

The Role of Development Communication in the Development of Nigeria's Economy

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ABSTRACT

Development communication has been practiced in Nigeria for some years now. And in the period of .the practice it has been discovered that such communication has a lot of positive impact to make in the sectors of the society. As a result of that discovery it is believed that development communication is a catalyst of societal development; hence its introduction in the nation's developing economic system. Thereby, this study is mainly focused on the role of development communication in the development of Nigeria's economy. The study adopted historical method of research in reviewing assumptions of this study, which among others are: That Devcom has made positive impact towards the development of Nigeria's economy. Better application of development communication in Nigeria will lead to improvement of the nation's economy. Nigeria's economic development polices need sound communication to fully excel. In communicating for economic development, it is wise to combine modern mass media with traditional media. And that development communication has been effective in securing supports of Nigerians for the improvement of the nation's economy. Findings made from historical the survey and analysis shows that development communication has been playing many 'roles toward development of Nigeria's economy. In view of this, it is recommended among others that Nigeria government should give financial supports to Nigerian mass media institution to enable it get better equipped for development communication in the interest of economic development in Nigeria. This study is based on the combine theoretical frameworks of Development Media Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory of the media.

Keywords:The Role. Development. Nigeria's Economy.

INTRODUCTION

Development communication is a powerful catalyst of economic development. Without such communication there can be no meaningful economic development in the society. In the current era of information/communication economy no society will achieve maximum economic progress without proper application of development communication in the societal development process [1,2,3,4]. You cannot talk of economic development of any country without talking of development communication. In other words, economic development programme or policy depends on sound development communication framework to excel. According to [5] development communication means "the use of all forms of communication in reporting, publicizing and promotion of

development at all levels of society." It implies communicating development message transaction between the source and the receiver. In terms of nature it is participatory and collaborative. It is Behaviour Change Communication-B.C [6]. As a practical two-way communication task: it is a planned process of economic transformation "...which operates at the levels of advocacy to provide resources and socio-political leadership commitment and support for development goals and objectives", [7]. Emphasizing further, [8] pointed out that the major aim of such communication "...is to make life better for people in a given society economically by encouraging them to understand the vision of the change agent, accept to participate by developing their capacity and skill that will enable them change from unprogressive or under

developmental conditions of the past to a better condition."Similarly, [9] believes that development communication is agent of societal transformation for the betterment of people's lives. As such he describes development communication as "the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and larger fulfillment of the human potential."Contributing, [10] states that such communication "focuses on people in communities, nations and the world with a view to transmitting messages on idea and practice aimed at improving their welfare and helping them to attain more productive and fulfilled lives." [11] explains the concept in such a way that it places self-determined need of the masses at the centre of development communication. To him, "a remarkable feature of development communication is that it is only concerned with people's welfare as defined by them." Ekwelie goes on to define development communication a "news from below as against news from a above-that is, news as package by those who believe they know what we need." However, in this discussion economic development refers to positive economic advancement, which in turn brings positive advancement of life and society. It implies progressive economic change for the betterment of the conditions of individuals and consequently of the society. This is usually achieved by wise distribution of economic resources in the society. As a process of positive change,

economic development aims at achieving economic self-reliance and improved economic living conditions especially for the under preivileged majority of a given human population. Therefore, in any given society economic development brings economic transformation in order to improve lives of the majority within the society. This is the basic demand of people in Nigeria. Now, economic development is a participatory process, which demands collaborative effort of members of a given society. This is why it should be handled with sound. Development communication or communication for development. Note where there is no necessary communication, there will be no necessary development. Communication and development are strongly interconnected. In other words, "...communication and development arc so closely interconnected that there can be no development without communication," [12]. [13] is in support of this idea when lie stated: "we have proof that development and communication can be complementary...after making all allowances for accident in nature and society, we are still left with a paradigm that links communication with development. In view of that [14] says: "communication is so important in the process of development that it is seen as the very soul of development". Therefore, there should be communication for development, which will consequently bring economic advancement in the society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Realities of Modern Nigeria Society and their Implications

