PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (CSDP) IN TARABA STATE 2009-

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ABSTRACT
This study seeks to explore how participation, interest and involvement of community members/beneficiaries in the planning and execution of poverty alleviation programmes will accelerate the process, using the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) as a case study. Anchored on the principles of participatory communication theory, the study critiques the assumptions of the dominant paradigm of modernization, calling for an alternative paradigm of participation that recognizes local initiatives and contribution to the process of poverty alleviation. Evaluative design approach has been adopted, with key informants interview (KII) conducted on a sample of 33 respondents (three information officers of the CSDP and thirty members of CSDP host communities in Taraba State) to elicit data for analysis. More so, documented assessment of micro projects by the agency from 2009-2012 have been reviewed. The research discovers that community members were actively involved and participated in the planning and execution of the CSDP micro projects in their communities, and that the projects executed have been impacting positively in the lives of community members. To this end, the research conclude that participation, interest and involvement of beneficiaries at the planning and execution stages of poverty alleviation project is central to their success, thus recommending the approach to subsequent poverty alleviation programmes for more results that would enable us achieve the goal of poverty alleviation in the country.

Keywords: Poverty, Poverty alleviation, Participatory communication and CSDP

Introduction
Communication is an integral part of human endeavour. From time immemorial, it has been used to solve practical situations and issues bothering humanity. Humanity in our contemporary society has been plagued by several problems, few among which include poverty, hunger, terrorism, bad governance and war among a myriad of others. The communication concern here is to see how we could effectively deploy the arsenal of communication to avert such unfortunate situations.

Poverty in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon; it is a scourge that has paralyzed the citizens long ago. Early scholars to raise alarm about the prevailing poverty situation in the country include Townsend and Davidson (1982) cited in Udoakah (1988) who asserts that:

The majority of Nigerians are not just poor from the standpoint of comparative analysis, but are facing a vicious circle which in the words of Townsend and Davidson (1982), through variety of mechanism, they are locked into material, educational, environmental and social disadvantage for a lifetime, and even for generations...

The menace of pervasive poverty in the country could be traced to the oil boom era in the 1970s which was preceded by a total or near neglect of the agricultural sector, a sector which according
to Orji (2009), prior to the oil boom era, served as the mainstay of the economy. During this era, the basis of the Nigerian economy was a well diversified agricultural sector that supported about 75% of the population, provided 68% of the GDP and 78% of exports as well as supplied the people with 94% of their food, (Elijah and Ogunlade 2012). This trend has however changed over the years, with a drastic shift of attention from agriculture to oil exploration which has become the “backbone” of the Nigerian economy. Steadily following this shift was a gradual fall in per capita income, drastic deterioration of living standards which manifest in pervasive poverty, hunger, deprivation and lack of basic human necessities.

Amidst this mess, a myriad of schemes aroused, anchored on the World Bank’s Structural Adjustment Programmes that aimed at bringing succor to the impoverished masses. Such programmes include: War Against Poverty, Operation Feed the Nation, the FADAMA projects, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Peoples Bank of Nigeria, National Agency for Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPAP) among a host of others, (Chinonso 2014). Worrisome is the fact that most of these programmes failed to yield the desired results, while some were totally exercises in futility, thus the citizenry surged further into abject poverty. The role of communication in this situation becomes thus important as scholars have continued to attribute the failure of these programmes to lack of good communication strategies to complement the schemes, lack of involvement and participation of beneficiaries in the projects, top down approach to programme formulation and implementation (Ejiofor 2012), lack of monitoring/evaluation and sustainability plans, paucity of funds, negligence on the part of the stakeholders involved etc all of which bothers on communication (Imoh 2012).

Historically, early attempts to marry communication with development projects started after the 2nd world war. The miserable living conditions left behind by the war and the quest to bring about speedy development to those people living in abject poverty according to Marafa (2012) aroused the consciousness of development scholars such as Daniel Lerner, Everett Rogers etc who saw the media as a useful resource and instrument in the hands of development planners, hence the need to see how the media of communication could be used to facilitate development and poverty alleviation. Today, development communication has become a household name in developing countries, who have now realized that any meaningful development effort is best complemented by an appropriate communication strategy.

