

Research and Training for Rural Development Communication: Adopting the Tri-Modular Training and Sequential Research Models

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of communication training and research in integrated rural development. The author's major thesis is that if rural development communicators and workers in developing countries are inculcated with the right skills, they can utilize the rich potentials of modern and traditional communication to achieve rural development goals. He proposes an appropriate training programme for the kind of development communicators he envisages. He also suggests a research model that would facilitate the work of such communicators. His recommended training programme blends development theory and practice, development communication theory and practice, as well as information delivery strategies, techniques, evaluation and field work.

Résumé

Cet article passe en revue le rôle de la recherche et de la formation en communication dans le développement rural intégré. La thèse principale que soutient l'auteur est que si on armait les agents et les communicateurs du développement de compétences adéquates, ils pourraient utiliser les riches potentialité des communications rurales et modernes pour réaliser les objectifs de développement. Il suggère aussi un modèle de recherche qui faciliterait une formation qui allie la théorie et la pratique du développement, la pratique et la théorie de la communication ainsi que les techniques, les stratégies, l'évaluation des prestations d'information et le travail sur le terrain.

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Introduction and Problem Statement

Rural development efforts in Nigeria and various other parts of the developing world are still largely dominated by extremely-specialised, urban-oriented, single purpose, professionally-balkanized and top-down programmes, conceptualised and executed by specialised government departments and other foreign or local agencies. Current research and experience have, however, continued to demonstrate that this dominant pattern or paradigm should give way to integrated rural development paradigms, models or programmes that adopt multi-professional, multi-disciplinary, holistic, self-reliant, mass participatory and beneficiaries or people-oriented approaches.¹

Nevertheless, for an integrated rural development programme to be effective, the various components, disciplines or professional areas that would be integrated and made to work together must be sound and effective. This means that each of the integrating disciplines or professions must provide a corps of well-trained personnel and a body of knowledge emanating from a persistent, continual and reliable research tradition on rural development and other related subjects in that discipline. This paper is directly concerned with only one of those integral disciplines or professions - communication.

Communication has since been recognised as a vital and inseparable component of the rural development process. Unfortunately, in Nigeria and many other developing countries, the utilization or application of communication in rural development programmes is still far from adequate.

One major reason for this state of inadequacy is that most communication and other field officers involved in these development programmes still do not have adequate knowledge of the nature and techniques of the modern and traditional media of communication available to them and how these can be effectively and collectively used to achieve rural development objectives in today's development programmes that are "communication-heavy".

Another key reason for this state of inadequacy is the glaring absence of research data in some areas on the role of communication in development and the insufficiency or unreliability of available research data on the subject in other areas. Even though experts generally agree that universally, broad

general findings and research literature on communication and development "are far from skimpy",² they also agree that there is a yawning lack of "credible cause-effect studies which give valid insights" into the fundamental and operational questions that have always bothered us such as: "Do the mass media bring about... development, and if so, how and to what extent?"³ What are the information needs of the rural dwellers in various localities, how do these compare and how best can they be satisfied? What media, media mix or combinations are available to different ruralites and how can these be most effectively used to satisfy their information needs and mobilize them for rural development?

It must be unanswered questions such as the above and many more that are often asked by rural development workers that made one development communicator, Lal Karamchandhi, to cry out that "... communication researchers have let us down. We are still in the dark as to how much information an extension worker in a village (or a rural dweller) could absorb or make the most use of."⁴ This situation is not helped by the earlier-mentioned very low level of rural development communication research outputs in some developing areas. West Africa is one of those areas, especially Francophone West Africa. This point is supported by the fact that for a period that covered the years before 1944 and up to 1979, there are only 413 published Mass Communication researches on West Africa and only 66 masters theses and doctoral dissertations.⁵ When we take into account the fact that these figures cover studies done in all areas of mass communication, it should become obvious to us how little or inadequate the number of those studies that were focused specifically on rural development communication must be.

All this goes to show that before we can realise fully the rich potentials of communication in rural development we have to remove the two factors of inadequate training and inadequate research which constitute a cog on the wheel of effective utilization of communication for rural development. This paper is a contribution in this direction.

