

**AN ASSESSMENT OF NPTA'S TFD INTERVENTIONS FOR SOCIAL
CHANGE IN EREMA AND OTUASEGA COMMUNITIES OF NIGER
DELTA REGION IN NIGERIA**

BY

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(P13ARTP9013)

**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS
FACULTY OF ARTS
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA**

JANUARY, 2018

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA,
IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D) DEGREE IN THEATRE
AND PERFORMING ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS
FACULTY OF ARTS
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA**

JANUARY, 2018

DECLARATION

I IDEBE, Ejoywoke-Oghene Abel hereby declare that this thesis entitled “An Assessment of NPTA’S TFD Interventions for Social Change in Erema and Otuasega Communities of Niger Delta Region in Nigeria” is written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are duly acknowledged by means of reference.

IDEBE, Ejoywoke-Oghene Abel

Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled “An Assessment of NPTA’S TFD Interventions for Social Change in Erema and Otuasega Communities of Niger Delta Region in Nigeria” by IDEBE, Ejovwoke-Oghene Abel (P13ARTP9013) meets the regulations governing the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Theatre and Performing Arts from Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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DEDICATION

I wish to first of all dedicate this work to my Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Mercy. I further dedicate this work in honour of my Late Father Pa Joseph Coulsin Idebe, my dearest Mother Mrs. Rosemary Jaiyeola Idebe, my eldest Brother Dr. Theodore Efe-Oghene Idebe and his lovely Family, as well as beloved Priest and elder Brother Rev. Fr. Jerome Idebe.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Theatre for Development (TFD) interventions for social change in selected communities in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. It is aimed at expounding on the effects which TFD, as an alternative and community-oriented communication approach, offers in addressing social challenges within local communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This was done by assessing the TFD interventions undertaken by Nigeria Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) in selected Niger Delta Communities of Erema, Rivers State and Otuasega, Bayelsa State. The Culture-Centered Theory by Mohan Dutta and the Theory of Dialogical Pedagogy by Paulo Friere were used as the theoretical framework to underpin this study. Qualitative approach was adopted to obtain data from community members who participated in the TFD intervention; and as such instruments such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KII), Observation and Desk Review were employed to obtain data for the study. The data obtained provided the basis for an in-depth analysis. The analysis of data was in line with the set aim and objectives of the study. Findings from the discussion of data revealed that TFD as a communication strategy is viable in eliciting community participation towards social change and development in the Niger Delta Communities. However, the study also identified some challenges which need to be properly addressed in order to actualize greater and more sustainable outcomes for future TFD interventions in the Niger Delta communities and beyond. Hence, recommendations on the basis of the findings which the study brought out were proffered at the end of the study. Firstly, the study among others, recommends that more efforts should be put in place to enhance platforms and approaches that community members can explore in the Niger Delta region to become greater key players in addressing the social challenges that plague their communities. Secondly, it also recommends that all necessary factors that will enhance effective monitoring and execution of Community Action Plan (CAP) must be put in place to ensure effective TFD interventions for social change in communities. Finally, the study emphasized the need to explore TFD alongside other communication media, as this will bring about a more effective and sustainable impact in the attainment of social change and development in the Niger Delta region.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page - - - - -	i
Declaration - - - - -	ii
Certification - - - - -	iii
Dedication - - - - -	iv
Acknowledgements- - - - -	v
Abstract - - - - -	vii
Table of Contents - - - - -	viii

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study- - - - -	1
1.1 Statement of the Research Problem- - - - -	16
1.2 Aim and Objectives of Study- - - - -	17
1.3 Research Questions- - - - -	18
1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study - - - - -	18
1.5 Significance of the Study - - - - -	19

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction - - - - -	22
2.1 The Concept of Social Change - - - - -	22
2.2 Social Change Communication - - - - -	27
2.3 Approaches to Social Change Communication - - - - -	35
2.4 TFD Practice and Social Change - - - - -	43

2.5	TFD Practices across the Globe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44
2.6	TFD in Africa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	72
2.7	Examples of TFD Practices in Africa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77
2.8	The Niger Delta Region	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	94

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0	Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	102
3.1	Culture-Centered Theory-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	102
3.2	Theory of Dialogical Pedagogy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	105

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.0	Introduction-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	111
4.1	Research Design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	111
4.2	Instruments of Data Collection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	115
4.3	Reliability and Validity of Instruments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	119
4.4	Method of Data Analysis-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0	Introduction-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	122
5.1	TFD Interventions, Social Change and the Niger Delta Region: The Discussion of Research Findings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	122

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.0	Introduction-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	168
6.1	Summary of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	168
6.2	Key Findings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	170
6.3	Recommendations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	172
6.4	Conclusion-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	172
6.5	Contributions to Knowledge-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	174
	References	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	177
	Appendices	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	185

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The need for social change in communities has increasingly been identified as a fundamental global and national challenge that needs to be addressed to ensure the realization of sustainable growth and development in communities. As a concept, social change is widely applied to refer to different alterations as manifested in the society. However Burkey (1993) conceptualizes social change as a process of transformation in which people increase awareness of their knowledge to analyze their needs and challenges; as well as to decide on solutions, organize themselves for cooperative efforts; and mobilize their own human, financial and natural resources to improve, establish and maintain their own social service and institutions within the context of their own cultural and political system. Within the context of community development, Nair and White (1993:2) take “social change to be the process of raising the quality of life for the poor through communication and information processes which alter attitudes and behaviours of rural community and this enables their participation in development”. In other words social change essentially is concerned with desirable changes that lead to the transformation and growth of the community. To realize the desirable social change in communities, programmes and interventions over the years have been initiated by national and international authorities and agencies in different rural communities across the globe.

In Nigeria, a number of these programmes and interventions have been initiated at different times by National Governments and Policy Makers in the form of establishment of different directorates, and development plans, aimed at ensuring sustainable growth and development of

rural communities. Some of these include: Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructures (DFFRI), Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Agriculture, Green Revolution, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and other Agricultural Development Plans of the Government, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) as well as various development programmes established by different State Governments in the Nation. Despite the laudable goals and objectives of the different programmes, they have not yielded meaningful and sustainable results in bringing about desirable social change in communities. Enyi decried this situation accordingly:

Rural or community development in Nigeria has not received its fair share in the scheme of things. The institutions and agencies charged with the responsibility for rural development and the policies and strategies adopted to meet these objectives have not lived up to expectation of the rural dwellers in particular and the nation in general. It has been shown that in spite of the numerous natural resources that Nigeria is endowed with, majority of the citizens, particularly in the rural areas live below 'absolute poverty line'. Therefore there exists mass poverty as a result of the lopsided and urban-based development process which the governments in Nigeria have pursued till date. For instance the various World Bank, IMF and other multinational corporations-sponsored large-scale agricultural projects are based on obsolete trickle-down theory by which the main beneficiaries are supposed to diffuse information and motivate the small peasant farmers, who would then follow their example. It would be difficult for Nigeria to attack its poverty unless it stops discriminating against peasant farmers and rural population. The above situations revolve on the neo-colonial and dependent nature of Nigerian economy and society. This appears to be the crux of Nigeria's development and other problems, including that of political instability currently ravaging the country (Enyi, 2014:27).

More scathing is the fact that at some point the perceived lack of trust in Government and other Donor initiatives has led to some situations of violent resistance and dismantling of any developmental projects by Government and Donor agencies in some communities over the years.

The rather negative and undesirable response of communities is as a result of what Dutta explains below:

The distribution of communicative spaces and the opportunities to participate in these spaces are unequally distributed, with increasing gaps in access to communicative infrastructures between the rich and the poor. These disparities have been observed within local spaces, within nation states, as well as across the various sectors of the globe. Of particular interest here is the increasing marginalization of the poorer sectors of the globe with limited access to material resources as well as to platforms for articulating their voices (Dutta, 2011:2).

To this end, it becomes imperative to assert that programmes and development plans must be thus developed in such a way that allows for a holistic and workable process of communication as a vital condition that aids the people to respond positively to the real needs of the community, in order to engender social change and transformation in communities.

However in most cases the voices and inputs of community members are undermined, and the opportunity to take the centre stage in tackling their social challenges is not well encouraged. This as Dutta (2011) explains above is as a result of the fact that communication processes or platforms through which the people can be more stimulated to play influential roles and become more participatory in addressing issues that affect them are not well advanced. This situation has adversely impinged on the development of a number of communities across Nigeria including those in the Niger Delta region as examined in this study.

The Niger-Delta region as it should be noted is very strategic in our national landscape. The reason as Abah et.al (2009) remark is the fact that the Niger Delta houses Nigeria's over 25 billion barrels of oil reserves. Oil from this region accounts for more than 60% of all foreign exchange earnings and contributes over 80% to budgetary revenues. This oil rich region in the

Federal Republic of Nigeria, has no doubt become very topical in our socio-economic discourse. Since the beginning of the democratic dispensation in May 1999, the different democratic regimes have made the issue of the Niger Delta one of their top most priorities. Within the course of these years, efforts have been made to effect the 13% derivation for the communities marked out as oil producing in the Niger Delta, even though this percentage still remains debatable. There has also been the formation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 1999 and the Ministry of the Niger Delta in 2007. These departments of government are aimed at ensuring that significant changes are achieved through various strategic policies and programmes. Despite these moves by governments, the hopes and aspirations of communities in the Niger Delta region still remain problematic with incessant conflicts that have hampered peace and development (Abah et.al 2005, Akpomovie 2011, and Uzie 2016).

One area of serious concern is that of the communication approaches explored to engage local communities in the Niger Delta region. More often than not, Government, Transnational Companies (TNCs) and other stakeholders, involved in the development of the Niger Delta region mainstream media of communication that are top-down in nature. It is more about giving the people what has been prepared for them. Agenda and programmes which are believed to address communities' challenges are presented to them through the different agencies and departments of government. They also use electronic and print media in ways that only portray their image in a positive light. Government's different programmes and agencies over the years have been more concerned with creating and formulating policies that suit their different regimes' political interests and not necessarily the needs and agitations of the people. As such they are less concerned with pursuing a people's oriented agenda and needs. This is the reason

why a lot of the policies and programmes established always meet a stumbling block. In this vein, Akpomuvie reveals that:

The peoples of the Niger Delta have seen one government sponsored development agency after another, without any significant changes in their lives or in the quality of their delicate physical environment. There is clearly the need for a new development approach that makes people the centre of all development goals and actions in the area. A people centered or participatory approach to development, planning and management involves peoples' active participation in decision-making on issues that pertain to their livelihoods and interest. This helps people to realize their potentials and play active role in the social and economic transformation of their communities. A people-centered development paradigm would help not only to achieve the goals of physical and socio-economic development but also to empower the local people who are undoubtedly the most important factor in the development process in the Niger Delta (Akpomuvie, 2011:212).

In the light of the above argument, this study therefore examines Theatre for Development (TFD) as a people-centered communication intervention that can contribute to addressing social challenges militating against communities in the Niger Delta region.

The idea of using TFD to create a process by which social change is experienced in communities, has over the years, provided a veritable platform concretely explored by theatre practitioners, to demonstrate the participatory and pragmatic essentialities of the theatre. TFD in this context is a praxis that involves critical thinking and reflection leading to an action process to initiate change in the community for the emancipation and development of that community. This form of theatre over the years has been identified by different nomenclatures. Some of these nomenclatures include: Theatre for Integrated Rural Development, Participatory Theatre, Applied Theatre, Forum Theatre and Community Theatre. These nomenclatures are much related but Theatre for Development (TFD) has been widely adopted by practitioners and researchers of this field especially in Africa. Justifying this position, Abah (2005:25) says that:

...that in spite of the multiplicity of nomenclatures, however I believe that the practice all over Africa shows a consensus that TFD is: a practice which is about, for and increasingly by the ordinary people in both urban and rural Africa and a practice of empowerment and of liberation.

Abah's statement aptly points to the idea that makes TFD a veritable practice for actualizing social change in communities. Throwing more light on the suitability of the term, Okolobia (2013:56) recounts that:

The acceptability of Theatre for Development in Nigeria, despite its numerous names and titles, can be attributed to its utilitarian nature. Its emphasis on the people's participation in shaping their reality and its "completeness" allows for an ever-deepening participatory analysis...The acceptability of Theatre for development has manifested itself since its establishment in or introduction to the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1975... Through Theatre for Development, development has been redefined and for whom it should be. This has been made possible by the active participation of the people for whom development is meant.

From the above, we see the fact that the idea of TFD necessarily has to do with the people's active participation. Tracing its development from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria further brings to light the academic root of the practice in Nigeria. However it is important to state that TFD, beyond the walls of academic institutions, is a developmental strategy adopted and utilized by Non- Government Organizations (NGOs), and Community Based Groups not only in Nigeria but in Africa and many other parts of the World.

The outcome of any TFD intervention should be primarily focused on the people. The galvanizing of the people's collective will and determination in order to figure out possibilities for confronting and challenging the complexities of their existence, with the aim of developing new scenarios of desired changes for their progress and prosperity is quite fundamental. Ewu (2002:3) further remarks that "... in order for development to be purposeful, dignifying and sustainable it must evolve with people and their participation is crucial". To this end, TFD not

only focuses on the marginalized but engages them as active players taking into serious account their contributions in the processes of the developmental experience. With this they become more informed, conscientized, empowered and ready to take action for change. Its strength lies in its ability to engage local communities in a collective and participatory decision making process. Ahura (1990:55) further elaborates that TFD:

...emphasizes the mass mobilization of the rural masses for the purpose of upgrading themselves intellectually and materially so that they come to a thorough understanding of themselves and their environment. By this understanding they as a group come to full knowledge of the structures that are injurious to them and those that enhance their prestige as human beings. They therefore prepare themselves to control their destiny by seeking to change the existing situation.

How theatre can be used as a rallying point to bring about the needed change in the community is here emphasized. How it allows the community to be released from bottlenecks and unfavourable conditions that threaten and hinder community development; and spurs them into a new experience wherein they see themselves as a collective force for sustainable development is the central focus. Giving a general description of the concept, Okwori (2005:17) clearly explains it as a model for participatory communication.

TFD is one of the participatory method through which development issues can be communicated. It uses all the denominators of community theatre but it is more interested in the process i.e. the lessons and experiences that will be learnt by engaging in the process of the drama or theatre and in addressing issues of development

To further articulate what participatory model of communication is all about, Serveas (1999:91) gives us some key factors that define the participatory model of communication:

It views ordinary people as key agent of change and focuses on their aspirations and strength, emancipating them to meet their basic needs. It sees people as the nucleus of development, educating and stimulating them to be active in self and communal improvements. It emphasizes local community rather than national initiatives. It involves strengthening the democratic processes and institutions at a community level and explores the redistribution of power.

As a process of critical thinking and action, TFD is thus anchored on a participatory approach to development. It serves as the peoples' media. It is democratic in nature, and it utilizes the people's methods of communication and conscientizes the people in the community to change or modify their attitudes and discover better ways of solving their real problems. Ross Kidd quoted by Osofisan comments that TFD is aimed at "...bringing people together, building confidence and solidarity; stimulating discussions, exploring alternative options for action and building a collective commitment to change starting with the people's urgent concerns and issues. It encourages reflection on these issues and possible strategies for change" (Osofisan, 2003:24). TFD in this light advances the principles of interactive participation. It advocates that the theatre experience must put into consideration the active contribution and participation of the whole community. TFD like Illah and Warritay (2004:3) also explain is to "make theatre for the people, make theatre with the people, enable the people do theatre by themselves, using their stories, songs, dances, hoping to change negative attitudes; to advocate and sustain new values and behaviours". Unlike the conventional theatre that places emphasis on the theatre professionals as being absolutely central to the successful outcome of the theatrical experience, Illah and Warritay argue that TFD is democratic in nature. Epskamp (2006:89) shed more light on the concept of TFD as democratic and community-centered as he enumerates and describes a number of objectives which TFD seeks to achieve:

TFD gives a voice to the previous unheard members of the community. TFD confronts participants continuously with the possibility of making choices in order to solve their own problem. TFD offers opportunities to explore social reality by means of improvising and performing for both utilitarian and creative purposes. TFD offers a common playground or laboratory to explore near misses as well as golden opportunities for self-development. TFD promotes behavioral changes by means of persuasive communication, stimulating changes in attitude, belief and behaviour towards development-related practices. TFD motivates active participation in development programmes in order to improve the quality of life and in order to maintain development-related skills, linking them with daily

practices. TFD enables one to take collective action by means of a two-way communication process, community discussions and decision making, solidarity and intra-village/inter-village solidarity.

The foregoing itemizations by Epskamp simply highlight the wide spectrum of ideas that have informed the use of TFD across different communities. It becomes tenable to state that the focus of TFD is to explore along with the community the problems facing them and as such requires common solution. TFD builds its block on research and participation, it make use of the community's cultural and social resources to sensitize and facilitate the people, so as to create a change in the structure that is a clog in the wheel of progress for the people.

In essence, the ideology of TFD contest and takes a contrary view about changing or bettering the people's condition where People's ideas and inputs for their socio-economic change and development are relegated to the background; while the development 'experts and technocrats' are forced on them. Like Okolobia (2013) rightly points out, "Development should therefore not be seen from the perspective of a man being asked to eat fish without teaching him the skills of how to catch the fish". Its criticism of dominant development policies and their implementations are even more scathing where as, in the context of these, development plans are imposed by stakeholders who are not members of the community and therefore fail to evolve with the very people that make them necessary in the first place. Worse still, they reinforce and more often than not create conditions of dependency and a lopsided development pattern. In this kind of situation, the people are not provided with the needed empowerment and critical thinking that could change their conditions. To this end, therefore, Iorapuu and Bamidele (2004:35) further assert that:

First TFD has its roots in the philosophy of empowerment. The current view in development struggle respect the need to build on what people know, with the

belief that this type of theatre seeks to liberate, demand innovation and effect potential change in the lives of those that use it...TFD uses local resources and enable programme beneficiaries to make use of the tools it offers to change it realities...TFD also provides a means of exploring and addressing dynamic relations between people. It offers a means of reflecting upon why and how changes might be necessary and why and how they come about. It is this dimension that practitioners of TFD are deeply involved with, and attempt to promote by seeking to create Theatre with the People around issues that question the contradictions that have reduced them to objects not subject...TFD is therefore a praxis; a process of reflection and action that uses the medium of drama to deconstruct the myths that makes people become split personalities or social, economic and political lepers.

The critical implication here is that TFD experience is not necessarily a 'product' which is to be consumed and adsorbed, but fundamentally it is a '**process**' (emphasis mine) which engages and demands an inclusive participation where the partakers of this process continue to unfold the complexities surrounding them with the aim of ameliorating and transforming their debased conditions. It is in this way that the TFD strategy contributes significantly to social change.

In Nigeria, a lot of communities are hampered by various social challenges. Most of these communities suffer from bad leadership, inadequate provision of social services and infrastructures, poor formal education, scarce employment opportunities for the Youth, high birth rate, mal-nutrition and other health diseases. There are other inherent traditional encumbrances as well as other impinging environmental, political and security challenges which hamper their growth. These challenges present themselves in different dimensions across different communities of the country. The issue therefore is how to change their conditions by effectively tackling these challenges. It is this need that necessitates the use of TFD as a strategy for communicating social change. Abah (2005:98) further argues that:

The reason TFD is always seeking change is to be found in the nature of the environment in which it is practised. It is a situation in which the everyday life of the ordinary person is that of non-availability of basic needs such as pipe drinking water, health care, access road, electricity and in some cases absence of food and

shelter. Therefore, in the marginalized world of the poor, theatre cannot but deal with daily struggle for survival.

Examining the above comments, one will therefore state that TFD is interested in leading the community to explore from the socio-cultural resources and experiences within their reach to address their predicaments. Resorting to channels of communication such as TFD, the community members are able to effectively utilize their cultural principles, institutions, creativity as well as optimizing other resources for the transformation of the community.

In Nigeria, TFD has been used to engage different local communities with the aim of supporting them to tackle social challenges that affect them. Health related matters such as HIV/AIDS, immunization, and family planning; politically related matters such as elections, awareness of citizen's rights/responsibilities, good governance and conflict resolution; and socio-economic issues such as building and construction of basic social amenities for the community, advancing formal education, agricultural/environmental development, women/children matters as well as youth development have been emphasized. This study therefore, critically examines how the TFD interventions carried out by the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) in selected communities of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria affected their communities. These communities are Erema in Rivers State and Otusega in Bayelsa State.

Based on the documents obtained from NPTA on the TFD intervention done in both communities, Erema the first community examined in this research is located in Onelga Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State. Rivers State is currently the most commercial and populated State in the Niger Delta region. It is located within the South South geo-political zone of Nigeria and was created as far back as 1976 under the Gen. Yakubu Gowon military regime.

Onelga LGA where Erema community is domiciled was created in 1991 under the then military Head of State, Gen. Ibrahim Babaginda. Onelga is part of Ogba kingdom, with three main clans, namely: Ogba, Ndoni and Egbema. The general language spoken in Erema is the Ogba language. Other languages include Ibo, Egi, and Egbema.

Erema community is divided into three parts namely: Obedi, Abururu, Umuagbnah; however the physical boundaries are indistinguishable. As a community, Erema community is endowed with nature's bounties. Therefore, traditionally, the people's occupations are fishing, farming and trading. Ogba land also has a rich oil reserve. Prominent among the transnational companies (TNCs) found in the community is Shell and Total Oil Companies. Conversely, activities such as bush burning, timber logging as well as adverse effects of oil extractive activities by the oil industries have damaged the local ecosystem making traditional modes of occupation quite difficult.

Furthermore, one of the interesting features as observed in Erema is that a good proportion of the youths have had some form of formal education. In fact, it is not a strange phenomenon to hear community members in Erema speak English or at least Pidgin English. Many of the young people in the community are graduates of various institutions of learning, and have acquired Degrees and Diplomas, nevertheless there are bitter complaints of Youth unemployment and lack of empowerment amongst them. This has often led to some violent agitations among the Youths in the community. This situation has also become more challenging in the midst of leadership crisis and distrust within and outside their community; as well as intractable relationship which the community in general has with Transnational Companies (TNCs) operating in the

community. These challenges have adversely affected the people of Erema and have thus informed the TFD intervention undertaken in their community.

Otuasega being the second community to be examined in this research is located in Ogbia Local Government Area (LGA) of Bayelsa State. Bayelsa State was created in 1996 with just eight LGAs including Ogbia by the then General Sani Abacha military regime. Based on the documents obtained from NPTA, Otuasega is about thirty minutes' drive from the State Capital, Yenagoa. The people trace their origin to Oloibiri, the first community where oil was first explored in Nigeria. The people belong to the Ijaw ethnic group with a common ancestry traced to Olei who is said to be the father of Ogbia. It was said that one Emeyal migrated from Oloibiri and founded a place called Emeyal. Emeyal's son, Asega, migrated from Emeyal and settled at Otuasega. In spite of all the stories of migration and founding fathers, they do not have traditional rulers who are appointed by lineage. Instead, the rulers are elected in a popular election by the entire community. The community is made of mainly fishermen, traders and farmers although some of the inhabitants are employed as menial workers with the TNCs companies in their domain that include Shell and Mobil companies. The signature' sign to this community as one approach it, is a Shell flow station with the unyielding gas flare.

Like Erema Community, Otuasega also houses a good amount of Oil Reserve. However, the community is affected by terrible environmental degradations caused by oil spillage. There are obvious and significant parts of the Otuasega community that remain swampy as a result of the environmental degradations in the community. Apart from the environmental problems, like the Erema community, there are also serious disgruntlements and agitations from Youth members of

the community who are angered by the fact that a number of them have not been considered in terms of good job offers from the TNCs operating in their communities. The Community has also had serious challenges that have led to different scenarios of leadership crisis in the community.

It is important at this point to note that the social challenges and issues which bedevil these communities especially in the area of Youth challenges, unhealthy relationship with TNCs operating in these communities; and community conflicts arising from Leadership crises affecting these communities have led NPTA to deploy the use of TFD intervention as a way of providing these communities with more effective approaches of handling social challenges affecting them so that they can create an enabling environment for social change and development in their communities. The TFD intervention undertaken in these communities was done as part of a project titled: *Local Voices and Choices*. It was an initiative directed at promoting grassroots agency in the Niger Delta region for the promotion of development initiatives. The project was sponsored by Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid (CORDAID) in partnership with Stakeholders Democracy Network (SDN). The project was awarded in 2008.

1.0.1 Nigeria Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA)

NPTA is a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) founded in 1989 for the purpose of promoting participatory engagement of ordinary Nigerians in the process of development. In its over 25 years of existence, NPTA has executed several community interventions across the six geo-political zones of the country. The organization has been concerned with advocacy, capacity

building and skills development to promote peoples' ability to take action that leads to social change and community development. To further elucidate the mission of NPTA, Chukwu-Okoronkwo (2012:1) quoted the statement of the founding President, Oga Steve Abah, where he states that NPTA plays:

...different roles in national development; it identifies and cooperates with grassroot organizations working as change agents within their communities. This encourages enlightenment and participation. Again NPTA has as one of its programmes Theatre for Development workshops. Each workshop should discuss development problems of selected communities. Such workshops will provide the forum for members of NPTA and the communities to share ideas on, discuss the communities' problems. Overall these workshops are meant to suggest levels of collaboration between the communities and appropriate agencies. It is also to suggest solutions, where possible, to the problems.

In carrying out the above mentioned roles, NPTA has also forged an effective partnership with other development organizations and agencies within and outside the country. Chukwu-Okoronkwo (2012) further explains that one level of this relationship is at the community level where it is expected to cooperate with grassroots organizations functioning as base groups in carrying out community development.

NPTA has its principal organizational and operational base in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State with representatives at the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. To strengthen their mission, NPTA in 2000, established the Theatre for Development Centre (TFDC), with support from the Ford Foundation, to function as incubator for training on TFD and other participatory development techniques. TFDC engages in action research as part of its training programme to enable trainees to learn practical skills of participatory engagement that leads to social change in communities. In all approaches, NPTA brings together a multi-disciplinary thinking to its training and project implementation strategies. For this reason, the mission of NPTA is to

promote participatory development through the use of TFD and other participatory strategies. Hence the focus of this research is to critically discuss the use of TFD intervention by NPTA in selected communities of the Niger Delta region, as a way of addressing social challenges that affect communities within that geo-political terrain.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Working towards social change for local communities in the Niger Delta has been poorly handled over the years. This is quite evident in the ways and methods of communication which stakeholders use in engaging local communities in the region. Stakeholders such as Government and TNCs operating in the region often deploy methods of communication that are vertical and top-down in nature. In other words, policies and programmes which are believed to address community challenges are mostly implemented without ensuring that these policies and programmes have the people's active inclusion and participation. More scathing is how the government and TNCs use electronic and print media in ways that do not actually address the real challenges affecting the people within the region. The media is usually exploited to carry out propaganda. This situation has consequently brought about a number of social problems that impinge on their growth and development. Some of these problems are incessant and violent agitations from Youths within the region who are seriously frustrated from lack of good jobs and social empowerment. Others include: environmental challenges, community leadership crisis, degenerating relationship between the community people and TNCs, as well as lack of trust in government programmes.

In the light of the above situation, this study therefore examines the role which TFD as an alternative and community-oriented communication paradigm contributes to enabling communities emerge with better ways of addressing their social challenges and bringing about the desired change.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of Study

The aim of this study is to expound TFD as an alternative and community-oriented communication strategy capable of instigating people's inclusiveness and participation for effective social change. In the light of this, the objectives of this study include the following:

1. To provide a critical account of the communication process deployed by NPTA in the two communities under study.
2. To critically examine how the TFD interventions done in the Niger Delta communities of Otuasega and Erema by NPTA facilitated and fostered active participation of community members.
3. To explore the extent to which the use of TFD addressed some of the social challenges affecting the selected communities in the Niger Delta region.
4. To establish the need for complementing the mainstream media with alternative and community-oriented media in the pursuance of social change and community development.
5. To identify some of the challenges associated with the use of TFD for social change in the selected Niger Delta communities.

1.3 Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this study:

1. How was the TFD process undertaken in Erema and Otuasega Communities by NPTA?
2. How did participants respond to the TFD intervention undertaken in their Community?
3. Was the use of TFD intervention able to address some of the social challenges within the Community?
4. How can mainstream media compliment the alternative and community-oriented media in the pursuance of social change communication for local communities?
5. What are the challenges that can affect the use of TFD for social change in Niger Delta communities?

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the TFD strategy for pursuing social change. This was done by concretely highlighting the efficacy of the TFD process in addressing the myriads of current challenges as they affect communities in the Niger Delta region. The role which alternative communication strategy such as TFD plays in actualizing social change within local communities is emphasized in this study. In order to give a focal and in-depth understanding of the nexus between TFD and social change initiative in Niger Delta communities, this study specifically assesses the NPTA's TFD intervention undertaken in two different communities within the region. These communities are: Erema in Onelga Local Government Area of Rivers State and Otuasega in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The TFD interventions examined in this study were undertaken between 2009 and 2010 by NPTA.

In terms of the limitation, some key community members who actively participated in the TFD intervention done in their communities and who could have formed part of the respondents for the study could not be reached. This was due to their far relocation from the communities. Outside the relocation of key community members, a number of the facilitators from NPTA who would have formed part of the respondents for the study have unfortunately passed on.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study has both academic and social significance. Firstly on the social sphere, this study examines a critical issue that has shaped and impacted deeply on the socio-political history and development of the nation that is the issue of the Niger-Delta development. This study thus examines key issues that include: challenges of Youth development, community leadership challenges, community conflict with Government/Multinationals companies and other socio-economic challenges that have emerged from the region. These issues overtime have generated strong debate, and even violent agitations by various groups operating across the oil rich zone.

Abah et. al (2009:3) note that:

The politics of oil in Nigeria has attracted considerable activists, community protests and scholarly attention in the recent years. But in the midst of these, environmental degradation, leadership challenges, allegations of human rights abuses and poor developmental preference; the Niger-Delta region has not just become a national challenge but has also come under global scrutiny. Furthermore the lack of accountability over how oil is extracted and who benefits in the Niger-Delta has led to demands by many different community-based and militant groups for their rights to the resource to be respected and guaranteed.

These disturbing issues no doubt have adversely affected the social complexities that characterize different communities in the region. It is therefore of essence that we understand these complexities as they are reflected within this region and how they have altered perceptions, awareness, and response to their social existence. It is to this end that this research becomes

significant as it critically examines the People's contributions to social discourse and development. The TFD interventions in Erema and Otuasega communities are therefore examined to ascertain the level of efficacy of the method as people-oriented strategy, capable of revealing in concrete terms the key role that community members contribute to shape the development of their own communities and the nation as a whole.

On the academic front, one of the salient issues around the practice of TFD in Nigeria is the lack of documentation of its interventions and projects; and the changing phases in terms of relevance. Academic attention has since not really focused much on the application of the tool as a research method. It is on this ground that this present work attempts to contribute to the ever emerging discourse of TFD in Nigeria. It also provides an opportunity to further bring to light the important role which TFD practitioners and researchers have played in advancing the practice of TFD across Nigeria.

Furthermore, it is an obvious fact that a significant number of Nigerians live in rural communities. This work puts into a clear perspective a communication approach that can be responsive, inclusive, sensitive, indigenous as well as relevant to the diverse socio-political and cultural issues orchestrated in the Nigerian situation. In any human society, conflict is inevitable. Nigeria is not an exception most especially with its multi-regional, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic divides. Conflict resolution practitioners in Nigeria can also benefit from this work because it provides a procedural document that can guide them in locating the roots of social conflicts and its possible management and transformation in communities as they are found to be in Nigeria today.

Since the conventional research approaches are limited especially in addressing rural communities and the urban poor masses, this work would provide for researchers an alternative that facilitates inclusive participation of development targets or participants in communities. Hence the work serves as reference material for scholars and students, and will open further grounds for alternative development research methods. Above all, this work is an advocacy for TFD as a communication strategy in dealing with our daily emerging complex social realities in Nigeria.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Review of literature for this study is built around Social Change, Social Change Communication, Theatre for Development and the Niger Delta. These provide the study relevant and wide dimensions of scholarly perspectives to the different subject matters examined. However this study critically examines views and scholarly perspectives of different writers and scholars whose works are related to this study with the aim of gaining more insights on them.

2.1 The Concept of Social Change

Social Change as earlier stated implies a number of meanings and perspectives. Simpson et. al (1998:116) explain the term using the two operational words ‘Social’ and ‘Change’:

“Social” meaning living or disposed to live, in companionship with others or pertaining or relating or being connected with society as a natural or ordinary condition of human experiences. On the other hand the term “Change” literally means to render different, alter, modify, transmute, and to quit one and take another. Therefore, Social Change in the society involves working towards modifying it or turning it from one direction to another.

