The Place of Functional Communication in Self-Help Development Projects among Adults in Osun State, Nigeria (1985-1999)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines in detail the place of functional communication in self-help activities for sustainable development in Osun State, from the points of view of the major stakeholders in the development of the rural society, viz: the change agents, community leaders, members of the community, facilitators and other sundry officials connected to small and large scale self-help promotion in our communities. In other words, the study tries to find out what type of communication strategies can be employed for successful self-help promotion in our rural communities, and how these communication variables can be maximally used to ensure speedy development of our rural areas.

The sample for the study consisted of 150 adults from each of the four selected local councils, making a total of 600 subjects, which are made up of the adult educators, community change agents and adult members of the communities. Random Sampling Method (RSM) was employed to select four local government areas from all the geographical zones in Osun State, which are then considered to be fair representatives of local councils in Osun State. Questionnaire and oral interview are the principal instruments of data collection. Three null hypotheses are raised for the study, and the major technique of analysis is the T-test statistical method. The data collected is thereafter subjected to a thorough analysis, after which the results are discussed in line with the hypotheses developed for the study.

The study therefore concluded and firmly established through the results of the data analysis that, there is a significant difference between provision of qualitative information and literacy awareness and participation of adults in self-help projects in Osun State.

Keywords: functional communication, self-help projects, development

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential part of human development. It helps the individual to understand others and the social world as they change throughout the life cycle. Communication helps stability, self-assurance and consistency. It also helps the development of the individual, his relationships and social

environment. Through communication man has recorded and transmitted its cultures, values, traditions from one generation to the next.

In his definition, Crystal (1991) states

> Communication is the transmission of information (a "message") between a source and a receiver using a signally system; in linguistic contexts, source and receiver are interpreted in human terms, the system involved in language and the notion of response to (or acknowledgement of) the message becomes the crucial importance (p. 64).

Also, Anyanwu (1992) describes communication as the process by which information and understanding are transferred from one person to another. Hence every group of human beings must make use of communication as it spells out the very existence of human community. Communication brings interaction between community members, thus agreement is reached on how to effect a change. In essence, communication can be seen as a change agent since it helps to effect social change.

Admittedly, communication is an effective strategy for self-help projects. What is being emphasized in self-help projects is the coming together of the community members to find solution to their problems through their direct labour and under the supervision of their change agents. In other words, they exert themselves to change their living condition. It is an aspect of community development. Therefore, the importance of communication cannot be overlooked. Within the communication encounter, information is exchanged and social relationship is defined, verbally and or non-verbally, digitally and analogically. Communication with others is a crucial human activity. The need to interact remains important to the individual through all stages of life and the adults are no exception. This is not to say that adults must just continuously interact with others, but quality not quantity of communication is the important thing here. Successful communication experiences contribute immensely to any self-help project.

Communication is the foundation for all interpersonal relationships, and our daily lives are filled with one communication experience or another. Hence the importance of communication cannot be overemphasized. For example, through communication we reach some understanding of one another, begin and end relationship and learn more about ourselves and how others perceive us (Uranga, 1983: 1). Communication should involve a mutual sharing of meaning because communication can take place even if it is not intentional. But when the participants are able to understand each other, there will be a sense of belonging in relation to one another in the social grouping.

Mass media is also an aspect of communication. In the last fifty years, there have been significant trends towards involving communication in rural development, and the number of projects using communication, has grown constantly. While only one medium was employed at first, more recently a multi-media approach has become common. Today, new devices such as computers, television, videotapes, radio, audio tapes, telephone networks, two-

way radio system and so on are being added to the media arsenal. Media are also being used for new purposes while in the past they were universally considered a one-way channel for information, motivation, persuasion and instruction. Today, they are also providing a means of national and collective participation in decision-making.

People use communication because it accomplishes certain functions for them. They listen to the radio, read the newspapers, attend meetings and so on not only because an external source wants to communicate something to them but also because they themselves feel the media satisfy some of their needs. Obviously, communication performs different functions for different people. One person may listen to the radio to obtain useful information, while another mainly cherishes the feelings of companionship the speaker's voice provides.

Communication is the process that links the individual to the society. Every man has a role to play in bringing about changes in the society, in a free, fair and conducive atmosphere. In a situation whereby effective communication cannot be ensured, progress will be retarded and development projects will suffer. The focus of this research therefore is to identify communication factors that can affect participation of adults in self-help projects in selected communities in Osun State.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the major conditions for a successful project is the quantity and quality of communication. Communication creates meaning as opposed to a mere message, and in this way aids an individual in understanding personal and social experiences. Communication fulfils a lot of functions in people's life. Not only do people like to receive information from one another, they also want to communicate what they think and feel with others. Thus, in the concept of communication, such notions as expression, relationship and participation are significant. When communicative interaction in its ideal form is absent, it may result in a state of pluralistic ignorance. That is, a situation where a person rationalises attitude and ideas or assumes that others share the same perception.