Basic Questions:

The basic universal question in the area, communication training and research for rural development today still remains: How best can we communicate with and mobilize rural dwellers on issues and problems which relate to their basic and higher-order needs within broad national development strategies? But for most developing countries there is this additional and most relevant

question on the issue: To what extent will the dominant development communication theories, practices, research methods, training packages and communication delivery strategies conceptualised and tested with data from developed or industrialised societies be able to account for and ensure or facilitate development in developing or pre-industrial societies like Nigeria?6

These two questions underscore the fact that for a developing country like Nigeria, it is not just enough to produce a corps of rural development communication specialists and establish a tradition of continual research on this issue, but a conscious effort must be made to ensure that the training methods, rural communication theories and techniques as well as the research data generated are very contextually relevant. In other words, we have to contextualise the foreign research, theoretical, training and professional development communication models and integrate them with local ones to suit our individual nations' needs and peculiar situations.

We shall always have this in mind in this paper which is basically an attempt to present and examine certain concepts, techniques and issues that should form the key elements of more effective and contextualised rural development communication training and research strategies for Nigeria and other developing countries.

Key Assumptions, Scope and Approach

The major message of this paper hinges on the following key assumptions:

- (1) That if rural development communicators and workers in Nigeria and other developing countries were given the right training, they would be more able to utilize the rich potentials of modern and traditional of communication in helping to achieve rural development objectives.
- (2) That continual and contextual research and evaluation which use the right approaches will help to produce the relevant data needed for improving upon rural development communication strategies and thereby achieving rural development communication goals.

While no direct attempt is made in this paper to produce or offer a particular curriculum for training rural development communicators or a manual or blueprint for executing a particular rural development communication research, the paper will offer abundant ideas and facts that can be designed or packaged into particularistic training curricula and research manuals for particular situations.

In trying to accomplish the task of this paper we shall adopt the approach of using relevant theoretical models, secondary or cold data from existing research literature on this media issue as well as relevant reported field experiences in development projects in and outside Nigeria.

Definition of Key Concepts

Let us continue by offering contextual and operational definitions for some of the concepts we shall be working with in this paper. These are development, rural development, rural development communication and integrated rural development.

The term development has been differently defined by people from different professional and other biases.⁷ But a close examination of these definitions, indicate that they refer to one thing in different words - positive change or improvement of human kind by reduction of disparities between the haves and the have-nots, either within or beyond national frontiers. We shall therefore adopt this as our working definition of development in this paper in preference to some others that have narrowly equated development with modernization, industrialization, technological innovation, economic and social change or rises in personal income, gross, national products and living standards.

In line with the above definitions of development we can also define rural development as the process of and activities aimed at bringing about positive changes in the rural areas, improving the quality of life among ruralites, reducing urban-rural dichotomy and mobilizing the ruralites for development. Rural development activities may focus on rural health, nutrition, agrarian reform, literacy, family planning, environmental sanitation, small scale industries, fisheries, agriculture, transportation and politicization.⁸

Rural development communication can simply be said to be the art and science of using modern and "trado-rural" communication resources, personnel and technologies to achieve the rural development objectives outlined above. It is a process that ensures a continual, participatory two-way flow of information that is aimed at improving the quality of life among rural dwellers and getting them involved in national life and development. These media of communication can be used singly, but tend to be more effective in most rural development situations in mixed or combined forms.

The concept of integrated rural development can best be defined as a more modern response to the old or dominant haphazard,

isolationistic and piecemeal approach to rural development. It is a new response to an old system or rural development strategy in which each agency or professional group had "pursued its own narrow objective and its own independent course of action with little if any attention to whether it harmonised with complementary objectives and programmes or with the broader processes of rural development in that particular situation."⁹

Training for Rural Development Communication

Training for rural development communication can be as formal and tightly organized as when it takes place within the confines of established Mass Communication or Sociology programmes in various institutions of higher learning. But it can also be as informal and loosely organised as when it is administered to groups of agricultural extension workers, field information officers and others already engaged in information delivery and mobilization of ruralites for development. The training approaches may differ slightly in both cases, but the content should remain basically the same. What we are offering in this paper should, therefore, be useful in both instances.

