

RESEARCH AND CASE STUDY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION: AN ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

Godswill John

Department of Mass Communication

Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Nigeria

getbeezy@yahoo.com, godswilljohn@crutech.edu.ng,

David Nandi Etika

Department of Mass Communication

Cross River University of Technology, Calabar

davidetika1@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper was an attempt to investigate to which extent participatory communication is adopted in communication interventions in Nigeria. Three selected developmental projects in Cross River State were studied. Four objectives and four research questions were raised to guide the study. Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) was adopted as the theoretical underpinning of the work. It also collected data through quantitative and qualitative research methods. The questionnaire was the main data gathering instrument. Data gathered was analysed using simple percentage. One of the findings in the research is that participatory communication should be adopted across every level of development projects as it has been considered as a veritable component that fast-tracks development/community projects. The researcher therefore, concludes that, participatory communication is a salient approach of communication that facilitates development projects. To achieve success, priority should be given to the component of participatory communication when carrying out community projects. Consequently, it has been recommended that, participatory communication should be adopted across every level of development projects as it helps development agents to engage the people to know their pressing needs and to avoid situations where projects that are worth millions of naira are not utilised by the beneficiaries.

Keywords: participatory, communication, sustainable, development, community projects? and development agency

Introduction

Participatory communication has been perceived as a significant component that triggers development. Many countries of the world have employed participatory communication in development programmes and the resultant effects have been positive. This kind of communication is aimed to facilitate development and it allows the benefiting communities to share their views and even the least person in the community will have his/her opinion heard.

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009, p.32) opine that “participatory communication is an approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment”. It is not just an exchange of information and experiences, it is also the exploration and generation of new knowledge aimed at addressing situations that need to be improved.

"Participatory communication tends to be associated with community-driven development but it could be used at any level of decision making (local, national and international levels) regardless of the diversity of groups involved, by actively engaging stakeholders from the start and by seeking consensus around development initiatives". Participatory communication has begun to be considered a crucial tool. This is partly because many conflicts and obstacles can be prevented if addressed quickly. Genuine participation also increases the sense of ownership by local stakeholders enhancing sustainability” (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009, p. 24).

Many development projects have failed or experienced shortfalls because the agents perceived opinions of the people to be less important or probably did not engage the people on participatory communication to find out what they really wanted. For (move up) example, if you are carrying out a project in a community that lacks good drinking water, schools and markets,(single space) and the change agent is to carry out one project among the three, the beneficiaries need be engaged to know what their pressing need is at that moment. This is so because whatever the problem is at that moment, the change agent may not know. A segment may prefer a school, some may agitate for a bore-hole while others may choose the market as their basic need, and therefore, Participatory Communication would enhance to achieve the project.

A community project is a term applied to any community based project. This covers a wide variety of different areas within a community or group of networking entities. Projects can cover everything including the most obvious section of concerns to any community.

Anaeto and Anaeto (2010, p.7) opine that "community development is all about the active involvement of community members in the issues involving all segments of the community in their own development process. Taking community development as a process, the people of a community, must first discuss and define their want and then plan and work together to satisfy those want(s)".

Pearce (1994, p.75) states that "sustainable development is a process that must encompass every section of society and every role that one plays which include: citizens and parents, children and students, civil servants and teachers, business leaders and employees. Sustainability will not simply happen, neither can it be imposed by top-down authoritarian government". Nevertheless; the transition to sustainable development will still need to be managed, planned and administered. It also needs a sense of purpose.

United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in (1987) in Owusu (2014, p.54) states "that development is sustainable if it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.(close quote?) It is usually understood that this “intergenerational” equity would be impossible to achieve in the absence of present day social equity, if the economic activities of some groups of people continue to utilise the well-being of people belonging to

other groups or living in other part of the world. Sustainable development could probably be otherwise called equitable and balanced, meaning that, in order for development to continue indefinitely, it should balance the interests of different groups of people, within the same generation and among generations, and do so simultaneously in three major interrelated areas of economic and social environment.