Nigeria is a developing West African country with an emerging democracy. The country has a land mass of about 98 million hectares accommodating over 120,000 autonomous communities; over 150 million people; over 250 ethnic groups that are often suspicious and hostile to each other (especially in political matters) with Igbo, Hause and Yoruba as dominant groups; over 250 mutually unintelligible languages made more complex by 1000 dialects; 2 major

opposing religions (Christianity and Moslem) plus the third African Traditional Religion (A.T.R) which often compliments the first two; 60% of rural dwellers; 60% of illiterates and innumerate by western standards, and the illiterates mostly behave like animals due to lack of education whose aim is to transform animals into human beings. Furthermore, the country spent 28 years under military dictatorship which badly affected its social, health, educational, political,

infrastructural, economic and media systems. This situation has made journalism "in the country to become a mixed bag of headaches and "panadol". Journalists in the corrupt nation are poorly paid and there is high level of corruption in the media which take the form of brown envelop journalism, bribery, journalism of terrorism, sensationalism, plagiarism, slanting of news stories, selling of news stories to other media houses, distortion of facts and withholding of information, publication of half truths and deliberate falsehood, wrong application of advocacy-journalism and the likes. Due to the above factors, journalists in the nation have become chatter boxes and sycophantic megaphones of government, political and business comprador bourgeoisies. Although, the government of president Goodluck has brought about a little "breath of fresh air" and that to some extent has restored hope, national rebirth with renaissance, the country is still at the crossroads of decadence and democracy now which has made Nigerians to be wondering with hard questions for our leaders, [8]. However, one big problem is that we are not making maximum use of the resources to facilitate development of our economy. Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) and other related bodies within and outside the country have been reporting that base on survey researches. To be realistic, Nigeria's economy has been temporally poor and weak if we compare it to those of advanced nations of the world partially because of this problem. Even within Africa, some countries are still better than Nigeria in terms of economic development. A quick look at the -records of economic poverty in Nigeria will help one to understand the present ugly condition of the nation's economy. According to result of survey carried out by the Nigerian institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), cited in [9], economic poverty increased in Nigeria between 1980 and 1985, and between 1992 and 1996. Between 1985 and 1992 there was decrease because of some level of economic recovery. In 1980 proportion

of the poor in the country was 28.1%. Translation of this resulted about 17.7 million poor people in 1980 within the country and 34.7 million poor people in 1985. In 1992 we recorded about 39.7 million poor people. In 1996 the population increased to about 67.1million. The records also show that poverty level increased by 22%. But between 1985 and 1992 there was little decrease. However, between 1992 and 1996 there was index rise. In 1980, the rate increased to 29.3%. In 1985, it rose to 51.4% . In 1992 it decreased to 46.1%. In 1996 it skyrocketed to 69.8%. Moreover, in urban areas poverty increased between 1980 and 1985. It maintained about the same rate between 1985 and 1992. Between 1992 arid 1996 there was rise to 55.2%. All these data show that between 1980-1996 rural economic poverty was higher than that of urban in Nigeria. Then base on sex of households, the data further show that male-headed households were poorer than the female-headed ones. Female-headed households rose from 29.2% in 1980 to 59% in 1996 while within the same period, male-headed families rose from 29.2% to 67%. Then between 1997 to 2007 the situation has maintained higher percentage due to lack of resources to match the fast increase of human population in the country. However, going by 1992 reference point using projected population figure of 178.5% million by 2015, percentage of the poor in Nigeria is expected to decrease to 21.4% by 2015. This indicates that about 38.1% million people will still be economically poor in he country. Base on the data; income inequality and food security are worsening in the country and they indicate that economic poverty is rising [15]. With this little picture one can imagine the current state of Nigeria's economy. In fact, our economy is in bad shape just as we all know; that is why recent Nigerian government mapped our economic reform policies as corrective measures. Prominent among the policies is NEEDS, which described as Nigeria's comprehensive plan for poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation.