The researcher therefore plans to examine in detail what best type of communication patterns could be used in achieving the aim of improving the lives of community members through the execution of various self-help projects. The main questions that this study seeks to resolve are therefore stated below:

(1)   Does communication stand as a factor in participation of adults in self-help development projects in Osun State?

(2)   What are the communication factors in self-help development projects?

(3)   What are effective means of communication for promoting self-help development projects?

(4)   What are the adult attitudes to different means of communication for promoting self-help development projects in Osun State?

Considering the obvious high rate of poverty among adults (especially illiterate ones) in the rural areas, it was necessary to examine the best communication patterns to be used in improving their lives through self-help projects and find out if the adequacy or non-adequacy of qualitative communication is a contributory factor to the poor state of self-help developmental projects in Osun State.

This study was therefore undertaken in the believe that it would
- (a) help ensure effective communication in planning and implementation of future self-help projects among adults;
- (b) enhance the quality of self-help programmes among adults; and
- (c) help change agents appreciate the importance of effective communication in self-help projects.

The purpose of this research is to examine the role of communication in the overall development of self-help projects in Osun State. This is with a view to finding out:
- (a) whether communication has a role to play in self-help projects;
- (b) whether communication, as a factor, contributes to the success or otherwise of self-help projects;
- (c) what type of communication patterns should be used to ensure a speedy and successful completion of self-help projects;
- (d) whether quality and not only quantity of information is recognized as an important factor in any self-help projects; and
- (e) whether there are other factors that can enhance good communication.

The present study will focus specifically on the communication problems related to self-help projects among adults in Osun State. Emphasis will be placed on the identification of possible communication problems and the suggestions of appropriate strategies of reducing or eliminating the problems.

It is envisaged that all the Local Government Areas in Osun State cannot be managed effectively within the time limit for the study. Therefore four Local Government Areas will be randomly selected. It is necessary to limit the subjects to community members (adults) and their educators. The data collected was taken to be representatives of other Local Government Areas in Osun State. And the results will be accordingly interpreted and discussed. The period that the study will cover will however be limited to the period of 1985 to 1999.

To achieve our aim in this study, some hypotheses are developed for the study. They are:
- (1) There is no significant difference between vertical and horizontal communication in adult participation in self-help projects.
- (2) There is no significant difference between communication and mobilization strategies for effective participation in self-help projects.

(3)   There is no significant difference between provisions of qualitative information and literacy awareness in adult participation in self-help projects in Osun State.

3. COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW

Communication is a central and fundamental aspect of all human interaction that must be given adequate attention every time. Admittedly, communication is an effective strategy for any self-help project. Self-help project has four phases, viz: identification of needs, the planning, implementation and evaluation. In all these phases, communication features as the most essential. Communication is a basic tool for changing our environment. Most of the problems we are facing arise from ineffective communication. Let us then ask ourselves this question: What is communication?

Communication is the heart of all social intercourse. Whenever men have come to establish regular relations with one another, the nature of the systems of communication created between them, the forms these have taken and the measure of effectiveness they have attained have largely determined the chances of bringing communities closer together or of making them one, and the prospects for reducing tensions or setting conflicts wherever they have arisen.

According to Anyanwu (1992: 16) "communication involves the process by which information and understanding are transferred from one person to another". Anyanwu goes on to submit that communication is the basis for all human interaction and for all group functioning. Against this background, Anyanwu (1992), identifies seven basic elements in the process of interpersonal communication. These are:

(1)   The sender is led to send a message by his intentions, ideas and feelings as well as the way he decided to behave.

(2)   He encodes his message by translating his ideas, feelings and intentions into an appropriate message.

(3)   The message is sent through the receiver.

(4)   The message is sent through a channel or any means of communication.

(5)   The receiver decodes the message by interpreting its meaning. The interpretation depends on how the receiver understands the content of the messages and the intentions of the sender.

(6)   The receiver responds internally to his interpretation of the message.

(7)   The success of communication is assessed by the degree to which noise is overcome or controlled in the communication process. Noise is any element that interferes with the communication process.

> Simply put, a source encodes a message, places it in a channel to be decoded by a receiver.

However, the presence of noise hinders the effectiveness of the communication process. When such hindrances occur, the fidelity of communication is said to have been reduced. That is, eliminating noises, increase fidelity while the production of noise reduces fidelity. By fidelity, it means that, the source gets what he wants and that the decoder or the receiver translates a message with complete accuracy, argued Berlo (1960: 16). It is the intention of a communicator, a source or a receiver to attain the high fidelity level in communication. It is imperative therefore, to filter away all the suspected noises.

In the view of Schram (1974: 11) "the sender and the receiver have common experience which gives meaning to the message encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver". Braimoh (1986: 12) deduces from Schram's definition of communication that, "the end result of any communication is to add to the receiver's knowledge and to enable him to have a positive overt reaction to a received stimulus from a source."