Statement of the Problem

Participatory communication is an approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment. It is not just an exchange of information and experiences: it is also the exploration and generation of new knowledge aimed at addressing situations that need to be improved.

Development is said to be sustainable if it meets the needs of the people without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. Many development projects across the globe have failed or experienced great challenges and setbacks as a result of the missing component of participatory communication. Development projects such as the provision of toilets to avoid open defecation in Yala Local Government Area by CRS, Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency in collaboration with European Union (EU) and UNICEF, failed woefully because there was communication lacuna between the beneficiaries and development agents (Ekpeyong, 2014,p.7).

This development project experienced great setbacks, difficulties and even total failure because some of the intervention agents failed to employ participatory communication. Also, some of the projects were not considered a necessity by the host communities especially since they were not included in the overall planning as well as the execution of such programmes. All these are issues created as a result of the communication gap between the provider of the project and the end user. Therefore it becomes pertinent to ask: do development agencies integrate participatory communication in their development projects such as Community Led Total Sanitation, HIV/AIDS campaigns and provision of water projects to the benefiting communities?

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- i. To ascertain whether development agencies employ participatory communication in community development projects in Cross River State.
- ii. To determine the relevance of participatory communication in the sustainable development projects in Cross River State.
- iii. To determine how the non-use of participatory communication has affected sustainable development in Cross River State.

Research Questions

The following questions are generated to guide this study:

- i. How do development agencies employ participatory communication when carrying out developmental projects?
- ii. How is participatory communication relevant to sustainable development projects in Cross River State?
- iii. How does the non-use of participatory communication affect sustainable development in Cross River State?

Conceptual Review

Participatory Communication

Participatory communication means different things to different people. Just as sustainable development means different thing to different people. Many scholars have written on participatory communication.

Jooste (2014, p.63), writes that "for development projects to be sustainable and to actually contribute to the development of communities, communication has to be based on the participatory approach of development communication". Dialogue, empowerment that leads to independence and cultural identity are some of the most important principles of the participatory approach. The importance of communication aimed at development first became apparent during the modernisation paradigm. Modernisation is considered an evolutionary shift from a traditional view to a modern society.

Participatory communication requires first of all changes in the thinking of communicators. Participatory communication is an approach used in a dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinion among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment, especially for those who are most vulnerable and marginalised. Participatory communication is not just exchange of the information and experiences; it is also the exploration and the generation of knowledge aimed at addressing situations that need to be improved, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009, p. 14).

"Participatory communication can be used in a variety of situations. It is most meaningful when used for assessing the situation devising solutions through dialogue among representatives or all parties".(Reference?) This should leads to the appropriate and sustainable identification of the project/programme objectives and to the design of the related communication strategy, Mefalopulos and Lucia (1991, p. 29).

Participation has become an essential part of the vocabulary used in project proposals over the past two decades, since it recognises the people rather than technology-oriented approaches which are required to find the right balance in achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability (Van de Fliert 2007). The underlying goal of participation is, in theory, to empower communities, groups or individuals to determine their own direction, objectives and options for change, make well informed decisions, take (collective) action to achieve their goal and monitor and evaluate if they are getting where they want to be. In practice, however, many non-participatory interventions can be observed. (Bassette 2004).

Participatory communication processes involves "participants" and "facilitates". The prerequisites and desirables for each of these two main roles in participatory communication process are participants and facilitators (Van de Fliert 2007). According to Stone (1989) in Jooste (2014, p.23), "unless people themselves are the driving force of their own development, no amount of investment or provision of technology and inputs will bring about any lasting improvements in their living standards".

To be genuinely participatory and truly effective, communication should occur among all parties affected, ensuring all have similar opportunities to influence the outcome of the initiative. Optimally, participatory communication would be part of the whole project process, from beginning to the end. Since this approach promotes the active involvement of stakeholders in investigating options and shaping decisions regarding development objectives, participatory communication also facilitates empowerment. In this way, the effects go beyond the project boundaries, spilling into the wider social and political dimension, Tufts & Mefalopulos, (2009, p. 17).