The broad aim of a rural development communication training programme should be the production of a specialised communicator who can effectively inform, educate, motivate, persuade, live with and mobilize rural dwellers using modern and traditional media of communication and who can plan, implement, manage and evaluate various rural development campaigns or programmes aimed at improving the quality of life in the rural areas. The broad training approach should be interdisciplinary because there is no single academic discipline that can fully provide all the knowledge needed for effective rural development communication projects. As Erskine Childers put it, "You do not get this training by getting a degree in Mass Communication, a degree in development economics, or a degree in journalism. You don't even get it . . . by getting something like an agricultural extension certificate."¹⁰

This is why we shall, in this paper, divide our rural development communication training package into three modules:

- (1) General development theory and practice
- (2) Communication and development communication theory and practice and
- (3) Development communication/information delivery strategies, techniques and evaluation.

The Tri-Modular training model sketched on page 77 summarises these 3 modules.

First Module:

The General development theory and practice aspect of the training package should be in line with our operational definition of development offered earlier and should emphasize the multi-faceted and interdisciplinary nature of the development process. It should include a broad overview of the theoretical and research literature on development in various parts of the world as well as a thorough review of successful and unsuccessful development projects in the world as case studies.

This multi-perspectival approach to the understanding of development should emphasise the place of policy planning and execution, the behavioural and management sciences, sociology, economics, government, administrative and bureaucratic practices/influences in the development process. It should also treat very well the role of communication, history, geography and other socio-economic change factors in the development process. Rural development theory and practice should also receive direct treatment.

Second Module

The second module of the training package focuses directly on communication theory and practice, as well as on development communication as defined earlier on in this paper. It will involve a thorough review of past and present theories of communication that may have direct or indirect bearing on development and rural development. In this module too, relevant studies on communication and development and rural development, especially those done in Third World contexts, should be *critically* studied.¹¹ These would include such pioneering and leading works as those of Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm (1964), Lerner and Schramm (1967), Pye Lucian [ed.] (1963), Everett Rogers and F.F. Shoemaker (1971), C.F. Hovland et al. (1949) and Sean McBride et al. (1980). More especially, remarkable attempts by African and other Third World scholars to contextually apply the models developed by the above-listed foreign studies and offer new ones, should be closely examined.¹² They include works by Frank Ugboajah (1976 and 1983), A. Basu (1969), A. Moemeka (1981), M. Mbithi (1973), Nwuneli (1984), Sobowale and Sogbamu (1984), S.K. Williams (1978) and Ikechukwu Nwosu (1985).

This segment of the training package should also contain specific instructions on dominant research methods in communication, especially those that are very useful in development communication studies. Such methods would include sample survey or polling techniques, field experimental and laboratory research methods, case study approach and content analysis. A thorough knowledge of the history, dynamics, characteristics, techniques and problems of the modern and "trado-rural" media as vehicles of participatory communication, as opposed to mere tools of information dissemination, will also be handled under this component of the training package. This would include a thorough study of the rural press, rural broadcasting networks, interpersonal communication of "oramedia" networks, mass persuasion, mass mobilization, and opinion leadership systems.

Also in this module, attempt should be made to treat contextually and thoroughly the theory, techniques and implications of national communication policy planning, formulation, execution and evaluation for national and rural development. Then it is important to also stress the need and techniques for appraising the information needs and information environment of the rural dwellers under this module.

Third Module:

All this will lead us into the third and final module in the proposed training package - Communication/Information delivery techniques and evaluation. Here the emphasis is on providing adequate and special communication skills to the rural development communicator and contextually assessing the existing skills.

There is no doubt that the communication of information and persuasive materials is one of the most important functions of the development communicator. He must therefore continually acquire and sharpen his skills in this area. This will involve developing keen expertise in various mass media vehicles such as newspaper, radio, television, film and magazine. In the newspaper, magazine and other media, for instance, he should learn special skills that include news, features, article, editorial and column writing, editing, as well as how to use cartoons, photographs and other artworks as message carriers. In the broadcast of electronic media, skills that must be acquired include news production, spot announcements, commentaries, documentaries, interviews, panel discussions, video and audio tapes, slides, other audio-visual

materials, as well as film editing techniques. Skills in preparing and using the miscellaneous media like posters, charts, graphs, calendars and brochure will also be very necessary. All these come under what have come to be known as the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) packages.