According to [16] some agencies have been established to implement the policies. Some of the economic reform policies that are still begging for full implementation in the country are the Nigeria's perspective of Millennium Development Goals, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment

and Development Strategy (SEEDS), Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Bank Reforms, debt relief, Anti-corruption crusade, etc. The economic reform policies respectively go with some development communication challenges directly or indirectly, [17].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the process of this study, the researcher based on historical research which involves broad review of secondary sources of knowledge. According to [7], historical research aims "...at establishing the validity or authenticity of past event for possible acceptance, reconstruction or outright rejection." However, secondary

sources of knowledge "refers to other materials from which information or data, is obtained," [18]. In the field of research, such sources refer to works of other persons, reports or events already documented which are more detailed and better organized most of the time than primary sources, [19].

Theoretical Framework of the Study

It has been established that certain theories are determinants of communication effects on audience. Therefore, this study is based on the joint theoretical framework of (a) Development Media Theory. To [20] this normative media theory maintain the following principles among others:

This theory believes that the primary aim in media use is societal development especially at the grassroots level. Principles of this theory are in support of the respective concepts of development communication and journalism (McQuail in Folarin 2005:48). The theory sees the media as tools of national integration, socio-economic modernization, promotion of literacy and cultural creativity, [21]. And (b) Agenda-Setting Theory: This is one of the powerful mass media effect theories posited in 1970s by Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs. Studying media coverage of political campaigns the two researchers found the main effect of media in political/electoral process to be agenda setting. To them, media tell us not what to think in the process, but what to think about. This implies that the rate of attention given to an issue in the press affects the level of relevance attached to that issue by the consumers of the media contents. The major stand of agenda setting theory is that media cannot change your view about a certain issue, but they will change your perception of what is vital, [15,17,19,20,21,22].

- i. Mass media must accept and carry-out the responsibility of positive development in the society in line with the established policy of national development,
- ii. Freedom of the media should be determined by economic priorities and development needs of the society,
- iii. Media should give major attention in their contents to the indigenous culture and language of the nation.
- iv. In their news and information, media should focus more on linking up other developing countries that are culturally, geographically or politically close to the host country,
- v. Media practitioners have some responsibilities as well as freedom in their constitutional professional tasks.
- vi. Whenever necessary government can control media operations in the interest of development ends in the society.

Limitations of the Study

There are some factors that affected this study but not in a remarkable significance. There were: time constraint, lack of finance, lack of relevant statistics, stress

involved in gathering data relevant to study etc.

What "Development" is all about

Societal development is a sustained, concerted actions of policy makers, communities, non-governmental organization that promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific society. Societal development can also be referred to as the qualitative changes in the social and economic life of people. Such actions can include multiple areas such as development of human capital, vital infrastructure, regional competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion health, safety, literacy and other initiatives. Societal development also includes improvement in information flow among members of the society through the mass media. When societal development occurs basic social amenities like electricity, portable, roads, etc are usually accessible to the citizenry. There is general improvement of the wellbeing of the presence of societal development. Many intellectual giants have made various attempts to explain the concept, "development." In the process of doing that, they came up individually and often collectively with various definitions of the concept. Now, let us critically look into some of the definitions. [8] defined development "as the process of change which aims at achieving self-reliance and improved living conditions for the underprivileged majority of the population." Note the underprivileged majority in the developing or underdeveloped countries like Nigeria, Zambia, etc are usually located in the rural areas. For it is commonly believed that 70-90% of population of the third world countries are rural dwellers [10]. However, to Moemeka (1989:4) development is "a change for the better in both the human, cultural, socio-economic and political conditions of the individual, and consequently, of society." Meanwhile, Rogerian definition of the concept seems to be broader when it states that development is "a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about social and material advancement (including greater life) for the majority of people through