Therefore as a process social change lays emphasis on what happens to people socially and behaviourally in the course of their social relations, as they seek to address their social needs and challenges. In his view point, Olujide (2005:2) conceptualizes “Social change as the modifications and influences in social systems and their sub-units for the purpose of their wholesome and effective functioning”. That is to say it involves initiatives on social issues and challenges affecting a given society in order to attain positive changes in the way people interact socially, in their structured relationships and in the functions performed by these relationships.

Development scholars over the years have been involved in the discourse of social change within the context of development communication interventions and programmes (Tahuwai 2006, Melkote and Steves 2001, Escobar 1995 and Dutta 2011). Dutta (2011:31) points out two broad perspectives through which social change has been conceived namely: the development based perspective and the Marxist based perspective. According to him:

In the development based perspective the goal here was to change the societies based on top-down intervention so that these societies would be modernized... Change is typically thought of in terms of individual-level behavioural or attitudinal modification that operate within the broader structures that exist in society. As opposed to the development-based view of social change Marxist school of thought conceptualized social change in terms of the necessity to bring about structural transformation in order to address the inequalities in society. Here social change is theorized in terms of the capacity of the proposed framework of social organization to differ substantially from the existing structures of organizing.

The two conceptualizations of social change presented here differ widely from each other. In the perspectives of social change as development, social change initiatives are carried out with the goals of enacting and reproducing the power and control of the State Power structures. The principles of social change are dictated by the agenda of national and international agencies; and are oriented towards addressing challenges within recipient societies. In the Marxist approach, emphasis is placed on the material inequities that are perpetuated by political and economic organizing. Therefore, social change in the Marxist approach is situated structurally and is brought about through transformation in social and economic structures that perpetuate the marginalization of the subaltern and rural classes. In the context of this study the Marxist approach is advanced as it emphasizes a process that gives focal attention to the imbalance and marginalization of the subaltern and rural communities.

Chambers (1994) revealed that the imbalance and marginalization of the subaltern and rural classes in social change agenda, fundamentally operated on the basis of assumptions of backwardness of the rural sectors. Here is what Chambers articulates in discussing the underdevelopment of the rural sectors in the social change agenda:

For the beliefs, behaviour and attitudes of most staff, extension agents and others, have believed that their knowledge was superior and that the knowledge of farmers and other local people were inferior; and that they could appraise and analyze but the poor people could not... they 'put down' the poor. Outsiders' beliefs, demeanour, behaviour and attitudes were then self-validating. Treated as incapable, poor people behaved as incapable, reflecting the beliefs of the powerful, and hiding their capabilities even from themselves. The ignorance and inabilities of the rural people were then not just an illusion; they were an artifact of outsiders' behaviours and attitudes, of their arrogant and ignorant manner of interacting with local people (Chambers, 1994:963).

Chambers actually notes that the 'backwardness' of rural populations is epistemologically manufactured through the inherent biases built into the theory and practice of social change agenda. It is this very scripting and fixing of the inability of the rural actors that most times defines the parameters of social change, without listening to the voices of rural participants. Along similar lines, the writing of Paulo Friere (1970) served as one of the most influential lines of work on the role of participation in educational processes, articulating the idea that community member participation is quintessential to challenging and transforming the oppressive nature of the top-down educational systems. At the heart of Freire's work is the idea of dialogical communication that respects the personhood of each human being and attends to active meaning-making capacity of community members. Furthermore, participation is quintessential to the collective capacity of communities to address the diverse social challenges affecting them.

Essential to the idea of social change is the conceptualization of a participatory space or site that brings together participants and where the views of the participants are articulated in the social change agenda. According to Dutta and Basnyat (2008:248) “Participation is operationalized in a wide spectrum of roles that includes: Participation in information gathering, participation in information dissemination, participation in consultation, and participation in decision-making”. Participation as information gathering use participatory channels for the purposes of gathering data in order to create more effective social change messages. The emphasis is on creating the strongest social change agenda with the highest efficiency. Participation as information dissemination conceptualizes participatory processes and spaces as channels for carrying out information. Therefore, participation is configured in the form of support groups, community meetings, radio listeners group, folk performances, or as emphasized in this study TFD programmes. These are developed as strategic components of the channel mix for the social change campaign.

In participation as consultation, the role of the community members emerges into one of offering guidelines to the dominant structures, with the goal of ensuring that local voices are well considered in the development of the programme planning. The greatest level of community-centeredness is seen in the participation in decision-making framework, where the local community emerges and participates in developing the problem configuration and subsequently in the consideration of possible solutions to the problem. In this framework, the locus of decision-making is situated in the local community. It is essential to note that not only do grassroots process of social change often emerges from the participation as decision making framework, but they also have to negotiate the other functions of participation as consultation,

dissemination, and information gathering (Chamber 1994, Dutta and Basnyat 2008 and Dutta 2011).

Responding to the critique of the top-down models, Francis (2001) noted that a number of international organizations, funding agencies and development agencies have started incorporating participation in their social change campaigns and agendas. Francis remark accordingly that:

Large-scale bureaucracies such as World Bank have incorporated participation in their conceptualization and application of development principles and interventions. Empowerment of local communities has emerged as a key principle in several World Bank projects, as well as government and public-private partnerships. In addition, a large number of activist projects, project of resistance and social movement involve communities in processes of social change (Francis, 2001:147).

Therefore the specific goal of social change as a participatory process is to create opportunities for listening to unheard voices of marginalized communities and thus rupture the hegemony of the mainstream ideologies of development that exhume agency from local and subaltern communities, turning them into targets of development informed by the expert knowledge of outsiders. Participatory social change in this regard disrupts the knowledge claims by expert networks of knowledge production, by co-constructing alternative rationalities and knowledge claims. This co-construction consequently brings about the foundations for social change interventions and projects that attend to the inequalities and other social challenges that are directly or indirectly perpetuated by the hegemonic structures.

Ekong (2003) further elucidates this concept by highlighting some basic dimensions of actualizing social change in the society. The dimensions of social change as he explains take the

following forms: Economic, Political, Cultural, Technological and Behavioural dimensions. Economic dimension occurs in the mode of production, economic relations and status of people in the society. Political dimension as he notes take place in the distribution and operational mechanism of social and political power within the society. Cultural dimension is used to describe all changes that take place in every part of culture, be it material or non-material cultures, such as values, beliefs and modes of fashion. It involves the alterations in the way people perceive and relate to the environment. Technological dimension is a continuous process of change within technical materials and physical practices in the society. It also entails the application of scientific knowledge and inventions to practical problems in the society. However, of the different dimensions as examined by Ekong, Behavioural dimension is quite central. This is because it impacts on the knowledge, attitudes and skills of Individuals, leading them to positive changes in social relations as well as in individual and collective aspirations. When the attitudinal perceptions of the people are positive, it becomes possible for them to effectively respond to the different dimensions of changes they need to address in their social milieu. TFD examined in this study gives focal attention to the behavioural dimension of actualizing social change. In this way, the community members are better disposed to participate and respond effectively to the other essential dimensions as explained above.

2.2 Social Change Communication

Communication that is situated in relation to social change projects and interventions is conceptualized in two fundamentally different frameworks: message-based framework and process-based framework. Dutta (2011:32) reveals that the message-based framework of communication also referred to as the transmission view of communication, “operates on the

basic model of the sender and the receiver, where messages of change are sent out to receiver population with the aim of influencing or persuading the population to respond in line with the desired behaviour”. The message-based framework therefore emphasizes the creation of messages that are able to reach the desired target audience, and have a large impact on the population. On the other hand, Dutta (2011:32) states that “the process-based framework to communication for social change focuses on the shared spaces of interpretation and meaning making through which communication comes to constitute social realities”. In this regard, communication is seen as an active process of meaning making through which individuals and communities come to understand their contexts and act upon them. The process-based framework emphasizes the cultural processes through which, individuals and collectives enact their agency, in their relationship to social structures. This is essentially the goal of TFD interventions and programmes.

Furthermore, in conceptualizing communication for social change there exists a wide range of approaches, and these approaches operate on the axes of two dialectical tensions that have been historically theorized in the study of social change processes. Dutta (2008) identifies these as individual-level approaches versus structural change approaches on one hand; and top-down approaches versus participatory approaches on the other hand. Whereas the differences between the individual-level versus structural-level changes in communication for social change are articulated on the basis of the locus, focus, and goals of change; the differences between the top-down versus participatory methods of social change communication are articulated on the basis of the conceptualization of communication, communicative processes tools and strategies used, and the modes of communication deployed by the social change processes.

Individual Approaches: Starting with the early theorizations of communication for development, individual-level approach to social change dominates much of the mainstream literature on communication for social change, arguing that changes in Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior (KAB) at the level of the individual would bring about changes in individual behaviours and practices, which in turn would constitute broader societal-level change (Lerner, 1964 and Schramm, 1964). These social change campaigns were however constituted under the framework of development communication projects that were directed at changing what they described as ‘primitive’ Third World societies by targeting individual members. Pathways of influence were developed for shifting the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of target populations in the Third World, with the goal of aligning them with modernist principles of development that were presented as universal desirable markers of development. For example, Schramm (1964:28) points out the role of mass media in teaching modernizing skills at the individual level:

Any social change in the direction of modernization requires a program in teaching the necessary skills. Some of these are general skills; for example, no society will modernize very far until a substantial proportion of the population can read and count. Others are quite specific-for example, repairing radios and farm machinery, operating machine tools, book-keeping, surveying, medicine and pharmacy. Almost invariably, skills like these are in short supply when development begins, and one of the great tasks of smoothing social change is to make technical skills and technical development march at the same pace, so that technology does not wait for workers, nor skilled workers for machines and jobs.

The focus of the individual-level approaches is to operate from within the status quo, and further perpetuate the status quo by emphasizing modernization as a panacea to the constructions of under development. The articulation of modernization as solution emphasizes the teaching of skilled workers to participate in the labour processes of the capitalist economy, to serve the interests of the status quo in generating profits for the owners of the capital. The emphasis is on

maximizing the profit margins of the owners of the capital, which in turn is perceived to bring about development, as opposed to addressing issues of redistributive justice.

Since the early years of social change campaigns developed by communication scholars, the emphasis has been on using mass-mediated messages to target audience members, with the goals of modifying their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Lerner 1976, Rogers 1973 and Schramm 1964). Schramm (1964) for instance, discusses the role of the mass media in widening horizons, focusing attention, raising aspirations, conferring status, helping to form tastes, teaching and training individuals.

Ultimately, the individual-level approach to social change is carried out through information campaigns that seek to persuade people in target communities, and these persuasive campaigns seek to bring about the status quo intention in terms of the attitudes and behavioral change. A wide variety of information-based social change campaigns have been carried out since the 1960s, covering areas such as family planning, immunization, use of mosquito nets, condom use, and sanitation practices, with the goal of bringing about individual-level change in order to develop societies. In summary, social change in such traditional approaches continues to be seen as an aggregate of individual-level changes in the community.

Structural Approaches: Founded on the principles of dialectic materialism in Marxist theory, the structural approaches to social change fundamentally note the presence of inequitable structures across the globe that underlie the marginalization and erasure of the subaltern sectors from the discursive and material spaces of social systems (Cloud, 2007). The roles of access to economic

modes of production and ownership of capital are underlined in the theorizing of social change communication. Social change communication here is written into the class conflict and class antagonism that are symptomatic of capitalist systems of production, drawing upon the concept of exploitation of labour that drives⁷ the profits of the capitalist system. The very existence of class differences to contemporary capitalist societies is the breeding ground for the praxis of social change. Here unpaid labour is the profit of the capitalist classes, and therefore, the struggles of the proletariat are defined in terms of the struggles to seek ownership of the systems of production. These approaches highlight the fundamental inequities in social structures that produce and reproduce cycles of marginalization, exploitation, and dispossession. As Melkote (2000:46) argues that:

As long as societies distribute needs and power unequally between populations, it is unethical for communications and human service professionals to help solve minor and/or immediate problems while ignoring the systemic barriers created by societies that permit or perpetuate inequalities among citizens. Real change is not possible unless we deal with the crucial problem in human societies: lack of economic and social power among individuals at the grassroots.

Therefore, the structural approaches to communication for social change pay critical attention to the underlying economic inequalities and imbalances in society. In this context social change communication is directed at attempting to transform these very structural inequalities.

Scholars such as Cloud (2006) and Lee Artz (2006) foreground the role of the material in processes of social change. Cloud (2006:75) for instance, argues that “the efficacy of resistive practices depends upon their ability to collectively disrupt systems of production. Without the threat of the material intervention to fundamentally strike at the economic base of capitalism, the legitimacy of communication for social change is limited to the realm of the symbolic”. Therefore, she discusses the role of the material in its relationship to the symbolic as an entry

point for social change. Along similar lines, scholars taking the structural approach to marginalization across the globe pay attention to the large-scale data about inequalities, putting forth arguments about the role of neoliberal policies on poverty and inequalities. Social change communication once again is thought about in terms of specific interventions that are directed at addressing issues of redistributive justice. Social transformation and redistributive justice become the focal points of structural approaches to communication for social change.

Top-down Approaches: As noted earlier, the traditional approaches to social change are based upon mainstream ideas of development and modernization, drawing upon the fundamental idea that underdevelopment is a deficiency and a product of backward cultural traits that act as barrier to progress (Schramm 1964). Modernization, based on universal values attached to economic growth, growth in mass media, growth in capitalist opportunities and technological progress, is the goal of top-down approaches to development. With reference to the Middle East, Lerner (1964:45-46) fundamentally points to the fact that:

...millions throughout the Middle East are yearning to trade in their old lives; for such newer ways is what modernization promises to most people... the Western model of modernization exhibits certain components and sequences whose relevance is global. Everywhere, for example, increasing urbanization has tended to raise literacy; rising literacy has tended to increase media exposure; increasing media exposure has “gone with” wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation (voting)... The point is that the secular process of social change, which brought modernization to the Western world, has more than antiquarian relevance to today’s problems of the Middle East tradition. Indeed, the lesson is that Middle Eastern modernizers will do well to study the historical sequence of Western growth.

Based on the core ideas that Western-based modernization principles define as the universal markers of progress and development for humankind, development communication campaigns are run via mass media to diffuse the messages of enlightenment. Development is achieved

through urbanization, literacy, development of media exposure, greater modern economic participation, and voting, all of which are treated as markers of modernization.

Through the principles of modernization, Western values are placed as the universal aspirations for cultures and societies across the globe. The treatment of these values as secular values, coined from their Western roots and situated more in the context of universal human values; serves to support the agenda of top-down development campaigns. Funding structures such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ford Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation determine the agenda, objectives, and goals of the development projects; networks of expert campaign developers from the academia, civil societies, as well as the private sector, team up to develop the interventions based on pre-existing problem configurations and solution frames. The solutions are implemented as strategic persuasive campaigns through mass-mediated as well as other one-way communication channels. The campaigns are then evaluated for their effectiveness, thus continuing the cycle of development campaigns.

Participatory Approaches: In response to the observation that most social change communication strategies are diffused through the mass media which uses linear flow of communication from the sender to the receiver of development messages, Latin American scholars noted that such conceptualizations of social change perpetrated the domination of certain classes over the majority of others within nation states, and the domination of the United States over the Latin American states externally (Dutta 2008, Boal 1985 and Friere 1970). It was in articulating this criticism to the classical pedagogy of what he termed as “banking education”

that Paulo Freire (1970) articulated the notion of the “pedagogy of the oppressed” that emphasized dialogic forms of communication built in mutual trust and respect. It is also along these lines that in responding to the traditional domain of top-down development communication campaigns, Robert Chambers (1983:79) noted the importance of listening to the poor as the starting point for effective participation and developing best solutions:

Respect for the poor and what they want offsets paternalism. The reversal this implies is that outsiders should start not with their own priorities but with those of the poor, although however much self-insight they have, outsiders will still project their own values and priorities. In what follows, too am trapped, an outsider asking what poor people want. All one can hope is that the effort of trying to find out, of asking again and again and doubting the outcomes, will check some of the worse effects of core-periphery paternalism, and the more the priorities of the poor are known, the easier it will be to see what it is best to do.

By and large, participatory approach takes a parallel position to the top-down approach in communicating development and addressing social challenges of those who are within less developed and subaltern communities. In essence processes of social change are founded in the capacity of local communities to come together as a collective. It is in this identity as a collective that the community becomes key stakeholder in issues that affect them, developing the capacities to identify the absence of resources; developing community-based understandings of the problems, and putting together solutions that are directed at addressing these problems.

The participatory approach utilizes participatory channels and platforms for the purposes of advocacy. The inputs of the local community are sought for the purpose of ensuring that the message is effective in achieving the desired social change objectives from their own perspective. It is in line with this ideology that TFD is being examined in this study as a useful

channel and strategy to actualize possible participatory approach to communicating social change in subaltern and local communities.

2.3 Approaches to Social Change Communication

Social change communications are manifested through different approaches. These approaches sometimes reveal interconnections as well as divergent features. Examining approaches to social change communication offers this study the opportunity to look widely into globally situated spaces of communication. This study thus critically examines some of these approaches as a way of establishing an anchor rationale upon which the option of TFD as strategy of social change communication becomes a very useful approach. Approaches to be examined include:

Street Protests: Streets protests are performances on streets that challenge mainstream hegemony by seeking to reclaim the streets as public sites of agitating for social change (Fend 2001 and Harvey 2001). They are typically expressed in the form of planned marches, rallies, and walks that are organized on the streets on specific issues, policies, and social injustices (St. Clair and Sekula, 2000). The goal of these protests is to challenge structures and social institutions, and to voice alternative rationalities publicly. Although contemporary theorists studying street protests have noted the politicization of urban hegemony that seek to recapture these spaces to narrate stories that are counter to the narratives against consumption, commoditization, and privatization. Smith (2004) remarks that the meaning of street as public space is being re-appropriated and re-interpreted from site for struggle, public debate and contestation, to articulating the vision of street as highly corporatized and privatized vision. (Bogad 2003:76) sheds light on this as follows:

In contemporary neoliberal politics as more communicative spaces have been taken over by neoliberal hegemony that excludes the poorer sectors from participating in these spaces, global social movements however continues to foreground the vitality of resisting the taking over of the streets by private corporations by radically participating in the streets as sites for articulation of resistance and the discursive spaces of knowledge production.

Street protests therefore seek to draw attention of the public and those of policy-makers by taking over the signifiers attached to the streets and by utilizing these signifiers to articulate the politics of social change.

The very problematization of the street as a method of enunciation and collective action remains at the heart of the struggles of legitimacy that seeks to organize in the streets to disrupt the status quo. For instance, during the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle, protesters from across the globe took to performing on the streets in order to draw attention to the oppressive political economy of power and control carried out by the WTO (Cockburn et al., 2000).

Cockburn et.al thus recount that:

The protests were performed at the sites of the WTO convention, and thus disrupted the symbolic markers of WTO with alternative narratives. In this instance, the street protests were performed through symbolic markers of resistance such as sea turtle costumes for the marchers to wear to protest the WTO's ruling of the Endangered Species Act, which requires shrimp to be caught with turtle excluder devices, to be an unfair trade barrier...Marchers carried posters and slogans that symbolically articulated the politics of the movement, constructing alternative stories to neoliberalism. The "truth" claims of the global corporations, policy-making bodies and nation states were ruptured with alternative truth claims narrated on the streets (Cockburn et. al, 2000:56)

In performing the stories of change, street protests usually take on a carnival-like character, imbued with banners, posters, songs, dances, speeches, poetry slams, graffiti writing, chanting of slogans, and so on. The celebratory performances on the streets become symbolic markers of the protest, mapping out a space in public memory and public discourse that challenges hegemonic

and neoliberal narratives. Smith (2004) uses the metaphors of “playfulness” and “carnavalesque.” strategically to mark up public sites, and to interrupt the narrative of neoliberalism with multiple counter narratives. Street protests as Smith (2004) further remarks is a form of praxis that interrupt hegemonic narratives through the circulation of symbolic markers and messages that explicitly question the status quo and the public relations messages of the status quo that inundate mainstream media.

In Nigeria, street protest has been explored at different times by pressure groups and Labour Unions to agitate for their rights and to question the status quo on a number of social issues. Some of these street protests have produced some very significant social outcomes for the nations. A citable one in this regard was the massive street protest against the removal of subsidy which led to the hike of petroleum in January 2012. Nevertheless, street protests in most cases have always suffered the negativity of it been an opening for violence and lawless mannerisms. Even though the social course for which it intends to pursue is ideal, in most cases it becomes a ploy by unpatriotic groups and individuals to execute their nefarious intentions.

Gheraos: This approach of social change takes an even more radical and revolutionary dimension than street protest. Gheraos refers to the encircling of public spaces that are perceived by community participants as spaces for achieving social justice. Gheraos draw their performative capacity from the ability to disrupt and challenge the status quo through the public performance of resistance, demanding justice, equity, and structural transformation. The taken-for-granted inequities that are often built into dominant structures become visible through the presence of the collective in the geographic spaces of the power structure. Social resistance is

communicated in the disruption of public spaces by taking over these spaces. Gollriack (2008) for example recalls the case of the indigenous population of Chiapas region known as Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional, or EZLN) in Mexico on January 1, 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement took effect:

...rebel farmers from the local jungle communities moved into several cities in Chiapas, briefly occupying these cities, and thus drawing attention to the oppression of the indigenous peoples and rural poor in the mainstream discursive spaces of Mexican and global politics. The taking over of the cities marked off the public sites in these cities, and therefore the broader discursive spaces, with messages of resistance that challenged the hegemony of neoliberalism, drawing attention to the oppressive forces of neoliberalism that operated in carrying out the marginalization of the subaltern sectors.

The presence of the collective encircling the public site stands as a representation of disruption, attempting to stop the day-to-day activities of the dominant structural configuration and drawing attention to the social issues at hand for which they demand change. For example South Africa, in time past, explored this model to demand change of the Apartheid regime. For many years, the Black South Africa resisted the Apartheid regime by occupying the streets of South Africa. They resisted all political oppression and intimidation against their cause even to the point of death.

More recently in 2011, the Egyptians as a way of demanding a change in the perceived oppressive reign of Hosni Mubarak, occupied the Tahrir square for weeks resisting every kind of coercive confrontations from the political authorities of the state. This radical gesture was a fundamental demonstration that was part of what has now been termed the “Arab Spring” that saw a number of North Africa and Middle East countries revolting against the existing political authorities demanding a total change in the socio-political system which they have condemned as been too oppressive, corrupt and undemocratic. Like street protest, gheroas despite its radical potentialities in seeking social change, the society is left sprawling due to the devastations of

radical protests and social chaos that characterizes it. As it is often the case, the society having gone through these social quagmires, is taken aback and left with a more assiduous challenge of rebuilding an environment left with more shattered and bloody experiences.

Self-Sacrifice: Hunger Strikes and Suicides

Historically self-sacrifice has operated as a drastically powerful model in social change movements and experiences across the globe. The self is subjected into the space of political action; the body becomes the identity of enunciation, and symbolically creates a discursive space for resistance as it disrupts the taken-for-granted assumptions about politics and citizenship (Sweeney, 1993). Hunger strikes, for instance, depriving the body of food, have remained an act of resistance in movements of civil disobedience across the globe.

“In protesting against the oppressive policies of globalization and political oppressions that have placed them at the margins of contemporary economies, farmers, miners and indigenous people across the globe have committed suicides as the ultimate expressions of resistance to the state-sponsored neoliberal violence carried out in the form of globalization” (Majid, 2008:29). Majid further recounts the story of the suicide committed by a South Korean farmer, Kyung Hae, President of the Korean Advanced Farmer Federation, in the Mexican resort of Cancun in 2003 when he was attending the Fifth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference:

On the day the WTO conference opened (coinciding with the Korean Thanksgiving holiday of Chusok and around the second anniversary of 9/11), Kyung Hae climbed the steel barricades separating protesters from officials and stabbed himself to death, thus concluding a long attempt (including a self-stabbing in Geneva a decade earlier) to bring the world’s attention to the destructive impact of globalization on South Korea’s rural communities “I am crying out the words to you that have so long time inside my body,” he wrote. Kyung Hae’s suicide at the very site of neoliberal hegemony became a media

spectacle, thus disrupting the representations of the WTO with the stories of violence perpetrated by global policies that reify the power and control of transnational corporation (TNCs) in the global South (Majid, 2008:30).

Suicide in this context tragically breaks past the controlled and strategic use of symbolic markers, by articulating stories that are altogether different. These are stories of deprivation, of structural violence and desperation, and of loss in the face of the neoliberal project and its instruments of power and control. Another example in this regard is the Tunisian Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation that sparked off an unprecedented wide scale socio-political revolution across Tunisia as well as in major parts of North Africa and some other parts of the Middle East referred to as the Arab Spring. His self-immolation in Sidi- Bouzid ultimately led to the ousting of longtime President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011.

However it is important to state that even though actions of these kinds sometimes lead the people to act seriously on their social and political challenges, they are not sustainable and are socially depleting in nature. Worse still they often create in the heart of the people a mindset of violent radicalism. These kinds of feeling put the society in the danger of been battered by social disorder. Painfully this is the hazardous experience that now characterizes a number of countries like those of the Middle East that went through the Arab Spring.

The Media

Media constitutes a dynamic and contested terrain where multiple social actors compete to have control over the representational space; particularly in the realm of social change process that seeks to bring about transformation in the social structure. Securing access to the means of media

production becomes germane, as it is through these mediated sites that critical social discourses are introduced into the mainstream.

The instrumentality of the media has over the years provided platforms for the circulation of information and social agenda that aim at gaining public support for social action that leads to social change. Due to its large scale influence on social change, media contents especially as contained in electronic and print media have seriously been influenced and possessed by hegemonic class and corporations. Kumar (2001:57) with reference to the American society critically comments that:

The media, as sites of power, play a pivotal role within the United States, constituting a depoliticized citizenry that operates within the realms of selfishness and consumption as frameworks for national choice, thus leaving tremendous openings for corporate powers to exert their influence on the mass media, determining both media agendas as well as media frames... As sites of power media represent the interest of transnational hegemony, narrating the image of a consumption driven society..."

The influence of media content in the social colouration of a capitalist American system is not different from its influences as it occurs in many other countries outside America, Nigeria inclusive. Over the years, the electronic and print media have been utilized by the hegemonic class and authorities in the society to shape the social system of the country. Political authorities find it a very powerful instrument, using the products of the media to exert influence on the socio-political experiences of the country. This is quite evident during occasions of political campaigns and elections.

The emphasis of social movements therefore is to contest the sites and approaches of media power both implicitly and explicitly. These movements not only question the legitimacy of the

images and information transmitted in the mainstream media but also seek to create alternative interpretations and narratives. This is done through processes of organizing that seeks to produce and distribute alternative reading (Dutta, 2011). An alternative media in this regard is the New Media reflected through Internet activities which development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have brought about. Warkentin (2001:276) points to the fact that:

ICTs play a vital role in social movements, as social movements use email, newsgroup, mailing lists, forums, websites, streaming, blogs, social media and hacktivism to communicate with each other, to communicate with key stakeholders, to prevent an identity to outside stakeholders, and to challenge dominant structures and the rationalities perpetuated in these structures. The internet has emerged as a strategic platform for social movement to mobilize and organize protest, to communicate with members of the public and to put forth resistive strategies that question the legitimacy of the narratives circulated in the dominant structures.

Essentially the Internet serves as a useful tool for the provision of alternative information and perspectives that are typically suppressed by the mainstream media, thus creating spaces for alternative narratives, ideologies and voices that challenge the dominant structures. On the other hand, despite the proficiency of the internet to engage social mobilization, it still remains within the comprehensive domain of ICT knowledgeable persons; and as such may not be quite effective in facilitating social change among people and communities that are yet to gain wide presence of ICT facilities and its applicability. Therefore exploring applicable alternative media that effectively connect and elicit the needed response of community members especially those of the subaltern, to effect social actions that can impact the desired social change in their communities becomes very important. It is in this regard that this study examines TFD as a useful alternative tool that is capable of eliciting and leading local and subaltern communities to positive actions that creates the desired social change and development in the community.

2.4 TFD Practice and Social Change

Unlike the above examined approaches to social change communication that are more committed to the domains of issues as they directly or indirectly, affect national and transnational political spheres, TFD is keenly interested on the social plights of local and subaltern communities with the aim of engendering participation that is capable of leading to progressive social change.

Furthermore a number of these approaches such as Street Protest, Gheroas, Industrial Strikes and Hunger Strikes even though are capable of engendering change in the society, usually lead to the degeneration of peace and social harmony and the breakdown of law and order. It is in this light that TFD becomes an effective communication strategy that is capable of leading the community to peaceable changes and transformation. TFD gives premium to a process of amicably finding and searching out those actual areas where the community real needs must be addressed. It aims at a community-based and friendly response to the problems affecting the community. More so rather than depend on the technological media knowledge of few or selected individuals that make addressing social problems a hegemonic or exclusive ideology, TFD brings together community members to a common place of social interaction that offers members of the community a sense of belonging and communal participation. Walker (2010:78) while describing how progressive social change should unfold in a society, state in a likewise manner that:

Progressive social change is a profoundly democratic undertaking. At its best, people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, abilities and ages join together in developing and implementing creative solutions to social problems. This organizing amplifies the voices of those whose interests are too often overlooked. Money or selected individuals alone do not bring about change, but when people come together and form organizations to focus their collective power, social change can happen.

The potentiality in the TFD approach is in its ability to consciously organize, to educate, and to mobilize the community to discover and participate better; by committing themselves to ideas and action plans that consequently turn them into critical players in social change agenda.

Epskamp (2006:33) rightly recounts that:

From the 1970s on local media (especially the performing arts) TFD has been experimented with as tools for development support communication. These initiatives fitted in with community-development strategies focused on 'self-reliance' and 'small scale' development that were already available, inexpensive to work with, and well known to the community. The suitability with local culture enabled development workers to illustrate techniques in a way that made them clear and accessible. In this manner TFD came into being either as a direction and persuasion by means of theatre performance or as participatory learning through TFD workshops. Either way, the focus was on changing the behavior of people.

As a way of analyzing TFD historically, this study discusses a wide range of TFD interventions beginning with its global trends and then the African trends accordingly. In doing this, the study will provide an in-depth variance and multi-dimensional approaches to the practice of TFD across the globe as well as in Africa. The experiences of scholars, organizations and institutions that have significantly informed the underlying principles of the practice will be here examined. This thus provides a basis to demonstrate current relevance and functionality of TFD experiences as examined in this study.

2.5 TFD Practices across the Globe

Theatre for Development has been experimented with globally in the context of social change and community development. It initially evolves from the activities within the field of (non-formal) education and development support communication. This fact in itself has influenced its history. Epskamp (2006:22) rightly observes that "TFD has been an instrument of social change within the framework of development approaches. Moreover...TFD has influenced development

and cultural policies, and policy developments have recognized the role of arts in society and its use for development purposes”. Thinking in terms of development has a history originating in the Euro-American enlightenment. The product of this ideology is a grand narrative –especially strong in the field of development studies during the 1950s and early 1960s- that invested modernization with great expectation. In this regard development communication was given a distinction from the conventional top-down model to more effective bottom-up models of planning and managing of development activities.

As already noted, the top-down model is characteristic of private enterprise and state regimes working along centralized and hierarchical government principles. Planners and decision makers at the top of the hierarchy identify and develop plans for projects and programmes for the beneficiaries of these projects and programmes. The beneficiaries may or may not be consulted during the identification process (Epskamp, 2006). In general, they are not involved in decision making, nor do they carry large responsibilities in the implementation of the projects or programmes. They are expected to cooperate and contribute when required and to maintain the project’s results after its implementation.

From the 1960s onwards, the development models used by the government agencies supported by donors came under heavy criticism especially from development practitioners working under the aegis of NGOs and University departments. Challenging the technocratic approach to development communication, they started small scale field pilots to prove that participatory way of working could be more effective than the conventional approach featuring the top-down social engineering. This bottom-up form of participatory planning and management involved the

beneficiaries as primary stakeholders in the planning of their own development from the first step onwards. This created stakeholders ownership of the planned activities. It also increased the likelihood that they would not only take part in the implementation of these activities but also feel responsible for sustaining the results afterwards. In other words “it facilitates participatory development by ensuring that the primary stakeholders have a say at each level of programme implementation (planning and design, decision making, implementation and evaluation)”. (Belise, Bhog and John, 1997).

Top-down and bottom-up models differ strongly in philosophy, in strategy and process. They may serve the same overall purpose but use different approach to realize them. Both models differ in the way problems and needs are identified and praxes are carried out and managed. TFD clearly falls into the category of bottom-up model which emphasizes participatory development. As a bottom-up model for development, TFD aims at achieving community participation, empowerment and learning by doing. Looking at the historical development of the TFD practice, three pioneers can be fore grounded as having had a significant influence due to their efforts in developing, stimulating, and systematizing some of the ideas and principles that inform the practice. They include; Paolo Freire, the Brazilian adult educator and philosopher; Bertolt Brecht the German radical theatre director; and another Brazilian, Augusto Boal a theatre professional whose writings have contributed greatly to the further development of TFD till date. Outside these pioneers, there have also emerged a number of theatre practitioners across different parts of the world as well as institutions and organizations whose activities have been used to further bring to light the impact which the TFD model has in supporting processes of social changes and

transformation in communities. It is therefore necessary to examine some of the ideas and praxes as undertaken by some scholars and professionals beginning with the pioneers.

