

COMMUNICATION PATTERN USED BY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM ILERO, OKE-OGUN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study assessed the pattern of communication applicable for information sharing in community development associations (CDAs). Specifically, the study identified the development projects undertaken, determined the level of use of communication channels within and between CDAs and the sequence of information flow within the CDAs. A total of 120 CDA members chosen from the 6 most prominent CDAs in Ilero. These were interviewed with the aid of well-structured interview schedule for data collection. Data analysis was conducted with the use of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation as well as Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis for hypothesis test. Results revealed that the CDAs had completed infrastructural projects like water bore-hole, interpersonal communication channels were noted as the main media through which information were relayed among CDA members. Also, the sequence of information transmission was found to involve group executives as foremost followed by committees and then general members with proceeds of the general/open discussions to be transmitted to the patrons and advisers. The size of CDA ($r=0.375$), number of active committees ($r=0.33$) and average number of people per committee ($r=0.391$) were indicated to be significantly related to the use of communication channels at 0.01 level of confidence. Therefore, it concluded that the level of use of the communication channels is influenced by the composition and functioning of CDAs.

Key words: communication, communication patterns, community development, association

INTRODUCTION

Social interactions among collection of people had long underpinned joint action for enhancing their collective well-being and ease of day to day activities. The recognition of pending needs bearing on general strive for normal living and progress has being the precursor for the evolution of community driven development. In view of this, Akinsorotan and Olujide (2007) [1] opined that community development is an age long social activity in our societies. This gives a long history communal initiatives tailored towards improving the basic elements which defines their life. This is identified as particularly strategic in rural societies to bring about much needed socio-economic changes (Mequanent, 1998) [8]. This relies on the premise that rural socio-economic activities

occur mostly at the community level (Li, 1995) [6]. In essence, conscious efforts are undertaken by groups of people especially at the grassroots level to service common needs related to generating improvements of their socio-economic and cultural well-being. The progression of this initiatives have only become more relevant and instrumental for re-adjusting to the dynamic society we live in. The discharge of these efforts have gradually become even more germane with greater recognition of the imperatives of their organization and functioning. This led to the birth of wide range of Community Development Associations (CDAs) as recognised entities through which communal issues and needs are voiced, grouped and addressed.

These CDAs are characteristically different in terms of composition, sizes, fund sourcing approach and mode of operations among others (Omofonmwan and Odia, 2017; Akinsortan and Olujide, 2006) [10, 1]. Unarguably, their functioning is centred on interactive synthesis of ideas for collective course of action. This is fostered with cooperative sharing of information on needs and exchanges for decision making through relevant channels or methods for course of action. Accordingly, communication which encapsulates the exchange of ideas or meaning among entities, activates interaction among people who have come together to engender impactful improvements in the community, thereby actualising the basis of their collection. In fact, the coming together of people as a CDA presupposes that there is communication of common needs or interests to be fostered. The potency of this is reflected in the importance of communication in the creation, facilitation and maintenance of all forms of social relationships on which the operations of the CDAs are dependent. This is entrenched by the positions that communication is the livewire of societies as it is both interactive and purposeful; also it is the bedrock of meaningful co-existence and relations at all levels in the global community (Aruma, 2018; Mehta, 1987) [2, 7]. To emphasise, planned use of communication techniques, activities and media prepares and empower people for targeted change (Fraser and Ville, 1994) [5].

United Nations International Children Fund, UNICEF (2008) [12] identified three basic components of communication in development efforts, which were advocacy, social mobilization and behaviour change. It is obvious that there is no one-fit all method or pattern for communication in CDAs. Necessarily, the choice of channels involved in the conveyance of meaning in different CDAs cannot be specifically nailed. Relatedly, Soola (1995) [11] had long argued that people's participation in community development such as that fostered by CDAs requires alternative communication types, channels and strategies in the pursuit, actualisation and sustainability of

development objectives. As such typical CDA characteristics, location and operations' uniqueness portend array of peculiarities in their communication experience. Invariably, it is valuable to investigate the modalities of communication among members of CDAs as well as for inter-CDAs interactions for factual understanding of the groups functioning measures. The recognition of this need is the impetus for the conduct of this study.

