Integrated Media: A Communication Strategy For Sustainable Development In Developing Countries.

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Abstract: *Every community, society or country faces challenges of development, either to develop or mange the consequences of its development efforts. Third World or developing countries face peculiar situations of poverty, malnutrition, conflicts, natural disasters, among others. Governments and other stakeholders have the onerous task of sensitizing and mobilizing the citizenry to take action or embrace programmes aimed at improving their socio-economic well-being. To enhance success, the mass media and other channels of communication become indispensable in information dissemination or behaviour change communication. Considering the diversity of development uses faced by different societies in the developing countries and the disparity in their levels of income, education and infrastructure as well as cultural dynamics, specific or a combination of mass media and other channels of communication may become ideal for development communication in such communities.*

I. Introduction

This paper seeks to explore the significance of an integrated media strategy in advancing the frontiers of sustainable development.

The discourse on development has been varied and wide. The reason for this is not far - fetched given that development is a sine qua non to human existence. As diverse as the discourse on development has been, there is no doubt that there is a point of convergence on what development is and is not.

Earlier studies of the 1950s and 1960s on development viewed it as growth in per capita income. Soola (2003) states that:

Development was perceived as growth in per capita income, high technology, mass production, urbanization and massive investment in mass media infrastructure, among others factors.

Studies by development experts and researchers showed that the strategies devised by the West to develop the "Third world" countries were defective, counter-productive and in most cases reversals. Soola (2003, p 12) cites Schramm as lamenting his earlier failure to recognize the "cultural difference that makes development almost necessarily different from culture to culture, country to country."

This paper would be discussed under the following sub-headings:

❖ Key Words:
❖ Theoretical Framework
❖ Development Challenges facing many communities in developing countries
❖ Integrated Media or Media Mix for Development Communication
❖ Development Communication Strategy Options
❖ Conclusion/Recommendation

II. Key Words

Development, sustainable development, integrated media or media mix and communication for development.

2.1 Development

Development is a quantum leap in human evolution. It is not growth; for growth concerns itself with quantity, increase in numbers. But development is interested in quality-cumulative advancement in the standard of living of a people within a given period or time.

Development, according to Inayatullah (Soola 2003, p. 13) is a shift from an economic perspective to a more humanitarian and contextualized one.

Inayatuallah defines development as:-

...Changes towards patterns of society that allow better
realization of human values, that allows a society greater
control over its environment and over its political destiny,
and that enables its individuals to gain increased control
over themselves.

Udeoba, in Uwakwe (2000, p. 82) quoting Dissanayake views development as a social change, which has as its goal the improvement of the quality of life of all the majority of the people without doing violence to the natural and cultural environment in which they live or exist. At every stage of development the mass media are indispensable in mobilizing the people to participate in development activities.

Development is about people, their environment and how conducive the environment is for their habitation and existence. Any development that is not people-centred is bound to fail. Development, according to J. R. Kidds in Nyerere (1978)... is in the power of the people to solve their own problem with their own wisdom, experiences and resources with a view to eliminating poverty, pestilence and starvation.

Oladipo as cited by Soola (2003, p. 13) adds that development in general is a process of economic and social advancement, which enables people to realize their potentials, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment. It is a process aimed at freeing people from the evils of want, ignorance, social injustice and economic exploitation.

A common denominator in all of these definitions is people and their ability to gain greater control of their environment thereby reducing the grip of poverty and its attendant vices.

2.2 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is development that goes beyond the now and is sustained for the use of future generations. Sustainable development does not mortgage the future of generations yet unborn, rather it preserves a legacy for them.

Sustainable development came about after frustrating results recorded by so-called advanced nations to "develop" the so-called third world countries.

In giving sustainable development a human face, Soola (2003, p. 13) quotes Oladipo (1996) thus:

\   Sustainable human development is development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably; that empowers people rather than marginalizing them. It gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities, and provides for their participation in decisions affecting them. It is development that is pro-poor; pro-nature, pro-jobs, pro-women and pro-children.