Paulo Friere: Friere is a Brazilian educationist whose ideas and pedagogy have informed and inspired participatory and non-formal education worldwide. His classical work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) brings to light a new approach in education that requires communication in the form of starting a continuing dialogue between the learners or trainees and their trainers, teachers, animators or facilitators. In his view literacy training was the only way out for the poor, providing a voice to the voiceless and breaking away from the “culture of silence”. Learning to read and write would provide the learners with an opportunity to relate the use of abstract signs (written word) to their own every day existence. Participants in literacy classes not only learn to read and write, but are also made to be conscious of the repressive nature of the society and their own oppressed position. He thus criticized what he described as the ‘banking method’ of learning, where learners are considered empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. Friere suggests that knowledge begins with the awareness of knowing little and knowing that you know little, people are prepared to know more. The process of Friere’s methodology is action-reflection praxis, where participants are encouraged to take a step back from their circumstance and to examine them objectively in order to develop critical consciousness of what they see. This reflection offers the perspective and strength to then re-engage in action to change these circumstances. There is a strong emphasis on the dialogical nature of communication and education, where dialogue is recognized as an inherent human phenomenon and the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized (Taylor, 1993).

Freire holds the opinion that educative programmes including literacy and numeracy – should contain a political component, implicitly or explicitly. According to his pedagogies, education cannot be neutral: it is focused either on the consolidation of the existing (oppressive) regime, or on the liberation or emancipation of the people. The people should become aware of these two conflicting tendencies. The only way in which they could do so according to Freire- was by becoming literate. Freire himself used the term ‘conscientisation’. This concept used by Freire is now widely adopted to refer to the process of raising social awareness through collective self-inquiry and reflection; and transforming their realities by collective action. Ultimately this should provide people with the skills to participate actively in a democratic society. In Freire’s idea the oppressed illiterate must be offered the opportunity to become conscious of the fact that they can change their own situation. This idea which he refers to as “critical consciousness” is at the basis of popular education movement of Latin America and has inspired participatory education globally. Despite not being a Theatre practitioner, Paulo Friere’s ideas has greatly influenced and informed the development of TFD practice across the globe.

Bertolt Brecht: Bertolt Brecht is a German playwright of the early twentieth century whose ideas of Epic Theatre made a huge influence on modern Theatre practice especially with regards to TFD. He developed aesthetics of theatre techniques while experimenting with the use of non-realistic theatre devices and with what he described as ‘alienation effect’. This served to keep the public from identifying themselves too much with the characters and succumbing to the dream effect of the conventional narrative. In essence Brecht developed his main ideas about drama and theatre as opposed to Aristotelian dramas. The latter aimed at the effect of catharsis in the spectator, the freeing of emotions of fear and compassion, but for Brecht this was not the right

effect to strive for in the Marxist context of his time. Instead he wanted a form of drama and theatre that would stimulate an increased sense of social and political awareness in the mind of the spectator of his own society (amidst recession, unemployment and racing fascism). The focus shifted from involvement to critical distance.

The Epic techniques, with which Brecht wanted to create an alienation effect, by placing the world of the characters on stage, at a distance that alienated them from Spectators' world, were derived from different disciplines and times. This resulted in a performance and play structure that had frequent and short sequences , quick changes of location, time or action, the use of songs and very simple set pieces and an 'epic' acting style in which the actor is aware of the audience (speaking directly to them) instead of 'forgetting' them as is the case in 'fourth wall' theatre. Brecht's ideas and techniques are still among the most influential ones whenever discussion focuses on the possibilities of Theatre as a tool for communicating social change.

Augusto Boal: Augusto Boal developed a critical dramaturgy during the 1970s and 80s. He was inspired by the aesthetics of Bertolt Brecht and later by his fellow Brazilian Paulo Friere's critical pedagogies. Boal developed a didactics of progressive theatre techniques. Experimenting with the use of theatre as a rehearsal of social interventions, he viewed theatre as a laboratory and platform for conscientization, awareness raising and problem solving. In elaborating his first and ground breaking scholarly work, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal developed a wide range of dramatic strategies and games that include the following:

Image Theatre: In this form of Theatre, Boal include the static body forms to portray emotion. In image theatre, participants use their bodies to display feelings, emotion and attitudes. Boal claims that image theatre is the most reviving form of theatre because of its ease to portraying thoughts due to the absence of language. The method is often used to explore internal or external oppression, unconscious thoughts and feelings.

Invisible Theatre: This form of theatre is usually performed in public places without the audience knowing that it is a staged event. The audience can intervene and take part in the piece. The purpose of this kind of theatre is to make the audience reconsider their views on the issues so performed. If someone in the audience reacts so viciously to the set-up scene, it gives them an opportunity to rethink their stance on the issue.

Simultaneous Dramaturgy- This was a form of dramatic strategy that combines participatory propaganda and community-generated theatre. In this form of Theatre actors performed a play with a problem in it. Once the point where the problem is reached, audience members are then asked to give solutions to the problem, while actors acted out the solution. This type of theatre promoted audience participation and converted the monologue into a dialogue. It was this form that eventually led to another similar form which he described as Forum theatre.

Forum Theatre: This form of theatre gives what Boal described as a ‘rehearsal for reality’. In this form of theatre, actors perform a scripted play that has social oppression in it. The oppression is relevant to the audience. Once the play is performed it is run once again. However, the second time members of the audience can interrupt at any time and take the place of the

protagonist (the oppressed individual) in the play. The audience member that steps down onto the stage is called the 'spect-actor'. The objective of the spect-actor is to overthrow the oppression. The solutions that are found by the spect-actors can be used by the audience to fight the oppression that they face in real life. This form of theatre was the most common and significant of Boal's dramatic strategies.

Legislative Theatre: Legislative theatre is similar to Forum theatre. It involves the participation of spect-actors. However, instead of just discussing matters relating to oppression that they face in real life, Legislative Theatre was used to propose laws based on the result of the play. Boal who ran for a city councillor in Rio de-Janeiro in 1992 won the election and was elected as the city councilor. As a city councilor, Boal used the legislative theatre to propose several laws and were passed by the lawmakers of the Legislative assembly.

Through these various dramatic forms, Augusto Boal was able to establish himself as a formidable and foremost practitioner in TFD practice that provided strategies towards addressing the needs of lower classes of the society and propelling them to see the significant role they possess in changing their political, economic and social circumstances.

Inspired by the works of Boal as well as Paolo Friere and Brecht, a lot of Scholars across the globe have been able to develop on different approaches to TFD practice and have applied it locally to address social issues affecting local communities. Across the globe, a number of development institutions and organizations have experimented with TFD processes to communicate social changes. Social concerns such as Child Abuse, Health, Gender Rights,

Poverty, Social Conflict, Social Welfare, Cultural Promotion and Education, Agricultural and other Political and Economic matters have been tackled through the use of TFD. The main aim of exploring TFD methodology is to get the mass of people to be more concerned and involved in the development of their communities and society as whole.

A few of TFD experiences across the globe undertaken by development agencies and scholars will be examined to further buttress the impact of the practice in communicating social change. It shall further more reveal different trends as it exists in TFD practice. The essence of making this brief account of some experiences is to further expand the space of documented TFD approaches that is capable of informing new theoretical and practical perspectives about the field. The experiences reflect some topical issues prevailing within local domains which the exploration of TFD processes have further succeeded to influence changes in social perception and challenges. Even though a number of these experiences express similar TFD ideology, they however present a multi- faceted TFD practice both in content and context. Furthermore in the context of this study, they provide former experiences and perspectives that establish a need to examine current perspective and deployment of TFD experiences within our local communities.

2.5.1 Combating Social Trafficking - A Bangladesh TFD Project by LOSAUK (*Loke Nattya O Sanskritik Unnayan Kendro*)

LOSAUK is a social theatre group based in Bangladesh. This group based its theatre practice on the Bengali popular theatre forms *Jatra* and *khaner gan*. Ahsan (2004) explains that traditionally, *Jatra* often told mythological stories that reflect the aspirations of the people. It relied on the audience's emotional identification with the mythological hero. *Jatra* is a living form, still very

popular and always changing. For many, *Jatra* goes beyond theatre. It is a concept of life, a way of life. Because *Jatra* is so popular, it was an excellent tool for LOSAUK .

The extreme poverty of so many and the greed of others are the common causes of the trafficking in human lives that takes place over Bangladesh's unpatrolled border with India. Women are sold to brothels and children are taken to the Middle East to become camel jockeys. Sometimes people are murdered and their blood, kidneys and limbs are sold. Combating these kinds of trafficking became a main goal of LOSAUK. The group begins by raising consciousness about trafficking. LOSAUK uses their short "sample" *Jatras* to make people aware of the magnitude of the trafficking in Bangladesh. To develop sample *Jatras*, LOSAUK conducts training workshops. Ahsan (2004) further recounts sample *Jatra* developed during a five-day workshop shown in a courtyard for a limited audience:

People assemble at first to worship, then to listen to music. Finally, the actors appear in the acting area. There is little in the way of costumes or makeup, and any minimal props that are absolutely necessary, such as chairs or tables, are procured locally. They enact a *Jatra* about the trafficking of women and children. This is a real story, a true story, not something mythological sometimes at the beginning of the show, photographs of trafficking victims are shown to the audience—with no explanation given. The *Jatra* performers display the photographs and start a discussion with the spectators. "Do you know what these pictures are about?" "Can you guess?" After a short discussion with the spectators, the main performance begins. As the *Jatra* is performed, the *Bibek*—an actor-teacher— sings a song about trafficking. The *Bibek* is both an actor and a spectator to what is being performed. The word *Bibek* means "conscience" and the

Bibek is the conscience of the performance. His songs express the ethical values of the performance. . . He rouses the conscience of both the characters and the spectators. But the *Bibek* is not like Boal's Joker. The *Bibek* does not solve the problem as Boal's Joker does but rather gives characters and spectators the chance to choose right or wrong. The *Bibek* describes the situation but does not offer a solution. The Joker stands apart from other characters but the *Bibek* are very close to the characters. He sings directly to the spectators, explaining the various possibilities and dilemmas of the good and bad characters.

Because of the combination of wit and commentary, the *Bibek* is similar to the fools of Shakespeare. The *Bibek* also functions in somewhat the same way as the Greek tragic chorus. In Greek tragedy, the chorus often acts as a moderator and analyzes the behavior of the protagonists. The *Bibek* similarly acts as a moderator and analyst—but always without solving the characters' problems. The *Bibek* opens the eyes of the spectators to what is going on. The *Bibek* is a facilitator. He introduces the themes of the performance, interacts with the audience, and converses with them throughout the performance. At the end, the *Bibek* draws the attention of the audience to what the play means. The protagonist conveys the key message of combating child trafficking. He puts the message before the audience in plain language. He says that everyone should carry a passport when they immigrate, that legal immigration with a valid passport can reduce trafficking.

Rural people are fond of *Jatra* because it is a very emotional form. LOSAUK chose *Jatra* because it is a perfect tool with which to raise consciousness. It is also fairly easy to perform. The actors do not have to memorize dialogue; a prompter coaches them as they improvise the

main story line. Musicians sitting on both sides of the performing area create an atmosphere that carries the story along smoothly. The characters enter the stage one by one, and leave the stage accompanied by specific music that signals the coming of the next action. The impact of the sample *Jatras* on the community is strong and positive. Spectators respond spontaneously. Sometimes audiences mingle with the performers and when they see a trafficker capturing children they take action to stop him. The acting was so natural that the spectator just had to intervene.

Generally LOSAUK plays in communities inhabited by farmers, grocers, and illiterate and under-educated men and women of the villages and slums. These people are not only the spectators of a *Jatra* but also the victims of the very abuses the *Jatra* enacts. Ahsan (2004:123) reveals that “In such places the plays are very popular. Anywhere from 500 to 2,000 individuals gathered without any prior publicity. If there is some publicity, another thousand can be expected. Sometimes there are microphones to aid the actors, sometimes they have to shout”. Once people in a village or neighborhood hear the music associated with *Jatra*, a crowd spontaneously materializes. The very high rate of unemployment guarantees that a sympathetic audience is always ready to attend.

If the idea of the performance is properly communicated, ordinary people are moved. It is important to follow up every performance with a discussion between the actors and the spectators. The immediate response and suggestions of the spectators increases the chance that the message of the performance will get through and lead to positive action. Nothing can happen unless there is active participation. And for there to be participation, the quality of the

performance must be high, its message clear and transparent. In the sample *Jatras*, opinions are invited from the spectators on how to go forward in the next scene; spectators should not feel that the performance has been imposed. Participation becomes intense and everybody shares in developing the performance. The language of the performance is colloquial.

It is a general practice of LOSAUK that different themes are communicated in different styles. Discussions and idea sharing procedures are not the same at all performances. It depends on the theme and presentation. The common feature is that there is an essential issue that is put forward and performed. In some cases, audience intervention happens at the beginning, in other cases in the middle, and in still others after the show is over. Everything is adjusted to the needs of specific circumstances. Outside LOSAUK, other Theatre groups and agencies have also put this form as well as other TFD practices to use in communicating social change and development. From the foregoing, it is important to state that TFD should be judged from a social point of view. Its aim is to enable the people of the community to establish their rights in society. Indigenous forms speak to the people who have for generations made and used these forms. Adapting indigenous forms to contemporary issues is an effective way of raising consciousness and advancing particular social programs. *Jatra*, in the hands of LOSAUK, becomes an instrument for creating awareness, social change and transformation in Bangladesh.

2.5.2 Critical Citizenship in Prison - An Isreal TFD Experience with Prisoners in Ma'asiyahu, Israel by Tel Aviv University's Community Theatre Students.

A unique community TFD project conducted through Tel Aviv University's Community Theatre program over a nine-month academic year in 2005–2006 tackled the complex dynamics of the

prison political system. Prendergast and Saxton (2009) recounts that the program focused on theatrical facilitations between mainly female students and male prisoners—two more or less homogenous groups that represent polarized social sub-cultures. The Tel Aviv program initiated by the head of the Community Theater Program focuses on both long-term process and public performance.

Meeting once a week as an integrated group, and once separately with the theater facilitators (students' group) or a social worker and education officer (prisoners), the group engaged in theatrical activities designed to produce and transform conflict and also sharing sessions that reflected on these activities. Theater workshops with prison staff ensure a context of support and a space for staff to reflect on their own attitudes towards prisoners. The final performance provided a reflective site for audiences of prisoners, prison staff, family members, university students and faculty, and those who might provide future jobs for prisoners.

Shaping the Play

Prendergast and Saxton (2009) explained that following seven months of group work that included the development of theatrical scenarios, the prisoners and students met together for a day-long workshop. The facilitators summed up the various conflicts they had explored so that the group could decide together upon their central premise. Exercises exposing what individuals wanted to express for themselves, to their group, and to their society helped to formulate this premise. Several members of the group then volunteered to shape the scenarios within this structure. As the group decided that their central concerns were ethical—focused on individual choice and responsibility for one's actions in relation to their impact on others—they decided to

work with the structure of a “morality play”. They agreed that the journey of the piece needed to begin with an anonymous human being unrecognizable as either a prisoner or a “normative” individual. Dramaturgically, the play would commence with a peak moment in the individual’s life, a celebration or emancipation from unknown constraints. The play’s opening as well as its scenarios thus reflected the group’s experience.

In the play, the protagonist arrives at a party from an encounter with his mistress, immediately establishing the presence of an ethical crime while animating for the group the character of the mistress as figurative of the theater. The speech that the protagonist makes at his party also maintained a triple meaning for the prisoners and students, as well as the audience members who came to witness their work.

The play unfolds its scenarios by adopting elements of the medieval play *Everyman* to the prisoners’ experience and the group’s work. In a scene reflecting a typical criminal arrest as well as the archetypal journey of *Everyman*, a winged messenger takes the Protagonist away. Not knowing what crime he has been accused of committing, the Protagonist receives a 24-hour reprieve to try to find someone to take his place on the journey with the messenger. Like *Everyman*, the Protagonist makes the request of significant individuals in his life, including his mistress, wife and daughters, the friend with whom he stole a bicycle at age seven, and his parents. Through these encounters, the group reflected on the notions of criminality and responsibility exhumed in their facilitation process.

The messenger allows the protagonist to return to the scenario in which he stole a bike at age seven, with the scenario working to illuminate the limitations of choice available in the situation. In a scene reminiscent of that explored in the significant object exercise, the protagonist later encounters his daughters as young girls and as adults, one of whom accepts him while the other does not. Neither the young nor adult daughters offer to replace the protagonist on his journey with the Messenger. Like *Everyman's* encounter with aspects of his sinful character, the protagonist also encounters parts of himself that he must address in order to complete his journey, including Guilt, Memory, Education, and Self-rationalization elements that the prisoners and the students had expressed they need to work through in their own transformations.

As an embodiment of their democratic process, the group also added a Chorus, designed to highlight questions emergent from their process (as well as to provide a stage opportunity for all 34 participants). Along with the messenger, the Chorus addressed all of the crimes that were exposed within the group by both prisoners and students.

In the final scene, after the Chorus sums up the ethical discussions of the group, the Messenger takes the protagonist through passages of his life as possible sites of judgment for the audience as well as the prisoners. The scene foregrounds the various shades of criminality within the group (and potentially within the audience) while highlighting an ethic of individual responsibility. It leaves the audience with a question unanswered by the production about their own responsibility: "What do you choose?" Will the prisoner choose to take someone else's life or take responsibility for his own being in relation with others?

The hour-long performance concluded with an equally long interactive discussion with the audience. Response to the performance by various audience members implied a grappling with their own prejudices about both groups. A prison audience found it difficult that the performance had no clear, singular message. “I didn’t understand,” they asked the students, “Do you forgive us or not?” Without awaiting the students’ answer, another prisoner spoke up, indicating that he had collapsed the choral voices into a singular truth. “Why do you ask them? You didn’t see in the show? They don’t forgive and they will not accept us when we’ll be released.” A mixed audience produced more heterogeneous discussion allowing for anger, forgiveness, and compassion. These audiences also called for more responsive action. What should be done to transform both social polarities towards a less oppressive relationship? Still betraying their prejudice towards which group is teachable, several audience members asked only the students what they had learned from the project, expressing some astonishment that the education might flow in both directions between prisoners and students.

Responses and reflections on the process continued with both groups. In meetings with their social worker following the performance, prisoners were able to better verbalize and analyze the past choices they had made while also feeling that they had accumulated practical skills to speak with rhetorical force in front of a probationary panel. The students also used the process to re-socialize themselves in surprising and subversive manners. What does it mean to become a critical citizen? It means to have the ability to recognize and transform not only individual actions, but also fields of social power. It means to understand society not as a given structure but as a potentially transformable site that can ultimately be re-animated within a theatrical laboratory.

It is important to state that theater in this context is a complex one. Augusto Boal (2006:114), from his experiences working in Prisons, makes a very clear distinction between working in communities and working in Prisons:

When we work with social groups whose ethical values we share...we do not question their values because they are our own. In the adult prisons, or the reformatories for young people, the contrary is the case—we have partners who have committed acts we do not approve of. With these partners, we cannot identify, though we may be able to understand them...

Boal puts his finger on probably one of the greatest challenges as working in prisons. We may wish to assist others in this environment, but the human quality of empathy and identification with others must be held with care. TFD facilitators need to prepare themselves to work in these types of settings as it enables a sense of collaboration and shared stakes among the participants. It allows individuals to stand apart from their situation and consider alternatives and, as a physical activity, allows men who are often portrayed in mainstream culture as threatening and irredeemably criminal to represent themselves in their own bodies. Through the shared experiences of people in a theatre space, it is possible to deconstruct the self, to look at the self within a problem situation from multiple points of view, and then to put it all back together into an ability to take action for change.

2.5.3 The World of Systems/the World of Life - A Community TFD project in a South Samic Community Björkevatn, Sweden.

Björkevatn is in a rural area. According to Lena and Eva (2002) back in 1951, it was composed of a cluster of 12 villages with a total of 174 people, which was eventually reduced to 10 villages with 39 people by 1991. Today the population of Björkevatn area is about 50 people. After the

Second World War, there was a strong urbanisation in Sweden. At the same time, a powerful and effective oppression of the language and culture of the Samic people occurred. Today, South Samic people don't even have a Swedish/South Samic dictionary anymore, so they have to resort to a Norwegian dictionary. Two women, Lena Ostergren and Eva Helleberg who later documented the experience, facilitated the project in Björkevatnet.

The Story of Vattufall/Waterfall and Björkevatn

The story of the community theatre project is about how the world of systems penetrated the world of life during the 1950s and 1960s in Björkevatn. Lena and Eva (2002) recounts that in this period, the Swedish government decided to develop this indigenous area for hydro-electric power production. They first sent anthropologists to document the local ways of life. After the anthropologists had completed their research, engineers and workers were assigned to measure engineering requirements for the waterline (which is 13 metres higher than the tallest chimney). Then representatives were sent to convince the local population of the many financial benefits. The government's representatives visited every house, and counted every spoon, fork and knife, and every piece of furniture. Very carefully, all information was gathered and recorded. The government invited the inhabitants to information meetings where the local were promised a fantastic future filled with work and money and the newest modern appliances. Then the face-to-face negotiations began. The government's representatives employed money as power; for many of the inhabitants, the change from barter economy to money economy was substantial so they were only too easily persuaded. The locals used their pay-off money to buy the latest products available in both Sweden and Norway in the 1960s, including cars, typewriters and televisions—even though they had no idea of how to use many of these items. They bought television without

realizing that there was no local electricity yet. The locals were promised free electricity for the rest of their lives—which they do now have. Unfortunately, however, the quantity of electricity they receive free is only enough to light a single lamp! Some people built new houses as close as they could to the lake, many people moved to the south of Sweden to work in factories. Others moved to the eastern coast. From the outside, it looked as if everyone was satisfied by this quick progress.

One of the consequences was fog. Another was that the local authorities appropriated local hunting and fishing rights from the South Samic people. Some even lost their status as Samic people because they farmed rather than worked with reindeer. The authorities claimed they needed to give these rights to some North Samic people who had to move their reindeer herds to the south. A barrier was placed to close the old road; it was locked and impossible to pass. At the information meetings, everyone had been promised a key to the gate, but that was only one among many promises that were broken. After about 30 years, the local people began to talk openly with each other about what they really felt about this “progress” and the negative impact it had had on their lives—particularly now that many of them have returned to the area to retire.

From a great idea to a Community Performance.

Lena and Eva (2002) explained that *Vattufall* is an attempt to tell the above story, and all scenes of the script are based on this history that was just reconstructed. The Facilitators, conducted detailed research. Then developed and revised scenes in close collaboration with a local cast of 15 actors and musicians. Some of the adult and elderly participants remembered a lot of stories from the 1950s and 1960s. There were more than enough memories for several scripts.

Storytelling was also a therapy of sorts for the local participants. Their fictionalized role in the play gave them enough protection to tell it in public. With many rehearsals sessions, they went deeper and deeper into what this story was really about. In many ways, it had been a taboo to confess their sense of lost identity, to confess some of the core feelings they felt about the local tradition and culture. Working in this project, the local actors began discussing these issues openly.

The room where the performance took place as recounted by the facilitators, only had seats for 40 persons, but about 55 were there from the village. Some had to sit on the stage behind the actors. During the performance, people commented out loud: “Yes, it was just like this.” And they laughed. But the final scene ended with a blues that almost imperceptibly transformed into a *joik* (a Samic singing style that was deeply personal or spiritual). As one of the facilitators, Eva noted “it was very moving for everyone and i recalled the experiences of Augusto Boal in the rural districts” (Eva and Lena, 2002:29).

One of the audience who joined the cast and crew after the show, with food and drinks served, thanked the facilitators because the performance had everything he could have hoped for: “Fun, serious drama, irony, love and poetry, power and humility. It was about life—our life and history.” He was so grateful. Furthermore, Eva and Lena (ibid) recounted that towards the end of the audiences’ speeches, it became dark and suddenly there was a power blackout! Combined to this was the fact that the Night was very cold, but all of these hindrances did not deter the people they were so spirited to encounter the Theatre of their Lives.

The experience just recounted points to the fact that TFD as a Community-based theatre is very effective and is rooted in community setting in which contexts, participants and issues are essentially local. TFD in this regard, enhanced community appeal to explore and present performance based on shared concerns and history. The transforming of historical events and stories into a community-based theatre experience and how it was undertaken by Eva and Lena can help us to understand clearly what Neelands (1984:40) describes as *consensus* and *conspectus*. “The former involves homogeneity of perspectives, the latter a rainbow of differing opinions, all of which are to be recognized and included within a dramatic process”.

In a TFD programme, an effective facilitator aims for both consensus and conspectus, ensuring that the voices and attitudes of each participant are represented in performance. Dudley Cocker (1993) further explains that “Grassroots theatre is created in direct interaction with the community for whom it is intended . . .the audience is not consumer of, but participants in the performance. Exemplary performance quickens the audience, the variances in creation process challenges and vitalizes the community”.

2.5.4 TFD Experiences in Indian Communities - A collection of Issues addressed by Nazariya, Kolkata and Ashokenagar Natyamukh NGOs.

India as a nation has a long history of employing theatre as a means of social consciousness and development. The use of theatre as a political tool for social emancipation and freedom from their British colonialist was greatly influential and instrumental in actualizing an independent and democratic Indian Nation. Thakur (2013:90) reveals that: “From the 1940’s street theatre

played an anti-fascist role by the communist parties. Street theatre also became a part and parcel of Indian freedom movement. In a free India, street theatre evolved as a weapon against social-political-economic exploitations”. Today Theatre still remains very relevant in the India social context.

Thakur (2013) recounts some of the issues addressed through TFD approaches by Nazariya, Kolkata and Ashokenagar Natyamukh NGOs; and are briefly captured below to exemplify what several NGOs and some agencies are doing in employing TFD approaches as a major tool for empowerment, advocacy and social enlightenment in India.

Nazariya

Nazariya in Gujarat region of India have used Theatre in different forms in schools, colleges and with young people to create a culture of gender equality, communal tolerance and religious expression for social change in the city. Operational area of Nazariya is Ahmedabad, mostly in the old part of the city (economically downtrodden). As a way of exploring TFD approaches they experimented with ‘Forum Theater’; which gives the audience much more than just being a spectator. It is a medium known for its immense power to create question, debate and discussion among audience and the impact lasts more than the production time.

In various spaces, like Gomtipur, Behrampura, Juhapura etc, they organized Forum Theatre. The issue was ‘Gender Discrimination’ and as expected in this form of theatre; the play stops at a crucial moment and asks the audience for their opinions and reactions. Then People from the audience would come to the stage and enact tentative solutions on behalf of the community. In

addition to Forum Theatre they also experimented with participatory mapping in colleges and communities on the issue of Gender Violence. Nazariya experimented the approaches of participatory mapping in F.D Girls College, where the students came up with a map where they identified areas, which according to them are harassment prone areas near their college. At first all the students were divided into groups according to the areas they came from, like: Juhapura, Jamalpur, Vatva, Saraspur, Gomtipur, Danilimda, Behrampura, Raikhad, Rakhiyal and Bombay Hotel etc. It was a participatory process where each of the group members discussed and came up with a map collectively. The whole idea of this mapping was to identify the types of harassment they faced the reason behind such behaviors and thus identify the areas where these harassments can be found. After identifying the harassment prone zone, they spoke about the common types of harassment they face, day in and day out, identified the trend the general age group of the perpetrators and why they do this.

This mapping activity was followed by a Forum theatre, where volunteers of Nazariya from College and Community enacted a play where they depicted about three situations of harassment (more or less similar with what the students have said earlier). Where each aspect demanded; about three or more suggestions from the audience/students are taken with different solutions, and enacted in front of others. From that point their next session was initiated, where they themselves developed their plan of action to stop such ill practices in their Region and how they could become more vocal about this problem.

Same activity took place in one of their Community intervention area: Juhapura considered as the largest Muslim ghetto in Asia. The political situation of juhapura is volatile than in

comparison to the other areas of Ahmedabad . Another designing form was organizing rally with Forum Theater. Several Forum theaters were organized in various locations of Ahmedabad , after ethnic/religious clashes broke out in North east part in 2002. It was accompanied with Peace rally, where religious leaders actually spoke against the ethnic and religious problems and advocated for religious tolerance.

Kolkata Creative Art Performers

Kolkata Creative Art Performer in West Bengal was formed by a group of young students who believe that theatre can change life. One of the students, Safdar Hashmi once said “ if we can't take big theatre to the people, we can take small theatre to them” (Thakur, 2013:97). Base on their philosophy they explored TFD approaches by using the ‘third theatre’ form. This form of Theatre was a street theatre approach that was advanced by Badal Sircar whose real name is Sudhindra Sarkar, a famous Theatre practitioner in India from the 60s to early 90s. As it is the case with other TFD forms, his Third theatre form was ideologically a protest against prevalent commercial theatre establishments and it was often performed in open spaces with actors being attired no differently than the audience, who where expected to be active rather than been passive participants. Some of the issues as treated by the group include:

Health Communication: In this regard, they addressed the issue of Pulse Polio immunization program. This program was undertaken by Government of India for 0 to 5 years old children to eradicate polio and to make India polio free. During the initial years in many parts of Bengal, parents did not agree to take Pulse Polio. Murshidabad is one of a district where this problem was very high because 70% of total populations were Muslim. The majority of populations were

rigid that their children did not take this immunization due to lack of awareness. With the help of UNICEF, Kolkata Creative Art Performer started campaigning for Pulse Polio. They performed the 'third theatre' in Suti I, Suti II, Samsherganj and other districts of Murshidabad. The impact was huge. Their performance gained highest level of mass acceptance and the situation changed dramatically. After the performances the percentage of rigid population became 2-3% from 70%. The group also effectively used third theatre approach for creating awareness against diseases like Leprosy, Tuberculosis, Malaria and HIV/AIDS. In every district of West Bengal they performed Street theatres for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and created awareness of birth control, family planning. In 3 months they had over 900 performances in 36 districts of Bihar to disseminate the ideas of family planning by using TFD and other participatory approaches.

Women trafficking: A survey once showed that Girls and Women trafficking shape a major complication in Indian society. Kolkata Creative Art Performer organized street theatres in different areas of Sandeshkhali, Laksmikantapur, Sundarban and also in the districts of Howrah and East Midnapore to speak against women trafficking.

Alcohol and Drug Addiction: Rangabelia is a village of Gosaba block which is situated in Sundarban. The business of illegal liquor locally known as cholai is a common problem in South Parganas. In this village Kolkata Creative Art Performer organized third theatre on prevention of drug addiction and alcoholism. After watching this theatre local people took the initiative to organize and perform street theatre on this issue in many villages of Sundarban. This participatory approach made a silent revolution. Village people of Rangabelia with the help of local police destroyed the illegal shops of Rangabelia.

Sex worker's Right and Health: Kolkata Creative Art Performer in conjunction with Durbar Mahila Samanwaya committee which is a strong organization for women's right and sex-worker's right and Health; addressed the issues affecting this category of persons in the society. On behalf of this organization Kolkata Creative Art Performer highlighted these issues critically by using the third theatre effectively.

Child Labour: In the Dhapa Dumping Ground of Kolkata the wastes of the city are dumped. Children of this 450 acres area collect scraps of plastic, metal from the mountain of garbage and sell them. It is their only way of earning. Kolkata Creative Art Performer used third theatre to give slum children of this area non-formal education on their right, child labour, hygiene etc.

Ashokenagar Natyamukh

Ashokenagar Natyamukh used theatre in a different and alternative ways. Their main focus was on experiments on how theatre will be effective in modern educational system. They applied theatre in formal education in a form of theatre therapy. The issues addressed were mainly students and young persons related, which include:

Pressure of Students: Ashokenagar Natyamukh adapted theatre as a weapon against illiteracy and for academic drop outs. They explored TFD to communicate how to operate and gain effective educational process and system. They performed in schools and colleges based on the topics of curriculum. By using participatory techniques they were able to address the pressure of the vast curriculum and tackle issues relating to depression and suicidal activities among school and college students.

Ashokenagar Natyamukh was able to reinforce theatre in Ashokenagar Boys Secondary School, Jawhar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Haripal GD institution, Nahata Jogendranath, Mondal Smriti Mahavidyalaya, Gurudas College, Gour Mahavidyalaya, Kaliachak College, and Agrasen Mahavidyalaya. Their effort enhanced understanding and clarity among student on the topics and issues which TFD was used in dialoguing and educating them about.