There are, however, basic questions that must be addressed when discussing effective communication, these are:

(1)   Who is the communicator that is, the sender?
(2)   Who is being communicated to, that is, the receiver?
(3)   What is the content of the message that is being transmitted?
(4)   Why is it being communicated at that time? Is it to issue orders, to persuade, to make a request, to obtain information etc.?
(5)   Which medium would be used to communicate the message?
(6)   Where is the communication taking place?
(7)   Where are the two interlocutors located?
(8)   What is the effect of the message on the receiver?
(9)   How appropriate is the message transmitted? Is it to the appropriate person or group of persons?

Against the background of some of the definitions of communications examined, it is most obvious that, development does not occur in such atmosphere lacking effective communication.

3.1 THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The communication process involves all acts of transmitting messages to channels which link people to the languages and symbolic codes which are used to transmit messages, the means by which messages are received and stored, and the rules, customs and conventions which define and regulate human relationships and events (Ugboajah, 1985: 2).

The above shows that communication is a process. A process presupposes that there is a system with sub-systems, and also a movement within the systems

and sub-systems that are either linear or cyclic. The first communication theorists who tried to explain this process were Harold Lasswell and the pair of Shannon and Weaver.

Lasswell (1948) proposes a model of communication that analyses the process in terms of functions performed by communication in human societies. To show the functions, he raised the questions:

Who says **what** in **which channel** to **whom** with **what effects**?

His own process was one-way model which does not expect feedback, because his intention was to affect the listener or influence him in order to control. The other theorists were Shannon and Weaver (1949) who developed a linear model of communication that also visualizes communication as one-way process. The only additions, which differentiate theirs from Lasswell, are the question of noise which they saw as being necessary. This process however, has its drawback when it concerns mass communication because of the absence of feedback.

De Fleur (1970) develops the Shannon and Weaver model further. In a discussion about the correspondence between the meaning of the produced and received message, he avers that in communication process, meaning is transformed into "message" and describes how the transmitter transforms message into information which he passes through a channel, e.g. mass medium. The receiver decodes the information as a "message" which is in turn transformed at the destination to "meaning". If there is a correspondence between the two "meanings", the result is communication which is seldom perfect. The process is now reversed when the receiver now becomes a source of feedback to the sender. They can send their feedback through interpersonal contacts, groups, phone-in responses. These responses help to correct errors or mistakes.

4. THE CONCEPT OF SELF-HELP

Self-help is a self-motivated effort of the people of a community to come together to improve their standard of living by pooling their resources together and with a sense of belonging, tackle problems afflicting their peaceful co-existence. The principle of self-help is fundamental to the success of community development. It is the active participation of members of the community in projects and programmes that enhances the improvement of their lives.

The spirit of self-help is as old as man himself. It has been with us in Nigeria even before the advent of colonial administration. Communities in Nigeria have always shown the willingness to improve their condition through the organisation of various self-help projects like road construction, bridges, markets and so on. The traditional self-help process known as community development programmes started as a form of voluntary exercise in the past.

This was when the community members trooped out voluntarily to participate in projects that touched on the immediate needs of the entire community despite their limited financial and material resources.

Defining the concept of self-help in community development, Anyanwu (1992) asserts, "it is the end-product of community development as it helps local people to exploit to their advantage the resources which would otherwise be dormant and thereby perpetuate the ignorance and poverty of their community". The emphasis here is on what the people can do for themselves, against what the government can do for them.

Development, it must be seen, comes through self-help and it is not a packaged of benefits given to people, but rather a process by which the people of a country progressively acquire greater mastery over its destiny. Falling from this statement is that development cannot be trusted upon people; rather, it is the people themselves who will initiate their development through self-help, once the enabling factors such as public awareness, mobilization, empowerment and democratic principles are made available.

Thus true development must mean the development of man, the unfolding and realization of his creative potential, enabling him to improve his material condition of living through the use of resources available to him. It is a process by which man's personality is enhanced. All these cannot occur without people's willing contribution. Self-help exudes a sense of pride and commitment in the people where the community projects are seen as our project rather than the government's projects. The principle of self-help involves the learning of new techniques, ideas and technologies. Their adoption, adaptation and usage are the benefits of every one who participates in the process of change for the improvement of their lives.

Adeyemo (2002: 26) believes that self-help promotion among the rural populace can be most successful if "self-help groups establish links with local associations and traditional forms of organisation (saving clubs, field worker groups, etc.)". He states further that "self-help promotion institutions are particularly successful if they are not planned on the drawing board (i.e. on purely theoretical basis) and wherever feasible not by foreign experts, but developed by committed small-holders on the basis of their experience…" (p. 26).

Akinbode (1977) also states "the efforts for self-improvement were motivated by the awareness that the needs and aspirations of the people could best be realized through concerted efforts and basic to the success of self-help. Community work is the participation of the people affected by the programmes."