Sustainable development is that branch of development that seeks to locate man at the centrepiece or epicentre of development. It is one that seeks to depart from the old paradigm of top-down development to participatory development. Development can only be sustained if and when it is participatory.

According to the Brundtland Commission Report (1987),

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

An interesting aspect of sustainable development by the International Institute for Sustainable Development is the notion that the world should be seen as a system,...when you think of the world as a system, over time, you start to realize that the decisions our grandparents made about how to farm the land continue to affect agriculture practice today (in parts of Nigeria, there is still a lot of bush burning before cultivating the land which leads to depletion of soil nutrients.) The economic policies we endorse today will have an impact on urban poverty when our children are adults. Chinese leaders are aware that the current investment and export-led growth is creating numerous problems.

At home, the model hurts because it is occurring at the expense of private consumption. As consumptions is the best way to improve living standards, expert say China's reliance on export or investments is holding back prosperity. We also understand that quality of life is a system too. For instance, it is good to be physically healthy, but what if you are poor and do not have access to quality education? It is good to have a secure income, but what if the air in your part of the world is unclean. For instance, China's rapid economic growth is having some repercussions. As the world's largest producer and consumer of coal, China is also the largest emitter of sulphur dioxide and this has caused acid rains in Japan and Korea.

Sustainable development is a more holistic approach to development than the traditional development activities. There should be a balance between the economic, social and ecological aspects of community development.

Sustainable development therefore locates development within the needs of man. Today, sustainable development is on the front burner of every discourse.

However, we must ask the following questions: How can the people that development is meant for be involved in the process and how can the people be coached or guided to be self-sustaining, self-dependent and make their environment more habitable and safe?

To be able to answer these questions, we need to look at another concept- the concept of integrated media (communication.)

2.3 Communication And Integrated Media

Integrated media strategy is a mix of communication tools or a media tool-kit-aimed at solving certain societal problems. In this case, the focus is on sustainable development. The media refers to channels of communication. McQuail and Windahl (1993, p.4) citing Theordorson and Theordorson (1969) define communication as:

"The transmission of information, ideas, attitudes, or emotions from one person or group to another (or others) primarily through symbols"

Osgood et al (1957) view it thus:

In the most general sense, we have communication wherever one system, a source, influences another, the destination, by manipulation of alternative symbols, which can be transmitted over the channel connecting them. Gerbner's (1967) definition of communication is a social interaction through messages.

McQuail and Windahl (199, p.5) analyse communication from the foregoing as implying a sender, a channel, a message, a receiver, a relationship between sender and receiver, an effect, a context in which communication occurs and a range of things to which 'messages' refer. Sometimes, but not always, there is an intention, or purpose to 'communicate' or to 'receive'. Communication can be any or all of the following: an action on others, an interaction with others and a reaction to others.

From the foregoing, communication is a situation where both senders and receivers have specific intentions to affect/influence or share meaning with each other. A communication situation is like a mutual relationship between a suitor and his intended. Any attempt to view the latter as inferior is likely to leave the former celibate for a long time.

Communication is the lifeblood of any strategy and is therefore an integral part of the process of development. Effective use of communication for sustainable development is dependent on information management, information use, language, target, access and channel.

Communication as defined earlier is a clear two-way process, engaging all key stakeholders. A media strategy that does not take cognizance of this fact is bound to fall short of the objectives of sustainable development.

A two-way communication process is a process of co-operation and collaboration. Development communication is therefore a two-way communication process with emphasis on collaboration and co-operation.

Early studies on development communication, according to Soola (2003, p.12) failed to stimulate development because of the tendency to underplay the complexity of development and to exaggerate the power of communication, especially the mass media in the development process.

These diffusionist and functionist models did not take into consideration the needs; aspirations and cultural background of the people.

Soola (2003, p.12) citing Lent (1987):

...attempts to evolve an alternative paradigm of development and development communication based on the philosophies of Freire, Schumacher, Bordenave and Fuglesang. The model is anchored on self-reliance, people participation and faith in people's ability to learn and change.

