolayan, 2019), while livestock rearing, particularly among Fulani pastoralist communities, is still a major economic activity (Mustapha, 2022). However, the sector struggles with poor infrastructure, limited access to modern farming tools, and worsening climate effects, such as desertification and unpredictable rainfall (FAO, 2021).

2.2 Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have helped fill out the picture of how broadcast media shapes audience perception of flooding in Nigeria. Governor et al. (2025) surveyed viewers in South-South Nigeria about NTA and AIT's flood reportage, working from an agenda-setting framework. Most respondents turned out to be frequent viewers who saw these stations as credible flood information sources, and the study called for more diverse, victim-centred reporting to better match what audiences expect. Ojo (2024) examined radio's effectiveness in flood education across Ibadan and Osogbo, combining a descriptive survey with structured interviews. Radio stations in both cities covered flooding consistently, and respondents rated the coverage as useful both before and after disasters, although the study also flagged weak government follow-through and called for better communication strategies overall.

Onyedi and Wogu (2023) examined how media reportage shaped residents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices around flood management in South-South Nigeria. Radio emerged as the dominant information source, with most respondents holding positive views of media messages and trusting their accuracy. The study linked media exposure directly to more informed attitudes and more proactive behavior.

Ezebuenyi et al. (2020) studied radio's role in early flood warning campaigns, focusing on the Anambra Broadcasting Service's 2019 "Flood Is Coming Again" slogan. Using a design survey, they found that most respondents were ready to take proactive steps and recommended intensifying the campaign alongside other channels of dissemination.

Amanawa and Amanawa (2023) examined how audiences perceived radio coverage of the 2022 floods, finding that while exposure was high, audiences felt that political and economic angles



received disproportionate attention. The study called for more prompt reporting, better public education, and stronger support for flood victims.

Ibrahim (2021), studying Borno State, set out to measure how television news shaped public awareness and preventive action around flooding. The results were encouraging on the awareness front; regular viewers reported a better understanding of flood causes, warning signs, and prevention measures; however, the study also revealed a gap: high awareness did not always translate into the resources or capacity to act on it.

Oluwole's (2022) case study on Yobe State found that radio and television were essential flood information sources, particularly in rural areas with little internet access. However, language barriers cut into the effectiveness of broadcasts, which tended to run in English or Hausa, even though many residents preferred their own local languages, and inconsistent messaging compounded the problem.

Ejem et al. (2023) examined the social amplification and attenuation of flood risk perception through broadcast media during the 2022 floods in Southern Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey, they found that broadcast warnings were seen as credible but fell short of amplifying risk perception, largely because of timing issues and other moderating factors.

A related study by Ternenge, Suemo, and Dami (2025) examined how Nigerian media covered the herder and farmer conflict through the lens of solutions journalism. Using critical discourse analysis grounded in Agenda Setting Theory, Framing Theory, and Social Responsibility Media Theory, the study found that coverage leaned heavily toward conflict and blame rather than proposed remedies, which limited media's contribution to public understanding and policy response. Although the crisis is different from flooding, the finding echoes a pattern that recurs across the studies reviewed here: media attention on its own does not guarantee constructive engagement unless coverage moves beyond reporting events toward framing solutions and accountability. Taken together, these studies point to a consistent set of factors shaping how audiences perceive flood risk communication: credibility, trust, cultural relevance, interactivity, timing, and consistency of the message. They also point to recurring weaknesses, misinformation, infrastructure gaps, language barriers, and a lack of two-way engagement, which cut across otherwise effective broadcast efforts.

Theoretical Framework

This paper draws on two theories: Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory. Although they focus on different aspects, combined they explain both how flood issues rise to media prominence and how their presentation shapes what audiences take from them.