Unprotected Children: Unprotected children through out Kolkata face much exploitation. With the help of Humanity Association, Ashokenagar Natyamukh organized TFD projects for street children and children of Sex Workers. They promoted literacy campaign by using theatre in Sonagachi, Bagmari, Ultodanga, Koley market and in many different areas in Kolkata. Their aim was to focus on their problems and social right. Their participatory approach evoked a great upsurge among the unprotected children.

By and large, Theatre groups and other development agencies in every part of India continue to explore TFD interventions to give voice to the voiceless. Thakur (2013) remarks that “multiple theatre groups throughout the country deal with different issues...the plurality of expression in TFD strengthens the democratic base of India”. India been a land of wide geographical and cultural diversity with over 1.3 billion populations has indeed found great impact using this popular media of communication to achieve a vital strategy of involving the mass of people to be well conscientized and participate actively in the process of social change and development.

2.6 TFD in Africa

Although TFD have been explored in virtually all continents of the Globe, Africa can be said to be the most pronounced of them all. Across several communities especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, a number of TFD interventions have been undertaken which produced significant impacts on their given communities. Given the myriads of social challenges which have bedeviled the post-colonial Africa, the use of TFD aimed at tackling socio-economic and political quagmires across different communities in Africa has no doubt raised the functionality of the Theatre from the perception of just being a tool at the service of recreation and entertainment to a tool of social emancipation and transformation. TFD employed as a communication strategy gives an ample opportunity for local communities to raise their voice on the menace and plight of poverty as well as other social bottlenecks which the marginalized and poor members of the rural and semi-urban communities are seriously plagued with in Africa.

These communities are often deprived of the dividends of good governance. The escalating rate of rural-urban migration has also not helped in the development of local communities. This can be traced to the emphasis which many African political leaders give to political leadership that places an overtly premium on elitist and hegemonic approach to development. Their attention and agenda is more devoted to commercial and urban towns where the elites and more educated people reside. Rural areas have not been given the sufficient attention compared to urban towns. It is in this vein that TFD process seeks to advocate better life for local communities; consequently serving as a veritable instrument to communicate social change. TFD as Ross Kidd (1982:74) rightly notes:

...is a process of social change; changes in self-concept, attitude, awareness, skill, or behaviour. Its art goes beyond metaphorical representations of others- to

facilitating actions on social problems. Theatre becomes a forum for organizing communities into participatory decolonizing discourses, thereby providing a means of negotiating the cultural and political terms of their own social progress. Theatre for Development re-conceptualizes the very notion of development in post-colonial Africa to mean not simply the provision water, hospitals, and shelters for underprivileged communities but, more broadly, to encompass a complex process that uses theatre to enact, critique, and sustain strategies for the full and effective participation of marginalized communities in society.

TFD as a programme of development may not provide the vast amount of physical needs and structures for the people. Nevertheless it is a communication support programme that spurs and evokes a process leading the community to greater awareness and increased determination to overcome the barriers that are clog in the wheel of progress and development in the society. Development in this context takes into cognizance members of the community inputs as critical and very essential to the actualization of basic social needs and enhanced standard of living. Ewu while critiquing the dominant paradigm of development argues likewise that:

...development is much more than about industrialization, economic growth, technological advancement, higher per capita income or Gross National Product (GNP), important as these maybe..., they are imposed from the outside (for example , from the centre to the periphery, from urban to the rural areas, from the industrialized to the developing nations) and therefore fail to evolve with the very people that make them necessary in the first place; worse still, they reinforce and sometimes even create conditions of dependency and unequal development between rural and urban areas. In both philosophy and practice TFD clearly demonstrate that modernization and human development are interdependent. The fact that the provision of adequate food, housing, health care and education have as much to do with humanization as they have to do with modernization need no emphasis, since people ought to be both object and the subject of development (Ewu, 2002:3).

Ewu has further deconstructed the idea of development which TFD as strategy for social change aims at actualizing. In essence development that is to be dignifying, purposeful and sustainable in local communities must spring up with the people and their participation is crucial. As a result, TFD must not only target members of local communities in Africa but also involve them in a process that emphasizes conscientization, dialogue, action and social empowerment.

Outside its socio-political relevance, TFD has also gained sustained acceptance and appeal in many African communities due to its methodological structure. The approach to achieving societal goals of improving themselves through a collective and communal approach has made TFD endearing and applicable in many developing countries especially in Africa. It is an obvious fact that communal living has always been an embedded nature of African communities.

Explaining the fundamental place of communal lifestyle, Emeka (2015:1) elucidates that:

The African idea of security and its value depends on personal identification with and within the community. Therefore, the authentic African is known and identified in, by and through his community. In another sense, the community offers the African the psychological and ultimate security as it gives its members both physical and ideological identity...It must be noted that in the African mentality, the community as an entity remains, while individuals as persons, come and go. Therefore the Africans emphasize community life and communalism as a living principle of which the basic ideology is community-identity.

From the above remark it therefore suffices to state that the African society emphasis people owning things collectively and in unison. Individualistic inclinations to societal concerns are not part of the basic composition. Advancing togetherness for which the community should be known for is absolute. TFD thus becomes a mechanism which further aligns itself with this fundamental ideology. Its strength lies in the fact that active participation and involvement from all members of the community is needed to advance their course. Its mission is to carry community member along all through the process. Issues are not approached from complex or too scholarly dimension which may end up making people find it difficult or unable to follow instead efforts are made to ensure that the people are well incorporated into the process. TFD in this way becomes a bridge builder for African communities.

In a bid to achieve this vital communality, TFD facilitators and organizers ensure that drama performances and community meetings of TFD encounters take place at venues that significantly

connect every member of the community. Village square, market arena, public hall, palace square etc are employed. These are avenues that allow the people connect themselves regardless of their social, economic, gender, religious or physical status. They all have free access to the venue and are also given the equal opportunity to render their own contributions to the unfolding events and discussions. Emeka (2015:2) points to the essentiality of the community venue in Africa by stating that:

The community is the custodian of the individual; hence he must go where the community goes. In the material term of reference, the individual must go to the "community centre" or village square which is a social, political, judicial and religious centre. It is the communal meeting place for political discussions, communal tribunals, sports and games. It is therefore a traditional place of congregation for the entire community.

The above remark clearly explains why TFD performances and meetings should be designed and scheduled for venues that communicate symbolically to the people's socio-cultural existence.

Closely linked to communal living as a rationale that makes TFD practice of relevance in Africa; is the use of the people's cultural arts and medium of communication. TFD process beyond emphasizing social development is also quite keen in incorporating into the process, the promotion of the people's cultural identities. Abah (2005:120) rightly notes that TFD in Africa "... has come to be accepted as the people's theatre. This is because it deals with issues and problems of the people. It uses their cultural forms and challenges them to become engaged in changing their realities and leaves the process of creativity and sharing in their own hands". In this regard, TFD has become the people's medium and through it they are able to contextualize issues of common concern. This will consequently lead to the engendering of a greater collective participation and interest in their developmental needs. Furthermore, Penina Mlamba explaining the potentials of TFD as cultural medium of communication comments accordingly that:

Another breakthrough for Theatre for Development is its incorporation of community-based media for communication for development. After identifying and analyzing their development problems, the community communicates their ideas using artistic forms from the community. These include dance, song, poetry, story-telling, recitations, mime and drama among others. These are normally the media available to the grassroots communities and not radio, television or the printed media. It is also a fact that electronic mass media is not easily accessible to the majority of rural communities. And even if they are available their structures are such that the grassroots communities cannot even own them and therefore cannot use them to communicate. They can only be audience. The community based media mentioned above on the other hand, are not only accessible and owned by the community but also used by community for their daily communication... Using these community based media in the Theatre for development process, therefore, avails grassroots communities the opportunity to use media which are easily accessible to them and ones that they own and ones that they can easily handle to communicate their viewpoint on development (Mlama, 2002: 47).

Cultural development is a very useful concern for the people of African communities that have seen their cultural features and practices severely eroded. TFD which places emphasis on community's modes of communication and cultural activities becomes a welcome agenda, which beyond addressing their social issues, is able to provide a vital opportunity for some sort of cultural revival and propagation.

From its early years of formation in the 1970s and 1980s TFD has created so much enthusiasm from Theatre practitioners all over Africa who saw the instrumentality of TFD to effect qualitative and sustainable development for post-colonial Africa. In a similar vein Kerr (1991) notes that the enthusiastic response to popular theatre was in a way an indication of the post-independence theatre practitioners' search for a theatre relevant to the struggles for independence. TFD was therefore a link to the early political discourse on improving the lives of citizens at grassroots level; and practitioners were poised on proving that TFD in terms of its African origins has a direct link to the peoples' socio-economic transformation.

2.7 Examples of TFD Practice in Africa

Several versions and practices of TFD have been developed in local communities across sub-Saharan Africa countries like Nigeria, Botswana, Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, Sierra-Leone, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Tanzania, Cameroon, Ghana, Swaziland and South Africa. Some of these experiences have been documented in a number of scholarly publications by scholars and agencies involve in the facilitation of TFD workshops. As a way of concretely examining the impact of TFD approaches in Africa, and how this has significantly contributed to social change in communities, this study examines some of these experiences undertaken in some communities across Africa. Account of these experiences will be mainly contextualized. This will provide for an in-depth studies and analyses of themes and methodological approaches as prevalent in Africa. Different experiences from different countries have been selected across time in the development of TFD in Africa. However the discourse on TFD in Africa will necessarily begin with the first documented experience in Botswana popularly known as *Laedza Batanani* by TFD activist Ross Kidd and Martin Byram.

2.7.1 TFD in Botswana: The Laedza Batanani Experience

Laedza Batanani was the first documented experiment in using TFD as an instrument for social change in Africa. It was centrally aimed at changing approaches to non-formal education and rural development in Botswana. It started in 1974 in the Bokalaka area of northern Botswana by a community leader, Jeppe Kelepile and two expatriate adult educators, Ross Kidd and Martin Byram who were then academic staff members of University of Botswana. David Kerr (1995:151) while critiquing previous approaches to communication strategies as deployed in Botswana, further points out that:

Much of the early theorizing and practical organization for *Laedza Batanani* came from a group of Adult Educators that felt dissatisfied with the kinds of Adult Education Extension programme offered to rural population. There was an excessive reliance on traditional extension media such as posters, written instructional pamphlets, demonstrations and chalkboard lectures/Seminars. Other faults identified with unimaginative communication strategies were: lack of coordination between different development agencies (such as health, agriculture, literacy and community services), a lack of focus in attempting to concretize the constraints to rural development, and a tendency to a moralizing, exhortatory approach on the part of Extension Workers... An important feature of *Laedza Batanani* was its use of popular theatre to make concrete the practical constraints impeding development in the rural areas.

Essentially *Laedza Batanani* developed out of their concern to overcome problems of low community participation and indifference to the development efforts in the area. Their basic goal was to find a way of motivating people to participate in development and mobilizing the community around important local issues. What was needed was a means of bringing people together to discuss their problems, to agree on changes and to take collective action.

The process of people meeting and working together was codified in a rallying slogan and theme song *Laedza Batanani*: "The sun is already up. It's time to wake up and come together for a common effort". This slogan reflected the strong motivational orientation of the project; it assumed that a major constraint on development was peoples' apathy and indifference; what was needed was a means of "sparking" people's interest and involvement.

The initial TFD project in Botswana was guided by the Freirian pedagogy and funded by the Canadian University Services Organization (CUSO). Through such undertakings, drama became a familiar form of sensitization at agricultural shows, district conferences and health seminars (Byam, 1999). Kidd and Byram (1982) recount that "previous experiences with drama in workshops and conferences had shown the organizers that villagers were good at drama, took

part in it with little self-consciousness, and enjoyed doing it". So drama seemed a good medium for ensuring active participation of local people in the running of the programme—for once villagers could be involved in presenting the programme (through drama) and not just responding to it as an audience. Participation then was seen as both a goal of the programme (that is to mobilize a large number of villagers in discussing and taking action on important local issues); and an important aspect of the methodology (for community members to help in planning and running the education/animation programme).

Kidd and Byram (1982) explain that by 1976 onwards the campaign base on the challenges of the early years gave a more analytical approach to the drama aspect. Instead of creating the drama out of a common sense or "external expert" understanding of the problem, an intermediate step of problem analysis was introduced. This represented an attempt to get away from prescribing "text book" slogans (e.g. "Good nutrition means three balanced meals a day") and to take account of villagers' perceptions and the actual socio-economic situation. This took the form of a type of analysis which involved listing people's knowledge, attitudes and practice with respect to each problem; identifying from this list the key constraints such as lack of resources; and deciding which of these constraints might be successfully challenged and which current practices should be built on and supported. Through this analysis participants work out a clear set of objectives and problems to be presented as a preliminary step to creating the drama, puppet play, dance and song.

Kidd and Martin (1982:75) explain that "the educational and collective action process required a new approach to non-formal education". The organizers rejected the existing approach of merely

providing services and information; they felt this reinforced dependence and individualism rather than encouraging self-reliant and collective action. They wanted to get away from the elitism of agricultural extension services, finding a means of involving all rural villagers and not just the wealthier farmers or cattle-owners. They also saw this as an opportunity for a collaborative inter-agency approach—a positive move away from the narrowly sectional programming and lack of co-ordination and co-operation among extension workers.

In terms of venue, the event usually used the *kgotla*—the village meeting. “In the past, the *kgotla* was a powerful medium for community decision making and a major part of village life. It was a vehicle par excellence for educating the community” (Kidd and Byram, 1982). Since Independence, with the declining role of traditional leaders, it lost its influence and no longer drew large participation. However, Byam (1999:38) states that:

Laedza Batanani chose to resurrect the *kgotla's* which afforded them the opportunity of community education by providing: a stimulus for attending such a meeting; a medium for presenting community issues in a powerful way so that people would want to talk about them; a new, more participatory means of organizing discussion within the *kgotla* that is small group discussions.

As a TFD workshop, *Laedza Batanani* exploring the use of *Kgotla* traditional forum, became an annual "campaign" lasting for a minimum of one week in which a team of extension workers and community leaders tour the local areas with a programme of popular theatre performances and social discussion.

Kidd and Kumar (1981) further highlight that the campaign was preceded by a participatory planning process involving two major events: Firstly, a *community planning workshop* (attended by traditional leaders, village development committee members, extension workers, and leaders

of other community organizations) in which the participants working in groups "brainstorm" a list of community problems, select one or two priority and solvable problems, and then improvise some short skits to reflect the problems. And secondly an *Actors' Workshop* in which a smaller group of extension workers and community leaders take the priority problems and create a more polished performance (including puppet skits, songs, and dances) for touring through the villages.

Several themes covered during the early campaigns included; family and marital conflicts, the effect of community and family life of migrants, labour and the drift to the towns, cattle theft, village development, youth problems, government land reform proposal, tuberculosis, nutrition and sanitation. David Kerr (1995:153) remarks that:

It provided the inspiration for other experiments in using popular theatre as a medium for non-formal education. Other districts, government departments, and community groups have taken up the idea and adapted it to their own situation and purposes...outside the *Laedza Batanani* community workshop, workers at the Oodi Weaving factory utilized TFD as a means of challenging fellow community members at Oodi to deal with some major social problems including employing it as a medium for resolving misunderstandings and conflicts within their own factory.

In other words, TFD activities overtime gained huge presence in Botswana. Kerr further noted that at national level a popular theatre committee made up of representatives from every district and town and the major national extension agencies were formed. However the national popular theatre committee was not a policy-making or planning committee; it operates primarily as a vehicle for exchanging experience and ideas among the different regions and agencies. Beyond these, popular theatre has been added to the pre-service training of government extension workers.

Despite the popularity which the practice achieved, Byam (1999) observed that there were the challenges of poor approach to the follow up process of the TFD experience. Nevertheless the national impact which TFD have had in Botswana right from its initial experiment goes a long way to reveal its far reaching influence which the practice possesses in effecting social change in local communities.

2.7.2 TFD in Zambia: The Chalimbana Experience

TFD experiments in Zambia can be closely linked to the philosophy of humanism and cultural rejuvenation of the post-independence Zambian State. Attempts were made by Theatre scholars to bring to light the value of indigenous arts of the rural areas. This was due to the fact that at that time western inspired theatres have filled the urban areas and was of more emphasis. More also the educational curriculum was tailored along the Western and European theatres. In order to develop their community dramas university lecturers and expatriates such as Michael Etherton, David Kerr and Andrew Horn established *Chikwakwa* Theatre. Etherton (2013:339) recounts that:

It was more of a travelling theatre form that incorporated some progressive element of the European theatre. The coordinators used university students and the Zambian National Theatre Association to perform social plays that they took to communities. The plays reflected themes on the Zambian political and economic climates, while emphasizing the revival of indigenous cultural practices. Outside the Chikwakwa experience, Takita Theatre Company was another significant group that employed popular theatre approaches. Although a professional theatre group in the country they also carried social plays to neighbouring communities. As a group they were able to expand on the ideals of the Chikwakwa's ideals by continuing the pursuit for a more indigenous theatre grounded in the theme of development.

Despite the developmental nature of these groups, they were limited in their scope of employing TFD as research process which should engage the people from the beginning of the process to its

conclusion. It was until 1979 (between August and September) that the first TFD workshop was held in Chalimbana, Zambia. The objective of the workshop according to Chifunyise (1979) was to experiment with TFD techniques and in the hope that it might act as a catalyst for further work and experiments. The TFD process like Chifunyise explains:

... began with the preliminary investigation of Chalimbana. The investigation disclosed further information about the problems facing the community. The indigenous people of Chalimbana, the Soli, had persisted with several traditional practices such as tending cattle as status symbols rather than Livestock... A particularly urgent problem was the scattered patterns of settlement, which impeded the distribution of amenities. Efforts at consolidating these settlements had met with community resistance. (1979:59)

At the early stages of the program, the information was made available to the participants through discussion. The conscientization of both the villagers and the performers was a key element in bringing about change.

In order to collect information in Chalimbana, the participants were grouped under a resource leader and dispatched to different villages. These groups were then given a maximum of two days to engage in the “participatory research process”. They were expected to collect as much as possible on their assigned area. Each group subdivided into smaller groups, sub-groups, to facilitate the gathering of information. And stocked with food and water, these sub-groups visited their respective villages, where they met with teachers, local villagers, and other members in the community to discuss community concerns. This process was followed by six days of preparation for the performance, during which the participant scripted the issues in the style for drama or choreographed for the dance and rehearsed among themselves at the training college. Subsequently, they toured the villages for two days presenting two simultaneous performances in each village of Chalimbana. Byam (1999:120) recounts that some of the performances prepared and presented to the community include:

A dance group performing a play, through Music and Dance, about a Village that has only muddy waters as its drinking sources. Ultimately, someone falls ill and visits the hospital for treatment. When he returns to the Village, he warns of the need for clean water. Consequently, the villagers decide to dig well. The drama group also performed a piece about poor drinking water. Their story centered on a young boy who falls ill from consuming contaminated water, but whose Father believes that he is faking to avoid going to school. Later the Father falls ill from consuming contaminated water and then believes his son. The Family then resolves to boil their water... another drama group performed about local government bureaucracy... The puppetry group performed about the failing bridge. Their story centered on a school child that drowned while trying to cross a river during a storm. Her classmates sought help from the headmaster who in turn met with the dead child's parents to discuss possible solutions to the problems of the weak bridge. They finally agreed to build a stronger bridge.

After the performances, the participant usually reconvened for a post-performance discussion and a final evaluation of the work done in the villages. Some expressed concerns about the long term effects of the work since they had no consultation with the local leadership, who were ultimately responsible for implementing some of the solution recommended in the post-performance discussion. The use of dance, songs, and puppetry in the TFD experience appealed so much to the people's cultural sensitivity and brought out a useful sense of popular participation which keyed the people to take the right social actions to address some of the social challenges affecting their communities.

On the other hand one fundamental challenge with the Zambia TFD experience, like the Botswana experience was the issue of effective follow-up. Kerr (1995:155) points out that "the lack of follow-up applied not only to the cultural/aesthetic impact of the Chalimbana workshop, but to the developmental issues to which the workshop addressed itself". Nevertheless the Chalimbana experience brought about an increased interest in the TFD programme which influenced great participation of the community members to critically discuss their social realities.

2.7.3 TFD in Kenya: The Kamirhitu Experience

The Kamirhitu experience represents a symbolic and significant stage in the evolution of TFD in Africa. It unleashed the organic as well as radical potentials which the process possesses in effecting social change. Byam (1999) explains that the Kenya experience marked a radical departure from previous trends in TFD. Providing a background for the eventual TFD experiment in Kamirhitu, he noted that the Kamirithu experience can be traced to 1974 when Njeeri wa Amoni, a community development officer, organized a committee of villagers to revive a recreational center erected in 1950s but that became abolished by the local authorities. The centre was later revived and renamed Kamirhitu Community Education and Cultural Centre (KCEC).

Leading to the TFD project, was the establishment of an adult educational program. The villagers organized a management committee to explore ways of using the center for educational purposes. This committee in turn created several sub-committees, chaired by community members to address issues of health, culture, and education. Subsequently, they resolved to offer programme in adult education, cultural development, material culture and health with each programme stressing the collective decision-making process. Ngugi wa Mirii, a resident of the district and also an adult educator, was elected to chair the adult education programme, and Ngugi wa Thiongo'o, a Professor of Literature at the University, chaired the cultural development programme.

Though the adult education became the priority, in the light of high level of illiteracy in the village, Ngugi wa Mirii abandoned standard teaching methods of reading and writing. He felt

that such method alienated rather than encouraged learning. Contrarily, he chose to investigate the village's history and culture. Through this investigation, he hoped to improve school attendance among the villagers and to discover the socio-economic factors that created the power relationships in Kamirhitu. Through the adult literacy programme, the community began to identify problems such as land issues, unemployment, low wages, lack of basic amenities such as food, water, firewood, housing, and health facilities, poor transportation, unfair labor practices, and inflation. The classes aimed to address these issues in terms of the country's historical phases of pre-colonialism, colonialism and post-colonialism. The students then represented these issues in coded form using posters, songs, stories and drama to best give explanation to their history and through the process, creating learning experience for both the teacher and student. As Ngugi wa Mirii puts it "the teacher was not necessarily an authority on content, he was only a technician in literacy symbols" (Byam, 1999:92). Six months after its inception, the programme graduated forty-five people literate in reading and writing in their native language, Kikuyu. Mlama (1991:100) notes that:

The adult literacy programme had been successful in finding themes that were of significance to the people, codifying them in the form of traditional stories and songs in order to explain the community's history and provoking an interest that went beyond the rote of reading and writing.

Through the cultural development programme, the villagers developed a story representing their history. Both Ngugis' collaborated on a play based on these historical experiences which they titled: *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (I Will Marry When I Want), written in the Kikuyu language and continued to develop with the cooperation of the community. Though credit has been assigned to Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Miri for authorship of *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, both authors have acknowledged the significant contribution that the people made to the creation of the play. Ngugi wa Thiong'o emphasized that what the teachers created was an outline of the script (a task which

took close to five months to complete), which the villagers substantiated. The entire process, from the drafting of the script to the presentation of the play, took nine months to complete, with the rehearsal process taking the largest chunk of time.

Unlike the Chalimbana or *Laedza Batanani* theatre, the Kamirithu residents aimed for a more permanent structure. An open-air theatre was subsequently erected under the guidance of an office messenger. This developed into a raised semi-circular platform, braced by a semi circular wall of bamboo. Behind it stood a modest building that served as a changing room for the actors. The audience area was made of steps of wood that served as seats capable of holding over two thousand people. Mlama (1991:103) recalls that:

Through the cultural center Kamirithu emerged as a cultural focus in the division of Limuru. Neighboring villages came to see the performance, and it is estimated that as many as ten thousand people witnessed the play. On many occasions there was standing room only and people took the very eucalyptus trees as they invented the audience space to correspond to the inventions that had happened through this process of participatory research. However after the ninth performance of *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, the performance permit was revoked. The district commissioner deemed it 'too provocative, and would make some people bitter and was opening up old grave'. It was shortly after this, that Ngugi wa Thiong'o was detained without cause and only later, that he was regarded as a risk to public security. The overt message to the villagers was that such work was subversive.

Despite the situation, the adult literacy programme continued at the cultural center. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, although detained, managed to complete the novel *The devil on the cross*. Nearly one year later, following the death of Kenyatta, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and several other political prisoners were released from prison. The adult education programme continued, and it was not long before requests began to abound for another production. *Maitu Njugira* (Mother sing for me) was written for this purpose. It detailed the history of capitalist exploitation and its effect on the peasants and farmers. As Ngugi (1981:59) explained:

Songs were more dominant than words in telling this story of repression and analysis. The medium of slides was also introduced to give authentic visual images of the period of the twenties and thirties. And at every stage in its evolution more people from many of the Kenyan nationalities were involved. *Maitu Njugira*, a drama in music, had more than eighty songs from more than eight nationalities in Kenya all depicting the joy, the sorrow, the gains, the losses, the unity, the divisions, and the march forward as well as the setbacks in Kenyan people's struggles. *Maitu Njugira* was directed by Kimani Gecau. Rehearsals were intense; some began at ten o'clock in the morning and lasted until 10 o'clock at night. Such diligence was reflected in the high quality of the work.

But by March 1982, all activities at the center in Kamirithu were outlawed by Government decree. Policemen and state security officials were instructed to level it. The theatre and its surrounding structures were destroyed without explanation and the Kamirithu Education and Cultural Center was renamed the Kamirithu Village Polytechnic and Adult Classes Center. A valid reason was never given for the destruction of the open-air theatre, and government officials remained elusive about their actions.

This TFD experience nevertheless brought out the wide and highly responsive impulse which the practice has in creating social change. The people in this experience had a far reaching impact and knowledge of the structures that have been affecting their growth and development. Structures within and without were brought to their consciousness through their active participation and collective determination. Their readiness to change was radical and uncompromising. However the political structure of the country which has also been part of the clog in the wheel of their social liberation plunge their heavy weight on them, thus bringing about a sudden halt of the entire experience. Howbeit the Kamirithu experience exposes the propelling potentials which this praxis possesses to move people to a strong resolve and commitment to changing their perspectives for a better social condition.

2.7.4 TFD in Nigeria: The TIDE Experience in Benue State

Theatre for Integrated Development (TIDE) experience was facilitated by the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) together with Benue State Arts Council and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The key facilitators, who were from NPTA, have been in the practice of using TFD to undertake community development. They were initially part of the staff members of the English and Drama department of ABU, Zaria that developed the practice in the institution. Outside members of NPTA, TFD experts such as Ross Kidd and Dale Byam were also part of the team of Facilitators. The Benue workshop in Kidd's experience, constituted the "breakthrough" from the product-oriented styles of TFD.

Abah (2005) recounts that the TIDE workshop took place in three different communities of Benue State namely: Akpa, Onyuwei and Andakari communities. The TIDE workshop took place in December 1989. The participants were grouped into three sub-groups to begin the investigation. As the first step in their investigation and as a matter of protocol, each group of participants met with the leaders of the community. There, the facilitators formally introduced themselves and talked to community leaders to explain their purpose and to learn about the village's problems. Issues such as lack of effective governance, politicians deceits, the lack of health facilities, the unavailability of crop fertilizers and wife desertion (women leaving their husbands and running off to the neighboring town) were explained. Through further discussion with villagers the facilitators were able to add to the list of problems that had been previously identified. Other places of information were gleaned through informal chats, private dinners with the villagers and elders in their compound, visits to the fortune-tellers and the like. The absence of a proper road, a primary concern to many of the villagers and several other problems were

also identified. For instance, the elders felt that a lot of the traditional values were being ignored by the youth. Limited educational facilities also constituted a major problem because the village had only one primary school in a sparsely furnished building and the secondary school was located several miles away from the villages.

After the identification processes, the facilitators together with the villagers decided those issues that are most critical. In the course of the analysis of the issues, specific interest groups, such as adolescents, women, and the elders were consulted to ensure a fair degree of participation from each. Later, these findings were shared with the general community. In each of the villages a basic plot was developed in a special village meeting.

After the plot was successfully developed with the villagers, the facilitators solicited more participants for the performance. The senior members of the village seemed more enthusiastic and chose the principal roles of the drama, which realistically matched people by age and status. Young men, characteristics of drummers, volunteered to drum, and the fortune-tellers agreed to play themselves in the performance. An open ended-drama was later presented for the community. The TIDE team played the roles of bureaucrats, while the other roles were assigned to the villagers. After the scene, the TIDE group goes into post-performance discussions with members of the community. The predominantly male audience commented freely.

For example, when the group presented its drama on the fertilizer issue at Akpa, the villagers noted the omission of the long lines for fertilizer. Such long lines, replete with frustrated villagers, were recreated. After the performance a discussion ensued. As a solution to the

problems presented in the play, the villagers agreed that a delegation to the Chief Agricultural Office would help the situation. The investigators then acted out these solutions while introducing whatever difficulties the suggestions raised. They also chose to dramatize the deserting-wife issue, a subject that sparked a heated discussion among the villagers. In view of the predominantly male audience and in order to maximize the women's involvement, a separate women's group was created to study the issues. The women were far more expressive of their issues in the smaller groups.

In Andakari, as a way of exploring important forms of cultural expression, the drama began with masquerades performance which was immediately followed by a storyline of a visit from a government minister who promised to repair the villagers' road in return for votes. The villagers eagerly cleared the road, anticipating the promised change and the construction of a bridge. However, back in the village, a farmer's child grew sick because of a steady consumption of stream water. The farmer, played by a councilor, left for work, unaware of the child's illness. The second wife, upon observing the sick child, suggested to the first wife that she should boil the water. The first wife chose to ignore her, which caused the child to grow progressively worse. Eventually, a fortuneteller was summoned and he determined that the child's illness warranted professional medical attention. The farmer was called from the fields and the family began the journey, through mime, dance and song, to the hospital several miles away. But because of the poor roads and the subsequent flooding, the villagers were unable to cross and the child died. The villagers then sang mourning songs lamenting their predicament. They agreed that their situation was a direct result of government neglect. The drama had a wide participation from the post- performance discussion that ensued. The people began to understand the

consequences of their consumption of lake-water. In the post-performance discussion, the villagers then proffered a series of solutions to address the problem. Eventually, it was decided that the water would be boiled, though many villagers questioned the practicality of such action in view of the limited number of containers that families possessed. As an interim solution, it was recommended that drinking water be boiled and bottled for future consumption.

In Onyuwei, the drama developed over a series of workshops. This approach generated a built-in mechanism for dialogue. Their drama focused on the inefficiency of the local government. At the end of the day the community seemed very angered by government stalemating over development issues. Some even resolved to stop paying taxes. Such was the effect that TFD experience had on the people. According to Kidd (2013:7)

The programme had been beneficial in enlisting the participation of the villagers and encouraging understanding of the process for it to be continued without the TIDE group. It had also made others aware of the cause of certain problems and had created the forum for continued dialogue. Thus, villagers began to understand the significance of drama as an information tool and as process for analysis of their social concerns.

Furthermore Kidd while admitting that the benefits were inconclusive, found the Nigerian experience “clearly superior” to the Botswana model:

In the Botswana workshop the analysis was locked into place in a superficial way at an early stage and didn't go any further because of the limited data available and lack of access to source of the data—the villagers themselves. The Nigerian workshop, on the other hand, represented an ongoing analysis because of the villagers' involvement in and the nature of the process itself. To some it appeared more innovative than the work undertaken in Botswana—a departure from the then ongoing trend of product-oriented theatre. Elements of other - forms of participatory theatre were discernable in its form. The style of Augusto Boal's participatory theatre, namely, the forum theatre and simultaneous dramaturg,' then popular in some parts of Europe, was often used to promote discussion. (Byam 1999:87)

For Kidd, the process oriented style emphasizes a higher level of participation as distinct from the orchestrated participation from the product-oriented theatre. Although both in his opinion are capable of eliciting community commitment so long as they are geared towards community empowerment with its attendant participatory and dialogical frame. In the light of this also Steve Abah one of the leading facilitators, in his work titled *Performing Life* where he documented the TIDE experience, remarks that TFD in this context:

...functions on several levels and in different dimensions. It provides a forum for a community to discuss the issues and problems of concerns in their lives. It is also an occasion in which the village may come together for communal entertainment. It is a medium through which individuals and the community can re-create themselves. In performing these multiple roles, theatre is both agency of change and is itself a changed entity. The change occurs in creative environment through participation in which both the participant and the medium emerge differently from the starting point (Abah, 2005:98)

It is such considerations that have compelled many TFD practitioners to employ TFD approaches as a participatory strategy for social change communication. TFD experience reveals the effectiveness derived from close relations with participating communities. It produces a great sense of appreciation from the community and makes them to familiarize with the experience by exploring it to better articulate the issues affecting them and for which they hope to adopt useful approaches to changing them. After the TIDE experience, NPTA has carried out several other TFD interventions and projects across different villages and communities in Nigeria that addressed different topic ranging from Health, Women and Girl-Child Issues, Conflict resolutions, Agricultural development to democratic and political awareness and education. This study as a way of expounding current trends and impacts of TFD intervention in social change, shall critically study recent NPTA's TFD interventions undertaken in selected communities in the Niger Delta region.