Anchored on the principles of participatory communication theory, this work seeks to explore how involvement, participation and interest of beneficiaries in poverty alleviation through appropriate communication strategies would accelerate the process. This would go a long way to help policy makers and development planners appreciate the role of participatory communication in poverty alleviation to effectively incorporate the approach into the poverty alleviation struggle.

**The Menace of Poverty and the Nigerian Experience**

Whether we look at poverty as a scourge or as a cause of other specific socio-economic problems, the menace of poverty is highly endemic and afflicts Nigeria, just like other developing nations of the world. Chinonso (2014) posits that the high level of poverty in the world has attained an endemic nature and is becoming worrisome. Nigeria is not an exception to this. Chinonso who decried the poverty situation in the country assert that:

...when a deep reflection is made of the Nigerian condition, it is so pathetic in the sense that the country which is so blessed and rich in natural and agricultural resources, oil and gas cannot boast of putting
With regards to conceptualization, a plethora of definitions exist about the concept of poverty. The world Health Organization (2002) has it that poverty is the inability to attain a minimum standard of living. This manifests in many forms which include lack of access to resources, lack of political freedom and voice, lack of shelter, poor access to health and sanitation facilities, vulnerability to shocks, violence and crime, political discrimination and marginalization etc. The United Nations Human Development (UNHD) introduced the use of such other indices as life expectancy, infant mortality rate, primary school enrolment rate and number of persons per physician to measure poverty in a country (UNHD HDI 2012) cited in Chinonso (2014). The United Nation Environment Programme (2005) holds a similar position when they assert that poverty is associated with the inability to afford basic food and non-food items, adding that it is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. Given these definitions, we could thus deduce that when people are unable to eat, go to school, and have access to good health care, then they can be described to be in poverty regardless of their income.

Whichever way we look at it or irrespective of whichever definition we concur with from the above, the Nigerian society is found wanting, as the various situations described are inherent in a typical Nigerian setting: talk of malnutrition, infant and maternal mortality; lack of primary education, poor or lack of sanitation facilities, lack of basic infrastructure etc; they all manifest in quite a significant degree. Thus the mention of poverty in Nigeria is not new at all!

In this case, whether we talk of absolute poverty (i.e with regard to the basic human needs, measured by resources required to maintain physical efficiency), or relative poverty (where individual or household income is less than the average income of the population in the society in question), or subjective poverty (an individual’s perception of his standard of living) the fact remains that poverty is highly endemic in Nigeria.

According to Dr Yemi Kale, the Statistician General of the federal republic of Nigeria and Chief Executive Director, National Bureau of Statistics (2012), the North East geopolitical region has the poverty rate of 77.7%, the North West follows with 76.3%, while South West has 51.1%. Generally, given the absolute measurement, the poverty level stand at 60.9% in 2010. Going by the dollar per day measurement, the figures stood at 61.2% in 2010, while based on the relative measurement scale, the figures stood at 69% in 2010. On the subjective scale, 93.9% of Nigerians considered themselves poor in 2010.

These figures are not intended to be intimidating or confusing. Rather, they are to help us buttress the fact that poverty is high in Nigeria, and to this effect, no stone is to be left unturned in the bid to address the situation. This research effort becomes thus imperative to ascertain how participatory communication can be of impact to the struggle.

**Poverty Alleviation Struggles in Nigeria: an Overview of Some Major Schemes.**

One of the most frequently asked question when it come to poverty alleviation in Nigeria is the question of the outcome of programmes aimed at bringing succour to the citizens. This question has become imperative, as a myriad of schemes, programmes and policies exist in the move to tackle the growing rate of poverty across the country. Hardly does a regime come on board
without introducing a new policy to tackle the scourge of poverty. In his term paper, Chinonso (2014) chronicled the programmes aimed at combating poverty in the country. The operation feed the nation (OFN) was launched in the 1970s and the Green Revolution was initiated in 1980 to address the problem of hunger in the country. Other efforts made by successive governments include the establishment of the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life Programme (BLP), Family Supports Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) etc. (CBN report 1998 Enugu Zone), cited in Chinonso (2014).

This was in response to the growing poverty rate, thus the conscious policy effort by government towards poverty alleviation began with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This period witnessed severe economic crises that worsened the quality of life in Nigeria. The government through the assistance of the World Bank/IMF introduced SAP to check the crises. The implementation however further worsened the living standard of many Nigerians especially the poor people. In a quick reaction to tackle the crises, the government designed and implemented many poverty alleviation programmes between 1986 and 1993 under the guided deregulation of the economy.