3.1 Agenda Setting Theory

McCombs and Shaw (1972) introduced Agenda Setting Theory to describe how mass media shapes public perception by emphasizing some issues over others. Their famous line captures it well: "The mass media may not be successful in telling people what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling people what to think about" (p. 177). In other words, media coverage can push flooding up the public's list of priorities simply by devoting more airtime to it. Walter Lippmann (1922) made a related point decades earlier: "The world outside and the pictures in our heads are not the same thing" (p. 10), media constructs the reality people perceive, including flood disasters. Most of what fills people's heads, the things they worry about, discuss, or think are important, comes from what they have read, heard, or watched through mass media. The press does more than relay information; when audiences fixate on an issue, that fixation usually traces back to what media chose to highlight,



meaning media priorities tend to become public priorities (McCarthy & Dolfsma, 2014). This theory matters here because it explains how media coverage can shape public awareness of flood risk in the first place. As Governor et al. (2025) note, heavy news coverage of flooding tends to prompt a corresponding public and policy response geared toward safety and management. For North-East Nigeria, which suggests broadcast media hold real potential to shape perception and drive mitigation efforts provided coverage consistently foregrounds flood risks and prevention measures.

3.2 Framing Theory

Framing Theory, introduced by Erving Goffman (1974), holds that people rely on frames to interpret experiences. Media organizations do something similar: they build stories around specific frames that reflect ideological, political, or social angles, thereby shaping how audiences understand events and construct meaning around them (Zaklama, 2025). Research consistently shows that framing can steer public opinion by highlighting certain aspects of an issue while quietly downplaying others (Entman, 1993, as cited in Zaklama, 2025). As Zaklama (2025, p. 75) puts it, understanding how news media shape public perception has become an increasingly key area of study given how fast the media landscape keeps changing. Framing, in this sense, is about outlets structuring and presenting information to shape interpretation. Entman (1993) finds four elements at work: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. The communicator builds the message and picks which frame to use, while the receiver interprets it through their own background and beliefs.

Framing carries weight in regions with low literacy, where broadcast media can heavily influence public discourse. This paper draws on Framing Theory to examine how broadcast media frames flooding in North-East Nigeria, whether through problem framing, attribution of responsibility, economic framing, human interest framing, or conflict framing, and how these choices ripple out into public opinion, policy debate, and support for prevention efforts. Framing Theory matters here because it explains how media does not just report reality but constructs it. Looking at the frames broadcast media apply to flooding helps clarify the relationship between media, audience, and environmental issues and points toward more effective strategies for environmental communication.

3.3 Theoretical Integration

Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory work as complements rather than competitors here. Agenda Setting explains which issues rise to public attention, setting up flooding as a salient concern, but it does not say much about how audiences interpret an issue once it is in front of them. Framing Theory picks up from this point. Framing extends what Agenda Setting can explain, moving from whether an issue is salient to how it becomes meaningful. Agenda Setting tracks the transfer of salience from media to public; Framing tracks the transfer of meaning. Entman (1993) describes frames as selecting and emphasizing aspects of reality, which in turn shape problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral judgments, and recommended responses. Together, the two theories offer a fuller picture of how audiences perceive broadcast media's flood messaging. Agenda Setting explains why flooding stays on the public agenda; Framing explains how its presentation shapes interpretation and response. That combination lets this paper ask not just whether audiences are aware of flood issues, but how media presentation shapes what they understand about them. The two theories share a common thread in the concept of salience; Framing's emphasis on choice and emphasis builds directly on it. In North-East Nigeria, where flooding recurs regularly and broadcast media remain the primary information channel, this connection plays out in observable ways: media set the agenda by covering flood events and issuing warnings, while the frames applied shape whether audiences read flooding as a natural disaster, a governance failure, or a preventable risk. This combined approach is not unique to flood communication. Ternenge, Suemo, and Dami (2025)



applied the same pairing of Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory, alongside Social Responsibility Media Theory, to Nigerian media coverage of the herders and farmers conflict, which suggests the same theoretical lens travels well across different disaster and conflict contexts in the country.

Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design, combining a structured questionnaire administered to residents of flood-affected communities with key informant interviews of broadcast media professionals. The quantitative part captured how audiences perceive broadcast media's involvement in flood risk communication, while the interviews supplied context on the institutional and operational constraints broadcasters face in producing that coverage. Combining the two allows the study to speak to both sides of the communication process, audience reception and media production, in line with Lindell and Perry's (2012) argument that a warning system's effectiveness depends on how a message is designed as much as how it is received.

4.2 Population and Study Area

The population included residents of flood-prone communities in Borno, Adamawa, and Bauchi States, three of the six states that make up North-East Nigeria. These three states were purposively selected because NEMA (2023) data find them recording the highest flood-related displacement and fatality figures in the region between 2020 and 2023. The population also included broadcast journalists, producers, and editors working at radio and television stations that carry flood-related programming within the three states.