Participatory communication is a key process that brings stakeholders together to cooperate towards addressing the problem of the dissolution of the environment and natural resources. It enables them to work together towards a sustainable social change away from individual behaviour change. It is a

set technique to make people change their knowledge, attitudes and practices and to voluntarily engage in the activities related to natural resources management.

Participatory Communication for Social Change

Participation involves the more equitable sharing of both political and economic power, which often decreases the advantage of certain groups. Structural change involves the redistribution of power. In mass communication areas, many communication experts agree that structural change should occur first in order to establish participatory communication policies. According to Mowlana and Wilson (1987, p.143), "communication policies are basically derivatives of the political, culture and economic conditions and institutions under which they operate". They tend to legitimise the existing power relations in society, and therefore, they cannot be substantially changed unless there are fundamental structural changes in society that can alter the power relationships themselves. Therefore, the development of a participatory communication model has to take place in relation with overall society emancipation processes at local, national as well as international levels. The Latin America scholar Jual Somavia (1981) in Servés & Malikhao (2005, p.98) sums up the following (slightly adapted) components as essential for communication:

- i. **Communication is a human need:** the satisfaction of the need for communication is just as important for a society as the concern for health, nutrition, housing, education and labour, together with all the other social needs. Communication must enable the citizens to emancipate themselves completely. The rights to inform and to be informed, and the right to communicate, are thus essential human rights and these are both individually and collectively.
- ii. **Communication is a delegated human right:** within its own cultural, political, economic and historical context, each society has to be able to define independently the concrete form in which it wants to organise its social communication process. Because they are a variety of cultures, there can therefore also arise various organisational structures. Whatever the form in which the social communication function is embodied, priority must be given to the principle of participation and accessibility.
- iii. **Communication is a facet of the societal conscientisation, emancipation and liberation process.** The social responsibility of the media in the process of social change is very large. Indeed, after the period of formal education, the media are most important educational and socialisation agents. They are capable of informing or misinforming, exposing or concealing important facts, interpreting events positively or negatively, and so on.

In summary, participatory communication for social change sees people as the nucleus of development. Development means lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect and environment. Development aims to educate and stimulate people to be active in self and communal improvement while maintaining a balanced ecology.

Participatory communication tends to be associated with grassroots and community driven development. While this is often the case, it should be acknowledged that participatory communication could be used at any level of decision making (local, States or national) regardless of the diversity of groups involved, even if the number of people involved can significantly affect the effectiveness. There are instances where participatory communication has been used to enhance social accountability in water reforms, to engage parliamentarians in governance reforms and to mediate conflicts between local communities and national authorities, Tufts and Megalopolis (2009).

Development

Amodu (2007), in Anaeto & Anaeto (2010, p. 4) in looking at development, says "that it is the process of positive socio-economic change in the quality and level of human existence which is aimed at raising the standard of living, the quality of life and human dignity". For Oladipo (1996), in Soola (2013, p. 13) development in general is the process of economic and social advancement which enables people to realise their potentials, build self-confidence and live a life of dignity and fulfillment. It is a process aimed at freeing people from evils of want, ignorance, social injustice and economic exploration. Rogers (1976) in Wilson (2005, p.124) explains that "development is a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment".

Mefalopulos (2008, p.5) opines that "development refers to improvements in the way of managing natural and human resources in order to create wealth and improve people's lives. Development is a multi-faceted concept. Generally, it means the improvement of the well-being of the individuals and betterment of the quality of his or her life".

Inayatuallah (1975) in Moemeka (2000, p.7) defines "development in a holistic perspective as change toward patterns of society that allow a socially greater control over its environment and over its own political destiny, and that enables its individuals to gain increased control over them".