By The year 2000, the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was introduced to intensify the poverty alleviation struggle, with key interests in youth empowerment, creation of employment opportunities and improving the productiveness of the economy. The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was subsequently introduced in 2001 as a blueprint to winning the fight against poverty.

NAPEP according to Chinonso (2014) recognized several reasons as being responsible for the failure of previous poverty alleviation programmes which include the absence of a policy frame work, inadequate involvement of stakeholders, poor implementation arrangements and lack of proper coordination among others. All these were taken into consideration in designing NAPEP with the aim that it won’t be a failure as usual. NAPEP haboured four schemes which were Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Scheme (SOWES) and the Natural Resources Development Conservation Scheme (NRDCS) (Chinonso 2014).

By the year 2000, the United Nations Millennium Summit evolved an eight point development agenda which was tagged the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with about eight goals, eighteen targets and forty eight indicators, (MDGs) were expected to make a remarkable impact in the fight against poverty among other issues which were pointed out as threats to humanity. Nigeria quickly keyed into the MDGs and implemented them, all in a move to combat poverty.

The familiar question still re-interrogates itself: why is the poverty rate in the country still high in the face of all these measures to combat it? Does the various programmes aimed at combating it yield their desired fruits? If not, why? And what do we have to do to reposition them for more positive results? The answers to these questions according to development scholars present a paradigm shift, which recognizes the inevitable role beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programmes have to play right from the planning to execution stages. This is contrary to the dominant trickle down paradigm that view beneficiaries as passive recipients of change, and policy makers as “all knowing”.

**CSDP: A band wagon or a scheme with a difference**
It is worthy to note from the onset that the paper does not intend to “glorify” or glamorize the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) as the best or most effective poverty alleviation strategy ever. Such a thought would be erroneous. All we are interested in is to examine the communication strategies of the scheme from the standpoint of participatory communication, and to as well explore the achievements of the scheme thus far in Taraba State in relation to what it planned to achieve within the first face of implementation i.e from 2009-2012. The Community and Social Development Project is a World Bank assisted programme aimed at accelerating poverty alleviation at the grassroots. According to Demoa (2012), the programme which took off in Nigeria officially in 2009 is an officially of the Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP) and the Community-based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP). It is collaboration between the World Bank and the federal government of Nigeria to promote poverty alleviation and grassroots development. This scheme places beneficiaries of poverty alleviation projects on the seat of stakeholders, who participate in the planning, execution and monitoring of the projects. This is clearly articulated in their credo which serves as a guiding principle for the implementation of micro projects. The credo reads thus:

- Goal: Poverty reduction
- Mission: Community empowerment
- Strategy: Learning by doing
- How: Go to the people, live with them, learn from them, plan with them, work with them, start with what they know, build on what they know, teach by showing, learn by doing, not showcase but a pattern, not odds and ends but a system, not to conform but transform, not relief but release.

With much recognition of the role of beneficiaries, the study seeks to examine the level of involvement, participation and interest of beneficiaries in CSDP micro projects, as well as the overall impact of the projects on beneficiaries.

**Statement of the Problem/Research Questions**

It remain a paradox that Nigeria which has one of the biggest economies in Africa, a country which is blessed with both human, natural and mineral resources habours a large number of people who are considered poor by every definition. This, coupled with the failure of previous anti-poverty programmes, aimed at bringing succour to the people has necessitated the quest to unravel what is behind the dead luck. Along this line of reasoning, this research is tempted to debunk the gospel of the dominant paradigm, and advocate for the renewed thinking or paradigm shift which has ushered in the alternative paradigm of participation and self reliance. Of course, the rate at which the number of poor people is increasing despite all moves by government to effectively combat it is alarming. This is a problem. The questions that thus bug society are:

- What has participatory communication to do with poverty alleviation?
- Do interest, involvement and participation of beneficiaries have anything to do with the success of poverty alleviation projects?
- After all, how can a good communication approach (anchored on the principles of participatory communication) impact the poverty alleviation struggle?