Objectives of the study

The study was poised to assess intra and inter-CDAs communication. The specific objectives were to:

- (i) identify the CDAs project and the present level of implementation
- (ii) identify the channels used for information transmission within and between CDAs and their level of use; and
- (iii) ascertain the sequence of information flow within the CDAs

Hypothesis testing

There is no significant relationship between use of communication channel and CDAs' characteristics

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Ilero town of Kajola Local Government Area in Oke-Ogun region of Oyo State. The area lies on coordinate 8.03° N 3.35° E. It is an agrarian Yoruba community, with a land area of 609m² and a population of 200,997 people (National Population Census, NPC, 2006) [9]. This study focussed on the six well known CDAs in the town namely Irepodun (67), Isegii (50), Gbelekale (60), Opara Ojete (73), Ifepeju (83) and Igbaye (67) CDAs. Thirty percent (30%) of members were proportionately selected per CDA.

This culminated in a total of 120 respondents sampled for this study. Structured interview schedule was used for eliciting required information from the respondents.

Data collected were analysed using simple descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation for descriptions and summary.

On the other hand, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was used to test

relationship of the CDA characteristics and their use of communication channels for information transmissions.

Information were elicited on the respondents personal characteristics and their CDAs', the CDA projects, the type and level of use of communication channels within and between CDAs and the order of reception of necessary CDA information.

The dependent variable for this study was the use of communication channels and was measured on a four-point Likert-type scale involving never used scored 1, rarely 2, seldom 3 and always 4.

For the sequence of information flow, respondents indicated their views of the first, second, third and fourth categories of CDA members informed of community issues to be tackled by their projects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socio-economic characteristics of CDA members

Results in Table 1 showed that majority of the CDAs members were married (82%) people who were slightly above the middle age as reflected by their mean age of 53.16 years \pm 13.88 and predominantly males (85.5%).

This corroborates the findings of Akinsorotan and Olujide (2007) [1] who equally found that most CDAs compose of married people within the ages of 30-59 and largely male dominated.

Also, the respondents were noted with slightly high household sizes of about 7 persons per household (mean= 6.7 ± 2.22) as about one-third (34.2%) of them were identified as farmers while a quarter (25.8%) were civil servants.

The mean of the respondents' monthly household income was found to be ₦40,342.24 \pm 18,425.

This reflects that the CDAs were populated by people above the national minimum wage. As such, it can be implied that CDAs were composed of people earning enough to live beyond the regulated minimum income expectation.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on their socio-economic characteristics

Variable	Freq.	%	Mean & St. Dev.
Age			
<25	1	0.8	
26-40	23	19.1	
41-55	48	40	
56-70	33	27.6	
>70	15	12.5	
Sex			
Male	103	85.8	
Female	17	14.2	
Marital status			
Single	4	3.3	
Married	98	81.7	
Separated	6	5.0	
Widowed	12	10.0	
Household size			
≤ 6	62	51.7	
7-12	58	48.3	6.70 \pm 2.22
Religion			
Christianity	65	54.1	
Islam	53	44.2	
Traditional	2	1.7	
*Main occupation			
Farming	41	34.2	
Civil service	31	25.8	
Trading	28	23.3	
Artisanship	20	16.7	
Monthly income			
$\leq 25,000$	23	17.6	
26,000-50,000	79	64.9	40,342 \pm 18,425
51,000-75,000	17	14.0	
>75,000			

Source: Field survey, 2017.

*Multiple choices

CDAs projects

Evidence presented in Table 2 reveals that nearly all the respondents indicated that their respective CDAs had completed water projects through the sinking of borehole/water well in different parts of the communities. In the same vein, half of the respondents noted that their groups had completed road rehabilitation projects just as one third noted that their CDAs had on-going road projects and 16.7 percent indicated they were about to start road rehabilitation in identified areas of the community. In the case of rural electrification, two third of the respondents indicated that their CDAs had completed intervention efforts in the regard

while the remaining 33.3 percent noted consideration of such effort. Building of bridges and culverts was also noted as completed project by one-third of the respondents just as they were about to be started as noted by another one third of the CDAs members. Few (17.5% and 16.7%) identified completion of classroom buildings for schools and construction of public toilets, respectively by their respective CDAs.