Then in this third module too, the all-important skills needed for effective usage of trado-rural modes of communication for information, persuasion and feedback must be acquired. They include folk songs and dances or folk theatre, village rituals and rites, town criers, family visits, marriage and circumcision ceremonies, printed village festivals, village meetings, puppetry, age grade functions, marketing or ceremonies, talking drums, schools, churches, mosques and initiations.

But after acquiring skills in these modern and trado-rural communication modes, the development communicator must learn also in this module, how to combine or mix these media whenever this becomes necessary. This is because case reports and research have consistently indicated that for greater effectiveness, some kind of media combination is often needed in many rural development communication efforts -- especially in information and mass mobilization campaigns¹³ which the rural development communicator is expected to be adept in.

The following table helps to strengthen the point that in most situations modern and trado-rural media combination or mix leads to greater effectiveness because it has many advantages over single channels of communication:-

One other technique that needs to be mastered in this third module is the art and science of motivating people to action. The rural development communicator would need this to succeed in most ruralites mobilization projects and should use the rewards, benefits and opportunities that would accrue to the ruralites if they participate or comply, as key motivating factors.

There is also this very important need for the rural-development communicator to be a kind of public relations officer and kind of marketing and advertising expert. So, some advertising and public relations skills must be acquired in this third module. In the area of public relations, for instance, the rural development communicator must learn the techniques of effective community relations in addition to some other public relations skills like organizing special events, contests and similar activities in order to use them as forums for disseminating rural development information and obtaining feedbacks.

Marketing and advertising techniques that come handy in many rural development projects, campaign and mobilization efforts

Table One*

Comparative Characteristics of Mass Media, trado-rural media and Combined Media for Rural Development Communication

Serial Number	Characteristics	Mass Media Channels	Trado-Rural Media Modes	Mass Media Combined with Trado-rural Media
1.	Direction	One-Way	Two-Way	Two-Way
2.	Time taken to reach large audience	High	Slow	Rapid
3.	Accuracy in Large Audience	High	Low	
4.	Ability to Overcome selective exposure and selective perception	Low	High	High
5.	Feedback	Little	Much	Much
6.	Ability to answer rural Needs of the audience	Low	high	High
7.	Participation	Low	High	High
8.	Rural Credibility	Low	High	High
9.	Rural Accessibility	Low	high	high
10.	Most likely main effects	Increased knowledge	Attitude change	Increased knowledge and attitude change

*Adapted and contextually modified from *World Bank Staff Working Paper*, No. 266, 1977; p. 363.

include audience segmentation, consumer, beneficiary or target audience research, planning, distribution, communication and results evaluation. Researcher John Woods must have had these facts in mind when he stated his belief that "the best analogy for development communication is the basic concept of marketing...A

very carefully integrated advertising campaign using mass media is usually part of the total scheme . . . The development field (must) have a systematic programme that would be comparable to what marketing does for industry".¹⁵ All this will require much field work.

Finally, in this third module, the development communicator must be exposed to the theory and practice of the self-reliance philosophy which has been found to be a vital ingredient in most successful rural development projects across the globe. Even though it has been called "Ujamaa" in Tanzania, "Juche" in Korea, "Tzuli Kongsheng" in China, "Olu Obode" in Nigeria and various other names in various other places, the guiding philosophy of self-reliance, which the development communicator must allow to shape his activities, remains basically the same. Its meaning and relevance to rural development communication can best be appreciated by going through Professor E.A.U. Ikoku's tacit explanation of the concept which goes thus:

Through Self Reliance, priorities will change towards production for basic needs for those most in need; mass participation is ensured; local factors are utilized much better; creativity is stimulated; structure/cultural conditions will be more compatible; there will be much diversity in development; there will be less alienation; ecobalance will be much easily attained; important externalities are internalised or given to neighbours at the same level; solidarity with others at the same level gets solid basis; . . . life begins to be more meaningful.¹⁶