From the above assumptions, it can be said that the hypodermic needle or magic bullet theories of innovation diffusion (use of mass media) are at best mere theories lacking relevance in the study of communication and sustainable development.

2.4 Communication for Development:

Obot (2013, p. 182) defines communication for development as "the act or process whereby citizens and other stakeholders are mobilized through various channels of communication to take actions that would improve their socio-economic and political well-being". Quoting Uche (1999), Obot (2010, p. 42) defines communication for development as the:

Process of disseminating and/or transferring information and messages, values and attitudes for the promotion of new behavioural patterns. Such new behaviour patterns would influence intended attitudinal changes that are germane for creating a conducive environment for the occurrence of social, political and economic transformation of the individual and his social system.

Communication for development may not be successful in certain situations without integrating various media forms

III.   Theoretical Framework

This paper is predicated on the diffusion and participatory models or theories of communication.

3.1 Diffusion Model

According to Rogers (1996), diffusion refers to "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. An innovation is an idea, practice or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. The diffusion of innovation involves both mass media and interpersonal communication channels."

Lasswell (1948) presented a well known model of communication and it is analysed as the SMCRE communication model. It corresponds closely to the elements of diffusion". Senders are opinion leaders or inventors, message can be a new idea or products, channels can be interpersonal or mass communication, receivers can be members of a social system and effects can be the individual adoption or social change. The time variable is however a very strong factor in the diffusion process.

This model sees communication mainly as a message going from a sender to a receiver. This approach is therefore concerned with the process of diffusion and adoption of innovations in a more systematic and planned way.

The pattern for broadcasting and print media in developing countries has been predominantly the same: informing the population about projects, illustrating the advantages of these projects and recommending support. Such strategies are situated in the area of family planning where posters, pamphlets, radio and television attempt to persuade the public.

The mass media are relevant in creating awareness about new possibilities and practices, but are less likely than personal influence to have a direct effect on behavioural changes.

3.2 Participatory Model

This model stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities. In order to share knowledge, information, trust, commitment and a right attitude in sustainable development project, participation is very important. The model stresses reciprocal collaboration at all levels of participation. Soola (2003, p.20) citing Moemeka (1991) puts it succinctly- 'communication is participatory, so is participatory development. Participation is therefore a significant part of communication and development'. Bassett (2001) sees it no differently as he states that "unless people participate in all phases of an intervention, from problem identification to research and implementation, the likelihood that sustainable change will occur is slim".

These two broad theoretical approaches have dominated the field of communication for development. The top-down approach of persuasion models assumed that the knowledge of government and agencies was correct, and that indigenous populations either did not know or had incorrect beliefs. On the other hand, participatory model ignores the fact that expediency may also contribute to development. Belabouring through grassroots decision-making process is slower than centralized decisions and thus not advisable in cases that require prompt resolutions. Participation might be a group long term strategy, but has short coming when applied to short term and urgent issues, (Waisbord, 2001).
But do these approaches have any points of convergence?

Waisbord (2001, p.29), examining these approaches states that the fundamental issue of development communication is that definitions of the problem are different and expectedly, theories, strategies and techniques still offer opposite analysis and recommendations. The intention of points of convergence is to map out trends and direction that attest to the richness and complexity of the field rather than pass judgement.
Different approaches, he adds, have gradually adopted an understanding of communication that is not reduced to the idea of information transmission but includes the idea of process and exchange.

Communication as a process is an integral part of development. This idea has gained more grounds amongst development communication experts. Therefore the strategy adopted for any developmental issue is dependent on the context and the content. Waisbord (2001, p.26) citing Moemeka reiterates that: 'communication... can and does affect situation, attitudes, behaviour and its content, context, direction and flow are also affected by prevailing circumstances.'