These results show that CDAs have functioned principally in the areas of infrastructural development of their community. For this, the provision of portable water is revealed as being of the highest priority among the CDA projects followed closely by road rehabilitation works and then rural electricity as well as the construction of

bridges/culverts. In contrast, the least considered and implemented projects by the CDAs include the construction of public library, public toilets and building of town hall. These affirm that CDAs play immense roles in infrastructural provisions for communal benefits (Omofomwan and Odia, 2017; Akinsorotan and Olujide, 2007) [10, 1]. However, the revelation of the intervention of CDAs in the provision of these essential community facilities expose the poor infrastructural development status of the study area as obtainable in a typical rural community of Nigeria. As such, the importance of CDAs initiatives in bridging developmental gaps and providing basic life conveniences is accentuated.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on indication of CDAs projects

Variables	Considered (%)	About to start (%)	On-going (%)	Completed (%)	Rank
Building of school classrooms	32.5	0.0	0.0	17.5	5 th
Rural electricity	33.3	0.0	0.0	66.7	3 rd
Town hall project	0.8	0.0	17.5	0.0	6 th
Bridge /culvert	16.7	34.2	16.7	32.5	4 th
Grading/rehabilitation of road	0.0	16.7	33.3	50	2 nd
Borehole/well	0.0	0.8	0.8	98.3	1 st
Construction of public library	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	7 th
Construction of public toilets	0.8	0.0	0.0	16.7	6 th

Source: Field survey, 2017.

Intra CDA communication channels and level of use.

The Result presented in Table 3 shows that general meeting ($\bar{x}=4$) was the paramount forum through which information exchanges occur among members of CDAs. It was revealed that majority of the CDAs members always share information amongst themselves through letters ($\bar{x}=3.83\pm 0.38$), phone calls ($\bar{x}=3.33\pm 1.11$), interactions in committee meetings ($\bar{x}=3.33\pm 0.47$) as well as executive meetings ($\bar{x}=3.2\pm 0.47$) and meeting circulars ($\bar{x}=3.3\pm 0.67$), while text message ($\bar{x}=2.9\pm 0.81$) was noted to be used seldomly. The communication channels identified to be rarely employed by majority of members are leaflets ($\bar{x}=2.28\pm 0.7$), home visits

chats/dialogues ($\bar{x}=2\pm 0.2$) poster/banners (1.95 ± 0.95) among others. Social media chat forums, and town criers were indicated to be largely unused for members' communication. These results point out that the conduct of general meetings in which all categories of members participate, is the main outlet through which members share ideas and decide on community issues to be addressed. In addition, high use of interactive forums such as sub-group meetings, telephone calls and messaging as well as some level of use of print media bulletin and leaflets were found. As such, it could be implied that communication within CDAs is mostly mediated with use of varieties of interpersonal communication channels. In contrast, mass

media channels namely newspapers, radio and television were more or less unused. The rural nature of the community in which these CDAs were domiciled could be responsible for their reliance on interpersonal channels of communication as the mass media channels might be unnecessary for serving their communication needs. This could be explained with the position of FAO (1999) [4] which noted that rural population relied greatly on the spoken word and traditional forms of communication for sharing knowledge and information.

Regarding communication between CDAs, it was shown that correspondence/letter ($\bar{x}=3.42\pm0.57$) was the most widely employed channel. More so, majority of the respondents affirmed occasional communication of their

CDA with other CDA through executive ($\bar{x}=3.33\pm0.47$) or committee ($\bar{x}=3\pm0.83$) meetings, exchange of circular ($\bar{x}=3.2\pm0.98$), telephone calls ($\bar{x}=3.02\pm0.75$) as well as text messages ($\bar{x}=2.65\pm0.5$). Communication between CDAs via home visits chats/dialogues ($\bar{x}=2.17\pm0.37$), leaflets ($\bar{x}=2\pm0.59$), posters/banners ($\bar{x}=2\pm0.09$) were indicated by majority of the members to occur occasionally. These results highlight higher utilization of letter writing, circular exchanges and meetings by CDAs for reaching out or connecting with other CDAs in their locality. This also affirms that the CDAs do not work in isolation but rather communicate with each other for ideas related to the progress and development of their community.