In this context, self-help means people's participation in the planning and execution of projects. This means that the community members are carried along from the onset of the projects. They participate in the identification of the projects based on their felt needs and are involved in the discussion to find appropriate solution to their problems. Community participation is the key to success in any community project either in the health sectors, agriculture, education, credit and capital assistance and other physical development projects

such as road construction and mending, building of bridges, rural housing, marketing, churches, mosques, town hall and even other sundry enterprises.

It is a widely held view among scholars in the field of self-help promotion that development projects in which people are involved, articulating their needs themselves, have better chances of being understood, accepted, supported and valued, and are better sustained and maintained by the community. In the same vein, Anyanwu (1992) opines that the principle of citizen participation emphasizes the initiative of the people as a means of stimulating the active participation of all citizens in the work of community development.

The idea is that success is assured where community development planners as interventionists arouse the efforts of the local people. The concept of participation thus helps to guarantee the acceptance of self-help models. In the execution of community projects participation is however one of the most difficult and elusive goal to attain in community development so it needs to be handled with care.

Self-help development projects are a process of social action in which the people of a community organize themselves for planning and action, defines their common and individual needs and problems, execute these plans with a maximum of reliance upon community resources and supplement these resources when necessary with services and material from government and non-government agencies outside the community. Self-help project involves group action, decisions, co-operations, study and joint evaluation, which will consequently lead to continuing action.

Therefore, self-help development projects can be viewed as the development of the moral, social, political and economic potentialities of the people to enhance their economic self-reliance through the provision of appropriate infrastructure such as small scale industries, pipe borne water, electricity, good roads; increase their political consciousness and participation, promote their moral and social well-being which will result in tolerance, justice, fairness, kindness, love and peace.

In a nutshell, the very act of people of a community coming together to plan and take necessary actions that lead to the betterment of their living condition is self-help. Self-help project on the other hand is the structured facility or amenity provided by the people of a community, through communal effort, to meet the felt-need of the people of the community.

As a way of boosting the spirit of self-reliance, which is the bedrock of self-help programmes, the government of Nigeria has initiated a number of programmes. Notable among such programmes is the National Youth Service Corps, (NYSC) scheme that was launched under a military government in 1973. It was to mobilize the youths of this country to foster national unity. The scheme came into being after a committee set up by the then military government had recommended positively to the government. The committee recommended that the scheme would be initially concerned with rehabilitation and reconstruction after the civil war experience, but today, the scheme has gradually developed into a permanent organ for mobilizing the Nigerian youths for development

tasks. Anyanwu (1987) acknowledges the steps taken by the then government when he commented that

> the Federal Military Government inserted in the Second National Development Plan, 1970, a policy statement on the potential of the Nigerian youth for national development (p. 11).

According to the statement:

> A national youth corps would be established designed to provide healthy work orientation for young unemployed school leavers. The corps would be deployed on projects in rural communities, involving the building of roads, bridges, schools and dispensaries (p. 12).

Another governmental programme aimed at promoting self-help effort of the people in Nigeria led to the establishment of the "Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI)" which was established in 1986. The agency was established to reduce the rural problems and improve the welfare of the masses. It was also to improve the quality of life and standard of living of the majority of the people in the rural areas and to use the enormous resources and potentials of the rural areas to lay a solid foundation for the security, socio-cultural, political and economic growth and development of the nation. Among the numerous community related needs and projects embarked upon by DFRRI are construction of rural feeder roads, rural electrification, rural housing, rural water supply and sanitation. The federal, state and local governments and individual communities, which most of the time are the initiators of the projects, jointly sponsor majority of the projects. The government allowed the communities to participate actively because it is the belief of DFRRI that development should be people-oriented.

Also MAMSER - Mass Mobilisation for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery - was another agency of government that had as part of its activities inculcating self-help and self-reliant attitudes on the Nigerian citizens. Though slightly different from NYSC and DFRRI in its operation guidelines and philosophy, it was a call for change in attitudes, wrong beliefs and life styles that are at variance with modernity and aspirations of our societies for the nation to be prosperous and progressive. MAMSER was established in 1987.

However, the establishment of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was perhaps the greatest efforts of the government to plant the seed of self-reliance necessary in self-help programmes. The NDE was established on November 22, 1986 to concentrate efforts on the reactivation of public works, promotion of direct labour, promotion of self-employment, organization of artisans into cooperatives, and encouragement of a culture of maintenance and repairs. Apart from creating employment opportunities for those concerned, the scheme also helped in developing a culture of inventiveness, self-reliance in the use of resource, thereby curtailing wastefulness and importation of items that can be produced locally.

In the same way other programmes such as Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support Programmes (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), introduced by the various First Ladies in Nigeria are all aimed at encouraging the spirit of growth of self-help project that would create a new sense of self-reliance and confidence to solve problems through personal efforts using local resources and initiatives generated internally.