These questions which beg for answers have constituted the motivation for this research, with the intention of critically appraising, examining and evaluating the activities of the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP)in the light of participatory communication. This would help society to appreciate the position and role of participatory communication in poverty alleviation.
Literature/Theoretical Review

Early Approaches to Development Communication: the Dominant Paradigm

Imoh (2013) held that development communication was introduced as an integral part of rural development in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s to promote and facilitate the participation of the rural poor in the sharing of the benefits of development as well as the responsibility for the development decision making. During this period, development communication models derived essentially from dominant economic development theories of the West which emphasized information and persuasion, increase in production and consumption, technological innovation, high level of capital investment and trickle down of benefits.

According to her, the extentionist, dependent, pro-urban, pro-literal, pro-mass media, one way flow of influence oriented messages from development workers at the top to the rural peasantry at the bottom (otherwise known as top-down approach) encouraged source oriented, authoritarian, manipulative and persuasive communication that created dependant rather than collaborative relationship between the source and receivers of development messages, (Imoh 2013).

During this era, the direction of flow in the scholarship of development was dominated by the tenets of modernization theory. Modernization suggested that traditional, cultural and information deficits lie underneath development problems that inhibited developing countries. (Marafa 2012). The theory further contends that Third World countries lacked the necessary culture to move into a modern stage. Culture was viewed as the “bottleneck” that prevented the adoption of modern attitudes and behavior. The low rate of agricultural output, high rate of fertility and mortality or low rates of literacy found in the underdeveloped world were explained by the persistence of traditional values and attitudes that prevented modernization. Given the situation, the goal was to instill modern values and information through the transfer of media technology and the adoption of innovations and culture originated in developed world. This presented the western model of development as a model to be emulated worldwide (Marafa 2012).

Ward Rustow, Daniel McCleland and Alex Linkels in Anaeto et al (2010) who propounded the modernization theory that formed the framework of reasoning in the dominant paradigm put forward the following as key assumptions of the theory:

- Interaction between developed and developing countries should be sustained to bring about greater development.
- A high level of technical assistance is needed for development in developing countries.
- Developing countries are to adopt the political structures and institutions of developed countries.
- Developing countries should practice and open economy where developed countries can participate (Anaeto et al 2010).

This paradigm places prioritizes adoption of innovations from the West, creating a mere dependency relationship between the centre and the periphery, a dependency relationship where the “periphery” is quite vulnerable to exploitation.

Basic Criticisms of the Dominant Paradigm

The dominant paradigm of development communication receives strong criticisms over the years. These criticisms stem principally from the fact that it undermines the local initiatives and emphasizes imposing development from above on the people.
Below are some of the key criticisms which scholars put forward against the dominant paradigm according to Marafa (2012).

- Emphasis on civilization at the expense of basic needs and poverty alleviation.
- It is one way, top down, vertical information transmission.
- It dwells more on persuasion rather than cultivation of trust and mutual understanding.
- It exaggerates the power of the mass media.
- It gives more emphasis on national level programmes rather than local level action.
- It overlooks the importance of interpersonal communication (Marafa 2012).

**Alternative Paradigm of Development Communication: the Renewed Thinking**

The alternative paradigm emphasizes not only material development but also the development of values and cultures. Where development communication interventions are concerned, it emphasizes the small media operating in networks and use of grassroots communication approaches. According to this paradigm, grassroots participation reinforces the chances that communities will adopt activities appropriate for them.

UNESCO (2003) held that this approach is more of helping people to formulate their problems or to acquire an awareness of new options, instead of imposing on them a plan that was formulated elsewhere. Thus the concept of interactivity and participation, with the small media as its operational instrument makes possible the indigenous acquisition of knowledge and skills within the framework of a search for solution to the identified problem. Anaeto et al (2010) contend that this paradigm hinges on the assumptions of participatory communication theory and the self reliance theory. These theories give priority to people at the grassroots i.e beneficiaries of the programmes or people whom the change process will impact. It relies heavily on local initiatives and utilizes such initiatives by way of building on what the people know/have to fast track the process of change. Thus the top-down/trickle down approach to development is heavily debunked here.

This study therefore in its theoretical inclinations, disagrees in strong terms with the assumptions of the dominant paradigm, arguing for the alternative paradigm that puts accent on the people and local initiatives. To this end, the assumptions of the research hinge on the propositions of the participation approach of development communication.

