

Original Paper

Development Communication as Strategic Anti-Albatross to Nigeria's Insecurity

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Abstract

This study undertook a critical survey, discussion and analysis of development communication as a strategy to curb Nigeria's security questions. This is because a state must assure her citizens, non citizens and investors of internal security; various stakeholders must themselves act collectively, thereby employing emerging communication trends and paradigm on participatory dialogical communications. This paper employed desk research method to source data for the study. The study revealed that without a consistent social process of communication for development which must be based on dialogue, using participatory and ownership approaches by communities and individual affected by insecurity, unemployment, poverty and other developmental issues; the evidence to demonstrate the value of efforts by the respective governments and institutions will not be seen. The study, in view of security challenges facing the nation, recommended that all stakeholders should adopt policies and legislation at all levels that will provide enabling environment for communication for development to encourage media freedom and individual rights to information and communication towards a secured society. More also, strengthening networks and partnership at all levels to advance communication for development which will in turn advance security outcomes.

Keywords

Communication, Development, Media, Security, Nigeria, Insecurity

1. Introduction

For internal security to be assured in any country, the various stakeholders must themselves act collectively rather than rivals, thereby developing communication processes and activities, which are complementary to solving Nigeria's security albatross. This is because one of the most fundamental

problems facing our society today is insecurity. The security situation in the country in the recent times has never been grimmer. The issue of national security is a very serious one in this country today. At all levels of our national life, it is becoming increasingly evident that the Nigeria state is incapable of providing even the minimum security required for the maintenance of exploitative capitalist relations. Manifestations of this state of insecurity include the rebellion in the Niger Delta, ethno-religious conflicts in various parts of the country, high and rising crime rates, high rates of accidents in the transportation sector, particularly in aviation and road transport politically-motivated violence, arson and thuggery; market insecurity, manifested in high inflation rates and the declining value of the naira, instability in the oil market and the wild vacillations in the prices of this commodity, job insecurity for the working people of the country which is manifested in inadequacy of wages, irregular and non-payment of salaries and wages, and cultural insecurity which is manifested in the serious threats to our cultural existence by western ghetto culture under the guise of globalization (cultural imperialism) there is also environment insecurity manifested in decaying and decayed infrastructure, roads, bridges, water and air pollution, urban overcrowding, and environmental degradation characteristic of the extractive primary industries all over the country (Saleh 2011).

Our domestic security situation has been critical and remains critical. On zonal basis, there had been the Niger-Delta near-insurgency. At the community level, there is the periodic, but ethno-religious strife and banditry in various parts of the country (e.g. Kano, Osun, Kaduna, Benue Taraba, Bauchi, Plateau, Zamfara, Kastina, etc.), always with significant loss of lives and property, as well as social dislocations among the affected population. And there is also the anarchy and criminal violence and disorders associated with periodic elections (e.g. 2003, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2019), and 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 herdsmen and militia killings in Benue, Plateau, Kaduna, Zamfara, etc. Needless to say, the communal-level strife and disorder result from failure of intelligence on domestic security in terms of adequacy, promptness, or even quality or truthfulness (Ade, 2011). It is on record that from 2017 to 2019, Amnesty International reported on its insurgency attacks, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, and torture and all ill treatment, which in so many cases led to death of citizens in custody; with revelations of military detention camps (Vanguard, 2018).

Still, the greatest indication of the dire situation of our internal security is the existence of what is referred to in criminological literature as a “crime problem” that is when in terms of incidence and prevalence, seriousness or quality, and recalcitrance to prevention and control, crime passes from the normal or tolerable level to the pathological and becomes a “social problem” having become inter-twined with the social fabric and involving virtually every social and occupational category in the population depending on the opportunities offered by their occupational and social status in the society. However, emerging communication approaches and paradigm focused on participatory communication that could constitute some necessary elements if we are to avoid the mistakes of the past as regarding security question and problems in Nigeria. It makes case about the importance of incorporating communication practices into policies of development. It is also highlights the need to harmonize