IV.   Some Development Issues Facing A Typical Community In Nigeria

Obot (2010,p.43) lists some development issues facing a typical community in Nigeria to include:
Livelihood: Many communities in Nigeria suffer dearth of means of livelihood – avenues for income generation. Quoting Chambers and Conway, Zoomers (2008, p.145) argues that a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both new and in the future, while not undermining the natural resources base.
Many communities have been deprived of their means of livelihood due to urbanization, natural disasters, environmental degradation and failed industrialization programmes/projects.
Food Security: Quoting FAO, Slater Sharp and Wiggins (2008, p.152) explain that, "food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient and nutritious food to meet their dietary

needs and food preferences and an active and healthy life". Food insecurity manifests itself in three ways namely; acute food crises, chronic malnutrition and micro nutrient deficiency.

Maternal and Child Health: Unnithan – Kumar (2008, p.403) explains that maternal and child well-being is a product of a complex set of interrelated social, biological and environmental factors. Poverty as embodied in the lack of adequate food and nutrition, absence of clean water and good sanitation and the poor quality of public health services are some of the main factors which underlie the high levels of maternal morbidity in developing countries.

Education: Many people in rural communities are facing challenges with reading and writing. Many of them are functional illiterates or semi-illiterates. There are many who have never attended a school or an adult education class in their lives.

Agriculture: Agriculture has also constituted a development challenge to rural communities. Agricultural productivity has been in the decrease due to environmental degradation. Many farmers do not have access to improved seedlings and agricultural practices as well as other modern farming techniques.

Employment and Social Amenities: Absence of employment opportunities, water supply, electricity and other amenities have immensely contributed to rural – urban drift, especially by the youths.

V. Integrated Media Or Media Mix: An Ideal Strategy For Development Communication

The success of sustainable development as put forward by researchers seeking a paradigm shift is dependent on participatory approach of communication.

Soola (2003, P.18) states that all the powerful direct media effect has had to give way to an indirect, mediated impact of the media.

Is it possible then that the mass media did not and will not be able to contribute to sustainability of development?

On several fronts, the model, which favours mass media in communicating development, has received knocks. Is there any ray of hope for the mass media as opposed to other media of communication in sustainable development?

A media strategy is an essential prerequisite to intelligent planning and implementation of sustainable development. It does not preclude mistakes; it simply improves the chances of success.

The proposed development communication paradigm shift must be rooted in contextualized media choice and use, Soola (2003, p.21).

Soola (2003, p.22) citing George (1990) reasons that we must first survey the cultural fabric of the landscape which we intend to penetrate and based on our findings design a media campaign to complement that which already assets... thus our choice must be predicated on a sound knowledge base of

what is needed, what each available medium can do, what combination of media is complementary, how much it costs to deliver messages through the media and of primary importance, what the culture and characteristics of those we are trying to reach are.

This sums up the import of this paper. No medium is irrelevant and no medium has all it takes in communicating sustainable development. The various media available will be classified under two broad headings:-

- Modern media and Traditional media.

VI. Traditional Media

The traditional media are an effective channel of communication especially in sustaining any development which success is rooted in participation. Participation is a common denominator of communication and development.

Traditional media have channels for feedback, which helps in assessing the success or failure of any developmental issue. Uwakwe (2003: p.178) views traditional media as effective in triggering off desired responses, serving the "preservative" and "caretaker" functions. Uwakwe means that the traditional form does not adulterate the culture of the people.

6.1.1 Drama – Live entertainment has long been used in development as a way of encouraging "behavioural change" These performances seek to sell new or different practices. By making a message entertaining, large crowds are often drawn to see characters they hold in high esteem facing problems and practising the solutions regarded as the most pressing or appropriate.

6.1.2 Town-crier- One of the oldest methods of communication is town crying. It has survived all onslaughts from modern methods. Its resilience makes it effective tools of the traditional communication. Yarhere (2003) cites Soola (1999) as describing the town-crier as a potent force in information dissemination as it remains an authoritative voice of the traditional authority.