Table 3. Use of communication channels within and between CDAs

Communication channels	Intra-CDA s			Inter-CDAs		
	\bar{x}	Δ	Rank	\bar{x}	Δ	Rank
General meetings	4	0	1 st	3	1.12	5 th
Correspondent/Letter	3.83	0.38	2 nd	3.42	0.57	1 st
Telephone call	3.33	1.11	3 rd	3.02	0.75	4 th
Committee meetings	3.33	0.47	3 rd	3	0.83	5 th
Executive meetings	3.32	0.47	4 th	3.33	0.47	2 nd
Circular	3.3	0.67	5 th	3.2	0.98	3 rd
Text messages	2.9	0.81	6 th	2.65	0.5	6 th
Leaflets	2.28	0.7	7 th	2	0.59	8 th
Home visit/dialogue	2	0.2	8 th	2.17	0.37	7 th
Bulletin	2	0	8 th	1.88	0.68	9 th
Poster/banners	1.95	0.95	9 th	2	0.09	8 th
Office calls	1.67	0.37	10 th	1.3	0.46	13 th
Newspapers	1.5	0.5	11 th	1.33	1.47	12 th
Television	1.5	0.5	11 th	1.17	1	14 th
Emails	1.4	1.02	12 th	1.02	0.18	15 th
Town crier	1.17	0.37	13 th	1	0	
Radio	1	0		1.17	0.38	14 th
Social media chat	1	0		1	0	

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Sequence of information flow within Community Development Associations

The result presented in Figure 1 shows the evidence of the ordered sequence through which information on group activities are relayed to or received by the different categories of CDAs members. It was indicated by majority (66.1%) of the respondents that the CDAs executives were usually the first to learn about the various CDA information, while only (3%) indicated the CDA general members as the first and about one fifth noted

Advisers and Patrons as the first to be informed about CDA issues.

As for the second level in the sequence of CDA information reception, few proportions (8.4%, 7.3% and 2.2%) indicated the executive, general members and patrons/advisers, respectively. However, 45 percent opined that the committee members were the second to learn about any necessary information. It is revealed from this that the committee members were indicated by the CDA members to be at the second level in the

chain of information flow on community development issues. Correspondingly, about half (49%) affirmed that the general members get informed of relevant issues at the third level while patrons/ advisers were indicated by 45% as the last to be updated with information on the CDA issues of interest.

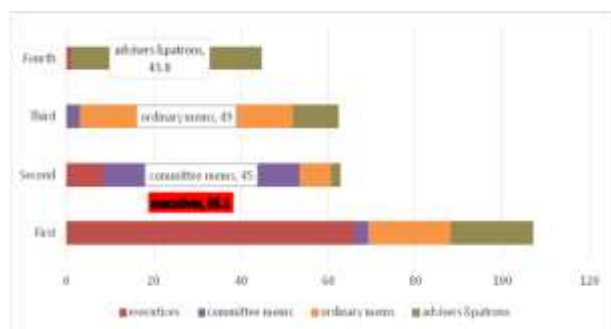


Fig. 1. Levels of information flow sequence within CDAs from the first to fourth
 Source: Field survey, 2018.

In view of the above results, it could be juxtaposed that the relay of information within each CDAs is hierarchical with the order involving the CDAs executives occupying the highest echelon in the process. As such, executives were usually foremost in knowing about pending issues followed by relevant committee members ahead of general discussion among all members and final notification of the patrons and advisers. This pattern of communication could be adjudged to reflect the rural culture of social system stratification. Given this, the view of Elegbe and Nwachukwu (2017) [3] that culture has a significant influence on communication patterns in a social system is affirmed from these findings. A schematic presentation of this ordered sequence is presented in Fig. 2.