2.8 The Niger Delta Region

In examining the issues of the Niger-Delta region, it is important to first discuss how the socio-political and socio-economic antecedents of the territorial region known as Niger Delta has been shaped and reshaped within the Nigerian Nationhood. To effectively do this, the study shall discuss the historical development of the region. The emphasis being laid on their socio-political and socio-economic development is with the aim of providing a background basis that captures key issues which have brought attention to the agitations emerging from the region and for which continue to have implications for the different communities of the region including those being examined in this study.

2.8.1 The Socio-Political Development

There is a general consensus amongst scholars that the process of political incorporation of the area referred to as the Niger Delta into what ultimately became Nigeria began in the late 19th century; and it needs to be emphasized that the Niger Delta was occupied by autochthonous independent groups that had vigorous interaction with other groups within and outside the region (Ikime 1985, Ekeh 1996 and Tamuno, 2000).

Also, the point must be quickly made that the area defined as Niger Delta has generated a lot of polemics and received considerable attention. The delimitation of the area referred to as Niger Delta has continued to be subjected to the ever changing historical dynamics in the development of Nigeria and this have continued to shape and reshape the definition of the area. The broadest definition of the area is that adopted by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), which mainly encompasses the present six states from the South South geo-political region that

comprises Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and River States. Others include parts of Imo and Abia states from South-East geo-political region and parts of Ondo state from South-West geo-political region of the Nation (Ogbogbo 1999, Tamuno 2000 and Akpomuvie 2011).

The last two decades of the 19th century in Africa, was characterized by aggressive European imperialism. During this period, the British who had dominant presence and influence in the Niger Delta region fostered their hegemony in the region with the establishment of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1885 over various hitherto independent peoples and states. By 1893, the Oil River Protectorate acquired the new identity of Niger Coast Protectorate. This change in nomenclature was sequel to the new Protectorate incorporating a larger area. It is pertinent to note that the categorization of the various ethnic nationalities in the region, first as the Oil Rivers Protectorate and then later the Niger Coast Protectorate was in such a manner that it comprised most of what could be regarded as the geographical Niger Delta. For the first time in the peoples' history they were being brought under one political umbrella (Ogbogbo,1987).

With the adoption of the policy of gradual amalgamation of various administrative units in Nigeria for their convenience, the British in 1900 wielded together different groups to form what came to be referred to as the Southern Nigeria Protectorate. The British with this new creation brought together nationalities that fall within the Niger Delta geographical definition with other neighbouring groups such as Igbo and Yoruba to form a larger administrative unit. "The beginning of the Niger-Delta people as minorities within a given political administrative structure is traceable to this creation of the Southern Nigeria Protectorate" (Osadolor, 2004: 55). Afterwards came the 1914 amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in which the Niger-

Delta people became part of even a larger political aggregation in which their minority status became further entrenched. With the amalgamation, status of the Niger Delta people diminished within the new larger political framework of Nigeria. Relative to other Nigerian groups such as the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, the population of the various people in the Niger Delta was smaller. Within the Nigerian Political aggregation, they became minorities; a status that has subsisted till date. Indeed they became part of a political group with people that they had little or no interaction with before the advent of colonial rule. As pointed out by Ogbogbo (1999:120) "... indeed colonial rule did not just bring about the incorporation of the Niger Delta into what became the Nigerian state but laid the foundations for the diminishing of its political status". Further political developments during the colonial era especially with regards to the administrative arrangements resulted in the increasing political powerlessness of the Niger Delta people. Tamuno (2000:70) notes that:

...on the 1st of April, 1939 during the Governorship of Bourdillon, the Southern Province of Nigeria was divided into Western and Eastern provinces while Northern Province was left intact. This split, ostensibly for administrative convenience, resulted in the balkanization of territorially contiguous and culturally homogeneous people of Niger Delta into the two different political and administrative units as minorities. For instance, the Ijaw who are amongst the first five largest ethnic groups in Nigeria were split into the two new administrative units of the Eastern and Western provinces. In the West they were dominated by the majority Yoruba group while the same was the case in the East where the Igbo held sway over the minorities in the Province. These units, created in 1939 for administrative reasons crystallized into political and permanent regions by 1951 and remained so.

As observed by Tamuno, the administrative steps taken by Bourdillon in 1939 left the heritage of mistaken sacrosanctity for the tripartite division of Nigeria. This meant a further distancing politically of the Niger-Delta peoples from the center of power. For the closest centre of power from which Niger Delta people could be administered was Enugu in the eastern region and Ibadan in the western region. They therefore felt aloof from the government operating at the

center in Lagos; and so were politically marginalized. This situation became a major source of grievance throughout the colonial period. This balkanization and subsequent dominance of the Niger Delta people has remained a major colonial legacy that has continued even in the post-independence eras by various political regimes.

2.8.2 The Socio-Economic Development

It is important to state that the Niger Delta has been a region of intense economic activity long before the colonial period. Ekeh (1996) observes that by the 15th century, there were clear indications that a long distance trade between the Niger Delta region and other regions in Nigeria had developed. It was on the trade links already in existence that the European trade was grafted. In this regard Dike (1969: 210) reveals that:

The importance of the Niger Delta laid in its very many rivers, which were waterway trade routes, hence its referral as the Venice of West Africa. Bonny and other cities such as Opobo and Brass were acknowledged as major trading states. Bonny was reputed as having the largest slave market in the world. Simply put, the Niger Delta was known for its commerce and merchants from within Nigeria and Europe that flocked to the Niger Delta region for trade. Apart from the goods that were brought into the territory that boost the economy of the region, the Amayanabos collected comey and their citizens participated in the Palm oil trade, which replaced slave trade. The economic boom that attended the introduction of the palm oil trade affected their socio-political life in very profound ways. The search for oil markets meant the intensification of relationship with their Igbo neighbours from whom they received most of their supplies. Such vigorous interaction resulted in marriage and attendance of social and ceremonial functions.

However, the robust economic activity in the Niger Delta soon experienced a decline. This came with the era of aggressive European imperialism with its mercantilist economic philosophy of free trade, which eventually resulted in the Niger Delta economy being sucked into the main vortex of European capitalist economy. The deportation of Jaja from Opobo in 1886, the Akassa raid of 1895 and the hunting of Nana Olomu in the same year were all flashpoints in the British

attempt to subjugate Niger Delta economy to theirs. By the first decade of the 20th century, the British had successfully superimposed their colonial authority. The implication of colonial rule on the economy of the Niger Delta people was loss of dues from European merchants who now paid directly to the colonial administration. Their strategic middleman status that hitherto conferred on them some advantages was completely eroded. Colonialism meant that European merchants now had unfettered access to the hinterland peoples and this made the Niger Delta people inconsequential in the exploitation of hinterland.

Ogbogbo (1999) observes that the Niger Delta was in a state of economic doom and hopelessness until 1956 when oil was discovered in commercial quantity at Oloibiri. The implications of this discovery became obvious after independence and this was to radically alter the relationship between Nigeria and the Niger Delta. Prior to crude oil becoming the major foreign exchange earner in the country, Nigerian exports were mainly from the agricultural sector and the regions that cultivated these commodities were adequately rewarded. Crude oil was soon to become a significant contributor to the Nigerian economy after the Oloibiri findings. By 1979, Nigeria became the 7th largest Oil Producer in the world. The Niger Delta thus bounced back as the region with the richest resources within the Nigeria federation. The rejected pillar became the head of the corner stone. Ogbogbo (1990:560) further explains that:

These developments greatly altered the nature of Niger Delta - Nigeria relations. For one, the new economic prosperity of the region meant an influx of Nigerians into the area in search of jobs and economic opportunities in the supposedly money spinning oil companies. Nigerians from the various ethnic groups clustered into the major oil cities of Port Harcourt, Warri, Bonny, Eleme, etc in search of greener pasture from what had again become the 'treasure base of the nation'. Thus at the individual level, it provided a haven for vigorous interaction amongst the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. Such relationship transcended the economics to the social realm. A lot of inter-ethnic marriages resulted from such

movement of people; a situation reminiscent of the 19th Century when the region was the hub of inter-group relations in the Nigerian geographical area.

The influx of people and transnational companies into the region however, caused considerable disquiet and social tensions in many communities. There have been charges of marginalization and lack of commitment from Government and transnational oil companies, against host communities in the areas of environmental development, socio-economic development as well as employment of youths and community members into the oil companies. Such arguments have resulted in some dialectical tensions in the relationship between the host communities and TNCs operating in the area.

Exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the region has indeed brought about environmental degradation of unimaginable proportion. Apart from massive deforestation, there has been the poisoning of the ecosystem through incidents of oil spillages and gas flaring. Makanju (2007) recalls that:

Before the crude oil years the Niger Delta region which was in dire need of development... however, seemed to have been neglected for three main reasons. First was what Chief Obafemi Awolowo described as ‘titanic challenges’ that confronted any development effort in the region due to its peculiar and intimidating terrain. Secondly, there was the question of the region not contributing much to the national coffers as to warrant the huge spending that would be required to provide the needed social amenities. To be added to this list is the lack of political will to tackle the problems that confront the region by the colonial administrators. Rather than the fortunes of the people increasing with the coming of crude oil, their situation became worse. In addition to the lack of infrastructural facilities their problems became compounded with environmental degradation. The later development became a threat to the livelihood and by extension their existence as people.

In all these confusing calamities that seem to have befallen the region, the response of the Nigerian State has fallen short of the people’s expectations. The seemingly lackadaisical attitude

of the State to their problems fostered the impression of collaboration between the transnational oil companies and the Federal government to merely exploit their resources without investing back something they could regard as substantial. The several revisions of the country's revenue allocation formula so far has been to the disadvantage of the oil producing communities and States of the Niger Delta region. But this was not the case before Oil became a significant factor, the revenue allocation, provided for 50% derivation. This was at a time when the dominant three groups of Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, provided the major agricultural exports of the country. However, with the production of crude oil from the communities of minority groups in the Niger Delta, there was the downgrading of the derivation principles.

The point being made is that the various revenue allocation formulas adopted after that of the Independence Constitution, deprived the Niger Delta people of a substantial share of the revenue derived from the region. Revenue allocation was distributed to the States, and the State creation exercise did not favour the Niger Delta people. It is this perception that informs the query of the Ogoni activist, Ken Saro Wiwa as to "why should one ethnic nationality have five States while 70 others share one State? The military split the major ethnic groups into smaller units to enable them rob the minority ethnic groups of their oil resources" (in Ogbogbo 1999:57). Such perceived injustices have brought the effect of increasing tension among the Niger Delta people. The misgivings of the Niger Delta people against the conduct and response of the Federal Government to their plight has generated considerable tensions and eventually, violent and conflictual relations even among the different tribes and communities within the Niger Delta (Tamuno 2000, Akpomuvie 2011 and Asagba 2010).

Fundamentally, it is not the presence of problems but the neglect in responding to the complaints of the Niger Delta people that often leads to social disharmony and conflicts. The consequence of all these is that the region has remained in a severely social challenging situation. The criticality of the Niger Delta therefore needs to have effective approaches and strategies that can address the myriads of social challenges currently plaguing local communities so as to bring about social change for these communities. It is on this basis, that this current study examines the potentialities embedded in alternative communication strategies to bring about social change for local communities in the Niger Delta region. The deployment of TFD as an alternative communication strategy in the Niger Delta Communities of Erema in Rivers State and Otuasega in Bayelsa State will therefore be examined to further probe the effectiveness of this strategy.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

Studies in TFD as social change communication approach involve different theoretical perspectives, depending on the relevance which they provide for the study being carried out. For the purpose of this research, the Culture-Centered Theory and the Theory of Dialogical Pedagogy are adopted. These theories enable the study to give an in-depth discussion on the essence of the TFD intervention undertaken in Erema and Otuasega communities of the Niger-Delta region by the NPTA. Furthermore the dialogical potentialities which these theories emphasize provide a necessary basis to discuss the subaltern nature and complexities of the Niger-Delta communities being examined.

3.1 Culture-Centered Theory

The Culture-Centered Theory propounded by Mohan Dutta, concerns itself with the voices of the marginalized and subaltern groups; and explores the interactions between culture and the structure that create the conditions of marginality (Dutta 2008, Dutta and Pal 2010, Bassu and Dutta 2008, Dutta 2011). Structures are the institutional frameworks, ways of organizing rules and roles in the society that constrain and enable access to resources. Culture is defined in terms of the local contexts, framework of meaning making and interpretation, and spaces of shared meanings, values and interactions. It is through these expressions, interpretations, and reinterpretations of culturally circulated meanings that individuals and communities enact their agency. Agency here taps into the fundamental human capacity to enact choices in negotiating structures (Bassu and Dutta, 2008). The Culture-centered theory at its heart recognizes the

agency of the subaltern communities in negotiating structures and in seeking spaces for change. The Culture-Centered Theory concerns itself with these silences and absences and generates meaning through a participatory framework. The philosophy here is writing issues from below and defining praxis through the engagement with subaltern classes who have traditionally been marginalized and absent in dominant theories and models.

According to Dutta (2008), power is differentially distributed and determines the nature and content of the dominant discourses, which in turn support the dominant positions of power, a view that is often ignored by the dominant models of communication theorizing. Although power is fragmented and is played out at multiple sites, it is also rooted in material realities. Therefore, critiquing the discursive turn in the dominant literature on critical approaches in communication, the cultured-centered approach emphasizes the relevance of attending to the material realities of control and resistance. Dutta and Pal (2010:9) for instance give the following account:

Chevron (a petrochemical TNC based in the United States) utilizes its material access to dominant sites and spaces of power to delegitimize and downplay the negative health effects of the oil spills caused by the operation of Chevron in Ecuador. The discursive strategy of delegitimizing the claims of the subaltern sectors in a weaker nation state (Ecuador) is achieved through the claims of scientific expertise, corruption and fabrication in the Third World, downplaying of the Third World subaltern agency and accusation of falsification within the dominant discursive spaces of public relations, crisis management, and legal communications that are traditionally accessible to chevron. It is against this backdrop of material inequity in the politics of representation in communicative framework that the Culture-Centered theory explores avenues for organizing in the subaltern sectors such that alternative subaltern discourses can be heard in achieving material transformations (in this case getting Chevron to pay and clean up the oil spills).

The situation as captured by Pal and Dutta in Ecuador is not different from the scenarios obtainable in the subaltern Niger-Delta communities in Nigeria. These communities in the Niger- Delta like their counterparts in Ecuador are oil-rich communities who have been severely

affected by the TNCs and Government exploitations of their communities through oil exploration causing disastrous environmental hazards. Like Dutta and Pal note that this exploitation has become so as a result of the TNCs having the protection of the dominant economic and political structures within. In a policy briefing of Theatre for Development Centre (TFDC) ABU, Zaria, Okwori et.al (2009:2) note likewise that in Nigeria:

...oil mining has created major ecological problem in the Niger-Delta. The Lands and Farms have been contaminated by the oil activity: the pipelines, flow stations, gas flares, oil spills have all combined to make the Niger-Delta an environmental disaster area...In Nigeria the oil companies have breached rather than respect oil environmental laws that regulate practices to protect people and the environment. The breach is taking place against the background that Nigeria is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Agencies 21 in addition to other international conventions. However none of these provisions of these conventions seem to have been brought to bear on the environmental and ecological devastation caused by oil mining in the Niger-Delta... The Federal Environmental Protection agency charged with the responsibility to bring environmental abusers to book is ineffective because the same Federal Government gives the oil companies latitude and protection.

Culture-centered theory takes a critical thinking about issues of these kind and place emphasis on the communities that exist on the peripheries of the dominant system with the goal of disrupting the marginalization of the undeserved sectors. Building upon its roots in subaltern studies theory and further extending the postmodern thread to material contexts, the cultured-centered theory centralizes listening to local voices that traditionally remain outside the mainstream discursive spaces, arguing that the silencing of the subaltern is deeply intertwined with her oppression in the hands of local, national, and global power structures (Dutta 2008, Spivak 1988 and Dutta-Bergman 2004). The emphasis therefore is on interrogating the dominant practices of communication for the ways in which they create and sustain conditions at the margins, and on creating spaces of transformation by documenting the ways in which these dominant practices are resisted in marginalized communities.

In creating subaltern entry points for transformative politics, culture-centered theorizing is attentive to the multiple counter-hegemonies and interplays of power as the local engages with the global. It is in these negotiations of power at various local and global intersections that possibilities of social change are constituted. What sets apart the Culture-Centered theory from other discursive approaches to power is its singular interest in understanding those conditions at the margins that have limited them access to basic resources for the well being and transformation of their communities. Drawing from the ideology of this theory this study examines the subaltern nature of the Niger-Delta communities of Erema and Otuasega. It discusses the aspects of their social milieu which is brought about as a result of their subaltern conditions. Furthermore the roles played by local agencies to voice and change the conditions of their subaltern and marginalized situations are buttressed in this study.

3.2 Theory of Dialogical Pedagogy

The Theory of Dialogical Pedagogy by Paulo Freire, is of the view that the desire to empower people could be achieved through the process of creating awareness and conscientization which can only be possible through the process of dialogue (Freire, 1970). This also implies reaching a level of consciousness whereby communities become aware of their living condition and are determined to take the right decisions to positively act on them. Freire, operating within the ambits of educational pedagogy, states that:

The concept of dialogue between the teacher and the student in search of solution brings the two into social interaction where both operate from a democratic base of equality that has two principal features: freedom and equal opportunities in social and political life. The teacher and student should work together to solve problems on equal footing, or at least without the teacher claiming absolute knowledge and an authority superior to that of a peasant. This entails people being to have a choice among a number of options. The second feature is equality. This

implies that people are fundamentally equal in some important respect (Freire, 2005:98).

In dialogic, Freire declares that there must be cooperation among subjects which can only be achieved through communication in which the desired change does not seek to conquer people but to gain their adherence. In this sense, dialogue is not employed as a mere technique to achieve some cognitive results, but a means to transform social relations and to raise awareness about relationships in the society at large. Dialogue therefore plays an umpire of recreating knowledge through learning process. Freire further states that:

Dialogue, as essential communication, must underlie any co-operation. In the theory of dialogical action, there is no place for conquering the people on behalf of the revolutionary cause, but only for gaining their adherence. Dialogue does not impose, does not manipulate, does not domesticate, does not “sloganize”. This does not mean, however, that the theory of dialogical leads nowhere; nor does it mean that the dialogical humans do not have a clear idea of what she wants or of the objectives to which she is committed...Thus co-operation leads dialogical subjects to focus their attention on the reality challenging them. The response to that challenge is the action of dialogical subjects upon reality in order to transform it. (Freire 2005:168)

In other words, dialogue brings people together in a social interaction to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it. In a situation requiring the use of participation, the dialoguers' process will illuminate and act on reality for the solution to the problems. Through dialogue Freire (2005), asserts that people reflect together on what they know and what they do not know to enable them act critically to transform reality.

Consequently it is imperative to say that when stakeholders are not involved in mutual dialogue from the beginning of any development initiative, they tend to be suspicious of the project activities and may not give their cooperation. Conversely, when dialogic communication is used to involve them in the definition of initiative, their motivation is higher. In order to take

decisions over their lives, individuals would have to be socially involved in a participatory process of dialogue and active communication that gives the power to decide and act upon those decisions. It is a theory of making meaning, such that individuals create their own understanding based on an interaction on what they already know and believe and the new knowledge with which they come into contact. Freire (2005:60) further states that “a genuine change aiming at eliminating the patterns of domination in the society can be achieved and legitimized only through dialogue with the people”. Ayuba (2015:124) thus gives the following as the basic characteristics of dialogical pedagogy:

- i. It gives attention to the individual and the community and respect for the community’s background, beliefs, and traditions.
- ii. Facilitates group’s dialogue, leading to the creation of shared understanding of the issues been raised.
- iii. Provides opportunities for individuals and community to determine, change or add to existing beliefs and understanding through participatory communication that are structured for the desired purpose and
- iv. Development of the community’s awareness of their own issues in the dialogue.

Embedded in the characteristics above is the desire of empowering people through that same process of awareness and conscientisation, which is very possible through the process of dialogue, aimed at social change for the people.

Relating the discourse of dialogical pedagogy to the culture-centered theory, Mohan Dutta gives emphasis to using tools that facilitates dialogue as fundamental to the creation of the needed

social change in subaltern communities for which practitioners and researchers should give attention to:

In essence then dialogue as a tool creates an entry point for those at centers to engage with the politics of subalternity, finding spaces for listening to subaltern voices in the ways in which policies are formulated and implemented locally, nationally and globally. In this sense, dialogue becomes an epistemological tool for the subaltern politics of social change. It offers guidelines for communication scholars and practitioners participating in the politics of social change to envision communication processes and methods with the marginalizing social structures and seek out avenues for changing them. A dialogic approach makes note of the dialectical tensions that emerge in the process of social change. It also brings forth the tools of solidarity, commitment, and reflexivity into the communicative processes of social change, thus continuously renegotiating the role of the researcher and practitioner (Dutta, 2011:170).

The politics of a dialogic approach to social change lies in the articulation of issues from subaltern standpoints, thus shifting the landscape of problem configuration and the development of solution into the realm of subaltern communities. Rather than depicting the subaltern as bodies to be targeted in large-scale campaign and intervention that focuses on top-down logics of individual behavior change, the dialogic approach centers on the role of listening to subaltern voices, taking note of problem configuration as seen through the subaltern perspectives and creating spaces of change through the voicing of subaltern agendas. "...a dialogic engagement with the margin begins with humility, reflexivity, and openness to learning through engagement, thus sifting the traditional role of the expert from a producer of knowledge situated at the centers of power to a listener who works in solidarity with the subaltern sectors to create spaces of structural transformation"(Dutta 2011:169).

In the context of this study, this theoretical perspective examines the viability of TFD as a communicative process that is participatory and endogenous in approach. It buttresses the idea of TFD as an effective social change communication approach. In other words, the emphasis is on a

people's oriented agenda, for contemplating the social challenges affecting them, and for which they must be critically involved in the emergence of desired change outcomes.

Essentially the theories examined in this study concretely emphasize the social change perspective which TFD advocates. A social change perspective that amplifies the voices of the 'other'; in other words, it puts into consideration the voices of the subaltern and marginalized, giving them greater level of consciousness to drive their course through more productive pathways in the resolution of the social challenges hindering the development of their society. Furthermore it seeks to disrupt the parochialism and selfish tendencies, aggressiveness and violent attitudes which are largely as a result of the manipulative and oppressive conditions emerging from hegemonic status quo and structures that have hitherto affected their society. In his contemplation of social change communication goal of TFD, Abah (2005:98) opines thus:

All over the world, wherever Theatre for Development (TFD) is practiced, it defines itself as an alternative practice, and the agenda it pursues always is that of change. The notion of 'auteur' (other) is quite strong in TFD's definition of itself and its role. It is also significant that in its practice 'otherness' is central to TFD's discursive strategy, first in its artistic form and secondly in the issues and participants involved in it. However, the end point to this exploration of the alternative, and the 'other' as an instrument of alienation and subjugation, is to seek a point of disjunction to where a resolution no matter how tenuous, may be achieved, that is at the centre of the TFD practice... The reason TFD is always seeking change is to be found in the nature of the environment in which it is practiced. It is a situation in which the everyday life of the ordinary person is that of non-availability of basic needs...Therefore in the marginalized world of the poor, theatre cannot but deal with daily struggles for survival.

The position of Abah given above captures to a large extent, the central concern and idea which makes TFD an effective strategy in social change communication. This it does by ensuring that challenging and subaltern terrains emerge with strategies and agencies that offer better possibilities for community development. TFD employed in the Niger-Delta communities of

Erema and Otuasega, as examined in this study therefore offers a useful opportunity to consider the practical evidences of its functionality as a cultural and participatory pathway that leads to social change in challenging terrains such as the Niger-Delta region. Furthermore it brings to bear the need to raise the horizon in actualizing a more sustainable social change and community development agenda for local communities beyond the Niger Delta region.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology adopted for this study. It explains the research design by examining the instruments and processes that guided the collection of both primary and secondary data for analysis. The reliability and validity of the instruments as well as the method of analysis for this study are also captured within this chapter.

4.1 Research Design

Kerlinger in Bello and Ajayi (2000:2) states that “Research design is the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to questions of the research study and control variance”. In other words, it is a blue print that aids the research in addressing the set objectives. It explains the methodological approach, the instruments for obtaining the data required for the research, as well as the reliability and validity of instruments, and how the data will be analyzed.

For the realization of the research objectives, the researcher adopted a qualitative methodology which offered the study an exploratory approach. The use of qualitative approach for this study was apt and carried a number of implications at the ontological, epistemological, and methodological levels (Guba 1990 and Wilkins 1994). Guba (1990) thus explains that ontologically, “it does not matter if reality is one or multiple, since reality is constructed through the exchanging and sharing of knowledge and experiences among individuals”. The implication here is that within the human frame there is no one or general fixed reality, but a variance of

realities which are quite valid within the explanations and perspectives of the individuals. At the epistemological level “which has to do with issues and disseminating knowledge in particular area of inquiry, the separation between the researcher and the object of the study is no longer of emphasis as the two in most cases are a part of a single reality” (Wilkins 1994:2). Methodologically, the central focus of the researcher is to identify and interpret constructions of reality through a number of data instruments essentially based on a dialectic mode. Therefore against the tripod implications of the ontological, epistemological and methodological levels, the use of qualitative method and techniques thus provided the opportunity to engage focal respondents in investigation and conversation on the relevant issues of discourse as it relates to the use of TFD intervention examined in this research. The use of qualitative research enabled a process that afforded the researcher opportunity to gain reliable and in-depth knowledge of the interventions undertaken in both communities from mainly participating community members. Qualitative methodology became very applicable in a research of this nature that is essentially aimed at interpreting social dynamics in an exploratory manner.

Justifying the need for the use of qualitative methodology for a research of this nature, the researcher aligns with Adamu (2009) as he explains that qualitative research helps the researcher to interact with those being studied and actively works to minimize the distance between the researcher and the researched. Qualitative research helps one to understand the views of the research participants, realizing that all understanding is constructed. This synchronizes well with the ideological underpinning of the culture-centered and the dialogical pedagogy theories adopted in this research. These theories emphasize a close dialectics between individuals; the inquirer and the inquired in collective action and reflection, and working towards liberation and

empowerment which is capable of leading to social change. More so at the core of these theories is the impetus to create dynamic and participatory spaces for listening to the voices of subaltern communities. Dutta (2011:264) explains further that:

These participatory spaces are fundamentally communicative as these are the sites where local and subaltern communities come together for the discussion of issues, sharing of ideas, the development of identities, and the identification and mobilization of resources. Participatory spaces within the communities become sites of collective organizing and forums for the discussions, deliberation and decisions on key issues facing local communities.

Qualitative research therefore helped the study to understand the views of the research respondents better. Ayuba (2015:78) further states that “It makes the voices of the people who are often marginalized in empirical research to be heard more, it highlights those who by number may not be captured within standard deviation and are not represented in reports of quantitative statistics”. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:45) are of the opinion that:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices... turn the world into a series of representation including field notes, interviews, and conversation ... memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive naturalist approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

In this study, qualitative research therefore seeks to find out the reasons for as opposed to numbers of. It explained the why and how by providing reasons for actions. In other words it does not simply extract information from the people but encourages interaction, which helps to liberate the voice of the beneficiaries or participants. Qualitative research therefore ensured that the researcher essentially gained in-depth understanding from community members that were involved in the TFD intervention in the study locations. Their opinions and perspectives

concerning the potentials as well as the challenges it holds for the development of their communities and the Niger Delta Region were better articulated.

In order for qualitative methodology to be well employed, appropriate forms and tools that bolstered their legitimacy as credible and in-depth method that enabled researchers viewed things constructively and from the views of the researched were thus employed. As an appropriate form then, this study made use of the case study form of qualitative research.

As Stake (2000:27) notes, case study is essentially a “choice of what is to be studied, which could be done analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures, but must concentrate, at least for the time being, on the case”. To Stake, the term case study can refer to either the process of analysis or the product of analysis, or both. Adamu (2009:3) affirms that case study as a form of qualitative research is focused on providing an in-depth account of one or more cases. This involves studying a community or individual that has been given a new programme. Bell (1987:6) is of the opinion that the use of case study can be quite useful as it gives the opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time. It allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance in a situation and to identify, or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work. In this context, the case study approach afforded this study the opportunity to employ qualitative instruments that elicited data essentially from community members that encountered the NPTA’s TFD intervention undertaken in their different localities. It provided a basis for in-depth discussion of the social issues as identified in these communities from the intervention carried out. Furthermore, it offered them an opportunity to speak on the efforts made so far to further address and change these challenges.

4.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The qualitative instruments of data collection employed for this study are: Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII), Observation Method and Desk Review Instruments. Although there are several other tools which are employable for qualitative research, these selected tools however offer the researcher an apt opportunity to obtain both primary and secondary data in order to ascertain how they facilitated active dialogue and participation on the TFD intervention undertaken by NPTA in the communities under study. Furthermore these tools aided in understanding the efficacy of TFD by revealing the dynamic process of its participatory and bottom-up approach to social change communication where the voices of beneficiaries are consciously articulated for their benefit.

4.2.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussion is one which involves a small group of people led through an open discussion by a skilled moderator. Usually the group should be within the range of eight to twelve respondents. Abu (2015:62) note that:

A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. It is an instrument or survey method to collect the views of users of an innovation. It can be applied to properly understand the motivation behind certain attitudes of a group or community. Group discussion produces data and insights that would be less accessible without interaction found in a group setting.

The use of FGD is basically aimed at generating a useful discussion on the subject matter of the research. FGD allows the researcher access a variety of different opinions. The interaction during the FGD session produces unique findings from the thoughts and feelings of the respondents. A safer experience is provided for respondents who prefer to discuss issues within a group rather

than individually. Diversity is also achieved with FGD while respondents interact and learn new information.

To implement the FGD for this study, the researcher gathered community members in the two different communities being researched. These members formed a basic population size for the study. The selection of the population size was done on the basis of community members' knowledge and experience on the TFD intervention undertaken in their communities. This aided an in-depth obtaining of data that provided a better basis for discussion on the objectives of the research. In each of the communities the FGD comprised a minimum of ten persons for each set. In Erema and Otuasega communities, community leaders as well as Youth association members formed the focus groups. The researcher as a facilitator asked questions with the aid of the guide questions aimed to start and guide the discussion, and to encourage inputs from everybody, while making sure that the discussion is not distracted by issues that are not relevant to the scope of the focus group. The questions asked essentially centers around the aim and objectives of the research.

4.2.2 Key Informant Interview (KII)

It is an established fact that interviews are appropriate tools that can be used to acquire knowledge or probe specific issues usually with one person at a time. Interview as Angulu (2015:41) defines it, is a “conversational practice where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and interviewee or a group of interviewees”. Unlike everyday conversations, the research interview is most carried out to serve the research objectives. In most cases, research interviewing involves a “one way dialogue” with the researcher asking questions

and the interviewee being cast in the role of respondent. The research interview has become one of the most widespread knowledge producing practices across the humanities and social scientific disciplines; “although interviewing was a marginalized practice in many humanities and social science disciplines for years, it is part of the mainstream today” (Adamu, 1999:44). Many different forms of interviewing exist. Interviews can be formally conducted in surveys, through the internet, over the telephone, or in face to face interaction, and they can be informally conducted as part of ethnographic field work. In survey research interviewing, standardized questions are posed and the answers are given in form that are amenable to quantitative procedures. However qualitative research interviews are usually semi-structured as a consequence of the agenda being set by the researcher’s interests yet with room for the respondent’s more spontaneous descriptions and narratives.

In addition to use of FGDs, this study further gained insight using key informant interview, to find out the why, how and where of the programme from those who were keenly involved in the intervention. From both communities under study, the researcher selected members of the community who had close link with the TFD intervention for the KII session. To further compliment the data provided by the community members, the researcher also had an interview session with one of the NPTA officials at their head office in ABU Zaria. The data generated was useful for further analysis on the topical issues examined in this research and more essentially how the experience becomes a vital tool for social change communication in Niger Delta communities.

4.2.3 Observation Method

For collection of data, the observation method was also employed in this research. An observational technique is a process whereby a researcher decides to observe a particular phenomenon, event or object of a given interest. Obioma et.al (1987) quoted in Jegede (2008) notes that observation is “an intentional or explicit examination of a situation, things or environment in order to ascertain facts. Observation can be unintentional or inexplicit, known or unknown, direct or indirect, scheduled or unscheduled”. The researcher thus used the documentary-observation method to bring out some of the issues as identified in the course of his formal and informal interaction with community members. Furthermore through observation, physical evidences were given of some of the social outcomes brought about from TFD experience in these communities as cited by the researcher in the course of his stay in the communities. This complemented the interview and FGD methods, as it enabled the researcher to give insight to the findings gotten from both the interview and FGD methods.