communication strategies and approaches, as indicated by the 9th UN Roundtable on Communication for Development and in other international fora (World Bank, 2002).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The security of any community or nation like Nigeria, whether in terms of food security, security of territory, or of individual, was always a collectively pursued through intelligence information and communication. Moreover, at elementary level of our existence, the question of security was uncomplicated. What was good for one was good for everybody. But even in the primitive society, security challenge or problems existed where and when man proved incapable of resolving his conflict with nature through communication and interaction. Another dimension to this is the infusion seen in the era of globalization which has also introduced an angle of threat to national security by the expansion of information and communication facilities providing a wide range of information on a large variety of issues potentially harmful to Nigeria's security. Thus, the implications for people security, the criminality-scene in the country is littered with assorted kinds of common theft, burglary, cheating, petty fraud in the markets and other work-places; crimes of violence such as aggravated assault, thuggery, assassinations, kidnapping; economy and polity-damaging, elite and leadership offences such as corruption, embezzlement, large-scale fraud, money laundering, election-rigging; organized crime such as smuggling, oil bunkering, arms smuggling, pipeline vandalization, human trafficking, cyber-crime; and the usually-unattended crimes of indiscipline and lack of law abidingness best epitomized by the conduct of our vehicular road-users. The problem therefore in this study, is to investigate to what extent development communication strategies could serve as an anti-albatross for Nigeria's insecurity.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- a) Ascertain the extent and level of Nigeria's insecurity burden or albatross.
- b) Ascertain the factors responsible for Nigeria's security albatross
- c) Determine the development communication strategies as anti-albatross for Nigeria insecurity.

2. Theoretical Background

a) Value change theory

This theory propounded by Dewey (1859-1952); writes (Folarin, 2005, 105) in Afulike et al. (2018) is a "variant of the psychodynamic model which employs the technique of feedback to induce attitudes and behavioral change". According to him, the persuasive message to be considered effective, it must succeed in altering the psychological functioning of the recipient (s) in such a way that he or she or they will respond overtly with the model of behavior desired or suggested by the communication

Value change theory is all about using communication to change observed bad value system of behavior. In this direction, Folarin (2005) further explains:

"Rather than simply inform people about the harmful or beneficial effects of certain kinds of behavior

programmes, policy and attitude methods based on the value change theory challenged the people to test their own value amongst those of others, which are presumed to be socially more acceptable. The discovery that one is probably less patriotic or less socially responsible assumed or lead one to self-dissatisfaction and will in the hope to trigger a value change in the individual”.

Thus, radio programmes and other communication approaches can be used to change the negative psychological orientations of the citizens towards security questions. In relations to this study, the theory suggests that the government through her security architecture should design persuasive communication templates with feedback that can influence attitudes and behavior.

b) Attitude change theory

This theory was propounded by Katz (1960) cited in Anaeto et al. (2008) and his associates suggest that human beings are both rational and irrational depending on the situation, the motivations operating at the same time, and so forth. They argue that the tendency for people to operate with different ways of thinking has important implications for understanding attitude change.

Katz argues that both attitude formation and change must be understood in terms of the functions that will attitudes serve for the personality. As these functions differ, so will the conditions and techniques of attitude change? He contends that the researcher dealing only with exposure to a film is not really able to understand or predict attitude change. According to him, the same attitude can have a different motivational basis in different people. He suggests that unless we know the psychological need which is held by the holding of an attitude, we are in a poor position to predict when and how it will change.

Katz's functional approach suggests that a persuasive message should be tailored to correspond to the motivational base for which an attitude is held. But some researches have suggested that it can be effective to use a persuasive approach that does not match up with the reasons the attitude is being held. Millar and Millar (1960) cited in Anaeto (2008) hypothesized that different types of arguments might be effective, depending on which component of the attitude was strongest. They also hypothesized that a rational argument might be most persuasive when the affective component is strongest and that an emotional argument might be most persuasive when the cognitive component is strongest. Therefore, in relation to this study, communication and messages through interactions, community radio mobilization programmes could be initiated to achieve sustainable attitudinal change towards effective and positive security system.

2.1 Symbolic Interaction Theory

Don Faules and Dennis Alexander (1978) defined communication as ‘symbolic behavior which results in various degrees of shared meaning and values between participants’. In their view, symbolic interaction is an excellent way to explain how mass communication shapes people's behaviours (Baran, 2002).

Kunczick (1988) in Folarin (2002) cited in Anaeto (2008), states that symbolic interaction is a process in the course of which people interpret the symbols used by the interaction partners, and that their own actions are based on the representative interpretations and or situations definitions.

Mead opines that human beings interact in terms of symbols, the most important of which are contained in language. A symbol does not simply stand as an object of event; it defines them in a particular way and indicates a response to them (Daramola, 2003).

Daramola contends that without symbols there would be no human interaction and no human society. In order to survive, the man must construct and live in a world of meaning, and social life can only proceed if members of a society largely share the meaning of words. Therefore, as people interact and interpret shared symbols within an environment faced with security challenges; it is evident that they could provide meaningful intelligence and security-based information.

3. Methodological Considerations

The study adopted the desk method of research to source data and to make inform decisions regarding the study as well as considerations, consultations of secondary data and literature analysis, in other words, studies on development communication as a strategic anti-albatross to Nigeria's insecurity. Hence, it is a position paper.

3.1 The Concept of Communication for Development

Communication for development is a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods to resolve issues. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustainable and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communication.