4.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study used a multistage sampling technique. In the first stage, purposive sampling selected local government areas within each state with a documented history of recurrent flooding. In the second stage, systematic random sampling selected household respondents within these areas, using housing lists obtained from community leaders as the sampling frame. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula at the 95 percent confidence level, applied to the estimated population of residents in the sampled flood-prone local government areas. This produced a total sample of 583 respondents, apportioned proportionately as 185 in Borno, 146 in Adamawa, and 252 in Bauchi. A separate purposive sample of broadcast media professionals was drawn from stations running in the three states for the interview part.

4.4 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire composed of closed-ended items measuring frequency of exposure to flood messages, timing of message reception, satisfaction with media involvement, and perceived challenges to effective flood communication. A semi-structured interview guide was used with broadcast media professionals, covering infrastructure, funding, staffing, training, and editorial independence.

4.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The content and face validity of the questionnaire were established through a review by lecturers in the Department of Mass Communication, who assessed each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's aims. Adjustments were made based on their input before the instrument was piloted with a small sample of respondents outside the three states. The pilot results informed



minor revisions to the item wording, after which the instrument was administered for the main fieldwork exercise in 2025.

4.6 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency counts, and simple percentages and presented in tables to allow comparison across the three states. Interview data were analyzed thematically, with recurring statements grouped into categories reflecting shared operational and institutional challenges across the sampled stations.

Discussion

5.1 Extent of Broadcast Media Involvement in Flood Awareness and Prevention

Pulling the empirical evidence together, a clear pattern appears: broadcast media in North-East Nigeria are widely trusted as flood awareness channels, but audiences see their actual involvement in prevention work as limited.

5.1.1 Frequency of Message Reception

Looking at how often audiences receive flood-related broadcast messages, most respondents report regular exposure. Table 5.1 shows "once a week" as the most common response across all three states, 41.08% in Borno, 45.89 % in Adamawa, and 42.46 % in Bauchi, averaging around 43 % overall. Weekly broadcasts, in other words, are the backbone of flood awareness for much of this population.

Table 5.1: Frequency at which Audience Receive Flood Awareness and Prevention Messages via the Broadcast Media (Radio, TV)

Response	Borno	Adamawa	Bauchi	Total
Daily	32 (17.30%)	23 (15.75%)	42 (16.67%)	97 (16.64%)
Several times a week	39 (21.08%)	31 (21.23%)	51 (20.24%)	121 (20.75%)
Once a week	76 (41.08%)	67 (45.89%)	107 (42.46%)	250 (42.88%)
A few times a month	29 (15.68%)	19 (13.01%)	41 (16.27%)	89 (15.27%)
Rarely or never	9 (4.86%)	6 (4.11%)	11 (4.37%)	26 (4.46%)
Total	185 (100%)	146 (100%)	252 (100%)	583 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Roughly 20–21 % of respondents in each state received messages several times a week, suggesting meaningfully higher exposure that likely reinforced awareness and preparedness. Another 15–16 % heard from broadcasters just a few times a month, which was less frequent but still a steady trickle of information. Only about 4–5 % reported rarely or never receiving flood messages, which suggests that the reach gap was small within this sample. The consistency across Borno, Adamawa, and Bauchi suggests that broadcast channels are doing a reasonably uniform job of disseminating flood information, which is likely to help sustain public awareness and encourage precautionary behavior.

5.1.2 Timing of Message Reception

Table 5.2 shows when audiences hear most about flooding from broadcast media. Across all three states, the flood itself is a messaging peak, with roughly 51 to 52 % of respondents in each state, and about 52 % overall, saying they hear the most during active flooding. That pattern makes sense for immediate safety response, but it also indicates where broadcasters are placing their emphasis.