Rogers (1976) posits that development refers to changing perspective in? a widely participatory process of social change and material advancement including greater equality freedom and other valued qualities, for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment. Development is a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced in a social system for higher per capital income, living standards by modern methods and improved standards by modern methods and improved social organisation.

It is a continuous process of harnessing resources in a manner compatible with culture for quality, liberty, freedom, justice, happiness and progress. It is a spontaneous non-linear, irreversible process inherent in all societies, it implies structural differentiation and functional specialisation which can be stimulated by external factors.

Development Projects in Nigeria

Development is about man; and man is both the subject and recipient of development. The word, "development" implies growth or advancement in the life of a person or society. Amodu (2007), in Anaeto and Anaeto (2010, p.4) in looking at development, says that "it is the process of positive socio-economic change in the quality and level of human existence which is aimed at raising the standard of living, the quality of life and human dignity".

Etika (2017,p.184) avouched that "development in Nigeria is an on-going process and it is dynamic. It is dynamic because it cuts across various strata of human endeavour. Ranging from education, Agriculture, Business, Health, Mining, Transportation, Housing etc, these are development projects that harnessed human coexistence".

The three tiers of government have disparity of development projects, some have been achieved while many have failed holistically as the result of weak policies, lack of political will, corruption, selfishness and the? depleting state of the economy, and/although some are yet to be completed.

A lot of non-profit organisations or non-governmental organisations have long ago keyed into development programmes/projects in Nigeria. An example of these is National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA). NACA focused on HIV/AIDS related matters, and other international funding bodies like UN, USAID, World Bank, EU?, UNICEF etc, have been pretty supportive of development as they help to fund most community projects such as provision of boreholes, provision of lavatories and rejuvenation of dilapidated school buildings and many more projects in Nigeria and even across other African regions and the world at large.

Some of the projects funded by World Bank and other agencies are; road projects, water projects, provision of palliative materials for IDPs, funding of school blocks or buildings, provision of interim and personal lavatories, as well as other social amenities that enhances human co-existence.

Sustainable Development

Since the Brundtland Commission first defined sustainable development, dozens, if not hundreds, of scholars and practitioners have articulated and promoted their own alternative definition; yet a clear, fixed, and immutable meaning remains elusive. This has led some observers to call sustainable development an oxymoron: fundamentally contradictory and irreconcilable. Further, if anyone can redefine and reapply the term to fit their purposes, it becomes meaningless in practice, or worse, can be used to disguise or green wash socially or environmentally destructive activities (Robert, Parris & Anthony, 2005, p.20).

Thus, the concept of sustainability has been adapted to address very different challenges, ranging from the planning of sustainable cities to sustainable livelihoods, sustainable agriculture to sustainable fishing, and the efforts to develop common corporate standards in the UN Global Compact and in the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

According to Uche (1999, p.20) "sustainable development is a challenging social process where decisions need to be made about the relationship rights needs of present and future at local, national and indeed global levels". The different objectives of the society, social economic and environmental, need to be integrated where possible, and trade-offs made, where they are incompatible. Institutional and individual roles and responsibilities have to change, so that new patterns of behaviour will foster sustainable development.

Pearce (1994, p.75) agrees that "sustainable development is a process that must encompass every section of society and every role that we play; citizens and parents, children and students, civil servants and teachers, business leaders and employees". Sustainability will not simply happen, neither can it be imposed by top-down authoritarian government. Nevertheless, the transition to sustainable development will still need to be managed, planned and administered. It also needs a sense of purpose.

European Commission (EC) (2006) in Owusu (2014, p.58) says that "a project is sustainable when it continues to deliver benefits to the project beneficiaries and/or other constituencies for an extended period after the implementers' financial assistance has been terminated".

Redclift (1992, p.30) asserts that "sustainable development is defined by people themselves, to represent an ongoing process of self-realisation and empowerment and the bottom line in practical terms, is that, if people are not brought into focus through sustainable development, becoming both the architects and engineers of the concept then it will never be achieved anyway, since they are unlikely to take responsibility for something they do not own themselves".