Communication is essential to human, social and economic development. At the hearts of communication for development is participation and ownership by communities and individuals most affected insecurity, unemployment, poverty and other development issues; and there is a large body of evidence demonstrating the value of communication for development (World Bank, 2005).

3.2 Communication for Development and Nigeria's Security Solutions

This is derived from the development communication division of the World bank (Dev Comm), which considers development communication as an *interdisciplinary field based on empirical research that helps to build consensus while it facilitates the sharing of knowledge to achieve positive change in development initiatives. It is not only about effective dissemination of information but also about using empirical research and two-way communication among stakeholders.* It is also a key management tool that helps assess sociopolitical risks, insecurity and opportunities.

Another phase of Dev Comm (development communication) methodological approach is strategy design. Here Dev Comm professional assist in transforming the findings of CBA (communication based assessment) into usable data to inform the design of effective strategies. The main output of this phase is the definition of a strategy and relative action plan. These indicate the budget and time required, the communication approaches needed, and the related media and messages identified for each audience targeted at a citizen or stakeholder of any security volatile or challenge area or sport. This tool is a particularly useful for managing straightforward communication strategies for security

that have clear objective requiring changes in knowledge or behaviors (World Bank, 2002).

3.3 Dialogic Communication for Development and Anti-Albatross for Nigeria Insecurity

The failure to entrench dialogic feature of communication for development to enhance the capacities of all ethnic groups and religions, especially the most marginalized ones, and addresses the issues of poverty, insecurity and under development formed albatross to Nigeria's national security.

Dialogic communication for development is not only effective as a problem-solving or insecurity reduction tool, but it also builds confidence, prevents conflict and addresses the issue of poverty and insecurity by engaging the poorest and most marginal sector in the process concerning issues relevance to them (Amartya, 1999). This is because development is about change and about people.

The development focus has shifted from economic growth to include other social dimensions, needed to ensure meaningful results in the long run- as indicated by the consensus built in the definition of the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainability and people's participation became key elements of this new vision, as acknowledged also by the World Bank (1994, p. 3): "Internationally, emphasis is being placed on the challenge of sustainable development, and participation is increasingly recognized as a necessary part of sustainable development strategies".

Meaningful participation to solve the country's security challenge cannot occur without communication. Unfortunately, too many development security programs, include community-driven ones, seem to over-look this aspect and while paying attention to participation, do not pay similar attention to communication, intended as the professional use of dialogic methods and tools to promote change. To be truly significant and meaningful, participation needs to be based on the application of genuine two-way communication principles and practices. That is why communication is increasingly considered essential in facilitating stakeholders' engagement in security problem analysis and resolution. Similarly, there is an increasing recognition that the old, vertical, top-down model is no longer applicable as a "one-size-fits-all" formula. While acknowledging that the basic principles behind the Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver model can still be useful in some cases, development communication has increasingly moved toward a horizontal, "two-way" model, which favors people's active and direct interaction through consultation and dialog over the traditional one-way information dissemination through mass media (World Bank 2008, p. 7).

Many past projects on development and security program failures can be attributed directly or indirectly to the limited involvement of the affected people in decision-making process. The horizontal use of communication, which opens up dialog, assesses risks, identifies solutions, and seeks consensus for action, came to be seen as a key to the success and sustainability of development efforts. There are a number of terms used to refer to this emerging conception (Mefalopulos, 2003); some of the better known are "another development", "empowerment", "participation", and "multiplicity paradigm". This last term, introduced by Servaes (1999), places a strong emphasis on the cultural and social multiplicity of perspectives that should be equally relevant in the development context.

The new paradigm is also changing the way communication is conceived and applied. It shifts the

emphasis from information dissemination to situation analysis, from persuasion to participation. Rather than substituting for old model, it is broadening its scope, maintaining the key functions of informing people and promoting change, yet emphasizing the importance of using communication to involve stakeholders in the development process and programmes that border on security of all citizens (Mefalopulos, 2003, p. 15).

3.4 The Value of Development Communication in Nigeria's Security Programmes and Projects

The history of security development has included failures and disappointments, many of which have been ascribed to two major intertwined factors: lack of participation in, and failure to use effective communication (Agunga, 1997; Anyaegbunam, Mefalopulos, & Moetsabi, 1998; Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 1998; Mefalopulos, 2003). The same point is emphasized by Servaes (2003, p. 20), who states, "that the successes and failures of most development programmes are often determined by two crucial factors: communication and people's involvement."

No matter what kind of project-agriculture, infrastructure, water, governance, security, education, health – it is always valuable, and often essential, to establish dialog among relevant stakeholders. Dialog is the necessary ingredient in building trust, sharing knowledge and ensuring mutual understanding. Even a project that apparently enjoys a wide consensus, such as the construction of a bridge, can have hidden obstacles an opposition that the development communication specialist can help uncover, address, and mitigate.