Furthermore, the observation technique showed the importance which the study gave to the active participation of both the researcher and the respondents in the dialogical essentiality of the study. It also helped the researcher to provide visible evidences of the NPTA’S TFD intervention carried out in their communities, and how it was in line with the needs of the communities.

4.2.4 Desk Review

Desk review for this research provided some essential secondary data as it relates to field experiences examined. Travis (2016:7) states that “... the role of the researcher in carrying out desk research is to review relevant materials and documents in order to gain a broad

understanding of the issues as gotten from the primary data”. Desk review enables the researcher to ascertain the novelty of the current research being undertaken, as well as facilitating credibility and a defined focus in the course of eliciting and examining data obtained from the field. In this research the use of desk review essentially served the following purposes:

Firstly, it offered the researcher an opportunity to examine field reports documents obtained from NPTA on the use of TFD in addressing social challenges in the Niger Delta communities of Erema and Otuasega. Secondly the desk research offered the researcher sufficient and general data base that provided a good ground for comparing the facts of previous scholarly materials and current facts as it is has been obtained in this research.

Furthermore, the desk review essentially provided facts on whether the TFD intervention undertaken in the communities of Erema and Otuasega by NPTA still proves an effective strategy in social change communication for the Niger Delta local communities. Finally the desk review provided a rationale and justification on whether the methodological approach employed in this research study is of relevance for further or future researches on the topic under study.

4.3 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

To ensure reliability and validity this research adopted a triangulation of the qualitative instruments through which data for analysis was obtained. In this way the validity of findings from one research instrument as compared to the findings of other approaches was possible. In essence a claim or perspective as obtained from KII for instance was compared to what FGD instrument revealed in order to find out if there is agreement or disagreement to the claim.

Furthermore, desk review evidence was accessed in order to support or refute the claim in the KII. In this way triangulation which compares what one source claims as to what would be obtained through a different source gave some level of reliability and dependability to the data so collated.

Outside triangulation, the research ensured that transparent procedure was followed in the collection and discussion of data. This was done by presenting a useful account of respondents in the course of eliciting information from them. In this way similarities and differences across accounts and responses were obtained. More so to guard against the problem of generating cumbersome and uncontrollable data, the collection of data was guided by the objectives and the scope of the research study.

4.4 Method of Data Analysis:

In a qualitative data analysis of a research of this nature, descriptive and exploratory approach is absolutely required and as such was adopted. Hence the instruments which were employed to obtain data for the study became relevant. The use of FGD, KII, Observation and Desk Review supplied logical framework for the study. The exploratory approach followed the basic theoretical proposition of the research, which is the adoption of a participatory model that facilitates researches in social change communication. The description of the TFD intervention was made to shed light on the various stages of the whole process in the intervention, thus highlighting vital steps as well as bottlenecks behind the realization of a truly participatory communication model. The data collected from respondents were subjected to critical discussion and was done in clear and understandable terms. The set of questions as informing the KII and

FGD provided insight on how the use of TFD as communication strategy contributes to social change and transformation of local communities in the Niger Delta.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the research critically examined the TFD interventions in Erema and Otuasega communities of Rivers and Bayelsa states respectively. At this stage, the research through the different research tools, obtained data from these communities and examined how TFD affected their lives. Guided by the research objectives, the research critically discussed how the TFD as a strategy for social change communication played out to engender community growth and development among communities within the Niger Delta region under study. This necessitated a research analysis that offered the researcher ample opportunity to make necessary connection between TFD and the socio-economic realities and dynamics in the region. As earlier explained, the instruments of data collection include: Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII), Observation and Desk Review of the NPTA's TFD intervention in the study locations.

5.1 TFD Interventions, Social Change and the Niger Delta Region: The Discussion of Research Findings

To discuss the research findings, the researcher ensured that he engaged the community members in both Erema and Otuasega who participated in the TFD process undertaken in their communities, as well as the office of the NPTA. This was done with the aid of the research tools that have been initially mentioned. In Erema, the researcher was able to elicit discussions with community members in two different FGD sessions. First was with selected community elders and leaders while the second was with selected Erema Youth Council (EYC) members. In

Otuasega, the situation was slightly different as the Community members insisted that the FGD should be done in one whole collective with community members that witnessed the intervention inside the town hall of the community. They explained that they want to hear from one another and pleaded with the researcher to allow it so, the researcher thus obliged them. Outside the use of FGDs, the researcher also had KII sessions with two members in each of the communities. This was in addition to the KII session that was held with Oga Steve Abah, the foundational head of NPTA at the NPTA office in ABU Zaria to better examine some of the issues addressed in both communities. Research findings were obtained in line with the objectives of the study and as such discussion of data is therefore done under the following sub-topics as capturing each of the objectives which the study addresses:

- i. Account of NPTA TFD Intervention in Erema and Otuasega Communities.
- ii. TFD and Community Participation in Niger Delta Communities of Erema and Otuasega.
- iii. TFD as a medium that advocates Social Change for Niger Delta Communities.
- iv. Interfacing Alternative Communication and Mainstream Media in the Niger Delta Challenges.
- v. Challenges of TFD in Social Change Communication for Niger Delta Communities.

5.1.1 NPTA'S TFD Intervention Process in Erema and Otuasega Communities

In response to objective one, the research presented a critical account of the TFD intervention process undertaken in Erema and Otuasega Communities by NPTA. This provided the research an opportunity to capture the basic stages undertaken by the NPTA as obtained from the NPTA's documents on the programme. Examining the account essentially reveals the usefulness of the

different stages in the realization of a TFD intervention aimed at actualizing social change and community development in the Niger Delta region, especially as exemplified by the communities in focus. The account is hereby presented beginning with the preliminaries stages.

The Preliminaries: As initially stated, the TFD intervention was sponsored by CORDAID (Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid) in partnership with Stakeholders Democracy Network (SDN). As a way of commencing the programme awarded to them, Oga Steve Abah in a KII session explained that:

The NPTA initiated a training phase where they could discuss with stakeholders on the TFD programme at stake. The training took place both in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where the NPTA headquarters is located and also in Clock Tower Hotel in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Key persons from the communities who were to also join in the facilitation of the TFD programme were included in the training. As part of our advocacy each of the intervention in the communities began with introductory sessions made to the Community Leaders to gain their understanding and maximum cooperation. In both communities the leaders were absolutely supportive and this actually aided our easy passage and the overall success of the programme (*KII session with Oga Steve Abah at ABU, Zaria*).

As part of the training, the NPTA adopted a methodological conversation for the realization of the intervention in both communities. Methodological conversation is an approach of complimenting TFD and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tools in the execution of TFD interventions. It was advanced by Abah (2003:126-127), and he states as follows:

There is indeed a commonality of agenda and sometimes approaches between TFD and PLA. The defining characteristic of both is the ethics of participation. PLA is a cavalcade of tools designed to be learned and used by ordinary villagers in the analysis of their problems...TFD on its own part is a performative means of concretizing community issues as the body, words and objects (props) in space define, analyze and strategize for action...TFD can operate from and with PLA; and PLA can spring from TFD. PLA and TFD build pictures of issues, of problems and of life stories. While PLA may often build pictures on two-dimensional surfaces (on paper or in sand), TFD pictures issues in songs, through story-telling and through the body in motion in the arenas of the village.

The above explanation thus provides a clear picture of the methodological approach which NPTA adopted in executing the TFD intervention in Erema and Otuasega where they worked. In the light of the above, NPTA during the TFD process, deployed PLA tools such as transect walk, community mapping, problem tree analysis and pair wise ranking. All these tools were combined with drama process in the actualization of the TFD intervention in these respective communities. The point of significance however, was to understand the use of these tools in relation to community issues and for the community to further explore them within their own particular context.

The Use of PLA Tools in Erema Community- As obtained from the documents on the NPTA TFD intervention done in the two communities, the NPTA team worked with community members mainly drawn from the umbrella organization called the Erema Youth Council (EYC). In order to have a sense of ownership, the selection of participants was carefully done by community leaders to ensure that those participating would remain on ground to carry forward the outcomes of the programme. Outside the audience consisting of various community members, about 20 persons from Erema played different roles during the TFD intervention. Their readiness and interest to learn and explore the tools was quite impressive. NPTA engaged these persons in the use of PLA research tools such as transect walk and community mapping, problem tree analysis and pair wise ranking.

Transect walk was done across the major roads of the community by the participants. After which they drew a community map. The use of these tools revealed a number of social and economic issues affecting the community. Key among them include: some bad roads, poor health services, teenage pregnancy, leadership tussles, poor educational and social facilities, poor

presence of oil companies provision of social amenities/social responsibilities, uneven distribution of water in the community, oil spillage and abandoned farmlands. Leadership crises, Youth unemployment and lack of Youth empowerment initiative from Government and TNCs were very conspicuous in the course of the findings.

In the interrogation of these issues, they were analyzed and the consequences of each of the problems were outlined. With regard to poor health services, it was perceived to be as a result of poor management, greed and political interest. The consequences of these included the spread of diseases and risk to life. Community leadership issues came out strongly in their analysis of the problems. The analysis of these problems located it first of all in the process of selecting leaders which the participants viewed as corrupt, driven by greed, based on sentiments and favouritism and that the zoning system ignored merit in favour of god-fatherism and mediocrity. The consequences of these on the community and its people have been poor infrastructural development, low morale and self-esteem on the part of the people. Also, in the discussion of the issues they traced a relationship between bad leadership and the most crucial for the Youth members which was the issue of unemployment of the Youths in the community.

There was indeed a thread linking most of the issues and many were branches of the same problem or were root causes of others. It was such linkages and appendages that the problem tree analysis brought together in one picture. However, in order to employ useful strategies it was necessary to prioritize issues to decide the hierarchy of needs since it is not possible to address all the issues identified at once. To this, another Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tool known as pair-wise ranking was used. This is a system of comparing each problem to the other to

determine how critical each one was in the life of the community members. The frequency of any one issue would determine its standing in the scale of needs. In Erema, Youth unemployment was ranked highest, followed by poor education and bad Leadership. Others included: poor presence of oil companies provision of social responsibilities, uneven distribution of water in the community, poor educational and social facilities, oil spillage and abandoned farmlands.

The Use of PLA Tools in Otuasega Community: NPTA also worked with the Youth group members, who were mainly drawn from the Otuasega Youth Association (OYA). This is the umbrella youth organization in the community. Unlike Erema where they had a slightly greater number of participants and involvement in the TFD process, in Otuasega about 15 of them were part of the TFD process. Nevertheless the enthusiasm shown by the participants was equally high as experienced in Erema. From the NPTA's documents on the TFD intervention done in the community, Transect Walk, Community Map and Pair Wise Ranking were the PLA tools employed to engage the community.

The transect walk was done across major roads in the community and the drawing of the community map, allowed them to see different parts of the community and revealed a number of social challenges plaguing them. These include: abandoned buildings, abandoned farmlands, abandoned overhead water tank, uncompleted public toilets, lack of Women empowerment, abandoned library project, lack of Scholarship, uncompleted school building, oil spillage, Gas flaring, lack of community market, bad roads, poor drainage, gas flaring and oil spillage. Much like the Erema Community, Leadership crises, Youth unemployment and serious dissatisfaction from the efforts of TNCs operating in their community, in terms of social responsibilities and

providing Jobs for Youths in the community were top most in the course of findings. Unlike Erema where they deployed the Problem Tree analysis, the Otuasega participants only made use of Pair Wise Ranking. The problems were prioritized and ranked amidst debates and disagreements among the participants. However, the Otuasega community prioritized Youth unemployment, lack of scholarship, Leadership conflicts, and abandoned projects by TNCs and Government. Others included: bad roads, lack of community market, poor drainage, gas flaring, women empowerment, environmental degradation caused by oil spillage and poor water distribution.

In a KII session with Oga Steve Abah, he explained that the PLA tools in both communities:

...essentially gave these communities a sense of getting to understand the issues affecting their community from a more critical and deeper dimension. The participants began to see some gray areas that needed better resolution from their community leadership and youth structures. They had the opportunity to discuss and articulate a number of social challenges better. For instance in Otuasega, they noticed that for them to tackle the challenge of leadership conflict that is bedeviling their community, they must work on amending their constitution. Both communities also noticed that the challenge of Youth unemployment and lack of Youth empowerment is something that has put them in a deplorable state. But these for them were a realization that needed a better approach to resolving them rather than using violent approach with the TNCs operating in their environments (*KII session with Oga Steve Abah at ABU, Zaria*).

It is important to state that the use of PLA tools in these communities has enabled them to embrace new ways of unlocking and teasing out their social quagmires. Furthermore it opens the room for them to form a sense of cohesion to further the interest and willingness needed to properly address the issues affecting them.

Drama Performance and Post Performance Discussions: Having explored the use of PLA tools, the key issues on which to base their dramas and community performances were then clear for the different communities. The participants in both communities decided that the issue of highest priority would be what their drama performance should focus on. Consequently the drama was

basically on the challenges of Youth unemployment and empowerment which for them was as a result of bad leadership, nepotism, and poor relationship of TNCs and Government with host communities.

The Erema Performance and Post Performance Discussions: As obtained from the documents on the NPTA TFD intervention, in Erema the scenario for the performance was developed by the participants as follows:

- *A senator from the community has secured twenty slots of job opportunities for the unemployed youths in his constituency. He hands over the forms to the Chief in the community for onward distribution among qualified youths. However, instead of employing judicious means to share out the positions the Chief only gives to his relatives and sells some.*
- *Two young men arrive at the chief's house to make enquiries concerning the offers which they hear are available. The Chief is aggressive and queries them how they got their information. He denies that any such opportunities exist and sends them away.*
- *The Chief is riding high on the crest of corruption, hobnobbing with his other associates. We see him discussing with his son whom he is preparing to send abroad for studies. One of his relatives comes in and he gives him one of the employment forms and directs him to take the form and the accompanying letter to the Employment Officer in Shell. He runs off jubilantly.*
- *We see him with some young men whom he is once again aggressive to when they demand to know about the forms and the job opportunities. He is all smiles however, when the Youth indicate that they are prepared to buy the opportunity. He sells the forms for N40,000 each. The frustration of the young people and anger at the behavior of the Chief leads them to organize his kidnap and demand ransom so as to teach him a lesson.*

The community performance that followed afterwards, took place at the Civic Centre in Erema. A collection of community members were on hand to watch the drama. The drama was received enthusiastically and afterwards it was followed with discussion of the issues. In the course of discussions, a community member by name Mr. Endwell Erema a graduate applicant explained that the problems of the community emanates from leadership problems, lack of commitment from the TNCs, poor resource management as well as bribery and corruption. He cited the example of the hoarding of job opportunities by leaders as an element of 'community colonialism', and argued that the actions of the chief and the government and TNCs representatives amount to a betrayal of the trust that the people have bestowed on them. He concluded thus: "That is why the Youth are restive; that is why there is crime and violence because they have nothing doing" Another elderly man in the audience who spoke noted that what the community has, are not leaders but rulers who know themselves alone. However, responding to the treatment of the Chief by the Youths, he submits that "violence is not an answer; we will only continue the problem without any change." The speaker provided that the solution is to call a meeting so that the people can take collective position on the issues. An elderly woman also spoke from the audience that "the unemployment situation is very serious. An idle mind is a devil's workshop. Elf (now Total) and the Government must do something to help the Youths to get something doing".

The discussions emanating from the community members attested to the fact that the drama was a reflection of some of the key social concerns of the Erema people and for which they seek better changes. From the discussions the community members reached some important

resolutions from which they decided to draw up a Community Action Plan (CAP): The following was captured in the CAP:

- That the community should have a specific periodic change of leadership
- Government and Transnational Companies (TNCs) should be more responsible and put policies and thorough processes in place to cater for the youths and the less privileged in the community.
- There should be a fair distribution of available resources among the community members and that the community members should have a change of consciousness and character as well as avoid actions that can instigate violence of any sort.
- Since unemployment was the main issue that the youth group prioritized as the most critical issue to be addressed, their perceived solution to the problem was job creation and Youth empowerment. While the participants acknowledged the need for government and transnational companies to do far better in the area of creating job opportunities for the youth of Erema, they also figured that if they set up shopping complex and cottage industries many of the young people who roam around unemployed at the moment would be absorbed, solving not only employment problems but also that it would help in reducing violence, crime and militancy. The Community Action Plan (CAP) capturing the above resolutions, was therefore created as a blue print of follow- up actions detailing out what needs to be done and what resources are required.

The Otuasega Drama Performance and Post Performance Discussions: The process of arriving at the final drama involved the community participants. Having made their different contributions they came out with the following scenario:

- *In a family house, husband and wife discuss the hardship they are facing in the community.*

(Song of Lamentation):

A wen dirawagisoriena

This life is very hard/ unbearable

Ogirikpawawoema

Suffering is killing us

A wen dirawomo school ema

There is no good school

Scholarship bawawoema

There is no scholarship

- *Husband asks whether food is ready. He calls out to the daughter who is playing and he queries why she is playing instead of reading. She complains that the library where she should go to for studying has not been completed.*
- *Meanwhile, the other daughter in a nearby secondary school returns to joyfully announce the good news that she has passed her examination to enter the university. Man's mood is further dampened, as he does not have money for sending the daughter to the University. While in this sour mood, his son comes in to lament and express his frustration over his inability to secure a job.*

A wen dirawagisoriena

This life is very hard/ unbearable

Ogirikpawawoema

Suffering is killing us

A wen dirawomo school ema

There is no good school

Scholarship bawawoema

There is no scholarship

- *Chief is seated. Youth leader comes in to complain about the growing restiveness of the youths over their inability to secure proper means of livelihood. The Chief did not say anything. Husband in the scene comes in to lament about his condition to the chief. In the midst of the confusion, two young ladies storm the chief's place to complain of lack of job. In anger the Chief decides that he has had enough; he decides to write a letter so that the youth leader can take it to Shell to demand employment and scholarship.*

A wen dirawagisoriena

This life is very hard/ unbearable

Ogirikpawawoema

Suffering is killing us

A wen dirawomo school ema

There is no good school

Scholarship bawawoema

There is no scholarship

- *At the Shell Office two youth leaders, a lady and a man walk into the office of the Human Resource Manager of Shell to present the letter from the Chief requesting for employment and scholarship on behalf of the needy in the community. The Shell official receives them enthusiastically and assures them that there is no problem. Immediately the youths leave, she (Human Resource Manager) dumps their application in the waste paper bin, saying: “I have not given jobs and scholarships to my qualified brothers, why do these people think I will attend to them just because the company is situated in their area?”*

A wen dirawagisoriena

This life is very hard/ unbearable

Ogirikpawawoema

Suffering is killing us

A wen dirawomo school ema

There is no good school

Scholarship bawawoema

There is no scholarship

- *Two ladies are in a boat on the creek paddling with difficulty because of water hyacinth. They come back home exhausted only to discover that there is no water from the tap to wash their itching bodies. The men are also having problems as they cannot cast their nets to catch fish because the water hyacinth has taken over the water (Freeze!)*

Unlike the Erema Drama performance, the performance of drama in Otuasega, carried with it traditional songs at interval. The drama was performed at the Otuasega community social centre and it was watched with keen interest. It was immediately followed with an audience critical

discussion of the issues affecting the community as mostly captured by the performance. Discussions were done around the issues of the inability of community members to get sponsorship of their children's education, poor surveillance of transnational and government projects in the community leading to poor or abandoned projects. The issue of the water hyacinth, the lack of women empowerment, the problem of oil spillage, bursting of pipelines and other social vices as affecting many Youths in the community. As was the case in Erema community, the issue of lack of Jobs and Youth empowerment was given some emphatic discussion. Community members expressed huge disappointments especially with endless unfulfilled promises of government and transnational companies' jobs and how these have led to vandalizing of pipelines. One of the women participants who spoke, in the person of Gloria Igbeta said the drama reflected the reality of the social challenges in the community and lamented that the surrounding communities are more developed than Otuasega because they have serious divisions among them. She thus suggested the way out for the community is for them to ensure that the community leadership should work out ways of ensuring that they properly engage the oil companies and the Government to provide the Youths with means of livelihood. She finally added that it will be important for the community to amend their constitution to ensure that they properly address the issue of leadership conflicts affecting them.

A Youth member of the community said that he is very pleased with the programme been carried out in their community as it has saved their community from fanning the hot flames of community leadership crises and violent conflict with oil companies. He appealed to the audience members to make sure that they take the drama serious and become a more peaceful and prosperous community. He said that the community leaders must also begin to think of what

they can do within to empower the youth and women in the community, because they cannot continue to rely on the false promises of oil communities and government. Another community member in the person of Chief Friday Alegbe categorically stated that "... this drama has really saved this community from an impending violent crisis with Shell. The drama and our discussions with the team of facilitators really helped us avoid a bad war with the oil company". He further stated that he on his part, he is ready to do all at his disposal to work for peace, reconciliation and community development. Others who spoke, appealed to different parties that have different court cases to immediately withdraw them. This was further emphasized by the NPTA facilitating team.

Following the robust discussion by community members on the myriad of social challenges affecting them as captured by the drama, and how they can change for the better, they came up with the following resolutions which formed the CAP which they unanimously agreed to pursue:

- Both Elders and Youth leaders will develop a strategy of follow-up actions as against violent reactions. And with specific reference to Shell Transnational Company, the Chief and community members agreed that there was a need to set up a monitoring team that would liaise with Shell once applications have been submitted from the community to address the unemployment menace.
- The participants also agreed to reach to warring parties in the coming weeks to ensure that the different court cases are withdrawn as decided by them.
- Regarding the water hyacinth, the community agreed that clearing the water hyacinth must become a joint action by all men and women; and with regards to the road

construction in the community, they shall intensify efforts that will see to completion of the road construction.

- The community members also agreed that both Shell and the Community Development Committee (CDC) need to work together to ensure execution of abandoned projects. This would also demand that the contract process be made more participatory to involve the CDC.
- The chief also decided that a little community market will be constructed as way of empowering the women and youth in the community. Also they agreed that the community will collaborate with NGOs and transnational companies in developing some Youth enlightenment and empowerment initiatives.
- A constitution amendment committee was also set up for the amendment of the community constitution.

Through their involvement in the drama and post-performance discussions, the participants in the different communities were given a greater sense of optimism. The drama offered the participants opportunity to shift from a theoretical dimension to a more practical understanding of the social issues. In the light of this the communities were triggered to an impactful dialogue on the way forward for the transformation of their communities.

5.1.2 TFD and Community Participation in Niger Delta Communities of Erema and Otuasega

The objective two focuses on how the TFD intervention undertaken in the Niger Delta communities of Erema and Otuasega by NPTA fostered active participation of community members. The research in line with this objective considered the role of participation by the

community members who were involved in the entire process. The researcher sought to find out from the community members how much of the activities they were engaged in and to what extent their participation contributed to the realization of the whole experience.

In Erema Community, the two FGDs members while commenting on their participation; mentioned some of the activities that were carried out by the NPTA with the community. They also commented on the drama piece that was performed at the community civic center and how the drama was received with so much enthusiasm by the community. This is reflected in the comments of the following members during the FGD sessions:

Comrade Idimma: The programme took place around 2010 when some lecturers came all the way from Zaria. They came with the aim of helping community members especially our Youth in the areas of community development and transformation. We did some interviews with community members on issues that affect the community, we also walked around the community and we later drew a map of the community identifying areas of the community that had some serious problems which should be addressed (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Chief David Egba: Yes I too can remember something like that and after having some walk around the community we also acted drama in the community hall. After the drama we were able to discuss the issues affecting the community (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Creativity Ugoma: The programme was well received by the community and we had real participation from members of the community. The Youth joined the lecturers from Zaria in so many of the processes that were undertaken by them. Some of us here handled camera and some of us acted in the Drama while some of us also drew maps. Others joined in the walking around the community. It was a very interesting experience (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

The programme was still fresh in some of their memories as captured above. The use of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) exercises was mentioned by them. The participation of the NPTA facilitators in their cultural festival which coincided with the programme was also recounted by them. One of the community members in the person of Comrade Gentle with whom

the researcher had a KII session recalled that the programme was a huge success in the community as they have never experienced such an experience in their community before. He stated that:

Although I have not been around for sometimes now, I still have great memories even though it's been a very long while now since they came; because I was among those who assisted the team from Zaria comprising of Dr. Martin Ayegba, a Professor (Abah) and other delegates. Some activities which we did included; walking around the community, drawing of community map to show some things around the community and drama. I also played the role of an applicant in the drama. The drama was mainly acted by the Youth and it was about the problems affecting our community. It was something we practiced on our own and we presented it to the community members at our hall. After the drama we had some very useful discussions on how we can move the community forward. Even after the programme we also held one or two meetings on how we can address some of the issues discussed with the people from Zaria (*KII session with Comrade Gentle at his Port Harcourt Residence*).

Based on the above, the community members have actually noted that they still relish the TFD intervention undertaken in their communities and they were able to highlight some of the experiences which emerged from the process. The situation in Otuasega community was quite similar as members in the FGD session and the KII also recalled that community members participated and responded positively to the TFD experience. During the FGD with the Leaders and Youth members of the community, some of them remarked as follows:

Francis Adah: I must seriously say that the programme with the lecturers from ABU was very successful; it was done in our community around 2010. The programme mainly involved some lecturers from ABU and they were here with some few people from Stakeholders Democracy Network (SDN). The last Community Development Committee (CDC) Executives and the Youth Association were part of the project. So they had some activities with us and part of those activities included: training in which some community members were taken to Port-Harcourt for training, and we also had some programmes in the community. Some of us did some trekking around the community and some acted Drama inside this Hall. The Drama always had questions and answers session because it was much more than drama because we were actually discussing mainly about the problems of the community. Even before the drama we also had things like drawing of the community on the map. Although it has taken a long while now but still I must say that it was a very interesting time with the people that came from Zaria and we wish for more of such kind of programme (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

Gloria Igbeta: Yes he has actually summarized everything. The programme involved mainly some lecturers from ABU and they were here with some few people from SDN. So they had some important activities with us and part of those activities included; Drama and community meeting (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

Chief Friday Alegbe: Yes, in addition to what he said because I was part of the training I can say that it was very successful. Because they taught us many community development things like using drama to affect our community positively and things like community mapping (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

Apart from the use of FGD, KII was also deployed. Speaking further on the participation of community members, Chief Friday Alegbe in a KII session added that it was a programme which was aimed at transforming the community and as such they gave it the needed enthusiasm:

Chief Friday Alegbe: The programme was very effective in the community. It was a big programme for me. You see the Drama was not just about entertainment. We first try to discuss some of the problems affecting the community such as Youth challenges, unemployment and leadership crises. And after discussing the problems, we were able to bring out some very vital stories. The stories were about things that were actually happening to us (*KII session with Chief Friday Alegbe at Otuasega Community*).

The information provided by the community members on the TFD experience in Erema and Otuasega communities to a large extent demonstrated a positive participation and acceptance of the intervention. The foundational President of NPTA, Oga Steve Abah in a KII session revealed more on the people's participation in the study locations as he noted that:

In terms of participation the different groups we worked with were very cooperative... I must also add that the Youth groups were quite inquisitive to learn and understand our work with them as they were also not comfortable with the option of using violence and road blocks to convey their grievances and demands from TNCs and Oil Companies (*KII session with Prof. Steve Abah at ABU, Zaria*).

Based on the above responses, it is important to state that central to the TFD intervention, is the extent to which it is able to engage participation in the entire process. TFD brings together both the participants and facilitators in a converging experience that enables them to articulate and proffer possible solution that is capable of bringing about change in the interest of the

community. Findings from both communities showed that community members who were part of the process saw it as an effective one. Hence they cooperated with the members of the NPTA group in undertaking the exercise. The community elders and leaders participated in the programme by rendering their maximum cooperation and joy. On the part of the community members that participated in the FGD session, they believed that the programme lived up to its expectation especially in the areas of creating and facilitating a much needed awareness for collective transformation. Consequently one of the interviewees in Otuasega community, Gloria Igbeta stated that “our experience with TFD and the facilitators from Zaria has further helped us to be more informed and educated on the need to always come together, not minding the differences that we sometimes express...”. It is in this light that Epskamp, while explaining TFD as a tool of participation in action research, points out that:

Within participatory approaches towards development a bottom-up approach to planning and implementation of development activities is crucial. Participatory action research is used to empower individuals to take practical actions as individuals or as a group, sometimes in cooperation with ‘outsiders’ often referred to as facilitators, conveners, catalysts, monitors or promoters. As soon as action research becomes participatory in nature, the researcher’s positions should become equal to that of the other participants. Instead of the Individual researcher’s exercise, it becomes the collective inquiry, analysis and interpretation of social phenomena within the community. Ultimately, it aims at problem solving and the improvement of the quality of life of the primary stakeholders (Epskamp, 2006:48).

In the light of the participatory impact of the TFD experience, community members’ involvements in the different activities were done with great enthusiasm. They were able to develop plots that reflected their common challenges and agitations. The storylines communicated messages which challenged them to examine some of the myriads of problems they needed to tackle. Nicholas Onouha in one of the FGDs conducted at Erema rightly stated that the drama “...was not for joke or entertainment; we acted out the problems which are

affecting our community especially the problem of lack of jobs in which many of these oil companies are not helping matters. But still I believe we cannot fold our hands, we have to do something to help improve ourselves”. Through participation, the members of the community realized the need to play their roles in tackling the bottlenecks within the community. In this sense, participation is fundamentally a democratic and transformative process

Through it community members become stakeholders in their destiny. “Community participation is therefore about freedom of choice, freedom of action and freedom to make mistakes and take responsibility over the consequences of those mistakes” (Mulwa, 2008:78). This sense of engagement more than anything helps in revitalizing their sense of common identity and the exploration of their latent potentialities to resist unfruitful dimensions to their growth thereby effecting meaningful changes for their communities. While describing the key role of participation in social change communication, Mohan Dutta points out that:

Participation is the cornerstone of social change communication as it is through participatory processes, spaces and techniques that local communities mobilize against oppressive social, economic and political structures. Participation brings about social change through the presence of subaltern population whose marginalization has been symbolically and materially achieved throughout history; through their erasure from mainstream spaces of society (Dutta, 2011:266).

In the light of the above, community members in Erema and Otuasega displayed active participation which was evident in the articulation of the issues as it affects their social milieu. Furthermore community members especially the youth members also showed heightened interest and readiness to partake in the arts of theatre as a going concern. One of the Erema community members in the person of Creativity Ugoma said he was currently planning a December event

with the Community Youth body where they would be featuring different artistic performances which the youth members of the community will be presenting.

Equally the Assistant Youth leader, Comrade Teddy Omonibo, in Otuasega also stated that they are contacting different organizations in Port-Harcourt and Yenagoa whom they hope to partner with to organize a carnival programme that will feature the best of the cultural and creative exhibitions of the community. These actions further demonstrate the participatory effect of TFD experiences with community members. It availed them the opportunity to stimulate and motivate themselves to doing things that projects a positive perception of the community as against the negative perception which is often identified with their communities. Nicholas Onouha, one of the participants in Erema, noted that TFD has helped some of the Youths in the community to give the community a healthier image of themselves as against what is sometimes said of their community which is really not true. Consequently TFD as Ross Kidd (ibid) rightly notes "...is a process of social change; changes in self-concept, attitude, awareness, skill, or behaviour. Its art goes beyond metaphorical representations of others- to facilitating actions on social problems".

Furthermore, the participation of community members in the arts of drama and theatre was quite symbolic. This is because it showed the extent to which the community members have seen the TFD programme done in their communities not just as a ceremonial exercise, but more essentially as one that also contributes to capacity building. Hence they have been able to further engage the practice of the theatre to build and develop on their creative human potentialities. In this vein Francis Mulwa describing the essence of capacity building for local communities states that:

Local capacity building is believed to be an essential factor for the sustainability of community development initiatives...In this sense, capacity building is conceptualized as an ongoing process of influencing and enhancing *change agent*' knowledge, skills, attitudes and ultimately their practices, in order to enable them cause similar effect and impact on the people and communities they serve. This process aims at transforming people's lives from a state of conformity to a dynamic state of creative and innovative living. It involves building people up in such a manner as to strengthen their ability to make decisions that affect their lives as they assume full responsibility over the consequences of those decisions. (Mulwa 2008:114-115).

The explanations given above perfectly capture the effectiveness of TFD intervention in Erema and Otuasega communities respectively. The initiatives taken by members of both communities have undoubtedly provided some sense of self-confidence and self-worth as they realize their potentials to transform their own circumstances; expanding the people's awareness and enhancing their capabilities through appropriate exposure and participation in the arts of theatre as well as in the processes of social change.