According to the classical definition given by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 in Ineji (2012,p.41) opines that "sustainable development is

development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Issues of sustainable development range from the human environment-climate change, desertification, deforestation, pollution and other challenges confronting the human society that called for the urgent attention.

It is usually understood that this "intergenerational" equity would be impossible to achieve in the absence of present day social equity, if the economic activities of some groups of people continue to utilise the well-being of people belonging to other groups or living in other parts of the world. Sustainable development could probably be otherwise called equitable and balanced, meaning that, in order for development to continue indefinitely, it should balance the interests of different groups of people, within the same generation and among generations, and do so simultaneously in three major interrelated areas, namely economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Theoretical Framework

Participatory Communication Theory

Participatory communication theory is a term that denotes the theory and practices of communication used to involve people in the decision-making of the development process. A very important aspect of this theory is the notion of multiplicity in one word, which recommends strong grass-roots participation in development and emphasises diversity and pluralism. It suggests that communities and nations cultivate their own responsive approaches to attaining self-determined development goals (Huesca, 2002). The basic assumptions of participatory communication are that communities should drive the processes of social change rather than be passive beneficiaries of decisions made by experts from outside the communities; participatory communication should reflect a communitarian view that makes deliberation and participation in public affairs integral parts of communication. Participatory communication should conceive development as a transformative process through which communities become empowered and lastly, participatory communication should promote local forms of knowledge and action as the springboard for social change (Waisbord, 2008) in Ifeduba and Bolariwa (2016, p.19).

The assumption of this theory is imperative to this study as it gives credence to participatory communication as a component that fast-tracks rural or community development. This theory stresses the need for development agencies /change agents to engage people in the decision making process when carrying out development project.

Thus, a very important aspect of the theory is the notion of multiplicity in one word which recommends strong grassroots participation in development programme. From the forgoing, the approach of communication, if properly adopted by development agencies, will buttress their efforts of ameliorating succor in rural communities and their aim will be actualised or achieved. More so, it will enable the stakeholders and community members to participate actively before and during project execution.

In addition, programmes/projects of development agencies are geared towards providing help to communities, and this theory reiterated the need to involve benefiting communities to drive the process of social change rather than be passive beneficiaries of decisions made by experts outside the communities.

Research Design

The researcher used the qualitative and quantitative methods known as triangulation in this study. Wendy (2014) states that in social science triangulation is defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic. The mixing of data types, known as data triangulation, is often thought to help in validating the claims that might arise from an initial pilot study. The mixing of methodologies, e.g. mixing the use of survey data with interviews, is profound form of triangulation. The purpose of triangulation in research is to increase the credibility and validity of the results.

Population of Study

A research population is a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. All individuals or objects within a certain population usually have common, building characteristic, such as age, sex or health condition.

According to a survey, the population of Ogoja Local Government Area stands at 171,574, Odukpani Local Government Area is 192,884 while Boki Local Government Area population is 186,611.

The population of this study was drawn from men/women of sundry occupation who reside in the three selected local government areas in Cross River State which are Ogoja, Boki and Odukpani. The population was opinion leaders/chiefs, men, women and youth because these are the beneficiaries of community projects.

Sample Size

Sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. In practice, the sample size used in a study is determined based on data collection, and the need to have sufficient statistical data.

A structured questionnaire was distributed to 180 respondents, who attempted and returned it to the researcher, while a total number of 12 interviewees were selected for the in-depth interview which took place in all the three local government areas (Ogoja, Boki and Odukpani) that represent three Senatorial Districts of Cross River State.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to respondents in three selected Local Government Areas which are Ogoja, Boki and Odukpani. And this was done on separate days with the aid of assistance.

The researcher organised three to five persons to form a team. This team helped to ensure that the administered questionnaire is promptly returned. The researcher got an interpreter when necessary to ensure that respondents that did not understand English were not left out.