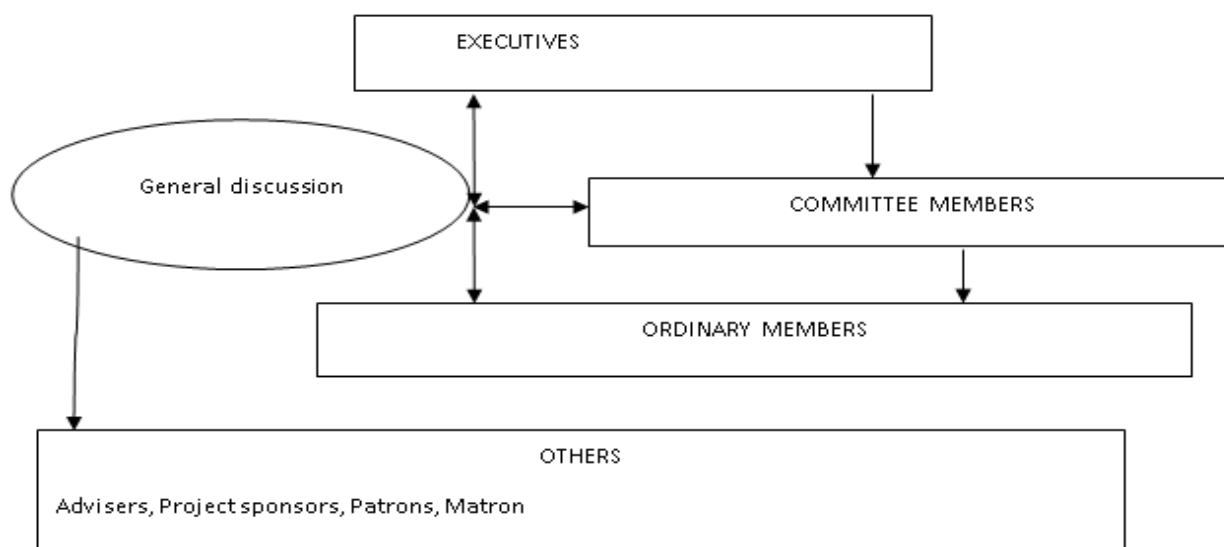


Fig.2. Schematic illustration of sequence of information flow within CDAs
 Source: Field Survey, 2017.

Test of Hypothesis

The result of the correlation analysis presented in Table 4 revealed that out of the CDA characteristics tested, only 3 variables showed significant and positive relationship with their use of communication channels. The significant variables were size of CDA ($r=0.375$), number of CDA committees ($r=0.33$) and average composition of committees ($r=0.391$) at 0.01 level of significance. This implies that the greater the association size, the higher the use of communication channels. This can be

explained by the fact that an association that has large number will need to explore different channels to transmit information among members. This might influence members' degree of interactions and resultant increased participation as well as active contribution in CDA activities. From this it could be hypothesised that larger CDA sizes associated with higher use of communication channels, portend greater dynamism on discussion of community issues for potential actions.

Table 4. Result of correlation analysis showing relationship between CDAs' characteristics and use of communication channels

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	Co-efficient of determination (r ²)	P-Value
Year of existence	-0.170	0.000	0.064
Association size	0.375**	-0.118	0.000
Number of committee	0.334**	0.112	0.000
Number of each committee	0.391**	0.153	0.000

**Significant at $\leq p 0.01$

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that rural CDAs are functioning to bridge developmental gaps through the provision of basic infrastructural facilities essential for normal living. The sharing of ideas on these communal issues for group decision and action are fostered through interpersonal interactions opportune by the conduct of meetings, correspondent/letters and exchange of circulars among others. Via these networks, the sequence of information transmission involves intimating executives with relevant issues and from whom committees to be tasked get informed ahead of general discussion with all members and finally informing patrons and advisers with discussion outcomes. The depth of use of the channels for communication at the various hierarchical levels are related to the composition of the CDAs and parameters of their organized functioning. Essentially, communication within and between the CDAs are reflective of the traditional rural caste system. It was recommended that CDAs should strategically explored ICT media for scaling up communication among members and with other CDAs, also government should support CDAs by establish working linkages with respective CDAs

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