5.1.3 TFD as a medium that advocates Social Change for Niger Delta Communities

In response to objective three, the researcher then elicited from the respondents the influence which the programme actually had on them as communities in the Niger Delta region. Essentially this formed the thrust of the interaction with the FGD respondents and the KII respondents in the study locations. The respondents used the opportunity to discuss some of the salient issues that the TFD intervention addressed. A number of the issues highlighted in Erema community were further re-emphasized in Otuasega community. In Erema, the FGD respondents from the EYC members provided the following responses:

Bright Ile: One of the things that I know that the TFD project did for the community was that it helped the community to attend to the issue of this hall you are now seeing because before now the hall was not well built. But after the programme we agreed that we were going to renovate the hall (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Godstime Obulor: The programme also helped the community leaders to relate better with the oil company on how to address the community crises. In fact they were able to discuss with us on the need to resolve crises affecting the community. We are now currently talking about some Youth Development programme that includes some talent hunt programmes (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Ijeoma Alekwu: Let me continue from where he stopped. I can remember that as at that time we were even having a big problem among the Youth body because there were serious leadership crises that was tearing the Youth and in short the entire community apart. So they helped in some way to advise us on what to do (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Comrade Woko: Outside what my brothers have just said I also remember that we acted about one of the very important problem which I can say is affecting many of our Youth which is the area of Youth unemployment. At that time we even started talking about building a shopping multi-purpose complex (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Still on the FGD session, the researcher further probed the group to explain how the problem was actually affecting the development of the community as at then and one of the respondents by name Nicholas Onuoha responded accordingly:

Nicholas Onouha: The problem which was affecting the community as at then was more of a leadership crisis. We were having problems after the elections in the Egbema clan. There were two factions in the community because of the problem. And I can tell that the oil company was not helping matters because they decided to recognize both factions and gave money to the both factions. This even led to court cases. But I can tell you that when the Doctor and the Professor from ABU came to our community, they helped a lot because they talked to us and to a great extent we addressed the issues. In fact both parties as at then were ready to withdraw the case from the court. For us here as leaders in the Erema Youth Association it also helped us to be more organized on how to relate with the larger Egbema clan. So I can say that we really felt the importance of the programme (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

From the above, it is clear that respondents were able to mention sensitive areas which the TFD intervention addressed in their community. These include: the issues of non-violence approach to conflict resolution and healthy dialogue with oil companies by the community, Youth leadership and empowerment, resolution of community leadership crises as well as aiding the community to

successfully renovate their hall. Two of the elders threw more light by highlighting some other specific benefits of the process in the FGD with Erema Community Elders:

Macaulay Egba: Seriously speaking that was our first time of experiencing a programme of that kind and I must tell you that we benefitted in a number of ways from the programme. For instance the people from Zaria were able to assist us to resolve a serious conflict that was about to tear our community apart. In fact the case was already in the court but with their intervention calm was restored in the community. There is no need to go over what happened again but that was one way we resolved the conflict that was affecting the community (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Chief David Egba: Just to further add that another thing which the programme did for the community was in the area of making use of the resources which multi nationals give to the community for our benefit as community instead of one man putting it inside his pocket. Right now we are building our Community Shopping complex and also we have renovated our Civic centre; because before now it was in a bad shape. And really speaking it was very educative and I think that is what we want Drama to do for our community. Already I think that the people in Zaria need to come back again because we need more of the programme (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Creativity Ugoma : Well I will add that the Youth in the community also benefitted. Because the Youth were taught different things and they were also advised to shun violence and embrace peace. I can say that with the knowledge that they gained from the programme, they are able to see the need to be more positive minded. Although I cannot say that we addressed all the issues affecting the community but one thing was sure, since they left we have always longed for their coming back. The area of violence was really addressed... That is why we said we still need more of this programme to enlighten our people the more on peaceful community life (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Such were the attestations which the Erema community members gave about the TFD intervention. The TFD programme, apart from being educative, actually availed them the opportunity to deal with some sensitive issues as recounted by some of the respondents in the FGD captured above. Even though TFD was not a one way instrument to tackle the entire challenges of the community nevertheless its impact on the community was quite conspicuous. The view of Comrade Gentle in the KII session quite affirms this. Giving his opinion he declared that: "... it is one of those days that I will never forget, it was a wonderful day I have ever experienced. This is because it brought about community improvement".

In similar vein, the researcher inquired from Otuasega community on how the TFD intervention actually influenced them as a community in the Niger Delta Region. Among the different areas talked about, the following were of greater effect as stated in the FGD session with the Otuasega community members:

Comrade Moscow Paul: The drama helped us to seriously address the court problem which the community was having by then. The court case came up after the election that brought in the former CDC excos. So there were problems and factions. But after the drama the lecturers talked to us, and the discussions took a long time but at the end it was resolved that the case should be withdrawn from the court which was done. I can say that it was very helpful to the former leaders because the problem was almost tearing the community apart (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

Omonibo Teddy: Another area which it helped was in the area of Youth development. The Drama was very useful in this area. Because it talked about the problem of Youth unemployment, violence; and also because of the drama we were able to address the issue of the community market. If you go down a little, you will see the reconstruction of the community market. It was as result of the programme we had as at then. Now a lot of our Youth especially our Youth leaders have been trying to organize some enlightenment programmes that can better the lives of youths in the community (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

Chief Friday Alegbe: Sorry let me also add a little to what has been said. The programme also touched the area of community leadership a lot. We addressed the issue of how our community leaders should effectively play their roles in the community. Although we now have a new set of leaders in the community the impact of that meeting which I was part of helped the community a lot to start organizing ourselves in such a way that will avoid social crises in the community. Also the Youth are now making efforts to do more creative programmes especially during the end of the Year (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*)

Gloria Igbeta: It was also very helpful in the area of bringing about the amendment of the community constitution, during the period we were able to review and amend our constitution under the last regime. Apart from this we looked seriously at the issue of scholarship and the multi- national companies' manner of handling scholarship. Many of our young ones were unfairly treated in the distribution of scholarships and academic benefits. However we were told that it will be better to request the audience of those concerns in the different multi-national organizations and dialogue with them (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*)

Precious Okilo: Finally I want to add that we tackled some social amenities issues. With regards to the new road construction I can tell you that after all the way and manner money was spent to construct the this road, it was at this programme that made us to address the issue very well. Our leaders were made to be more accountable and serious about the completion. By today I can tell you that it did not take long before the road was constructed (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

The recount of developmental strides emerging from the influence of the NPTA experience really attests to the people's acceptance of the process as changing their communities. Chief Friday Alegbe in a KII session also pointed out that more than just the developmental success of the programme, is the fact that to a large extent the community has benefitted especially in the area of promoting community peace, and this outweighs what they have gotten from the role played by Politicians. Gloria Igbeta in another KII session noted that the project was very useful to them because it led to the completion of a mini market for the community.

Essentially from both communities, the TFD intervention brought about progress and change for the community and they relished the significant inputs it has brought to their communities. From the facts presented by both communities, it is tenable to argue that TFD provides a vital communication tool for communities in the Niger Delta in addressing a number of the social challenges currently bedeviling local communities. In a KII session with Oga Steve Abah, he affirms accordingly that:

Looking at what was achieved in Erema and Otuasega communities, it is important to state that TFD becomes a viable tool for dialogue, for building community synergy and the possibility of solving crisis situation after a clearer understanding of the issue - are major contributions which the TFD can make to the nagging issues of the Niger Delta. Furthermore TFD offers them an opportunity to understand that no meaningful change can be achieved in the community except they create an environment of peace. So I can say that it has huge relevance in communicating social change for the Niger Delta communities (*KII session with Oga Steve Abah at ABU, Zaria*).

The instrumentality of TFD as a medium of advocacy becomes vital to the on going bid to bring about social change and sustainable development for the Niger Delta region, for a number of reasons as explained below:

TFD encourages Minority Voices on Issues: Over the years the issues affecting the Niger Delta region ranging from socio-economic, political to the environmental issues have been more shaped by those within the elite class. The voices of Political, Academic and Traditional Elites of the society have gained more recognition and dominance than those of the common people. Even though the voices of the elite hold significance nevertheless the less emphasis placed on the voices of those at the margin has created a fundamental defect that has hampered the growth and development of communities in the Niger Delta. More sad to note is the fact that a lot of corrupt individuals among the Leaders and Elders have capitalized on this to oppress and siphon the people resources and social benefits.

A pathetic case was recounted by one of the interviewees in Erema, Mr. Bright Ile who told the researcher of a particular community leader who was given huge sum of money to execute some social and welfare projects in the community; but he ended up using it for his selfish purposes by building houses in Port-Harcourt and a nearby town called Ahoada. This situation caused uproar in the community but at the end of the day he died mysteriously. Outside this story, several other cases of political and community leaders/elites misappropriation of funds abound in many communities of the Niger Delta that have led to chaotic situation. These situations maybe well averted if the voices of the members of the community are given some sense of attention. Furthermore, the discourse on developing policies and strategies for change in the Niger Delta by Government and other stakeholders does not give serious consideration for the voices of those at

the margin in shaping the policies and action plan of government. This structural deficiency has further incapacitated the minority voices and made them to be more or less critical to the alleviation of their own predicament. While stressing the need for listening to the voices of those at the margin, Dutta critically posits that:

...The method of knowledge production and the tools of praxis themselves need to be fundamentally questioned for the ways in which they represent the implicit interests of the status quo, and simultaneously limit the possibilities of real social change at the local level...Transformation in communicative processes and practices can begin with profound reflexivity that turns its critical gaze on the instruments of listening, continually asking questions: to what extent are we really listening? What is our commitment to listening? How do we become listeners in the sense of listening that we ourselves become open to change through the processes of listening? How do we become open to the challenges of our essentialist value systems if we were to truly listen to the subalterns?... The application that develop through this sort of reflexivity are continually questioning the values they represent, the processes they undertake, and the possibilities of listening that they open up (Dutta,2011:187-188).

Regarding the Niger Delta situation, listening to the minority voices indeed will create an entry point for structural changes; such as changes in policies, changes in how these policies are planned and implemented, and changes in the ways in which these policies are reported. It is in the consideration of the above that TFD becomes of great essence. The principles and processes of TFD ensure that emphasis is laid on getting to hear the voices and choices of the community people. TFD at all times advocates that the voices and choices of the local people must influence the course of their social transformation. In this way TFD encourages the common people of the society to get involved in matters that concern them. No matter how humble and narrow their opinions are, the community people come to the realization that they have been given the opportunity to make their contribution count in the decision making process. It is in the light of this that Oga Steve Abah in a KII explained that the intervention undertaken by NPTA in both Erema and Otuasega communities was tagged *Local Voices and Choices* because it provided them the opportunity to make better choices of moving their communities forward rather than

allowing conflicts and other social problems that have been hampering their community development to rear its ugly head.

TFD Facilitates Local Empowerment: In socio-political context, power is understood as the ability to make others act according to one's will, and influence others to respond favourably to one's own specific interests. It is the ability to influence others to meet one's own need (Mulwa, 2011). On the other hand, empowerment entails a process that seeks to redistribute power in favour of the *Other*. It involves the relinquishing of power from a personalized and institutionalized monopoly of power into the hands of the stakeholders of any particular undertaking (Mulwa, 2008). It is a process whereby community members take initiative for a greater sense of responsibility over their own lives as subjects of their change. The process is marked by an effort by the people to develop new knowledge and skills, which serves their specific needs.

According to Eade and Williams, "Empowerment entails a measure of people's capacity to bring about change, whether this is modest or far-reaching in its impact. It involves enabling individuals and group to develop enough courage and confidence to be proactive, challenge and overcome oppression and injustice"(Eade and Williams, 1995:12). In a similar vein, Mathie and Cunningham further emphasized that:

...marshalling of locally available resources is central to the process of local empowerment. This involves deliberate effort to locate and utilize human potential such as personal attributes and skills. It also entails building on relationships among people through social, kinship, or association networks. Empowerment rests on the principles that the recognition of strengths, gifts, talents, and assets of individuals and communities is more likely to inspire positive actions for change than an exclusive focus on their needs and problems. (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002:3).

Empowerment also implies the need to equip people with the correct information on which basis they plan and act for social change. This principle is anchored on the premises that people will identify with, protect and maintain what they have toiled to build. It is that level of community involvement that builds true sense of ownership of local development initiative. To pave the way for local community empowerment, the principle advocates that the best experts on matters concerning a people are the people themselves. They know their situation better than any outsider.

It is on these fundamental principles that TFD seeks to advance praxis that advocates local empowerment. As Abah (2005) puts it, it is a theatre for the people, by the people and with the people. TFD is designed fundamentally to ensure that the people influence the outcomes of the process. In this way the community people are challenged to emerge new situations that contribute to enhancing and expanding their human potentialities. Iorapuu and Bamidele (ibid) clearly accent to the empowering impact of the TFD as they state that:

First TFD has its roots in the philosophy of empowerment. The current view in development struggle respect the need to build on what people know, with the belief that this type of theatre seeks to liberate, demand innovation and effect potential change in the lives of those that use it...TFD uses local resources and enable programme beneficiaries to make use of the tools it offers to change it realities...TFD also provides a means of exploring and addressing dynamic relations between people. It offers a means of reflecting upon why and how changes might be necessary and why and how they come about. It is this dimension that practitioners of TFD are deeply involved with, and attempt to promote by seeking to create Theatre with the People around issues that question the contradictions that have reduced them to objects not subject...TFD is therefore a praxis; a process of reflection and action that uses the medium of drama to deconstruct the myths that makes people become split personalities or social, economic and political lepers.

This understanding of TFD is what makes it a potential tool that can be used to facilitate the much needed community empowerment among the Niger Delta people. Over the years TNC

companies working in communities of the Niger Delta region as well as the Government have come out with plans on how to empower the people of the Niger Delta. However these plans are never known by vast members of the community and as such they have no idea of the direction that these TNCs and the Government are taking for their well being. Even the implementations of these plans are done poorly and ineffectively and as such they do not satisfy the yearnings of the people (Akpomovie, 2011).

The community members in both Erema and Otuasega simultaneously agreed that, this is where they are very pleased and appreciative of the NPTA TFD intervention and other community development programmes carried out in their communities. They believed that such platforms have brought about significant input for their communities. They also pointed out some of the practical action plans which they have done so far as a result of the initiative carried out in their communities. In Erema for instance, the Youth took upon themselves the task of raising funds for the development of their civic hall and a library located inside the hall

This also includes the talent show programme which is now organized to encourage noble youth who have gifts in different areas of the Arts and Entertainment such as Dance, Beauty Queen competition, and comedies. In Otuasega, the community Youth and Leaders among other things were able to build a small community market. The Youth like those in Erema are also thinking of organizing Talent show programmes. Outside the area of the art, they also have reinvigorated their yearly football competition for the Male Youth in Erema.

These innovations and development significantly demonstrate the positive responses which community members that participated in the TFD intervention have brought out. The outcomes from these communities where the TFD intervention were undertaken testify to the potentials it possesses even for the wider Niger Delta Region.

TFD Promotes Community Values and Cultural Development: Embedded in every culture are values and cherished customs that ensure that the people promote a lifestyle that assures their prosperity and unbroken cords as a community. That is quite evident in the number of proverbs, songs, festivals and hierarchical social and political order they maintain and preserve. Consequently the community is able from time to time to remind themselves of how these practices have become of great essence to them. Owusu-Amoah (2012:1) notes that “Culture is said to be the oil that keeps society running”. Therefore as a people oriented means of expression, TFD always seeks to connect with the people cultural values and practices. This is to ensure that community people become more inclined and interested in the process. The deployment of language, music, dance and other forms of cultural expressions are fundamental input which TFD thrives on, in its bid to effect social change. Epskamp arguing in this light states that:

By virtue of its goals and approach, TFD belongs to the category of participatory development strategies that applies local knowledge and skills to analyze and solve social problems. As an artistic instrument, it refers to cultural expressions familiar to the participants. In the process of problem solving, TFD also makes use of and strengthens the cultural foundations of the participants (Epskamp, 2006:41).

These essentialities of TFD in relation to cultural affinity were quite expressed in the TFD experience undertaken in Erema and Otuasega. The NPTA with its wealth of knowledge in entrenching cultural vitality; ensured the people’s use of local languages, traditional songs, folktales, traditional ceremonies and other local media of communication. For instance, in

Otuasega and Erema communities the participants employed the use of their traditional folk songs, languages and dances at intervals, in the course of performing their drama during the TFD intervention done in their community. In Erema, the NPTA also featured in their annual New Yam Festival which coincided with the programme.

In this way they ensured that TFD as way of attending to the social challenges of the people created a necessary platform where the people can follow through the entire process engaging in the cultural practices and resources within their domain. TFD and culture therefore connect in a way that makes the people possess the process; deeply involving themselves in the change agenda it is set to achieve. It is this affinity with culture that makes Abah to affirm that:

Very often, the vehicle is culture- a whole gamut of visceral practices which are integral to the life systems of a particular group of people, through which existence is understood. Culture may indeed be seen as an ontological exposition of both self and community. That is, it is a constant redefinition of community and self, an act of identity in the process of constant formation (Abah, 2005:117).

The emphasis placed in the interaction of TFD and cultural endowments offers in no little measure, huge potential for advocating social change and community transformation. Consequently TFD becomes of even greater relevance to the needs and aspiration of socially challenged communities within the Niger Delta region. Involving in the people's cultural structures and activities will go a long way to giving communities in the Niger Delta a sense of commitment to identify with the objectives which TFD experiences seek to accomplish in local communities. It will break barrier of alienation; and get the people to explore from their cultural resources (material and non material) to accentuate how they can become part and parcel of the entire experience. People tend to hold with great esteem the tenets of their culture and as such social change communication praxis such as TFD that advances the resuscitation and projection of cultural nuances and values of the people will go a long way to communicate effectively in

addressing the social challenges affecting communities in the Niger Delta region and thus lead them to desirable changes.

5.1.4 Interfacing Alternative Communication and Mainstream Media in the Niger Delta Challenges

In response to the objective four of the study, this section addresses the need for interfacing alternative communication and mainstream media in the Niger Delta challenges. Having heard from the communities on the significance of the TFD programme; the researcher in addressing the fourth objective of the study, inquired the opinions of the community members. Although many of the respondents were not so optimistic about what the media can do for the community, others acknowledged the functionality of the media to widely spread the message and create awareness about the issues beyond the confines of their communities. Some of the respondents who spoke in the both communities during the FGD session remark accordingly:

Nicholas Onuhua: Yes if I may say the TV and Radio have not done much because most of the time they are basically after the money their stations can get, and base on what my brothers have said you yourself can even note the difference. But I will add that outside the problem of money, Radio and TV can be very useful for us too. Because they will also help to further bring out the message of peace which everybody both those within and outside the community can experience (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

Fidelis Ogbilo: For me I think it will be very important because what we do with all these development programmes will only end up with us if we don't communicate further with the outside world so there is a need for the Television and other media to help show what these NGOs are doing with our community. But the problem with TV is that most time when it is not concerning what satisfies the Government positive side they are not interested and that is what I do not like about TV and Media generally (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

Friday Ikpo: I must say that the Radio and TV cannot help us the way this programme has helped us. They are after money. The only time you see them is when the community is in crises. They don't have any good agenda for the community (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

In a similar vein, the researcher also obtained more responses from the use of KII. The respondents further revealed that:

Gentle Joshua: Well when you talk about these media you realize that they have so many problems, although they can be helpful but not as the TFD project that we had in the community. Because you see most of these media station are after making money. This is because they are profit oriented and are ready to satisfy their employer which is the government. Secondly T.V and Magazine are more for people living in bigger towns and sometimes you should not forget that for you to enjoy the use of Television and Radio you need PHCN which is not always available. But when you gather people together and enlighten them most time it works better than going into the other aspect of using electronics and print media (*KII with Joshua Gentle at his Port-Harcourt residence*).

Chief Friday: Well I believe that we need TV and Radio but so many a time media are Government properties. They always want to see things from the Government angle. But when we employ TV and Radio in a way that truly captures what the people of the community are saying then it will be another great medium that we can use to reach very far to voice out some of the problems affecting the Niger Delta region (*KII with Chief Friday Alegbe at Otuasega Community*).

Essentially, the opinions of community members demonstrate the high optimism they hold for a process that puts them on the driver's seat; making them to become very key in expressing their voices and role towards social change. Nevertheless their acknowledgement of the fact that media has its own essential role it plays gives credence to the fact that mainstream and alternative communication media should be complimented to address social issues affecting communities in the Niger Delta region. Throwing more light in this regard Oga Steve Abah in a KII has this to say:

Well in terms of disseminating the ideas, yes. Because TFD projects happen on location and the community will always have the opportunity to learn from the processes and the experiences. However when it comes to sharing the knowledge so that other communities and people can benefit from the experience then you talk about the social media and the electronic media. Through them you expand the horizon and therefore reach a wider audience with the knowledge of what has happened in the community were the TFD project has taken place. Through that

process you generate more discussions that can affect more communities positively (*KII session with Oga Steve Abah at ABU Zaria*).

Exploring the potentials of mainstream media is also key in the sense that most issues and information regarding the challenges affecting the Niger Delta are always obtained and shaped by the details gotten from the mainstream media. Nevertheless, it is important to state that alternative and community oriented communication such as TFD being examined in this research has been less emphasized over the years. Even though the mainstream media play a major role in the social challenges affecting the Niger Delta, howbeit the top-bottom nature of mainstream media already opens up some certain lacunas which necessitate the need for the use of alternative communication medium as well.

One of the fundamental weaknesses is the fact that mainstream media more often than not rest in the hands and influence of the Elites and those in Government and as such they can be easily manipulated by them. The community people become mere receivers and absorbers of the facts that are shaped and designed by these media (Gumucio-Dargon 1994, Epskamp 2006, and Okwori et.al 2005). The premium placed on mainstream media has thus hindered stakeholders the opportunity from tapping into the huge importance that alternative communication has to contribute in addressing the challenges hampering communities in the Niger Delta region. It is in the light of this that this research further resonates the impact which TFD as an alternative communication tools provides in effecting social change for communities in the Niger Delta especially as evident from the findings gotten from Erema and Otuasega communities. In making a case for the need of promoting alternative communication, the research further presents some

fundamental merits inherent in the use of TFD as alternative communication strategy for social change:

TFD encourages Peace building and Conflict Management: The lack of communication modes that afford community members within the Niger Delta exerting their critical role about issues that affect them have often led to degeneration of peace and stability. It is no doubt that the incessant presence of crisis and fierce agitation has created deep seated conflict in many Niger Delta communities. Many of them including the communities being studied in this research have suffered various conflicts scenarios that have adversely affected their social environment. Violent agitations from militant groups across the Niger Delta have further battered the presence of peace and harmony for many communities.

The need to explore alternative medium that gives room to community members to exchange and share issues among themselves will to a large extent provide for peace building and conflict management. TFD in this regard, offers a very useful medium that can ensure peace and harmony in many Niger Delta communities. It is important to state that across many communities in Africa and Nigeria where TFD has been employed, it has proved a useful instrument that promotes peace and social cohesion (Hager 1990, Byam 1999, Kafewo 2002, Abah 2005 and Asagba 2010). In the spirit of promoting peace and harmony, the TFD project undertaken in Erema and Otusaega recorded credible evidence in this regard. The FGD with both communities clearly pointed this out, as community members recounted how the programme aided them to avoid impending conflict and disharmony in the community. At Otuasega, the community particularly attested that the programme was very useful in the area of clarifying

misconceptions and problems that they had with their constitution which created discord in the leadership administration of the community. Oga Steve Abah in a KII session further remarks that “communication processes such as TFD has been able to shift the community members attention for employing violent approaches in pursuing their course...and now seen the need to embrace dialogue which can actually aid the community to get more positive results that can evoke the changes which the community needs”.

Generally both communities agreed to the fact that even though such programmes cannot guarantee absolute presence of peace in their community. However they submitted that it provided their communities platform to be enlightened on things that holds them together and more essentially gave them opportunity to enlighten many youth members to avoid treading dangerous path of violence and militancy that only ends up impoverishing and worsening them. It is in this role that TFD as a means of alternative communication affords community members within the region real opportunity to speak out their issues from a standpoint that is not at the risk of been misconstrued, misrepresented and alienated.

Building a Strong Sense of Solidarity with TNCs, Government and Other Stakeholders: In the course of obtaining findings from the communities, it is a general feeling among community members both in Erema and Otuasega that the Government, TNCs, and other Stakeholders that relate with them are only milking their communities. They complained severely about the fact that they have not really felt much of their presence and that much of what is being communicated through the mass media as developmental strides of Government and TNCs are nothing but a far cry from reality. This dampened perception of community members results

from the fact that there exists a poor communication link between them and external stakeholders involved in the development of their communities.

In most cases, as a number of the respondents noted during the FGD and KII sessions, is that TNCs and Government usually rely on the information of their emissaries and experts who give them reports and photographs of the development they have achieved in the community. However some of these reports and pictures do not capture the reality on ground. The community members lamented they only get to hear later on TV and Radio of some of those things which in the real sense were never there. It is situations such as these that warrant the need for communicating communities' issues from local perspectives. TNCs and Government must employ strategies that will help them draw facts from the affected communities. Reports and News of Prints and Electronic media must not be made to solely shape issues affecting the Niger Delta. Alternative medium such as TFD that brings out local voices must also be relied on. In this way the community will better be committed to a united course, as they see themselves as critical in initiating and sustaining social development projects made in their communities, as well as ensure that a better picture of the development done in their community is given.

In the light of this, Comrade Woko Peter during an FGD session in Erema, remarks that "... this drama has a way of bringing people together and making them to become united...we see it as a way of encouraging communities to look inwards and see what they can do for themselves... This programme is another eye opener for us and there is no way the Niger Delta region will not find it useful". Furthermore, Gloria Igbeta in a KII session at Otuasega, also stated that "our experience with TFD and the facilitators... has further helped us to be more informed and

educated on the need to always come together, not minding the differences that we sometimes express”. From the above remark it can therefore be said that “Participation in development can only be increased when communication systems start serving the needs of the vast majority in the rural areas. TFD is a good option to make this happen” (Epskamp,2006:109). Communities’ involvement through TFD method of communication brings great benefit to socially challenged communities especially within the Niger Delta terrain since it offers them opportunity to keep a process of continuous dialogue that helps to strengthen their sense of relationship and cordiality with Government, TNCs and other Stakeholders operating in their communities.

Adaptability and Flexibility of the TFD process for Local Communities: The formalities of mainstream media such as TV, Satellites and Radio means that it suites the urban and more developed environments. Communicating issues as they affect urban areas has thus preoccupied most mainstream media. Fewer spaces are provided for communicating issues as they affect local communities. The focus given on urban communities by mainstream media has thus necessitated the need for having a useful alternative means of communication that lays emphasis on local and rural communities. TFD is one of such alternative communication. TFD ensures that issues communicated are always themes that concern the daily lives and aspirations of local people. Gumucio-Dargon while expressing the comparative advantage popular theatre has over mainstream media in communicating local issues reveals accordingly that:

There are more than sixty newspapers and magazines, forty televisions stations and as many as thirty radio stations in urban areas of Nigeria- with many more to come...These may have a noticeable influence in urban areas, but they lose their influence as channels of information as you travel towards rural areas...At the village, the real power of communication is in the hands of the community leaders, the religious authority, the school teacher, the health worker and the agricultural extension worker. In this context popular theatre is the most powerful

alternative form of communication at the grassroots level (Gumucio-Dargon 1994:34).

As one range of popular theatre, TFD gives emphasis to communicating social issues of the grassroots with the aim of bringing about change for their communities. It is on this premise that TFD offers Niger Delta communities a useful communication strategy that addresses the myriads of challenges facing them.

TFD as a communication strategy is rural friendly since it relies on their modes of day to day communication to disseminate the message. Adapting the communicative process of TFD, stakeholders involve in the Niger Delta Development will find it a most effective way of gaining the people's feedback on developmental matters, which is a fundamental aspect in any successful communication goal. Furthermore TFD is not fixated rather it allows for dynamism and variations depending on the circumstances or community in view. In relation to Niger Delta local communities, what will therefore be of essence in any TFD experience is the fact that it will allow the peculiarities of the issues affecting communities in the region to be emphatically expressed with the people not just playing the role of viewers or spectators; instead ensuring that they gain control of the process as active participants or as Augusto Boal puts it "Spec-actors" who are determined to take the centre stage of recreating a better world for their communities.

5.1.5 Challenges of TFD in Social Change Communication for Niger Delta Communities

The objective five focuses on the challenges of TFD in social change communication for communities in the Niger Delta. Beyond the essentialities of the intervention, the study based on the fourth objective tried to find out some of the challenges encountered or experienced by the people. First of this challenge was the inaccessibility of the community action plan (CAP). While

in both communities their community action plan documents could not be accessed. In both communities they gave reasons for this. In Erema Community Mr. Creativity Ugoma stated that “...the plan was left with one elder of the community Chief Okpokiri, but he is now late and in fact his children are no more in the community”. Gloria Igbeta in Otuasega also remarked that “Yes, the action plan was about some of those things that they left behind for us to continue... but as it stands the last CDC chairman now lives in Port Harcourt and I believe he maybe with such a document. But actually, most achievements which are in the plan have been mentioned”

Even though they gave reasons for it and also added that they have been able to do a number of things contained in the documents; nevertheless the availability of the documents would have gone a long way to thoroughly guide and aid those who may have not been part of the experience but are now stakeholders in their leadership structures. To probe further, the researcher also inquired from NPTA on how much they were able to do with the community action plan. Responding to this Oga Steve Abah explained that the CAPs were actually handed over to the community leaders to further strengthen some of the agreements as stated by them in the document. He further added that the real challenge for them as facilitators is the fact that there is lack of funding to do thorough monitoring and evaluation. Nevertheless with regards to both communities there have been some significant progresses on some of the action plan as a number of the community members have informed them on some of the things they have so far done, and request for the re-visitation of their communities.

Connected to the above challenge therefore is the lack of continuity of the TFD process. Despite the high interest and acceptance of the intervention, there has not been a repeat in both

communities. Community members even though recount the positive gains of the project in their communities they have not been able to continue with the TFD process.

From both communities, their dissatisfaction was not with what they think about the whole process but with the fact that it has taken a very long while since they had such an experience. They stressed the need of having Government and oil companies' support to organize such a programme. For instance in Otuasega, two of the respondents stated accordingly:

Francis Adah: Well what I can say in this regard is that the TFD did a lot for the community because these people are not Government but the little they have done with the community even some of our leaders who say they are our representatives are not doing up to this level. Well I will just say that they did not stay long enough and since they came they have not come back again (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

Sunday Ikpo: What I want to say is that we cannot really say that this is what they did not do, or were supposed to do, because they were only helping us to help ourselves. Now the only thing I can say is to add to what my Brother has just said that we supposed to have a relationship with them once at least for some ten years this will help us to understand better what is expected of us. So when you go to Zaria please tell them that the good work they have started should not be left half way (*FGD session at Otuasega Community*).

Still in line with the position of the above respondents from Otuasega community, Mr. Anthony from Erema community also stated that:

Anthony Nwaomah: Yes I am of the opinion that such a program should be conducted every time. You see I believe my kinsmen have said a lot but what we need is support and a continuation of the programme. And we need these Oil companies and our Government leaders to be more responsible (*FGD session at Erema Community*).

The challenge of sustainability which the TFD intervention in Erema and Otuasega communities faced is quite similar with the experiences of many TFD projects across Nigerian communities where TFD have been undertaken. Consolidating and sustaining what has already been ignited becomes a key issue (Abah 2005, Epskamp 2006, Kafewo et.al 2013). In this vein TFD

practitioners must work more to find ways of ensuring that community members as well as other stakeholders continue and sustain the process for the benefit of the community. It is only in this way that TFD projects can become far reaching and ensure that the benefit it offers communities especially those in the Niger Delta becomes well concretized and sustained.

Furthermore, from the researcher's observation and informal interactions, these communities have also been bedeviled with the challenge of rural urban migration. Most key community members who should have been of help in sustaining the TFD experience and outcomes have actually left the community for far urban towns. This was another major challenge.

More disturbing, is the fact that the researcher observed that even though a number of them were too careful to mention it, is the peculiar challenge of bad image which cult groups with criminal and violent tendencies always have on the entire community progress. One of the community members in Erema actually lamented that:

I first want to say that based on some of the advice you have given us, I believe it is now left for us to get more serious and begin to play our role. One big problem that is facing us is that some dangerous Youth in this community, that is, the ones staying in the creeks have painted us in a bad image. Those of us who are even trying to help move the community forward are all looked at as militants and criminals. But you can see for yourself that the way they think about us is not what we really are. All the people you have talked to are either graduate or are attending one school or the other (*KII session with Nicholas Onuhua at Erema Community*).

The comment of Nicholas further brings to light the need for a more careful assessment and understanding of the social dynamics and peculiarities that prevail in the Niger Delta region. This is quite necessary as a holistic approach to addressing the myriads of challenges become a necessity. In as much as we will certainly have a need to deal with criminal case using the

security apparatus of the State, there is always the need to put in mind that those who are making conscious efforts to build their communities, should not be tagged together with persons that have criminal tendencies. The noble input which these progressive classes are making especially by engaging with positive community interventions that bring about change and development in their society should be clearly demarcated from the criminal tendencies of those living in the creeks.