The interview was conducted on different days in three LGAs that represent three Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Method of Data Analysis

Information obtained from the survey through the questionnaire were analysed using percentages and presented using simple frequency and cross tabulation.

The method used in analysing the data was descriptive statistical method of frequency distribution and percentages. The formula:

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \text{Where } X & = & \text{Observed frequency} \\ N & = & \text{Sample size} \end{array}$$

The notes taken during in-depth interview were developed and data transcribed. The response was categorised into themes and topics of interest. The themes are level of awareness, relationship, level of involvement/method of participation, the need for community involvement and the suggested way forward.

Results and Discussions

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of the responses from returned questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Information obtained from one hundred and sixty (160) copies of questionnaires duly completed and returned out of one hundred and eighty (180) that were distributed are hereby grouped in tables and analysed in simple percentage.

Table 1: Participatory Communication as a Tool that Enhances Participation in Development Project

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	135	84.38
No	25	15.62
Total	160	100

Source: Field work 2019

The table shows that 135 or 84.38% of respondents said yes, participatory communication is a tool that enhanced participation in development project, 25 or 15.62 said No, participatory communication is not a tool that enhanced participation in development project.

Table 2: Beneficiaries engagement in Participatory Communication

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	120	75
No	40	25
Total	160	100

Source: Field work 2019

This table indicates 120 or 75 % of respondents said yes, they have been engaged in participatory communication while 40 or 25 % said No, they have not been engaged in participatory communication.

Table 3: Participatory Communication Determines the Success of a Project

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	135	84.38
No	25	15.62
Total	160	100

Source: Field work 2019

This table indicates 135 or 84.38% of respondents said yes, participatory communication determine the success of a project while 25 or 15.62 % said No, participatory communication does not determine the success of a project.

Discussion of Findings

Participatory communication has been perceived to be a veritable tool that supports development and grass-root participation. Development agencies across the globe have adopted the component of participatory communication to achieve development projects.

It serves as a lubricant that determines the success of community projects. Its relevance is found in development projects which engage the benefiting communities to be part of the project. Hence they are seen as a drive for social change. The reason for this is to enable development agencies to know what the people want and to avoid completed projects from lying fallow.

It is imperative to state here that participatory communication plays a sacrosanct role in developing the rural communities and it helps development agencies to achieve their purpose. Most of the projects that have been not achieved have been attributed to the non-use of participatory communication.

The effectiveness of participatory communication has helped the target audience or the benefiting communities as they were seen as the drive for social change rather than viewing them as passive beneficiaries of development. Participatory communication has helped to sensitise and enlighten beneficiaries on the need to participate actively during the time and before the project is executed. It also helps to achieve sustainable development as the people are briefed on how to manage the project that is brought to them.

This is why the component of participatory communication should be adopted at every level of project execution since the respondents have expressed their opinion that it is a veritable tool that enhances development/community projects. It is worthy to note that project ineffectiveness is attributed to the non-applicability of participatory communication. Therefore, development agencies should know the importance of participatory communication when carrying out development/community projects.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this research can be made through the available data which formed the main findings.

Participatory communication is a salient aspect or approach of communication that fast-tracks development projects. To achieve success requires that priority should be given to the component of participatory communication when undertaking community projects. Development agencies and change agents should as a matter of fact allocate enormous attention to community involvement/ participation as this is key to the successful completion and realisation of set goals.

This study found out that two projects were successful and one failed. The reasons the HIV and campaign awareness in Ishibori Community in Ogoja LGA and the provision of water in Okoyong Community in Odukpani LGA were successful was because the change agents employed the use of participatory communication when undertaking the projects. However, community total-led?? sanitation in Bitiah Irruan in Boki LGA was not successful because the agents did not give priority to participatory communication.

Sustainable development is achievable if appropriate attention is given to the participatory communication component because during the period of community participation, change agents have the leverage to sensitise the people on the need to maintain the project that is brought to them to ensure its sustenance. Hence sustainable development is the ability to sustain what you have, in order to enable the next generation to come and also access or enjoy what you have enjoyed.