4.1 CORRELATION BETWEEN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND SUSTAINABLE SELF-HELP PROJECTS

Communication plays a unique role starting from the initiation of a project to its completion. In the first instance, effective communication enhances clear understanding among community members for development projects. It is certain that appropriate decisions in development world depend on group interaction. For any necessary development to occur, there must be clear understanding which only effective communication provides. In the atmosphere of effective communication, people begin to reflect on their traditional ways of doing things with unappreciable effects and think on the possibility of adopting better alternatives.

In case the community members could not see the needs for changes, the change agent could use various means of communication to open up the understanding of the people of the necessity of change in their lives and community through the use for example, films, visual aids, posters, radio, press and so on. If for example, the rural community dwellers through communication were to understand the essence of family planning for their good health and economic gain, there is a tendency that they will show enthusiasm for it and be willing to subscribe to it, and help to spread the information about it to the neighbouring villages. Therefore, there is no communication system adopted for the purpose of enhancing people's understanding that should not be encouraged.

People may remain pragmatic and perfunctory to development due to their lack of understanding. They may refuse to make tangible resolution for change in themselves and their community if the whole idea of the said change looks puzzling to them. The only tool that could be applied to expunge such unfortunate esoteric belief to change is effective communication. It is when people understand through effective communication the need for change and development that their interest is aroused. Wide use of the available public media and more talks with the community members may be responsible for more enthusiasm towards the value of development projects.

Self-help projects involve participatory and communal zeal. For instance, it is needful for the members to communicate in identifying the needs of the community and seek ways and means to meet those needs. After identifying their needs and seeking ways as a means to meet those needs, it is needful to set priorities for the actions to be taken. The programme is implemented and

controlled before been evacuated. All these steps involve effective communication. The members themselves must become aware of the communication system as a tool for effective and dynamic change.

A community change agent who craves to make a significant contribution to his/her area of coverage should try to look for effective ways of communicating with the people. Effective communication between the change agent and the community members is a sine qua non to a successful implementation of any self-help activity. Effective communication demands that the change agent respects the community members, be open to their views and respect their opinions. However, he must be tolerant, burying all his prejudices concerning the community where he works. He should understand the community and its people that they might work as a team towards the progress of their lives and the community. Through effective communication, the community change agents should try to see the world through the local people's eyes. A change agent who cultivates and maintains good human relations with his community members is most likely going to have a break through among them. By adapting to the people's socio-cultural milieu, through patience, tolerance and self-restraint the change agent would likely lead the people to tap both human and natural resources for the improvement of themselves and their community.

Projects should be well identified and everybody involved should be encouraged to contribute whatever they can. People should identify the self-help projects and agree on the one to carry out. If projects are not well defined, members may be discouraged to participate in the project, or conflict may arise and these may lead to the abandonment of the projects and loss of money. Functional and effective communication is a major requirement to the successful completion of self-help projects and for its sustainability.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Osun State. The state comprises of 30 Local Government Areas with the total population of about 2.2 million people according to the 1991 National Census. For the purpose of this research, four local government areas were randomly selected from the three senatorial zones in the state. The council areas selected are Ede North, Ife East, Ilesa East and Odo-Otin Local Government Areas. The subjects for the study were 150 adults made up of the adult educators, community change agents and adult members of the selected local government areas.

5.1 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument used for the survey was a structured questionnaire in addition to oral interview. The instrument was to evaluate the response and attitude of participants to different means of communication used in their

various self-help development projects. The instruments also identified possible roles that other factors can play to ensure effective communication in self-help development projects among the adults. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A to find out the characteristics of the respondents while Part B is to test the hypotheses.

5.2 DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire is divided into two sections - Section A and B. Section A was structured to obtain personal data from the respondents. Section B contains questions of which all are on five-point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree and Not Sure. Questions in this section, sought detailed information on the possible roles that communication could play in self-help development projects among adults, and the role of other factors that can affect communication.

5.3 RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was field- tested on 20 adults from Odo-Otin Local Government Area twice within an interval of two weeks. A correlation was calculated between the first and second administration of the instrument. This was established to be 0.63.

5.4 ORAL INTERVIEW

Oral interview was based on some of the issues raised in the questionnaire. The oral interview was employed to supplement the questionnaire technique to obtain necessary information where the informants are not literate or are not ready to co-operate in filling the questionnaire. Besides, there are some pieces of vital information for this study which might not be collected through any structured questionnaire but which are made possible through oral interview or face-to-face dialogue. For there is a possibility that some highly placed community members may not honour the questionnaire, but may feel better when they are visited and discussed with. Like other means of collecting data or information, the place of oral interview in a study of this kind cannot be undermined. Oral interview simultaneously conducted with the questionnaire was more probing and more revealing.

5.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The population that was involved in achieving the purpose of this study comprises adults and their change agents. The researcher had the basic understanding that for a research of this kind, not all the people in the area could be covered. Therefore, a simple Random Sampling Technique was adopted to select four local government areas in the state. The main target population for the study consisted of the members of the Community Development Council (CDC) organized by the local government councils to get in touch with the community members about self-help projects. Others include community members and leaders. They were selected based on some pre-determined factors like their position in the community, experience and involvement in community development projects

6. RESULT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section of the study we present the detailed analysis of data collected in order to test the various research hypotheses raised in the study.