Table 5.2: Period Audience Receives Broadcast Media Messages on Flooding More Frequently



Response	Borno	Adamawa	Bauchi	Total
Pre-flooding stage	40 (21.62%)	29 (19.86%)	55 (21.83%)	124 (21.27%)
Flooding stage	93 (50.27%)	79 (54.11%)	131 (51.98%)	303 (51.97%)
Post-flooding stage	47 (25.41%)	35 (23.97%)	57 (22.62%)	139 (23.84%)
Not sure	5 (2.70%)	3 (2.05%)	9 (3.57%)	17 (2.92%)
Total	185 (100%)	146 (100%)	252 (100%)	583 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Pre-flood messaging trails behind at approximately 21 %, a meaningful chunk, but clearly secondary to flood-stage coverage, and this is exactly the window in which preparedness and mitigation messaging matters most. Post-flood messaging sits at 23 to 26 %, reflecting some continued communication into the recovery phase. Overall, the data points to broadcast media leaning heavily reactively, concentrating coverage on the flood itself rather than the run-up or the aftermath. This reactive tilt likely limits how much broadcast media contributes to proactive risk reduction and long-term preparedness. Through an agenda-setting lens, media clearly set the agenda once flooding was underway, but the theory also holds that media could set the agenda earlier by emphasizing prevention and preparedness before a disaster struck. The data show that broadcast media are far better at responding to crises than at building the kind of proactive awareness that might soften their impact. Framing theory adds another layer here: framing flooding mainly as something to respond to, rather than something to prevent, likely shapes how audiences think about flood risk, as an unpredictable emergency rather than a manageable one. Those framing risks feed a sense of fatalism or helplessness, and it can crowd out messaging about preparedness, mitigation, and long-term resilience.

5.1.3 Level of Satisfaction with Media Involvement

Table 5.3 captures the level of satisfaction of audiences with broadcast media's involvement in flood messaging, and the numbers lean negative. More than half of respondents in each state rate it as low: 47.03% in Borno, 50.00 % in Adamawa, and 57.54 % in Bauchi, with another 3.78 % in Borno and 2.74 % in Adamawa calling it exceptionally low.

Table 5.3: Level of Satisfaction of the Involvement of Broadcast Media in Dissemination of Messages on Flood Awareness and Prevention among the Audience

Response	Borno	Adamawa	Bauchi	Total
Very high	35 (18.92%)	26 (17.81%)	43 (17.06%)	104 (17.84%)
High	43 (23.24%)	37 (25.34%)	47 (18.65%)	127 (21.78%)
Uncertain	13 (7.03%)	6 (4.11%)	17 (6.75%)	36 (6.17%)
Low	87 (47.03%)	73 (50.00%)	145 (57.54%)	305 (52.32%)
Very low	7 (3.78%)	4 (2.74%)	0 (0.00%)	11 (1.89%)
Total	185 (100%)	146 (100%)	252 (100%)	583 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Approximately 17–23 % of respondents across the states rated involvement as high or extremely high, roughly 21.78 % overall, while just 6–7 % were uncertain, meaning most respondents held a clear view one way or the other. This pattern held steady across states, with Bauchi showing the highest share rating involvement as low. This points to a shared perception that broadcast media, whatever regional differences exist, fall short of actively engaging communities in flood prevention beyond simply relaying warnings. This lines up with earlier findings. Ibrahim (2021) found that television raised awareness but that many residents still lacked the means to act on it. Oluwole (2022) pointed to inconsistent messaging and language barriers eroding both comprehension and



trust. Together, these findings suggest that simply covering an issue, without deeper strategy or community engagement, limits how much broadcast media can drive proactive flood mitigation. Agenda-setting theory helps explain why issue salience alone does not guarantee behavior change unless it is paired with content that is genuinely relevant and useful. Parker et al. (2008) map out the steps a warning must survive to produce action, being received, understood, believed credible and personally relevant, confirmed socially, and finally acted on, noting that socio-economic and psychological factors can derail the process at any point along the way.

5.2 Challenges Confronting Broadcast Media in Flood Communication

Despite the recognized value of broadcast media, several overlapping challenges limit how effectively they deliver flood prevention messages.

5.2.1 Agreement on the Presence of Challenges

Table 5.4 shows near-total agreement that challenges exist in using broadcast media for flood prevention messaging. More than 55 % of respondents across Borno, Adamawa, and Bauchi strongly agree that challenges are present: 56.22%, 55.48 %, and 55.95%, respectively, with nearly all the rest agreeing rather than disagreeing (43.78%, 44.52%, and 44.05 %).

Table 5.4: Agreement among Audience on Whether there is Any Challenge Encountered in the Use of Broadcast Media as the Sources of Messages on Prevention of Flooding in North-East Nigeria.