Recommendations

In consonance with the findings of the study, certain recommendations were made:

1. Participatory communication should be adopted across every level of development projects as it helps development agents to engage the people to know their pressing need and to avoid situations where projects worth millions of naira are not utilised by the beneficiaries.
2. Community involvement/participation should be given priority as it has been perceived to be sacrosanct when carrying out development projects.
3. Development agencies should devise new communication strategies that suit the rural dwellers who do not understand English, such as the use of interpreters during community engagement.
4. Adequate funds/materials should be made available to development agents to enable them to deliver projects promptly and to avoid the situations of uncompleted projects and unsuccessful campaigns and testing.
5. Consultations with the opinion leaders/chiefs, town-crier or elders should be considered and they should unveil the prospects of the project to them and stress the need to mobilise members of the community for active participation in order to avoid situations where projects provided to the people are not put to use because of mismatched priority.
6. Development agencies should not only be concerned with the provision of projects but should also consider the durability of the project to ensure sustainability.

References

- Anaeto, S. & Anaeto, M. (2010). *Development communication principles*. Nigeria, Oyo State: Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd.
- Etika, D. N. (2017). The role of international organization in Nigeria national development. *CRUTECH Journal of Communication*, 1(1), 174.
- Ifeduba, T. & Balariwa, R. (2016). *Communication for sustainable development*. London: Manson Press.
- Ineji, P. U. (2012). Revisiting the media effect controversy and their implications for, and applications in managing sustainable human development campaigns. *Journal of Science, Engineering and Technology*, 1(1), 84-88.
- Jooste, J. (2014). *The nature of participatory communication between stakeholders of the bhive university incubator*. Unpublished master's thesis, North-West University.
- Mefalopulos, P., & Grenna, L. (1991). Promoting sustainable development through strategies communication. In D. Hamu, E. Auchincloss & W. Goldstein (Eds.), *Communicating protected areas* (pp. 24-31). New York: Benhills Press.
- Moemeka, A. A. (2000). *Development communication in action: Building understanding and creating participation*. America: University Press of New York.
- Mowlana, H., & Wilson, J. L. (1987). *Communication technology & development*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Olsen, W. (2004). Triangulation in social research: Qualitative and quantitative methods can really be mixed. In M. Holborn (Ed.), *Developments in Sociology* (pp. 1-30). Ormskirk: Causeway Press.
- Owusu, E. (2014). *The role of communication in sustaining development project*. Ghana: Kwame Nkrumah University.
- Pearce, D. W. (1994). *Strategic communication in fostering development*. London: Earthscan Publications.
- Redclift, M. (1992). *The meaning of sustainable development*. In sustainable development in Peru: A review of Document from the Pachamama society. London: International Institution for Environment and Development (IIED).
- Rogers, E. M. (Ed.). (2008). *Communication and development: A critical perspectives*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Serveas, J., & Malikhao, P. (2005). *Participatory communication: The new paradigm*. Latin America: Clasco Press.
- Soola, E. O. (2013). Development communication: The past, the present and the future. In E. O. Soola (Ed.), *Communicating for development purposes* (pp. 9-28). Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Tufte, T., & Mefalopulos, P. (2009). *Participatory communication: A practical guide*. Washington DC, World Bank.
- Uche, L. U. (1999). *Communication for development*. Lecture notes Communication for development M.Sc class 1998/19 University of Lagos, Mass Communication Department.
- Van de Fliert, E. (2007). For growth or well-being? Communication strategies for sustainable development in rural Asia. In J. Serveas & S. Liu (Eds.), *Moving targets: Mapping the paths between communication, technology and social change* (pp. 45-60). Penang, Malaysia: Southbound.
- Wilson, D. (2005). *New perspectives in applied communication*. Ibadan: Sterling-Horden Publishers Ltd.