    (a)   Percentages were calculated to analyze the characteristics of the community members involved in various self-help projects.

    (b)   T-test analysis used in this study was to test the hypotheses formulated in relation to communication as a factor in self-help projects.

    (c)   Test of significance was applied to find out whether or not observed results were significant or otherwise.

    (d)   Means were compared to determine the highest point.

The Characteristics of the Respondent

Table 4.l. Local Government Area.

Local Government Areas	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Ife East	150	25
Ede North	150	25
Ilesa East	150	25
Odo Otin	150	25
Total	600	100

The table above shows that four local governments were involved with 600 respondents.

Table 4.2. Age of the Respondents.

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentages
25–35	–	–
36–45	108	18.0
46–55	159	26.5
56–65	100	16.7
66 – above	233	38.8
Total	600	100

Table 4.2 indicates that 108 or l8% of respondents fall between 36-45 years of age. While 159 or 26.5% fall within 46-55, 100 or 16.7% fall within 55-65 and 233 or 38.8% fall within 66 years and above. From the data, it can be concluded that elderly people are more interested in the community projects than the younger ones. The reason for this trend is not known.

Table 4.3. Sex of the Respondents.

Sex	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	360	60
Female	240	40
Total	600	100

The table shows that 360 or 60% of the respondents are males while 240 or 40% are females. This shows that most of the respondents are males.

Table 4.4. Occupation of Respondents.

Occupation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Civil Servants	80	13.3
Farmers	210	35.0
Politicians	60	10.0
Traders	80	13.3
Fashion Designers	62	10.3
Artisans	108	18.0
Total	600	100

Table 4.4 shows that 80 or 13.2% of the respondents are civil servants, 210 or 35% are farmers, 60 or 10% claimed to be professional politicians, 80 or 13.3% are traders, 62 or 10.3% are fashion designers and 108 or 18% are artisans.

Table 4.5. Level of Education.

Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
NCE, OND, HND, First Degree	140	23.3
Grade I & II, Modern School	50	8.3
School Certificate	58	9.7
First School Leaving Certificate (Primary)	142	23.7
No Education (Illiterate)	210	35.0
Total	600	100

Table 4.5 shows that 140 or 23.3% of the respondents have either N.C.E, OND, HND, or First Degree, 50 or 8.3% have Grades I, II or Modern School certificates, 58 or 9.7% are School Certificate holders, 142 or 23.7% are First School Leaving Certificate (Primary School) and 210 or 35% are illiterate. The result on the table shows that many of the respondents are illiterates and not well-educated people. This shows the high rate of illiteracy in our rural and even in the urban areas.

Table 4.6. Categories of Respondents.

Categories of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Change Agents	20	3.3
Information Officers	8	1.3
Community Members	482	80.3
Community Leaders	90	15.0
Total	600	100

The table above shows that 20 or 3.3% are change agents. While 8 or 1.3% are information officers, 482 or 80.3% are community members and 90 or 15% are community leaders.

6.1 TESTING HYPOTHESIS ONE

The formulation of hypothesis one was based on the view that vertical and horizontal types of communication will affect the success or otherwise of self-help projects. It was therefore assumed that there is a relationship between these communication types and self-help projects.

This is predicated on the assumption that communication as a process through which information is transmitted, processed and finally accepted or rejected could be horizontal or vertical. It is equally necessary to find out which type of communication is most appropriate and should be used in self-help projects especially among adults in the communities. Thus, hypothesis one

which states, "There is no significant difference between vertical and horizontal communication in adult participation in self-help projects" was formulated. To determine whether or not these types of communication can affect developmental projects and determine which of the two types of communication is better; data was collected and subjected to statistical analysis.

Table 4.7. Result of the Analysis of Test of the Difference between Vertical and Horizontal Communication in Adult Participation in Self-help Projects.

Group	N	X	S.D	df	T
Horizontal	600	3.86	0.33	1198	1.98
Vertical	600	3.72	0.31		

The result of the 't' test calculated yielded a value of 1.98 with the 1198-degree of freedom. This value was found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of probability, with the t-table of 1.98. Therefore on the basis of this result hypothesis one which states that "there is no significant difference in adult participation in self-help projects as a result of different types of communication was rejected."

6.1.1 Discussion

The result of the analysis carried out to test the hypothesis shows that there was statistically a significant difference in adult participation in self-help projects as a result of different types of communication.

The result of the study confirmed that communication is a sine-qua-non for self-help projects. With free interpersonal communication (i.e. horizontal) there will be little room for deliberate misunderstanding. Looking at the mean of horizontal communication and that of vertical, one will notice that the mean of horizontal communication is higher, meaning that adults themselves recognized horizontal communication to be the best in self-help projects.