Response	Borno	Adamawa	Bauchi	Total
Strongly agree	104 (56.22%)	81 (55.48%)	141 (55.95%)	326 (55.92%)
Agree	81 (43.78%)	65 (44.52%)	111 (44.05%)	257 (44.08%)
Neutral	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Disagree	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Total	185 (100%)	146 (100%)	252 (100%)	583 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

No respondents in the sample landed on neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with a striking level of consistency across all three states. This kind of unanimous acknowledgment suggests that, even though audiences generally trust and value broadcast media, they are aware of underlying problems, whether that is content relevance, accessibility, frequency, or something else entirely. The takeaway is clear: audiences see real obstacles standing in the way of effective flood messaging, even while holding a broadly positive view of media's role overall. Something is limiting how much broadcast media can contribute to flood prevention, and audiences know it.

5.2.2 Specific Challenges Identified

Table 5.5 breaks down the specific challenges respondents find, and some clearly outweigh others. Political interference tops the list at 14.05% in Borno, 12.33% in Adamawa, and 14.68 % in Bauchi, pointing to real concern about government and political influence over flood messaging. This is a genuine issue for disaster communication, specifically, where prompt, correct, unbiased information can be a matter of public safety.

Table 5.5: Challenges in the Use of Broadcast Media as the Sources of Messages on Prevention of Flooding among Audience in North-East Nigeria



Response	Borno	Adamawa	Bauchi	Total
Poor signals	31 (16.76%)	27 (18.49%)	47 (18.65%)	105 (18.01%)
Predominant use of the English Language	15 (8.11%)	12 (8.22%)	21 (8.33%)	48 (8.23%)
Inappropriate timing	11 (5.95%)	9 (6.16%)	17 (6.75%)	37 (6.35%)
Interference from advertisers	16 (8.65%)	15 (10.27%)	21 (8.33%)	52 (8.92%)
Interference from government officials and politicians	26 (14.05%)	18 (12.33%)	37 (14.68%)	81 (13.89%)
Poor power supply	18 (9.73%)	14 (9.59%)	21 (8.33%)	53 (9.09%)
Lack of repeat broadcast	9 (4.86%)	6 (4.11%)	12 (4.76%)	27 (4.63%)
Difficulty in understanding broadcast media programmes on flooding	14 (7.57%)	9 (6.16%)	16 (6.35%)	39 (6.69%)
Inadequate participation	15 (8.11%)	12 (8.22%)	18 (7.14%)	45 (7.72%)
Lack of frequent feedback	13 (7.03%)	11 (7.53%)	19 (7.54%)	43 (7.38%)
Too much propaganda	17 (9.19%)	13 (8.90%)	23 (9.13%)	53 (9.09%)
Total	185 (100%)	146 (100%)	252 (100%)	583 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Poor signal quality comes close behind, cited by around 18 % of respondents overall (16.76, 18.49, and 18.65 % by state), reflecting infrastructure and technical problems that get in the way of clear, reliable broadcasts. This was most prevalent in rural and remote parts of North-East Nigeria, where flood vulnerability is highest and access to broadcast signals is lowest. Advertiser interference and general propaganda each drew concern from roughly 8 to 9 % of respondents, hinting that commercial pressure and misinformation sometimes distort flood messaging. Other issues, such as inappropriate timing, poor power supply, and difficulty understanding programming, were less prevalent, with around 6 to 10% of respondents citing them. Lack of repeat broadcasts, weak participation, and thin feedback loops were the least cited, which does not mean they are unimportant, just less central than interference and signal problems.

Interviews with broadcast media professionals added further texture: infrastructure gaps, a shortage of qualified staff, insufficient training, tight budgets, and outside pressure from station owners and commercial interests all came up repeatedly. These operational strains cut into stations' ability to keep audiences engaged and well-informed. Poor pay appeared as its own issue, leaving demotivated staff less invested in producing quality flood coverage. Agenda Setting Theory suggests that when the media face these kinds of constraints, their ability to spotlight critical issues shrinks, weakening their influence over both public perception and policy agendas. Political interference does damage to this; it distorts what gets salience and undermines trust. When audiences suspect a message is politically motivated, they are far less likely to trust it or act on it, regardless of how important it is. Framing Theory points to a related problem: these constraints affect not only whether flooding gets covered but also how. Under-resourced stations often lean on official press releases, which tend to frame flooding around government response rather than community preparedness. Political interference can push frames that deflect blame from authorities or minimize the severity of flood risk. Meanwhile, commercial pressure can tilt coverage toward drama over the kind of practical, actionable information audiences need.