their gaining control over their environment." In a speech Akin Mabogunje pointed out that development is "a process of moving the whole social system upward so as to enhance the capacity of each member of society to realize his inherent-potentials and to effectively cope with the changing circumstances of his life." He further said that *communication (and by implication mass media) is necessary, not only for all aspects of a person's development, but also for all aspects of a nation's development.* In a through study of all the above stated definitions and various others not stated here something vital was discovered. What? That even though "development" has been given various meanings by various people, there are certain features which are generally agreed that developmental process should share. Such features are that development should bring change. This change should be positive enough for betterment of society. Then the betterment should be such that will be for the benefits of the majority of the people. And the potential beneficiaries should be allowed to participate in the developmental process [11]. This is a vital message for Nigeria and other developing countries of the world whose population need multifaceted development to cope favourably with the developed nations. While we digest the message it should be understood that real national development does not start with material goods and things, it starts with people-their orientation, organization and discipline (Nigerian Ministry of National Planning, 1980). When a society is properly oriented, organized and disciplined development will naturally come. And such development goes with basic components or core values which are life-sustenance, self-esteem and freedom [6]. That is why communication scholars believed that development is all about improvement of life [8]. For it has to do with growth, existence and self-sustenance of people. Remember that the surest way to attain national development in a developing society like Nigeria is to

focus development programmes more on the rural majority instead of the urban minority. That is why in some underdeveloped countries rural development is equal to national development. Note rural development according to [5] "involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those seeking a livelihood in the rural areas." All things being equality, it can be a genesis of overall national development. Direct or indirect development of the rural population is direct or indirect development of the over all population of any developing country. This is because rural development is a tested and trusted means to national development. There are verifiable reasons behind this assertion. Firstly, 70-90% of the over all population of developing countries are rural inhabitants. Only between 10-30% are privileged to the urban areas. Secondly, larger portion of

What Communication is all About

Ordinary, communication is a process of sending information, idea or knowledge from one person (source) to another (receiver). But communication as a process can begin from the source to the receiver as give and response but the same receiver who responded can in turn become the giver (source) while the source who had began the communication process becomes the receiver. However,

(A) Communication at the Individual Level

This level of communication involves communicating with oneself or face to face communication between one person and at least one other person. When it is with oneself, it is called intrapersonal

(B) Communication at the Group Level

This level of communication is divided into small group and large group (public speaking). [7] describes small group as when 3-15. People formalize their relationships by meeting (or by

(C) Communication at the Mass Level

Communication is at mass level when shared meaning is created between the mass media and their audience. In this setting, standardized messages are spread to a mass audience through the mass media. The sender here becomes a source-a conglomeration of professionals that includes writers, cameramen,

the natural resources of the nations are found in the rural areas. Thirdly, because of the above advantages and more they rural population directly or indirectly contribute more to the economic, political, social, cultural etc systems of the developing countries [5]. In view of the above reasons, responsible governments in some third world countries have shown more interests in developing rural areas in the process of national development. Nigeria government has been making efforts to develop rural parts of the country through poverty Alleviation initiative/programmes. If not deep rooted systematic corruption that still cry for lasting solution in the society the noble efforts would have improved majority of lives not only in the rural areas but also in urban areas where "...quality of life is also very poor, especially in the slums and shantytowns of major cities..." [8].

we communicate for the following reasons: to persuade or appeal to the emotions, to convince or appeal to reason, to instinct, to entertain, to educate, to inform, to establish and promote relationship, and to influence behaviour. Communication is broadly divided into two viz: verbal and non-verbal communication.

where as it is called interpersonal when it is between two people (DYADIC) or among three persons (TRADIC). In this level of communication, there is usually immediacy of feedback.

appointment) to combine talents to achieve a purpose, solve a problem or make a decision. He posits that message is personalized to the group and the feedback is immediate.

reporters, audio and video technicians, directors, floor managers, editors, etc who prepare and send messages through a mass medium to a huge audience. The receivers become an audience. The message becomes depersonalized and standardized, [9]. In this level of communication, the source and the

receivers (audience) have no personal contact and feedback is not always immediate. Audiences cut across diverse

cultures, languages, beliefs, geographical locations, educational background, etc.