During the discussions, the adults spoken to were of the opinion that for any self-help project to be effective, it has to be initiated by the people themselves. If on the other hand, it must be well understood by the people it is meant for. Many of them feel that there is a wide gap between themselves and the government since they cannot go to them on their own. They equally submit that when they go through the local government, their message is not well delivered since most of the projects they have in mind remained undone.

6.2 TESTING HYPOTHESIS TWO

The second hypothesis was formulated based on the view that development projects in which people are involved, articulating their needs themselves have

better chances of being understood, accepted, supported, valued, and are better sustained and maintained by the community. People need to be mobilized through various means of communication to join any new project initiated by the community leaders or the government to change their lives. People need to become aware of the benefit they stand to gain. Also important is the need for people to become aware of their condition and rise up to change it through community efforts. This is because they may not be able to adequately recognize their real need and want, and may not be able to rise up to provide for it through their own means.

Hypothesis two states that, there is no significant difference between communication and mobilization strategies for effective participation in self-help projects. To test this hypothesis, the data collected from the community members about communication and mobilization strategies for effective participation in self-help projects were examined and analyzed and the results of the analyses are shown in the table below.

Table 4.8. Results of the Analysis of Test of the Response of Community Members to Communication and Mobilisation Strategies for Effective Participation.

Group	N	X	S.D	df	T
Communication	600	3.74	0.29	1198	2.55
Mobilization	600	3.94	0.35		

Table 4.8 shows the analysis of the responses of the community members. The mean of each group was found to be 3.74 and 3.94 respectively. The 't' test calculated yielded a value of 2.55 with 1198 degree of freedom. This value was found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of probability with the 't' table of l.98 and the 't' calculated value of 2.55 was greater.

Therefore, on the basis of this result, hypothesis two which states that, "there is no significant difference between communication and mobilization strategies for effective participation in self-help projects" was rejected.

6.2.1 Discussion

The result shows that there is a significant difference between communication and mobilization strategies for effective participation in self-help projects in Osun State. There seems to be a need for adults to be well mobilized to encourage communal efforts and popular participation. The result confirms the fact that for any developmental project to be effective, efforts should be made to mobilize the beneficiaries, so as to encourage their participation in projects that will lead to an improvement in the quality of life. Mobilization suggests the process of creating public awareness and providing support to the community

members to adopt improved technologies and attitudes that will change their lives for good. To this end communication is a very important tool in mobilization since people cannot be mobilized effectively without adequate, proper and qualitative communication.

From the results, the mean of mobilization is higher than that of communication. This indicates that the adults recognized that mobilization is a very important tool in any self-help project whether the projects were initiated by the community leader, by the government agents or by the community members themselves. It must not be forgotten that both communication and mobilization work hand-in-hand and one cannot work without the other.

During the interview with some of the community members, they accepted that they would not only welcome new development plans but also will be actively involved in the implementation stages. This, according to them, could be done if they are aware of, and convinced about the projects. That is if the projects would be beneficial and disaster free. It is only when they are well carried along that their interest is aroused to participate.

Therefore the role of communication as a vital tool in mobilizing people to get involved in activities that will improve their lives cannot be overemphasized. Community members need to be geared to action to rise and change their own conditions.

6.3 TESTING HYPOTHESIS THREE

The formulation of this hypothesis was based on the view that to aid communication, literacy should move from the level of acquisition of basic literacy skills (reading, writing and simple arithmetic) alone to incorporate orientation towards the awakening of consciousness for effective participation in self-help development programme so as to raise or encourage awareness. Added to this is the recognised importance of the media.

Development messages cannot be transmitted without some channels of communication. Appropriate and simple media should be used by development agents to pass across development messages. The researcher was interested in finding out how true these assumptions are. Thus hypothesis three which states, "there is no significant difference between provision of qualitative information and literacy awareness in adult participation in self-help projects" was formulated.

In order to test this hypothesis, the investigator compiled and analyzed data on the opinions of the community members about the effect of information and literacy on self-help development projects.

Table 4.9: Result of the Analysis of Test of the Response of Community Members on Qualitative Information and Literacy Awareness.

Group	n	X	S.D	df	t
Information	600	3.98	0.76	1198	3.14
Literacy	600	3.65	0.22		

Table 4.9 shows the analyzed responses of the community members. The mean of each group was found to be 3.98 and 3.65 respectively. The result of 't' test calculated yielded a value of 3.14 with 1198 degree of freedom. This value was found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of probability, with the 't' table of l.98. Therefore based on this result the hypothesis, which states that "there is no significant difference between provision of qualitative information and literacy awareness in adult participation in self-help projects in Osun State" was rejected.

6.3.1 Discussion

The result of the analysis shows that there is a significant difference between provision of qualitative information and literacy awareness in the participation of adults in self-help projects in Osun State. This result shows that adequate information is necessary in any self-help projects. Qualitative information and relevant communication channels such as telephone facilities, town-criers, local radio stations, radio jingles, community awareness programme, posters, bill-boards and so on are very important to enlighten people and to enhance initiation and full participation and commitment of the community members for overall success of their various projects.