5.3 Implications for Theory and Practice

These findings carry weight for both theory and practice. On the theoretical side, combining Agenda Setting and Framing Theory offers a solid framework for understanding how audiences perceive broadcast media's flood messaging. Agenda Setting explains why flooding gains prominence, and framing explains how its presentation shapes what audiences take from it. The limited involvement audiences perceive reflects gaps in both processes. Broadcast media set the agenda effectively when flooding occurs, but far less so around prevention. The dominant framing, flooding as something to respond to rather than prevent, likely shapes audience perception in ways that work against proactive behavior. Practically, a few things stand out. Media outlets could move past simply relaying flood alerts toward genuine community involvement, participatory programming, community-based campaigns, and real feedback mechanisms that build meaningful engagement around flood mitigation. This would go some way toward addressing the perceived gap in involvement.

Stakeholders should also invest in infrastructure, staff training, and capacity building, while working to create policy environments that limit political interference and the technical and operational barriers currently holding back the reach and impact of flood messaging. Addressing these is central to restoring media's ability to set the flood risk agenda and frame issues in ways that support preparedness and resilience. Thus, tackling these challenges will likely require a multi-stakeholder effort, with media organizations, government agencies, disaster management bodies, and community representatives working together. Improving signal quality, training journalists, and protecting editorial independence could meaningfully strengthen broadcast media's contribution to flood communication.

5.4 Limitations of the Synthesis

This synthesis has its limits. It draws on existing empirical studies that vary in sample size, research design, and geographic coverage, which introduces some unevenness. It also focuses squarely on broadcast media, potentially missing the growing role of digital and social media in flood risk communication. North-East Nigeria's cultural and linguistic diversity may limit how far these findings generalize across different ethnic groups and communities. And because most of the reviewed studies are cross-sectional, they capture a single snapshot in time rather than tracking how perceptions shift as infrastructure improves, media landscapes change, or new flood events occur.

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine how audiences in North-East Nigeria perceive broadcast media's involvement in flood communication, working from a combined Agenda Setting and Framing Theory framework. The picture that appears is consistent: broadcast media are trusted as flood awareness channels, but audiences see their actual involvement in prevention work as limited. Coverage leans reactive, concentrated during flood events rather than proactive education beforehand, leaving a gap between message dissemination and genuine engagement. More than half of respondents across the reviewed studies rate media involvement as low or exceptionally low. Broadcast messages peak during flood events rather than in the run-up to them, reflecting a reactive rather than proactive communication style. Infrastructure gaps, political interference, tight budgets, and a shortage of trained staff all undercut effectiveness and audience trust, with political interference standing out as the single biggest problem eroding credibility. The combined theoretical framework helps explain why: Agenda Setting shows how media raise flooding's salience, while Framing shows how presentation shapes interpretation and response. The gap audiences perceive



reflects a disconnect between media's power to put flooding on the public radar and its actual contribution to prevention behaviour, one that the identified challenges only widen.

For practice, the findings point toward diversified programming, real infrastructure investment, reduced political interference, and stronger training for media professionals. Broadcasters could move beyond simply pushing out alerts toward genuine community involvement through participatory and community-based programming, while stakeholders invest in infrastructure and work to limit political meddling in editorial decisions.

For theory, this paper offers a regionally grounded account of the gap between what broadcast media could contribute to disaster communication and what audiences perceive them as actually delivering. The combined Agenda Setting and Framing framework provides useful analytical tools for studying how media messages get built, sent, and received in settings marked by conflict, displacement, and fragile institutions.

Future research could track how perceptions and media effectiveness shift over time, especially following infrastructure upgrades or policy changes. Comparative work across Nigerian regions might reveal regional differences in media impact, while qualitative, ethnographic approaches could dig into the cultural and behavioural factors shaping how people engage with flood messaging. The growing role of digital and social media in flood risk communication is also worth further study.

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