**Method of Study**

This research work adopts evaluative design method to elicit data for analysis. This design approach according to Winsett et al (2004) involves the “systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a programme or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the programme or policy”

This study thus evaluates the effectiveness of participatory communication as a development communication approach. To achieve this, the community and Social Development Project (CSDP), a scheme which is collaboration between the World Bank and the Federal Government of Nigeria has been chosen as a case study. The major reason for the choice stem from the fact that the agency “claim” to employ the principles of participatory communication in programme design and implementation. In this situation, the research first examine how true this claim is and if true, how effective it has been in helping the scheme achieve its goals.

The information and protocol officer of the agency in Taraba State with two of his assistants were interviewed to examine the communication approaches/activities which the agency
employed for programme design and implementation. More so thirty (30) respondents were interviewed from six host communities of CSDP Micro-projects in Taraba State. Emphasis was placed on two key things;

1. The communication approaches of the agency and;
2. The achievements of the agency in respondents host communities.

To back this up, documented assessment of projects by the agency from 2009-2012 i.e within the first phase of implementation was accessed and reviewed. These measures combined availed the research with enough data for the study.

**Discussion of Findings**

The success of any meaningful development plan depends heavily on certain factors which include among others its acceptability to the subjects, its recognition of the needs of beneficiaries as well as its incorporation of local initiatives in the initiation and execution of development projects. Imoh (2012) held this position. The data collected provide adequate justification to this. The data has thus been classified into two categories viz: information about the use of participatory communication to canvass for support of community members (obtained from the sampled population and the agency’s information/protocol officers), and information about the achievements of the agency Vis-a-Vis its target in poverty intervention across Taraba State (obtained from both the information/protocol officers of the agency, the sampled population and documented assessment of projects by the agency).

It becomes clear from the data that community members were involved in the initiation, implementation and execution of the micro projects in their respective communities. After carrying out needs assessment, the development planers were able to come up with some of the major problems bothering community members. This was preceded by grouping community members based on age and gender basis to decide what their most pressing needs were. This was similar to balloting. After this, projects with the highest number of “votes” were considered the “priority” of beneficiaries, hence qualified for execution.

At the implementation stage, community members were at the forefront of executing the planned course of action. Community members participated in the projects execution in various ways such as supply of physical labour, supply of materials and working tools (where needed), financial contributions (i.e 10% community contribution to funding of the projects), advisory and supervisory roles, security services among others. The contribution of community members at this stage however vary based on the nature of the project to be executed and the community itself. In whichever case, community members were actively involved throughout the execution of the micro projects in their respective communities.

It’s only redundant to reemphasize the point that projects executed were of interest to community members: after all, they choose or voted for which projects to be executed in their respective communities. One other interesting thing with the findings is that community members applauded the communication strategies employed by the agency to galvanize support of people at the grassroots. Respondents attest to the fact that the communication approach helped to carry everybody along in the course of initiating and implementing the projects. To this end, respondents recommend the communication approach to similar development initiatives.

The most significant discovery however, was that the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) has completed all the programmes slated for the first phase of implementation. The intervention cut across twelve local government areas in the state that were able to set up their local government review communities. A total of 167 communities from these local
governments benefited from these projects, as 221 micro projects across the various sectors were executed, completed and put into use by the end of 2012. The distribution of the projects across the various local governments in the state is presented in the table below.

Table 1 Distribution of CSDP micro projects in the local government areas in Taraba State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA projects</th>
<th>Communities with CSDP projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ardo-kola</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bali</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donga</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gassol</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibi</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalingo</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karim-lamido</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurmi</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lau</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardauna</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takum</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wukari</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>167</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TACSDP (2013) Summary of competed and ongoing micro projects

Although there exist disparities in the number of communities with CSDP micro projects across the various local government areas of the state, the disparity arise from failure to set up local government review communities in time at local government level. The table below presents the sectoral distribution of CSDP micro projects across the various sectors of intervention.

Table 2 Sectoral distribution of CSDP projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector percentage</th>
<th>completed MPs</th>
<th>ongoing MPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural electrification</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio economic</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental and natural resources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>201</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TACSDP (2013) Summary of completed and ongoing project

It was gathered from the respondents that the project’s impact community members positively in such areas as bringing social facilities closer to people at the grassroots level, opening up business opportunities to community members as well as improvement on the income of beneficiaries, provision of employment opportunities as well as skills for self employment to
respondents among others. Although shortcomings arise from scarcity of services rendered by some of the projects, spatial distribution of the projects among other things, it was discovered that the projects were impacting positively in the lives of benefactions at the time of carrying out this research.