6.1.3   Festivals- In the developing countries, there is usually an array of festivals to celebrate one event or the other. In Nigeria, from the New Yam Festivals in the East, the Osun Osogbo Festival in the West, Igue festivals in the South to the Argungu Festivals in the North, there is always an avenue to discuss developmental issues through the use of opinion leaders. Since these festivals go on and on, it is a solid form for development communication.

6.1.4   Folklore- Folklores are traditional stories, which are part of the culture of a group of people. Okonkwo (1984) points out that folktales are used to teach morals, create amusements, expose the follies of people and extol their praise-worthy actions. Folklores could be recreated to educate as well as entertain. Folklore involves a face-to face interaction, which enhances credibility and feedback.

6.1.5   Music/Lyrics- Music when performed in its rightful context, nearly always carries information, which is for the most part intended to elicit some form of response from the listeners among whom or to whom it is performed.

The traditional media, which are basically interpersonal and group communication favour participation and are usually regarded as a better process towards sustainable development.

6.2   Modern Media

This refers to mass media and telecommunications. The mass media are channels of mass communications such as radio, television, newspapers and the internet. These are not the only mass media that exist. They, however have the largest audiences and have the greatest impact.

6.2.1   Television

Television is the world's most potent tool of communication. Yet it cannot pass as one of the powerful media for sustainable development. This is so because to a large extent, it is not participatory. The benefits of this medium as stated by Burke (1999:67) are:-

✓ Access to television is increasing. Between 1965 and 1991 there was a 400% increase in television sets in developing countries.
✓ It has a powerful effect: as a visual medium, it can convey complex ideas in comprehensible formats.
✓ It is a central part of many people's lives. Popular formats like soap operas or serial drama can be used to attract support for programmes carrying development themes.
✓ Television can reach key decision-makers successfully and set national agendas.
✓ Training schemes can try to influence television directly, by raising awareness...this can result in improved programming.
✓ It can bring the past and distant to the viewer.
✓ It easily provides a reproduced record of events.

However, despite these benefits, television has its drawbacks.

❖ Television is expensive to run or utilize (often over 20 times more costly than radio)
❖ Television is a typical one-way medium that provides little opportunity for feedback.
❖ Television excludes vast number of women and men who cannot afford the time or money to gain access.
❖ Television requires electricity to operate. In developing societies, power is not easily affordable.
❖ It requires attention and time to access and decode messages from television.
❖ Television programmes are difficult and expensive to produce.

6.2.2   Radio

This is perhaps the most penetrative and accessible medium of mass communication. It has several advantages, some of which are:

➢ Radio reaches a wider audience than any other medium
➢ Radio can motivate people by building on aural/oral tradition
➢ Radio programmes are cheap to produce compared to television and video
➢ Radio receivers are widely available, comparatively cheap and portable, making them convenient for listeners.
➢ Radio can reach people who are isolated by language, geography, conflict, literacy and poverty.
➢ Radio can help create a demand for services and convey vital information.
➢ Radio listening can be a group activity, which encourages discussion of educational issues after the broadcast

Weaknesses of radio include:

❖ Radio is a transitory medium: listeners cannot ask for the information to be repeated or clarified.

❖ Radio is rarely sufficient on its own to teach new skills (such as mixing enriched weaning food or home-made Oral Rehydration Therapy), and will require reinforcement on the ground through distribution of visual and printed materials.
❖ In the wrong hands, radio can heighten people's fears and prejudices, inciting conflict and hatred.
❖ Radio is a one way medium: unlike face to face communication, radio offers no immediate opportunity to ask people questions about what they know or to check if people have understood what they heard.

6.2.3   Information And Communications Technology (ICT)
The impact of information and communication technology cuts across all sectors and areas of work directly and indirectly. According to Burke (1999, p. 81) Information and Communication Technology can be a valuable resource for large and small organizations. Electronic information can empower civil society through their access to e-mail and the internet and it enables exchange of information between groups. E-mail enables networks to function more efficiently. Key figures can download information and send it as printed copies to other members or pass it by word of mouth.