It corroborates the fact that it is always necessary to send adequate information about the projects, its relevance, duration of constructions and the expected contribution to the people's welfare so as to enlist their support, draw out their enthusiasm and win their confidence for the completion and sustainability of the project. In this context, information on proper communication channels is part of the tools of development in both rural and urban areas. However, without literacy, adequate and qualitative information may not be transmitted. Literacy helps in effective communication because both the sender and receiver are able to understand each other well, thereby avoiding misunderstanding and unnecessary delay in project execution. Literacy will also bring to the person confidence and dignity, which will enable the person not only to participate in the project, but also to contribute wisely.

The result reveals that there is a strong connection among the concepts of information, literacy and communication in self-help developmental projects. It shows that it is not enough to initiate programmes without reaching out to the

beneficiaries with adequate information through the proper channels of communication. Therefore, change agents should be aware of the fact that community members need to be carried along for them to participate meaningfully in all efforts to improve their living standards.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 CONCLUSION

Within the context of the present research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Most of the people interested in self-help development projects are older adults. This shows that younger adults are not very interested in the development of their communities and not many of them are around to know what is going on in their communities. More males are interested and are involved in self-help developmental projects as revealed by the results of the questionnaire, and those who were willing to grant oral interview to the researcher were mainly males. The result of the study also confirmed that communication is a sine-qua-non for a successful self-help project because adults themselves confirmed that qualitative not quantitative communication is necessary for the successful completion of any project.

Illiteracy is a major factor impeding the progress of developmental projects in most rural communities. For instance, from the analysis of the results, 35% of the respondents are stark illiterates while 33.4% can be regarded as semi illiterates. Adults themselves are aware that horizontal communication should be encouraged in any self-projects since it enables the adults themselves to be heard in the process of improving their lives. In the same vein, there is a need to continuously encourage vertical communication in order to enlighten the people for them not to wallow in ignorance. Most of the people interviewed confirmed that there is no adequate means of communication in the rural areas like the local newspapers or rural radio forum that will cater for the social well-being of the adults alone.

The study reveals that there is a strong connection among the concepts of information, literacy, communication and mobilization in self-help activities. People have the view that they need to be convinced that a project will benefit them and improve their lot before they will participate in it. Moreover, the interviewees submitted that lack of adequate financial backing, political will and sincerity of purpose on the part of the local government councils, under whose jurisdiction most of the community self-help projects are cited are among other factors responsible for poor execution or outright abandonment of most self-help projects in the local councils under study.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, a number of implications and recommendations are made below:

The analysis confirms that communication as a factor has a role to play in any developmental projects, in its initiation, execution, completion and sustainability. Also some other concepts such as literacy, media and mobilization enhance functional communication to help self-help projects. It was also discovered that there is no local means of communication in the rural areas, except the popular radio and television stations that do not have much to do with the lives of the rural populace.

Therefore, there is a need for the channels of communication in these communities to be improved. Relevant information needs to flow moderately to enlighten the people. There should be an appropriate means of reaching the people e.g. local radio, local newspapers, newsletters, or bulletins, posters (written in local languages) so as to gear them into action for sustainable developmental projects. There is a need for people (community members) to be awakened in their consciousness so as to critically appraise their world, thus attaining some measure of socio-economic freedom.

Self-help projects of any type need adequate financial backing before it could be successfully implemented. Both the government and the community members should work hand-in-hand to see that projects are initiated, completed and sustained.

Problems of illiteracy should be completely eradicated in our communities. This will eradicate poverty to a great extent since education would help the people to be informed on how to make use of available resources to produce things that will improve their lives. Literacy should not only involve training to be able to read and write but should incorporate orientation towards the awakening of consciousness for effective participation in self-help developmental projects.

In the same regard, subjects that will be emphasized should raise or encourage awareness. Factors such as ignorance, under-utilization and non-utilization of potentials and available resources should be removed.

Participation of every concerned member of the community should be sought in planning, designing, execution and completion of viable developmental projects, which will impact positively on the lives of the members. Every project should be based on the felt need of the people. There should be adequate, functional and open communication at every stage of the execution of the identified projects. Open communication should be used at the community meetings, and everybody should be given a chance to contribute ideas and ideals that will lead to the initiation and the completion of viable projects. Everybody should be allowed to share the responsibility of working together. Therefore, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation must be jointly carried out.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is a need, as with all studies, for a replication of the methodology of this research using similar or different kinds of subjects to see if the present findings will be bolstered by additional evidence. It would be necessary for further research to be carried out to know why older people are more interested in self-help projects than the younger people. It would be worthwhile if the same study could be replicated in other areas of community development. It would also be worthwhile if the study of the level of awareness about adult education programmes could be carried out.

Finally, another study on the relationship between socio-economic status and participation in self-help projects could be looked into.

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