Development Communication: A quick look

Giving a quick look at development communication, [16] states that development communication implies communicating development message. Quoting Edeani, she further defined development communication as "the use of all forms of communication in the reporting, publicizing and promotion of development at all levels of society." In her attempt to give alternative definition of the concept, Okunna cited Quebral who viewed it as "the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people." Based on these definitions, development communication is a powerful catalyst of positive environmental change. When properly managed, it can transform economy of a nation in the interest of its population. For Ekwelie as quoted by [13] says, "A Using Development Communication to Inform Masses in the Interest of Economic Development in Nigeria

remarkable feature of development communication is that it is only concerned with people's welfare as defined by them." Ekwelie further defined development communication as "news from below as against news from above—that is, news as packaged by those who believe they know what we need." However, Udokah cited in [18] views development communication as vital factor of economic development. He supported Sussman and Tatarian in their summaries of the doctrines of development journalism (and of course development communication) where they pointed "out the importance of communication to all sectors of the citizenry in economic development, noting that only the government is responsible for, and can assure the proper use of, communication for this purpose."

This may take the form of Information Education Communication (IEC) or Behaviour Change Communication (BCC). To [19] I.E.C is designed to provide information and communication. Its messages are disseminated through poster, handbills, public service announcement, seminars and workshops. Meanwhile, Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) is "meant to induce people to adopt new lines of action," [20]. It could be used in advocating behavioural changes, which are needed for the development of Nigeria's economy. According to [21], the goal of both I.E.C. and B.C.C. is to positively change attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviour or norms within individuals or groups. This form of change is necessary for collaborative and participatory economic development in Nigeria. Moreover societal development

information is part of development communication. In other words, development communication comprises mass media information concerning development of the society. To confirm this [22] states: "Development communication consists of information about government plans and efforts to improve the standard of living of the populace, appeals to citizens to adopt new ideas and ways of doing things, news of struggles for a better living and news of achievements to spur or inspire the citizenry, appeals from government to citizens for cooperation and threats of force or punishment in the event of non-compliance. They originate from agencies and individuals responsible for one form of development or the other and are usually thoughtfully put together by the accredited disseminators. It can be carried out orally or in writing."

Development Communication as a means of Educating Masses for the Development of Nigeria's Economy

Ajayi in [9] stated that education is the "process by which every society, as a people, acquire the skills and resources necessary for its survival, and transmits this through formal and informal means to the next generation."

From the time of Plato to Rousseau, Dewey and other great philosophers, the following have been identified as bases for human education:

- (1) Education for civility and .culture
- (2) Education for individual empowerment
- (3) Education for public enlightenment and democracy
- (4) Education for manpower and economic development
- (5) Education for national power.

The importance of education as powerful agent of positive change has been expressed in the National Policy on Education, which states that: "Education is Using Development Communication to

Integrate Nigeria for the Development of its Economy According to [21], integration "...means an attempt to make people of different race, culture, religion and language live together harmoniously in a society; it means an attempt at lasting unity." Quoting Burton, Udoakah explained further that societal integration is 'not just an association of units that are otherwise hostile and held together only while pressures are applied to keep them

the most important instrument of change in any society. Any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution..."

In view of the above statements [8] stated that: "Education is the most important instrument of meaningful change generally and fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook in particular. In all ramifications, education is the engine of development." In fact, "...one cannot have a meaningful and successful life without any education, more particularly in the present age of technology and information." This is why Indian Supreme Court declared that the Fundamental Human Right to Education is part of the concept of right to life [8,10,13,16].

Using Development Communication to Integrate Nigeria for the Development of its Economy

together." It is an act of unifying multi-ethnic society based on mutual understanding, goodwill, corporation, recognition and respect. To Udoakah the idea of integration comes into mind when a given society "... is made up of different race, culture, religion, language, etc. and that there is a hostile relationship existing between the different groups that make up the society."