6.2.4   Print
The print is the oldest form of mass media and it still has much to offer. Most importantly, it is used to support other types of media. Almost all television or radio news programs are written first. The print is also the most internet-friendly form of content because it requires significantly less loading time than audio or video clips. Print publications have the most loyal audiences.

6.2.5   Networking
Network exists for different reasons: To share information, to provide a forum for lobbying, to benefit from different experiences, to provide a conduit for donor funds. These networks exist to build capacity and to encourage empowerment. A good example is women's network.

VII.   Development Communication Strategy Options
The following as put forward by Waisbord (2001:30) are points of convergence for some theories and approaches aimed at communication for sustainable development:

7.1   A "tool-kit" strategy: Theories are part of a 'tool-kit' that is used according to different diagnoses. For example, social marketing could be used to address issues like immunization and breast-feeding but is inadequate to address community participation/advocacy that are responsible for permanent changes. For example, speaking up against the damage Chinese gas emissions is doing to the environment requires media advocacy, social mobilization and networking. A direct media approach such as social marketing may not be the solution, as decision makers must be made to understand the dangers their economic policies are posing to the future of the nation.

7.2   Integration of top-down and bottom-up choices: Faced with different scenarios and choices, it has become evident that development communication has gone beyond implementing behavioural change to communication activities. The Iringa Nutriion improvement program in Tanzania is a good example of integrated media advocacy, social mobilisation and social marketing (Waisbord 2001, p.33). It is a classical case of integrating media to fight malnutrition, infant mortality and to raise awareness.

7.3   Integration of Multimedia and Interpersonal Communication: Recent conclusions suggest that blending mass media and interpersonal channels is fundamental for effective interventions. The mass media are extremely important in raising awareness and knowledge about a given problem (Atkin and Wallack 1990). The mass media are able to expose a large number of people to messages and generate conversation among audiences and others who were not exposed. (Rogers 1998). Although television, radio and other media are important in disseminating messages, social networks are however responsible for the diffusion of new ideas (Rogers and Kincaid 1981)
In furthering this discourse, we realize that the behaviour change model and the participatory model are both good processes of reaching desired goals. They cannot work exclusively of each other in communicating for development. These models are in themselves important and must be applied depending on situations, choices, locations, structures and environment. They are therefore a means to and end, the end being sustainable development through community empowerment.

VIII.   Conclusion
In concluding, it is pertinent to note that there are some salient points on the essence of development and sustainable development. The place of communication in sustainable development, the importance of an integrated media approach to sustainable development and the need for a point of convergence of communication strategy for sustainable development cannot be over-emphasised.

Development is not development until it is sustained. Sustainable development is a complex unit bordering on the economic, social, political and ecological well being of the environment in which we live in. This brings to bear the fact that sustainable development is everyone's responsibility and as such needs more than a particular strategy.

IX.   Recommendation

Crude agriculture practices leading to the depletion of the soil nutrient, emission of gases causing acid rain, depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation and desertification, oil spills killing aquatic life and poisoning the water, climatic changes, disease, global energy use, global warming, poverty, political instability and many more make the concern for sustainable development a global issue.

The traditional and modern media each playing significant roles in their own rights should be engaged as key stakeholders in the sustainable development process. Ukakwe (2003, p.187) citing Nwuneli (1982) posists that interpersonal channels of communication such as face to face communication in clubs, festivals and formal gatherings must be initiated to complement the mass media and forms of traditional media such as songs, dramas, town-criers, folk media and royal voices.

Where the strength of the mass media fails in engendering participation, the traditional media will take over and where the traditional media is handicapped in reaching a mass audience, the mass media will come in to play.

These forms of media should no longer be seen as being inferior or superior to one or the other. They complement each other for sustainable development. The strategy for sustainable development involves a long-term process of change. The capacity to manage this is required at the individual, institutional and systematic levels.

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