**Conclusion**

The Community and Social Development Projects (CSDP) provides enough evidence for us to believe that for grassroots development and poverty alleviation to be achieved in Nigeria, participatory communication must not be neglected.

The first phase of her projects in Taraba state were completed and put to use by the end of 2012; and the research findings indicate that the projects were impacting positively in the lives of residents. To this end, the following conclusions have been drawn for the study:

1. The research concludes that participation or involvement of community members in the development projects of their communities is necessary. If the fight against the scourge of poverty bedeviling Taraba State and Nigeria at large must be won, then, the people whom the development projects concern must be active participants in the initiation, implementation and execution of the projects.

2. The research also conclude that for any meaningful development project to succeed in alleviating poverty in Nigeria, an appropriate strategy as well as a people oriented communication design is necessary. This will enable all those involved in the process of development and poverty alleviation to be carried along, or mobilized to support community members for the projects for better results.

3. The third conclusion drawn from the study is that the interest of beneficiaries of development and poverty alleviation projects must be taken into consideration for such projects to yield their desired results. There are so many completed but weak buildings across Taraba State and Nigeria at large, because such facilities were not the priority of residents justify this position. Thus, for poverty alleviation to be attained, the people for whom the projects were meant must first and foremost be interested in those projects.

4. The research has also concluded that the participatory model of communication, if used effectively (as CSDP has done) could be a chief facilitator of poverty alleviation, this is because the people that the initiatives were meant for would be mobilized or spurred to action, to be supportive of the projects aimed at poverty alleviation.

**Recommendations**

In line with the above discussion, and conclusion, the following recommendations became imperative for the research to be able to contribute its quota to the body of knowledge that exist in the field of development communication:

The researcher recommends the participatory model of communication for schemes or initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation. People should be given the opportunity to participate in carrying out development projects of their communities in the following ways.

i. At the planning/decision making stage: people should be allowed to participate in decisions to carry out development projects in their communities. This will enable development planners to identify the most pressing needs of the people and how best to satisfy them.

ii. At the implementation/execution stage: community members should be allowed to participate in the implementation/execution of poverty alleviation projects in their communities. This will give them a sense of participation in the execution of the project.
and cause them to protect/maintain them against abuse. Also through participation, it will help to minimize the cost of executing those projects.

iii. At the evaluation/maintenance stage: This is also a crucial part in carrying out poverty alleviation project in rural areas. Community members should be given a chance to evaluate the success or otherwise of poverty alleviation projects in their communities. This will help to reduce government propaganda and exaggeration of the benefits of these projects; thus, the score sheet of the benefits of poverty alleviation projects should be left in the hands of the people.

Also, the problem associated with many poverty alleviation schemes in Nigeria is poor maintenance culture and lack of sustainability plans. To overcome this challenge therefore, community leaders/members should be given the responsibility of maintaining those projects.

In Nigeria today, because the government takes it upon her to maintain her projects in rural areas, the phrase “It is government’s property, and not my father’s property after all” is common with community members; who feel, nobody can hold them responsible for, or ask them to account for the vandalization of public property.

iv. Part funding the projects: Community contribution to the funding or financing of poverty alleviation projects should not be neglected, no matter how small the contribution might be. This will make community members to cherish and value those projects.

2. The research also recommends that poverty alleviation schemes should evolve appropriate communication strategies that would help to carry along all those involved in the process, providing them with information at the various stages of the projects, proffering explanations for short comings encountered and the possible way forward and mobilizing the people to support those projects.

3. The interest of community members in any development initiative should never be undermined. This is because, the interest of the people in community – based poverty alleviation projects is important for the successful execution of those projects. Development planners should take it into consideration that projects are not imposed on the people, instead, people should be allowed to decide among themselves what their needs are. Development planners aiming at positive results should be committed to satisfying those needs, instead of deciding for the people.

4. Development planners should facilitate dialogue and exchange of ideas among community members, in order to come up with the best decisions on how to solve their problems. Here, development planners should not dominate, but facilitate the process of discussion.

5. Development planners should spur community members to think cogently, looking inward to see how they could ameliorate their problems, instead of waiting for the government to do so.

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