CONCLUSION

Based on the research method adapted for this study, the following are the summary of discussion:

- (1) Development communication has been making positive impact towards development of Nigeria's economy.
- (2) Better application of development communication will lead to improvement of the nation's economy.
- (3) The nation's economic development policies need sound development communication to fully excel.
- (4) In communicating for economic development in Nigeria it is wise to combine modern mass media with traditional media as that will enhance wide audience reach.

(5) Development communication will be effective in securing mass support in Nigeria for the development of the nation's economy.

(6) Modern mass media can be efficient in communicating masses for development of Nigeria's economy.

(7) There are challenges in communicating Nigeria's economic development policies.

(8) Development communication can contribute meaningfully towards solving problems of Nigeria's economy. This study was embarked on in order to find out the role of development communication in the development of Nigeria's economy. So far, the researcher's findings revealed that development

communication has been impacting positively on the nation's economy; and that such communication if better managed, can facilitate greater development of the economy. As a matter of fact, it is the conclusion of this study

that development communication is a powerful catalyst of economic development and therefore should be better used to facilitate economic development in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. To Nigerian Government and its Agencies:

(i) They should give more financial supports to Nigerian mass media institution to enable it get better equipped for development communication in the interest of economic development in the country.

(ii) They should work towards more democratization of the nation's media system as that will encourage better development communication for the improvement of the Nigeria's economy.

(iii) They should help to reduce rates of commercialization, bureaucratization and similar others in the nation's mass media system for that will help the system in one way or the other to communicate better for the nation's economic development.

(iv) In addition to financial supports, they should try and improve on their material and moral supports to the nation's media industry.

(v) They should establish specialized institute or centre for development communication in Nigeria as that will help to train more experts on the field in the interest of the nation's economy.

(vi) Periodically, they should invite foreign experts on the field into the country to complement the efforts of their local colleagues towards the improvement of the nation's economy.

(vii) They should sponsor more action-based researches on the field and results of the researches should be properly applied with the interest of the nation's economy in mind.

(B) To Nigerian Mass Media Institution:

(i) While Nigerian government and its agencies are playing their parts, the nation's media institution should give better professional attention to communication for the development of the nation's economy.

(ii) The institution should operate under the combine Frameworks of

Social Responsibility Theory, Democratic Participant-Media Theory and Development Media Theory of the press.

(iii) The institution should try as much as possible to distance itself from partisan politics to enable it communicate impartially for the nation's economic development.

(C) To Private Organizations in Nigeria:

(i) Private organizations across Nigeria should compliment positive efforts of Nigerian government, its agencies and the nation's media institution in the task of the nation's economic development (ii) For the sake of above issue the organizations should maintain symbiotic relationship with government and media agencies.

(iii) Private organizations, which are financially buoyant, are urged to establish media or education centre for economic-focused development communication.

(iv) Private organizations that already have media or education centres in the country should use them to champion the course of communication for the development of the nation's economy.

(v) The organization should positively influence their individual members to be part of such communication exercise.

(D) To Individuals in Nigeria:

(i) Individual patriotic Nigerians should compliment the positive efforts of government, its agencies, Nigerian media institution and private organizations across the country in the task of communication for the development of the nation's economy.

(ii) Again because of some limitations of this study, the researcher does not claim perfection in this work. Therefore, to compliment/update this work he recommends interesting individuals in Nigeria to embark on more research of this nature in order to gather more knowledge on the role of development

communication in the development of Nigeria's economy.

Knowledge acquired in the process should be applied appropriately.

(iii) Individuals in the country are recommended to pay greater attention to communication for the development of the nation's economy and properly implement contents of such communication.

(iv) Individual opinion leaders in Nigerian society should put more positive

influence on their individual followers to take communication for the development of the nation's economy more serious.

(v) Then, as source of such communication remain faithful to their promises individual members of the society should in other hand prove satisfactorily to be faithful partners in the process. Hopefully, all these development communication efforts will directly or indirectly encourage development of Nigeria's economy.

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