To be meaningful or useful, instructions to development communicators must emphasise the point that a self reliant development communication project should be initiated from the grassroot or rural areas "where it can unfold itself as mass action"; but should not be misconceived to imply autarchy or negative self-sufficiency. It should imply "a redirection and recomposition . . . and cooperation, not the building of tight walls around all units".¹⁷ This will enable the activities of a self-reliance oriented development communicator to fit in properly into the broad aims and objectives of an integrated rural development scheme as we defined it earlier.

The three training modules we discussed above can be graphically or diagrammatically represented as follows for easier understanding, appreciation and remembrance:-

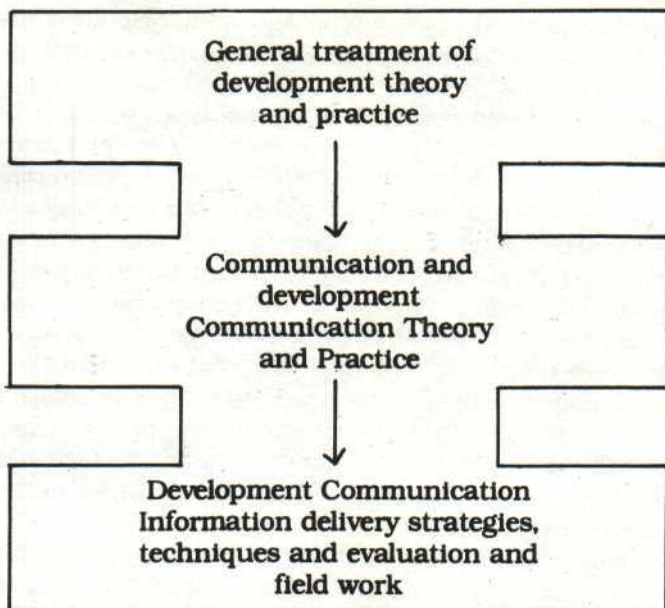


FIG ONE: THE PROPOSED TRI-MODULAR DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION TRAINING MODEL.

RESEARCH FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

As we pointed out earlier, in addition to producing a corps of well-trained development communicators, developing countries and development strategies need also to continually provide an array of relevant, contextual and reliable research data on rural development communication in various situations to facilitate the job of the development communicators. We have also mentioned some of the research questions that need to be answered. Many more can be raised.

In this section of the paper we shall directly examine some key general ideas, issues and strategies that should form the bedrock or foundation for designing and executing more effective and contextualised rural development communication research projects in developing countries like Nigeria. We shall also attempt to capture or present these ideas in a model we shall call the Sequential Rural Development Communication Research Model.

The first point that must be made here is that rural development communication research should focus more on applied, functional, utilitarian, field-operational need-based and culturally-relevant studies. What is needed here is a shift of emphasis and not

a complete neglect of the prototype and theory-building studies aimed at general development of scholarship and research in mass communication. The need for this shift in emphasis is supported by Professor Robert Lindsay who observed that research in this area has been dominated by those he described as neo-Lazarsfeld-approach researchers who believe that "communication research is and out ever to be the province of bemused academics whose principle dedication is to the aseptic production of esoteric information derived from available data and based upon arcane hypotheses."¹⁸ According to him these researchers or communication theoreticians who are found mostly in the universities see their main function as that of generating "infinite numbers of reports, articles, monographs, books, journals, models, proposals, constructs, paradigms, analyses, perspectives and prospectuses," most of which do not directly address the needs of the "planet's millions of culturally, educationally, (informationally) and economically deprived."¹⁹

Additionally, there should be continued conscious attempts to rid rural development communication research efforts in the developing countries of undue foreign influence. In doing this, however, we should ensure that we do not throw the baby away with the bath water by throwing away appropriate foreign research models and techniques with inappropriate ones. What we need to do is to sift the relevant foreign models, modify them contextually and use them in finding answers to the many problems of rural development, communication. We have not yet adequately done this kind of sifting or surgical operation and it is needed urgently. Frank Ugboajah would agree with this observation and has strongly criticised past diffusion of innovation studies for this weakness. In his own words:

"The most disturbing area of field research in the Third World in communication studies happens to be diffusion studies, which owing to internal ideological problems, are associated with agricultural and health extension work and are therefore accompanied by a messianic/cultural invasion. There should be a de-emphasis on communication and national development approaches of the Wilbur Schramm, Daniel Lerner and Everett Rogers types which were carried out with paramount academic qualifications but not necessarily with social relevance".²⁰

This same case for socially-relevant and functional rural development communication studies was re-echoed by Adedeji and Goran when they stated pointedly that, "Most African governments are positive to social science research that is 'applied' and 'useful',

i.e. potentially offers an answer to questions that bother government decision makers. There is less understanding of research that is basic', i.e. primarily done and written for an academic audience. "This attitude is understandable . . ."21

The implication of all this is that the rural development communication research would use any of the known social science, administrative or even marketing research approaches, but has to first check utility and contextuality quotients. In other words, case studies, participant and non-participant observations, laboratory and field experimental approaches, sample surveys, content analysis, documentary research and historical research, critical research, whichever is appropriate in each study, may be used; but it must be useful and contextually relevant before it can be seen as appropriate.

In addition, for the qualitative research methods among them to be considered appropriate for rural development communication, the techniques they employ must be valid and reliable. To ensure this, we must ensure that our various sampling and data-gathering techniques are accurate; that our research design is most appropriate for solving the problem being tackled; that our study is replicable; that the statistical techniques we employed are appropriate for the data generated; that our data, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations are well thought-out and clearly presented or communicated to rural development policy makers or field workers that would use them.

Adopting the Sequential Rural Development Communication Research Model we are proposing in this paper will help to assure the achievement of most of the above objectives. The model sees quantitative research in rural development communication as an input-output matrix or arrangement in which the quality of the output is solely dependent on the quality of the input. In line with the popular expression, garbage-in-garbage-out, if the input components are unreliable and invalid, then, the outputs or results would definitely become invalid and unreliable. In rural development communication studies designed and executed in most of rural African or Asian settings, for instance, there are many problems or obstacles that stand in the way of all social researchers that have to be checked before the research output can be reliable and valid and we shall briefly examine some of them in this paper. They occur at various levels of the qualitative research process as can be represented in our proposed sequential model which can be sketched as follows:

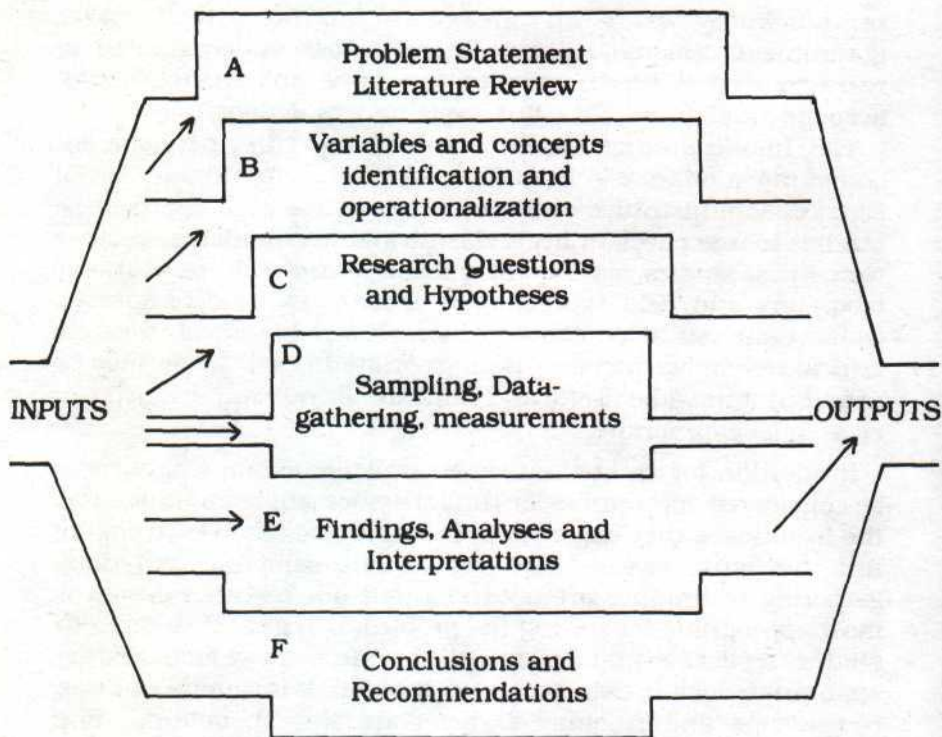


FIG. TWO THE PROPOSED SEQUENTIAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION RESEARCH MODEL.22

The problem of rural development research starts at the A-input or problem statement and literature level as shown in the above model, so the research has to start working towards valid and reliable outputs from there. Many past studies on this issue had not involved the ruralities fully in the process of determining what their real practical communication problems are. As a result they had spent much time and money studying problems that have little, if any direct practical value to the rural development workers or the ruralites themselves. Problem identification in rural development communication research should therefore undergo a perspectival change from its present dominantly theoretical, urban viewpoint and low-rural-consideration form to a form that is dictated by the ruralities' needs and their socio-cultural environment. Literature search and cold-data acquisition is another problem at this level because of their scarcity and the tendency for many of the studies to be unpublished. Even the published ones are sometimes treated as secret documents by some establishments.

Then, at the B-input or variables/concepts operationalization level the key problem facing rural development communication researcher is how to define various local, traditional or rural African, Asian or Latin America concepts, operationalize or reduce them to measurable forms without any loss in their original meaning and relevance to the ruralites and their problems. For example, it may not be very easy to define dowry payment in marriage ceremonies, oracle consultation, kola nut breaking and some burial rites as trado-rural communication modes or variables and reduce them to measurable or quantifiable forms. If their operationalization is not carefully done, they will right away introduce negative biases and invalidity elements that will for sure negatively affect the research results or outputs.

There are also problems at the C-input or Research Questions and Hypotheses level which the rural development communication researcher must learn to handle with utmost care. For one thing, because hypotheses are nothing more than tentative propositions that show the relationship between variables and are put up for testing, they must be related to or drawn from real-life rural development communication problems or situations in order to be useful. If this is not done, their contextuality and practical applicability are lost and the rural development communication theories that arise from such studies will be mere theorems,²³ while the data generated will be quite sterile.

This takes us to the D-point of Sampling, Data-gathering and Measurements level. This is, perhaps, the most problematic level in the sense that many, if not most of the errors of validity and reliability in rural development communication research arise from this level. Take Sampling, for instance. Reliable probability samples are often quite difficult to draw in rural areas where the houses are not arranged in streets and blocks as in the urban or developed areas. Then there are many data-gathering problems that can for convenience be grouped into three: problems arising from the researchers, problems arising from the rural research situation and problems arising from the rural respondents.

Starting with the researcher himself, it is a well-known fact that a researcher significantly affects the data he gathers in many ways.²⁴ But in rural development communication research this problem is greatly magnified by the fact that most of the time (if not all the time) the researcher is "alien" to the rural area and the ruralites. He is mostly either an urbanite or a foreigner. Even when the researcher tries to live with the ruralites for a while, the problem may only be slightly reduced, but it will not be removed completely.

This issue is made worse by the fact that the research situation in the rural areas is not ideal for effective research and for researchers. For example, communication by road, telephone and other means is either very difficult, non-existent or frustrating. Factors like poor weather and common rural diseases make the situation worse. Many other factors also conspire to make the rural communication research situation far from ideal. One more factor that must be mentioned specifically is the inadequacy of computer facilities in most rural development communication research situations. We all know how time-wasting it is to calculate T-tests, cross-tabulation, Chi-square and correlation scores using desk calculators or similar means, and how easy it is to make mistakes that can add up to negatively affect the validity and reliability of the final data.