A number of studies have confirmed that a top-down management approach to security development and management is less effective than a participatory one. Development communication supports the shift toward a more participatory approach, and its inclusion in development work or programme.

3.5 Development Communication of Non-Communication Programme for Security

Communication for a non-communication programme might seem like an oxymoron, yet this is hardly the case. It basically means that communication is used to investigate, explore, and assess various sectors (security health, environment, infrastructure, and so forth), regardless of whether any communication component is envisioned. The dialogical and analytical features of communication are useful for any kind of assessment (including security assessment) and for any kind of problem-solving strategy, thus helping managers of development initiatives to prevent conflicts and face unforeseen problems halfway through the project and programmes.

A road-building project might not seem to need the support of community, yet, contacting the communities involved in the project, listening to their concerns and suggestions, assessing risk and opportunities, or tapping into local knowledge can be crucial value to the success of the project. Road construction can involve the use of land with special sentimental value to local people (for example, burial grounds and ancestral spots) and raising funds for longer-term maintenance, just to mention some issues where communication would make a difference or create conflict and insecurity.

Any development intervention involves change of some kind, and as the manager of the Development Communication Division of the World Bank said, "Development is about change and change cannot

occur without communication.” The limited understanding of communication as a way to disseminate, inform, and persuade fails to embrace the spirit of the new development paradigm, in which communication is used to facilitate participation and generate knowledge.

The interdisciplinary nature of development communication becomes invaluable when conducting comprehensive assessment covering more than a sector. Even when different specialists are able to conduct in-depth assessments for each of the sectors involved (for example, environment, infrastructure, and health), it is often difficult to understand how the issues for each sector are intertwined and what the overall priorities are for different groups of stakeholders. Each specialist can give an accurate representation of his or her specific sector, but there is the need for someone putting together all the pieces in a single consistent frame to avoid the confusion of misrepresentation being the issues to Nigerian localities. (WorldBank, 2008)

3.6 Communication Strategies for Sustainable Security

Communication is a prerequisite for group functioning, it is an essential tool for the establishment and maintenance of the social and working relationship and has capacity to defuse insecurity.

The strength of communication in corporate organization or society is in its pervasiveness. It facilitates healthy relationship among every public both internal and external through the exchange of ideas, information and intelligence gathering facts and opinions regarding the operations of the organization and how they affect the strategic interest of the various publics as it relates to security. Uche (1999) describes communication as instrumental in societal development. He posits that communication is for the purpose of establishing mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence conflict resolution and the cumulative development, progress and well being of a social system.

According to Okon (2001) communication is a symbolic behavior designed to elicit a response from the recipient, hence the initiator of the communication process must be strategic enough to record his desired impact on the recipient through the use of pertinent codes and symbols.

This requirement makes communicating effectively with an organization's publics intricate. The intricacies bear on the fact that individuals attempt to interpret messages in relation to their expectations not minding the organizations circumstances. It requires perceptiveness on the part of the communicator to be able to engineer consent. He must know and use the language and behaviours that appeal to concerned publics anytime.

Woodward and Denton (1999) attribute the intricacies in attempting to effectively communicate with publics to the inseparability of insecurity from the communication process highlighting how one could inadvertently leads to the other. They maintain that the seeds of insecurity are always present in human communication. It is through communication that we engage in insecurity and sometimes resolve it (p. 327). Their position suggests that the relationship between communication should ensure that people have access to communication tools so that they can themselves communicate within their communities and with the people making decision that affect them e.g community radio, adopting communication approaches that are contextualized within their cultures, creating opportunities for sharing knowledge

through communication and developing a capacity building platforms which is a concept referred to as the strengthening of communication capacities at a personal, community and institutional levels.

4. Conclusion

In line with issues discussed and findings made in this study, the researchers conclude therefore that Nigeria security problems should be credited to communication breakdown; and communication interventions designs must be built to support security development objectives by every policy maker, stakeholder and citizen. Analysis of security development program experience makes a strong case of strategic and coherent communication activities to security development initiatives. A well-conceived executed communication plan can help to bring about critical result that could reduce insecurity and conflict risk.

5. Recommendations

In view of security challenges facing the nation, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) All stakeholders should adopt policies and legislation at federal and state levels that provide an enabling environment for Communication for Development that will encourage media freedom and individual right to information and communication toward a secured society.
- 2) Strengthen partnerships and networks at national, states and local levels to advance Communication for Development and improve security development outcomes.
- 3) Development organizations like UN and World Bank should include Communication for Development and security funding as a central element at the inception of all programs targeted at any community.
- 4) Create training platforms on people or community-based security for people in their respective local communities.
- 5) The media should create forums of communication programmes to exchange comments, opinion and reports on security at every level.

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