The problems arising from the respondents are also many and varied. If the rural development communication researcher overcomes the problems we highlighted above as well as others that include drawing up a reliable questionnaire (in say Sample Survey) that correctly operationalizes rural concepts and variables into questions, he will still have to deal with the deficiencies, apathy, cultural traits and other peculiarities of the ruralite respondents. In the language area, the researcher would have to cope with the problems of language and dialect multiplicity among most rural dwellers as well as the translation of a questionnaire prepared in English or French to these local languages and dialects without losing meaning. Cultural traits or problems in this area can be exemplified with what Isaac Obeng-Quaidoo has described as the African concept of time²⁵ and what Sylvanus Ekwelie has described as the belief among some Nigerians that children, who are gifts from God, should not be counted by their parents during research interview sessions because such a counting has an "undertone of boastfulness".²⁶

If we add the above problems to the universal problem arising from the respondent everywhere, we can picture how enormous the problem is for rural development communication research. Johan Galtung summarised these universal problems thus:

- (1) To what extent can we determine a person's true position on any given issue from his verbal expressions?
- (2) To what extent can we infer what a person thinks from what he says?
- (3) To what extent can we infer a person's behaviour from his verbal expressions?"²⁷

Then there is the problem of measurement which the rural development communication researcher must face after gathering his data. The earlier-reviewed problems, for sure, affect measurement, but the major problem here seems to be that of ensuring that the data we are measuring reflect or are closely related to rural realities. It does not seem reasonable for instance to measure day television viewership behaviour among rural farmers that mostly do not have television sets and work in their farms during the day. That researchers sometimes commit this measurement error was confirmed in the African context by B.I.C. Ijomah when he wrote that "The problem of measurement is a very realistic one, and one that challenges whatever we purport to be doing in Africa in the sanctified name of research. For measurement to be valid, the researcher must convince himself that he is measuring the observable facts. There is a great chasm between facts and data. All facts may be data, but all data cannot be facts. A measurable datum is one that should reflect social reality."²⁸

At the E-input of findings, analysis and interpretation level the rural development communication researcher should not just present his findings clearly but should check them for meaningful relationships, regularities or patterns that are valid, reliable and informative both for practical purposes and for scholarship. In doing all these the researcher can use descriptive or inferential statistics but he should not allow his analysis and interpretations to be negatively affected by his over concern with statistical theory, formal communication theories, over-ambition to establish tight relationship between formal statistical theories and formal communication theories in a single study, over-dependence on the computer and deemphasis of thought or brain power, sheer desire to be quantitative and sophisticated because it is fashionable and scientific, picking out and summarizing and presenting his chi square, t-test and Cramers-V and other such information from the computer without caring whether anybody besides his colleagues within the "esoteric circles" understands him.²⁹

Finally, at the F-Input or Conclusion and Recommendation level the rural development communication researcher should guard against drawing faulty conclusions by not allowing his data to guide him strictly to his conclusions by misinterpreting his findings or making such common mistakes. Because rural development communication research is applied and practical problem-solving-oriented, the researcher should not restrict himself to theoretical or research recommendations. He should go beyond this to offer practical policy recommendations that can be

used by rural development communication policy makers and implementers who sometimes, in most developed countries, are not able to make the quantum jump from ordinary research findings, conclusions and recommendations to how these can be practically applied in real life rural development communications.

Summary and Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to examine the role of communication training and research in the integrated rural development programmes of Third World countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Afghanistan and Nicaragua. In doing this, we have reviewed the problems involved, different attempts and methods used in trying to solve them and the results or effects of such attempts and methods. We have also drawn some conclusions and made specific recommendations in the area of rural development communication training and research. We further tried to capture all these in two largely descriptive models that should facilitate our understanding of our discussions - the tri-modular training and Sequential Research Models.

After all this, the conclusion we still must make is that in order to reap fully the rich benefits of communication in achieving rural development goals, we must produce a corps of well-trained rural development communicators and researchers who can, among other things, know how to remove or reduce the negative or unwanted influences of foreign communication and research models, know the benefits of effectively combining modern and trado-rural communication modes in executing rural development projects and realise that communication has to work closely with other related fields to achieve integrated rural development objectives.

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