Another serious challenge which the researcher observed and examines here is that of poor funding. This is because most communities will need facilitators such as NPTA to help them get acquainted with the process. However when the facilitating teams are not getting enough funding to facilitate the process they become handicapped in their effort to reach out to communities across the Niger Delta. Even when the use of community-oriented and alternative communication tools does not need the amount of funding like those of mainstream media, the commitment to investing in them has not been given the needed response from government, TNCs and other Stakeholders engaged with the development of Niger Delta region. The challenging situation therefore demand stakeholders and Government to show genuine commitment to encourage and invest in TFD and other participatory models of communication that can lead to social change in communities of the Niger Delta and beyond. This is an area where greater attention must be given in ensuring that people within the Niger Delta communities are better galvanized and stimulated to transform the challenging situation affecting the region.

Finally a salient challenge which the researcher observed is that of administrative constraints and lapses, especially as noticed on the part of NPTA. For instance, the NPTA office did not deploy sufficient number of facilitators to work in the different communities where the interventions were done. This turned out to have an adverse effect as some of the initial team members who died in the course of the interventions were no more available to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation of the TFD interventions undertaken in the different communities. Another administrative default is in the area of excluding officials of the State and Local Government Areas as well as officials of TNCs connected to both communities. Although the TFD interventions were aimed at empowering these communities to brace up to the challenge of improving their communities, however it also involved critical social problems that are beyond the resources and abilities of the communities to address. It is on this basis that efforts should have been made to ensure that the TNCs and Government officials were on ground to witness such an important community development programme. This will further raise awareness and place greater demand on them to live up to their social responsibilities.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

This study has examined TFD intervention for social change in the Niger Delta communities of Erema in Rivers State and Otuasega in Bayelsa State. The interventions as examined in the study were undertaken by the NPTA in both communities. This chapter therefore captures the summary of the preceding discussions of the study. The key study findings from the foregoing discussions and analyses of data are also brought out. Thereafter recommendations and conclusion upon the study findings are presented accordingly.

6.1 Summary of the Study

The role which TFD intervention for social change offers communities in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria has been emphasized in this study. As the study noted, there have not been effective and inclusive approaches to engage community members in addressing myriads of social challenges militating against the growth and transformation of communities in the Niger Delta region. This very bottleneck has unduly prevented community members from lending their voices to decision making processes. It was in this light that the study examined the use of TFD as an alternative social change communication strategy. The goal was therefore to assess the use of TFD with a view to determining its strength and limitations in local community development interventions.

The review of literature broadly considered the key concepts and issues around the focus of the research with the aim of justifying the basis for which the current study was pursued. These mainly include social change, Theatre for Development and the issues around the Niger Delta. In examining the concept of social change, the research provided diverse perspectives from which scholars have viewed the concept. Prominent among the perspectives examined are the Development-based perspective and the Marxist-based perspective of Social Change. In the former, the goal is to change communities using a top-down approach. The principles of social change are dictated by the agenda of national and international donor agencies and authorities. On the other hand, the latter emphasized a bottom-up and participatory approach to social change. It is particularly critical of the imbalances and marginalization of the minority and rural classes, and therefore seeks their empowerment for the transformation of their marginalized conditions. The study however, aligns with the Marxist based perspective, and as such buttressed the participatory approach to social change communication. In this vein, TFD was examined in this study as a pragmatic example of a participatory approach to social change communication.

The review also considered the concept, history and practices of TFD across the globe (including Africa and Nigeria). The examination of TFD revealed the potentials and opportunities which it offered in communicating social change across different climes over the years. It was on this basis that the research considered how its deployment in selected communities (Erema and Otuasega) in the Niger Delta region has helped to facilitate social change.

The theoretical framework which underpinned the study is the Culture-Centered Theory propounded by Mohan Dutta and the Theory of Dialogical Pedagogy by Paulo Freire. The

Culture-Centered Theory concerns itself with the voices of the marginalized and subaltern groups; and explores the interactions between culture and the structure that create the conditions of marginality. On the other hand, the Theory of Dialogical Pedagogy, is of the view that the desire to empower people could be achieved through the process of creating awareness and conscientization which can only be possible through the process of dialogue. In the context of this study, the two theories emphasized the ideological underpinning of TFD as an effective social change communication strategy. They also provided the needed premise for the study to discuss the essence of the TFD intervention undertaken in the Niger Delta communities of Erema and Otuasega. Qualitative tools such as Focus Group Discussion, Key Informant Interview, Observation and Desk review were employed to generate useful data from the respondents in NPTA and the two communities under study. The data were obtained in line with the set objectives of the study. Consequently, the analyses of data obtained were as well discussed in line with the objectives of the study.

6.2 Key Findings

Below are the findings obtained from the study:

TFD as a communication tool, proved viable in engendering community participation for social change in the Niger Delta communities of Erema and Otuasega. From data so far generated members in both communities were well mobilized by the TFD process and got actively involved in the different activities that NPTA engaged them in.

The study also found out that the TFD interventions were quite significant in addressing issues of conflicts affecting the communities. The community members in Otuasega and Erema attested to

the fact that they were able to resolve some leadership disputes and court cases confronting them. The interventions gave them fresh insights on how to handle conflicts amicably especially with the TNC companies in their communities rather than resorting to severe agitations and violence.

More than resolving conflicts, the study also discovered that the TFD interventions prompted and paved way for the actualization of some social amenities in the communities which include the renovation of community hall, the building of a library for Youths in the Community and the construction of a multi-purpose complex in Erema. In Otuasega community, members attested also that the intervention motivated them to build a market for the community. TFD intervention in this context proved its proficiency for capacity building of local communities under study.

Furthermore, the study found out that greater impact can be achieved when the TFD process is properly complimented with the mainstream media of communication.

The study also discovered that there was also the challenge of rural-urban migration. Some key community members who participated in TFD initiative have left the community for urban towns and as such were not available to aid the continuity and consolidation of the programme done in their communities.

6.3 Recommendations

In view of the above findings, the study therefore offers the following recommendations:

1. More efforts should be put in place by all stakeholders to enhance platforms that community members can explore in the Niger Delta region to become greater key players in addressing the social challenges that plague their communities.
2. There should be concerted efforts in the use of community-oriented and alternative communication tools such as TFD in addressing issues of social conflict and peaceful resolution of disputes between host communities and TNCs operating in the Niger Delta region.
3. To ensure effective TFD interventions for social change in communities, all necessary factors that will enhance effective monitoring and execution of Community Action Plan (CAP) must be put in place by both intervention team and the community.
4. To ensure effective and successful TFD interventions, it is suggested that more inclusive baseline assessment of field experiences be done to facilitate and consolidate social change in local communities.
5. It is also important that TFD should essentially be explored alongside other conventional communication media for greater and far reaching impact on people's development in the Niger Delta communities.

6.4 Conclusion

This study has brought to the fore some of the prevailing social issues hindering the growth and development of communities within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the need to properly address them. As the study noted development issues as it relates to the Niger Delta region has

become quite topical in the nation. This is due to the very significant amount of oil mineral resources it provides for the economic survival of the nation. However, the study argued that approaches that ensures inclusiveness and greater community participation that lead to sustainable growth and development has not been effectively explored. A number of Government development programmes and initiatives for rural transformation in the Niger Delta region have more often than not produced poor results. More scathing is the fact that the frosty relationship of community members and TNCs operating within their domain have resulted in negative and depleting outcomes for the communities. It is on this basis that the study clearly points to the fact that bringing about social change in these communities will need to consciously involve alternative communication processes that are community-oriented and participatory in nature. In this way the research believes that a more horizontal dimension to engaging local communities in the Niger Delta region can be attained. In the light of this, the research considered the use of TFD as an effective alternative and community-oriented communication approach that can facilitate social change in communities of the Niger Delta region.

To further justify its argument, the study critically examined the TFD intervention undertaken by NPTA in Erema of Rivers State and Otuasega of Bayelsa State. The research assessed the extent to which it affected members of both communities. The study findings from both communities attested to the fact that the approach was quite empowering and useful in addressing a number of social challenges affecting their communities. They relished the participatory potency of the TFD process done in their communities. Despite the positive attestations, the study however did note that they were some loopholes which were discovered in the usage of the TFD process in these communities. An obvious challenge in this regard was the lack of monitoring and

continuity of the process. Nevertheless, these loopholes which were clearly pointed out in this study will need to be well addressed for subsequent TFD intervention to have greater impacts.

Based on the foregoing, the research therefore submits that greater commitment of the intervention team and advancement of community-oriented and participatory communication processes are of a fundamental requirement for the pursuance of social change and transformation of communities in the Niger Delta region. This will go a long way to complement other conventional media and bring about a more holistic approach to communicating community social change in the Niger Delta. Furthermore, the efficacy of the TFD practice makes it a strategic instrument which is capable of precipitating peace and social harmony; which are fundamental requirements needed to attain desirable and sustainable changes for communities in the Niger Delta region. Consequently, TFD intervention becomes a workable communication strategy that can significantly contribute to actualizing community social change and development agenda in Niger Delta communities.

6.5 Contributions to Knowledge:

1. The study brought to light the need to pay more emphasis to baseline assessment of TFD field experiences. This is an area in the study of TFD practice in Nigeria that has been lacking over the years. Assessments of TFD interventions such as the Erema and Otuasega TFD interventions assessed in this study, gives insight to the sustainable and enduring effects that TFD interventions have for target communities.

2. The study was able to project the effectiveness of alternative processes of communicating issues of current social relevance as it relates to Community Development. This becomes very useful because it offers a vital referential document on communicating and addressing current social challenges especially as they affect communities in the Niger Delta.
3. The study also advanced the need to complement the use of alternative communication media and mainstream media in addressing social challenges as they regard community development in the Niger Delta region. In other words it was able to proffer new perspectives to communication solutions in addressing socio-economic challenges affecting Niger Delta communities.
4. The study also brought to light new approaches and dimensions to peacefully discussing the complexities of community issues in the Niger Delta terrain. Through the TFD process the community members in Erema and Otuasega explored the opportunity to voice and channel properly the issues as they affect their communities. This is against the frequent crises and violence which has adversely affected them and many other communities within the region. Hence the TFD intervention is revealed as a workable method of peace building and conflict resolution which demands greater exploration by stakeholders.
5. The study having identified some salient constraints and challenges that affected the Erema and Otuasega TFD interventions, has thus given opportunity to ensure that

researchers and facilitating teams on subsequent community TFD interventions become better equipped to actualizing more pragmatic results in the execution of TFD interventions within and even beyond local communities of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria.

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ORAL INTERVIEWS

Interview with Nicholas Onouha, Youth Community Liaison Officer at Erema Civic Centre on the 25th of September,2016.

Interview with Comrade Joshua Gentle, a former executive member of Erema Youth Council at his residence in Port Harcourt on the 26th of September,2016.

Interview with Chief Friday Oyoyo Alegbe, former Vice Chairman of Otuasega Community on the 28th of September, 2016.

Interview with Gloria Igbeta a Community Liaison Officer in Otuasega on the 28th of September,2016.

Interview with Prof. Oga Steve Abah, President of Nigeria Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) at the Theatre for Development Center (TFDC) Ahmadu Bello University, (ABU) Zaria on the 5th of May,2017.

FGD with Elders of Erema Community at the front of the former Youth Leader's Compound, Nicholas Onouha on the 25th of September, 2106.

FGD with Erema Youth Council Members at Erema Civic Centre on the 28th of September, 2017.

FGD with Leaders and Youth Members of Otuasega Community held in the Community Town hall on the 28th of September, 2016.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE:

FGD/KII QUESTIONS GUIDE

1. Do you remember the TFD programme undertaken in your community between the year 2009-2010 by NPTA?
2. Were you a participant and did you play any role?
3. Can you briefly tell us some of the processes and activities that were carried out by NPTA?
4. Was there active participation and response to the TFD programme carried out in your community by NPTA?
6. What has the community done so far on the action plans as agreed after the TFD programme done in the community?
7. What were the most pressing social challenges you believe that the TFD programme addressed for your own community?
8. Beyond your community, do you think that the TFD programme undertaken in your community can equally address some of the social challenges affecting the Niger Delta region in general?
9. Outside the use of TFD, what were the other media the community employed in addressing the social issues affecting the community?
10. What were some of the merits and demerits of employing such tools?
11. Do you think the use of TFD can be combined with other media and tools in addressing issues affecting communities in the Niger Delta?
12. What are some of the benefits and constrains you think will likely be from the combination of different media and tools in addressing social issues in the Niger Delta region?
13. What were some of the challenges experienced in the course of organizing and executing the TFD programme as undertaken by NPTA in the community?
14. What role do you think the community can play in ensuring that such community development programme can be developed and sustained for their overall benefit?
15. What role do you think that the Government, Multi-national organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders can play in the development of such programme in the Niger Delta region?

APPENDIX TWO

FGD with Elders of Erema Community at the front of the former Youth Leader's Compound Nicholas Onouha on the 25th of September, 2106

The FGD started with an introduction from the former Youth leader Nicholas. He explained to the purpose why the researcher came to the community. Having done so, the researcher introduced himself and appreciated the members that were seated in the audience, and further explained the purpose of the FGD. The members of the FGD having been enlightened about the purpose of the discussion were now ready to start up but they reminded me that we must make it very brief because they just finished some community sanitation. So we had to begin quickly with introductions. Those that participated included: Elijah Ezi, Chief David Egba, Mr. Ejikeme Ordu, Mr. Cheta Ochioha, Nicholas Onouha, Creativity Ugoma, Macaulay Egba, Comrade Idimma Obulor, Eze Williams and John Achugo

Researcher: Thanks all. Can we say something about the TFD intervention that was undertaken in your community some years back by NPTA group?

Comrade Idimma: The programme took place around 2010 when some lecturers came all the way from Zaria. They came with the aim of helping community members especially our Youth in the areas of community development and transformation. We did some interviews with community members on issues that affect the community, we also walked around the community and we later drew a map of the community identifying areas of the community that had some serious problems which should be addressed.

Chief David: Yes I too can remember something like that and after having some walk around the community we also acted drama in the community hall. After the drama we were able to discuss the issues affecting the community.

Eze: They have actually said much but what I just also want to add is that the people, that is, the lecturers from Zaria also joined in the annual 'Egwoba' festival of the community that was held around the time they came.

Researcher: So how did the community respond to the programme?

Macaulay: Seriously speaking that was our first time of experiencing a programme of that kind and I must tell you that we benefitted in a number of ways from the programme. For instance the people from Zaria were able to assist us to resolve a serious conflict that was about to tear our community apart. In fact the case was already in the court but with their intervention calm was restored in the community. There is no need to go over what happened again but that was one way we resolved the conflict that was affecting the community.

Chief David: Just to further add that another thing which the programme did for the community was in the area of making use of the resources which multi nationals give to the community for our benefit as community instead of one man choking it inside his pocket. Right now we are building our Community Shopping complex and also we have renovated our Civic centre; because before now it was in a bad shape. And really speaking it was very educative and I think that is what we want Drama to do for our community. Already I think that the people in Zaria need to come back again because we need more of the programme.

Creativity: Well I will add that the Youth in the community also benefitted. Because the Youth were thought different things and they were also advised to shun violence and embrace peace. I can say that with the knowledge that they gained from the programme, they are able to see the need to be more positive minded. Although I cannot say that we addressed all the issues affecting the community but one thing was sure, since they left we have always longed for their coming

back. The area of violence was really addressed... That is why we said we still need more of this programme to enlighten our people the more on peaceful community life.

Researcher: Ok thanks a lot, now I want find out from us especially those of us that witnessed the programme, how did the programme affect the people in terms of their social relations and development?

Willaims: Seriously speaking that was our first time of experiencing a programme of that kind and I must tell you that we benefitted in a number of ways from the programme. For instance the people from Zaria were able to assist us to resolve a serious conflict that was about to tear our community apart. In fact the case was already in the court but with their intervention calm was restored in the community. There is no need to go over what happened again but that was one way we resolved the conflict that was affecting the community.

Nicholas: Another thing which I think the programme did for the community was in the area of making use of the resources which multi nationals give to the community for our benefit as community instead of one man putting it inside his pocket. Right now we are building our Community Shopping complex and also we have renovated our Civic centre because before now it was in a bad shape. And really speaking it was very educative and I think that is what we want Drama to do for our community. I will suggest that the people continue to come again. Already some of us have told them in Zaria to please come back because we need more of the programme.

Creativity: Well I will add that the Youth in the community also benefitted. Because the Youth were thought different theatre skills and they were also advised to shun violence and embrace peace. I can now say that with the knowledge that we gained from the programme the youths of the community are able to see the need to be more positive minded. Although I cannot say that

we addressed all the issues affecting the community but one thing was sure, since they left we have always longed for their coming back. The area of violence was really addressed but now is like we are beginning to go back to old ways. That is why we said we still need more of this programme to enlighten our people the more on peaceful community life.

Researcher: I can see that from a number of you that have spoken you really believe that such a programme was of immense help to your community. Now my question here is that base on what these persons who have spoken have said about the usefulness of the programme in your community, do you see the possibility of it also playing a significant role when extended to other Niger Delta Communities?

Comrade Idimma: Now I like to start like this because interestingly Drama is an area I have been taught about before. Now what is Drama? Drama is about telling the experiences of people, that is their story. And I believe that the usefulness of Drama when taking to many other communities across the Niger Delta, will also help to tell their story very effectively. For instance a lot of times the Niger Delta people have always been branded as violent people without really understanding why they are taking to violence. Violence is not something to be encouraged in any way. However come to think of it we in Rivers, we in the Niger Delta who are producing the Oil are only meant to receive the crumbs and shaft of the goodies and the northern people who don't have oil is now our waste bag.

Ejikeme: Now with the discussion we have been having on the project, I can only say that it has opened our eyes to see a lot of things that are affecting the community so I can say it has really help us in the Niger Delta region.

Cheta: The only thing I can say is that it can be used to enlighten and teach us. Because from what I can see, community development programme like this one we are talking about, can help

us to see a lot of things affecting the community. It is something that I believe can help the grassroots a lot

Researcher: Ok we are already coming to the end but before we live I want to ask what do you think the community can do to sustain a project of this kind?

Elijah: One way I think we can sustain the programme is through our Youth organization. But the problem is most of our Youth are not employed and this is really affecting our communities in the Niger Delta area.

Creativity: I think like my Daddy has just said, I believe in the area of Youth empowerment in the community, Government and the Oil companies should help us and try to empower our Youth in different skills. This I believe will go a long way in ensuring that we support Government and multinational organizations. The reason why some our Youth are restless is because they are not engaged in any thing meaningful. So what I am saying is that if we must play our roles more effectively having something to do is very important. That is why I must say I am very happy with the way the programme brought us together to talk about these things. And with your coming I believe it is time to move forward.

Having concluded I stood up to appreciate all the FGD members and also encouraged them on the need to pay attention to things that can move their society forward and that they must all work together for the good of their community. They so much appreciated my coming and I also appreciated them in return.

APPENDIX THREE:

FGD with Erema Youth Council Members at Erema Civic Centre on the 28th of September, 2017.

The FGD started with a brief explanation once again by Nicholas Onuoha who was trying to help them understand my purpose for coming. This as he noted was necessary before I can come in. Having helped to break the ice I was introduced to the members of the Youth group. I appreciated them so much for granting me the audience to speak with them. I went on to introduce the topic and the questions which will be discussing. They were really warmly and were ready to examine the issue before us. Interestingly all the Youth that were part of the discussion participated in the TFD project that was undertaken in their community. Those that participated in the FGD included: Comrade Woko Peter, Nwaomah Anthony, Chilekwe Chinatu, Comrade Godstime Obulor, Comrade Ijeoma Alekwu, Imo Daniel, Bright Ile, Uzoh Onyemaruche, Creativity Ugoma, and Nicholas Onuoha. Having done the initial introductions, we went into business of the day.

Researcher: Ok since I am dealing with members of the Youth community that experienced the project can anyone of you tell me how the programme was received by the community?

Creativity: The programme was well received by the community and we had ready participation from members of the community. The Youth joined the lecturers from Zaria in so many of the processes that were undertaken by them. Some of us here handled camera and some of us acted in the Drama while some of us also drew maps on paper and we joined in the walking around the community. It was a very interesting experience.

Researcher: Ok that is very good, so what were the major things that the TFD undertaken in community addressed? Ok let's hear from as many please:

Bright: One of the things that I know that the TFD project did for the community was that it helped the community to attend to the issue of this hall you are now seeing because before now the hall was not well built. But after the programme we agreed that we were going to renovate the hall.

Godstime: The programme also helped the community leaders to relate better with the oil company on how to address the community crises. Infact they were able to discuss with us on the need to resolve crises affecting the community. We are also currently talking about some Youth Development programme that includes some talent hunt programmes.

Ijeoma: Let me continue from where he stopped. I can remember that as at that time we were even having a big problem among the Youth body because there was serious leadership crises that was tearing the Youth and in shut the entire community apart. So they helped in some way to advise us on what to do.

Comrade Woko: Outside what my brothers have just said I also remember that we acted about one of the very important problem which I can say is affecting many of our Youth which is the area of Youth unemployment. At that time we even started talking about building a shopping multi-purpose complex.

Nicholas: Seriously speaking that was our first time of experiencing a programme of that kind and I must tell you that we benefitted in a number of ways from the programme. For instance the people from Zaria were able to assist us to resolve a serious conflict that was about to tear our community apart. In fact the case was already in the court but with their intervention calm was restored in the community. There is no need to go over what happened again but that was one way we resolved the conflict that was affecting the community.

Researcher: ok so what was the problem that was affecting the community as at then?

Nicholas: The problem which was affecting the community as at then was more of a leadership crises. We were having problems after the elections in the Egbema clan. There were two factions in the community because of the problem. And I can tell that the oil company was not helping matters because they decided to recognize both factions and were given money to the both factions. This even led to court cases. But I can tell you that when the Doctor and the Professor came to our community. They helped a lot because we held different meetings and to a great extent we addressed the issues. In fact both parties as at then were ready to withdraw the case from the court. For us here as leaders in the Erema Youth Association it also help us to be more organized on how to relate with the larger Egbema clan. So I can say that we really felt the impact of the programme.

Researcher: Ok just to add I believe that when the NPTA had the programme with the community, there was a community action plan that was left, are we aware of such?

Creativity: Yes but that plan was left with one elder of the community Chief Okpokiri but he is now late, he died last year and in fact his children are no more in the community. The community action plan was not spread. But I can remember that base on one of the community action plan which was on the need for us as Youth to find ways of making peace in the community that made me last Year to organize a Youth talent project in conjunction with the Youth Organization and even this year I will be organizing another still in conjunction with the Youth association.

Imo: Yes as my brother said we have that document with Chief Okpokiri and he is late and most of the time it was him that kept the document. But I can add that another thing that we were able to agree on that Community action plan was a change of orientation in the area of employment. Because most of our Youth are always looking for Oil Company jobs which in most cases are

not always available. With the different discussions we had with the team from Zaria, they were able to neutralize our mindset about Oil jobs. You know when 1000 people want to pass this one door automatically the door and so many people will collapse. In fact it was because of that we also talked about textile industry and also opening a shopping complex. So the whole idea was to help us achieve Youth empowerment. And I can say that a lot of our Youth decided to see how they can engage in different meaningful enterprise until the recently some kind of crises wanted to tear the community apart.

Researcher: Wonderful, yeah even without the exact copy available to what is expected of Youth who want to see to the progress of the community is what you are now doing. So I will want to ask further are there other things you people are consciously doing for the progress of the community especially as a Youth body having been able to reorganize yourself since the TFD project carried out in your community?

Uzoh: Yes there are some enlightenment campaigns which we are planning to do with the executive and in fact I already started discussing with Nicholas. For now I may not let the cat out of the bag because we are still talking about it. When we are done I can bring it out very perfectly.

Chilekwe: Yes base on the question you ask I am the director of Sport and Socials in the Youth community. Apart from the programme which is been coordinated by Creativity that is the October 1st programme, later in the year the office of the Sport and Social in conjunction with the Erema Youth Executive will be organizing a programme which we have tagged “Operation show your handwork and talent”. The programme will involve different Youths in Erema who will be expected to do some handwork in a competition and at the end of the day awards will be given participants. We are now looking for sponsorship for the project.

Researcher: Ok outside the TFD project what is the role that other mediums such as TV radio and Print media have played in the community?

Nicholas: Yes if may say the TV and Radio have not done much because most of the time they are basically after the money their stations can get. But I will say that outside the problem of money Radio and TV will be very useful for us too. Because they will also help to further bring out the message of peace which everybody both those within and outside the community can experience.

Creativity: In terms of the magazine, there was a time when this community was captured in a magazine. And all over we saw the faces of our community members. Now what I am saying is that these people whose faces have been so captured will want to make sure that they behave well and contribute to community development.

Researcher: Ok base on what we have been talking about, how do we see this programme which have done in this community, how do you see it affecting the entire Niger Delta Community?

Comrade Woko: It is something that is highly needed. This Drama has a way of bringing people together and making them to become united. And apart from the drama, we see it as a way of encouraging communities to look inwards and see what they can do for themselves. We cannot continue to depend on multi national and the Government for our survival. The Government has always been a toatla failure and there is no need to talk about them. This programme is another eye opener for us and there is no way the Niger Delta region will not find it useful.

Imo: I believe that what we need in the Niger Delta region is greater enlightenment and since this programme is about enlightenment, then I it will make a lot of impact in communities across the Niger Delta region. We in Erema the Drama has been able able to empower us, help us solve

conflict and contributed to the Youth and Social development of the community, so this is what I believe it will also do not only for Niger Delta communities but even in the entire Nation.

Researcher: OK can we also hear from you ?

Anthony: Yes I am of the opinion that such a program should be conducted every time. You see I believe my kinsmen have said a lot but what we need is support and a continuation of the programme. And we need these Oil companies and our Government leaders to be more responsible.

Ijeoma: Let me also add that such a programme is another way of encouraging culture and community life. Because I remember that the Prof. and Dr. also joined us in celebrating our festival and this encouraged us a lot. The Niger Delta people are a people that respect culture and I think anytime their culture is involve the people will surely be interested. And again too it is another way of education. So the Youth, Women and children will benefit greatly from it.

Researcher: Ok, we have come to the end but please before we go and I just want to firstly appreciate all of you for this precious time offered to this discussion. I want to encourage this Youth forum to do their best to further the actions that you have pointed out that you want to do for the community development. Even though the NPTA have left the community but I think with a structure like this you can organize yourselves to organize similar drama programmes for the community

Comrade Woko: (cuts in) Yes that is some of the things I earlier said that we want to do. Drama and Dance is part of them. And we are looking at a later part of the year to execute the project. By then the community will be fuller.

Researcher: That is very good, I believe that when such projects are carried out by progressive Youths of your kind then your community will definitely be better for it. Once again thank you and may God bless you for the time you have spent with me.

Nicholas: On behalf of the entire Erema Youth Association we wish to thank you for taken out time to come to our community all the way from Zaria. We are indeed grateful. For us it is another motivation and a lesson for all of us who is seating here with you. We must encourage you to please keep the good work we believe that one day you will become a force to reckon with in the Society.

Researcher: Thank you very much.

(Having concluded I stood up to appreciate all the FGD members and also encouraged them on the need to pay attention to things that can move their society forward and that they must all work together for the good of their community. They so much appreciated my coming and I also appreciated them in return)

APPENDIX FOUR:

KII with Nicholas Onouha at Erema Civic Centre on the 25th of September, 2016

Researcher: Mr. Nicholas thank you for the patience to wait behind after the FGD we have just had.

Nicholas: No problem, you are welcome

Researcher: I just want to get your thought more on some key areas we have just addressed. The first is on the role you believe the Youth of this community can play to further some of the agreements that was brought out of the TFD intervention in this community?

Nicholas: I first want to say that base on some of the advices you have given us, I believe is now left for us to get more serious and begin to play our role. The biggest problem that is facing Youth in this community is that the bad ones that the ones staying in the creeks have painted us in a bad image. Those of us trying to help move the community forward are all looked at as militants and criminals. But you can see for yourself that the way they think about us is not what we really are. All the people you have talked to are either graduate or are attending one school or the other. So I think moving forward we must not relent to continue to see how to create the needed change in our society. We must employ drama and other avenue such as Sport, carnivals and other youth friendly programmes to help encourage our Youth to become good ambassadors of Erema. Furthermore I want to let you know that I among the Youth in my community that have encourage many of our Youth not to get themselves frustrated by these oil companies who in many occasion are promise and fail. We must be ready to help ourselves with the abilities that God have given us.

Researcher: Wonderful, I also think that that is the way to go about it. Now just one more question. From our conversation we have been able to see how TFD has fostered development

and social changes in community, now do think it is something that can affect other communities in the Niger Delta Region?

Nicholas: Why not, it is something obvious. Most people in the Niger Delta communities have already lost hope in the way the Government have handled their affairs. Most of these Militant groups came as a result of poor development from Government and Oil Companies. Bunkering, Militancy and Kidnapping are as a result of bad leadership. So nobody trusts Government to help secure peace and development. That is why when we see people from NGOs such as the ones that came from Zaria we welcome them. They are here for one mission to help our communities have peace and harmony. It is something that every community in the Niger Delta need. These are some of the avenues Government and Oil companies should be serious with but they keep telling lies on the Media that they are doing this, they are doing that to address the Niger Delta crisis. They are all lies. So I believe that we need drama and TFD in the Niger Delta region. The programme can help to restore peace and true communal living because the drama programme for us was not for joke or entertainment; we acted out the problems which are affecting our community especially the problem of lack of jobs in which many of these oil companies are not helping matters. But still I believe we cannot fold our hands, we have to do something to help better ourselves. Thank you

Researcher: Mr. Nicholas I am grateful for this extra time. It has been nice discussing with you
God bless you

Nicholas: Na you try pass. Please feel free to come anytime, you are now our brother and we believe by the grace of God you will make it in your programme.

Researcher: Amen oh! Thanks a lot.

APPENDIX FIVE:

KII with Comrade Joshua Gentle at his residence in Port Harcourt, Rivers State on the 26th of September, 2016

Researcher: Thank you very much for granting me this opportunity to have an interview with you. May I please know you?

Comrade Gentle: Thank you very much Mr. Abel. My name is Comrade Joshua Gentle, an Erema Man from Rivers State. And I was a former Youth Executive member of the Erema Youth Council. I am very happy to grant you the audience you require.

Researcher: Thank you Sir. Sometimes ago a TFD project was organized in your community. I don't know if you have knowledge of that project.

Comrade Gentle: Although I have not been around for sometimes now, I still have great memories even though it's been a very long while now since they came; because I was among those who assisted the team from Zaria comprising of Dr. Martin, a Professor (Abah) and other delegates. Some activities which we did included; walking around the community, drawing of community map to show some things around the community and drama. I also played the role of an applicant in the drama. The drama which was mainly acted by the Youth and it was about the problems that was affecting our community. It was something we practiced on our own and we presented it to the community members at our civic hall. After the drama we had some very useful discussions on how we can move the community forward. Even after the programme we also held one or two meetings on how we can address some of the issues that was discussed with the people from Zaria. It was wonderful day I have ever experienced. This is because I seriously love any involvement that can bring about community development and societal change.

Researcher: Did you play any role?

Comrade Gentle: Yes I played a very important role. I was one of the characters in the play and I joined to organize the programme too.

Researcher: Thank you very much and then I think that base on what when on that day, did the community give it a positive response?

Comrade Gentle: Yes even from my initial response you will have discovered that it was a positive response. You see in Erema we love enlightenment most especially when it comes to the educational and development aspect. Education has been a top priority of the Erema people. In fact if I am ask to rate the response I will say it was exceptional response.

Researcher: Ok what were some of the issues you thought that the TFD programme addressed or resolved in the community?

Comrade Gentle: Yes, before sometimes most especially as a Nigerian community that have some oils and multi-national you find out that there are always bridge in communication or barriers and misunderstanding between the oil companies and community/elders of the community. So the programme was able to address some of the hindrances that were affecting the community development and that was keeping it back from actualizing some of their goals. We were able to speak on some very important issues in the community such as Youth unemployment. This was a very important issue that the drama brought out. We also talked about Women empowerment and we brought up the issue of up grading our civic centre and building a shopping complex that will accommodate different activities. Some our leadership crises were also resolved. Apart from these the project also addressed the issue of political thugerry and violence. Youths in the community were told to avoid been instruments in the hands of politicians who are trying to cause conflict in the community. Really speaking the programme was very educating. We were very happy with it.

Researcher: Thank you. Looking at what the programme did in the community do you think that such a programme could be of benefit to the broader Niger Delta region. Do you think it can also address issues affecting the community.

Comrade Gentle: Well I must tell you, if I say no, I must be mistaken or I will be drifting out of the line. The programme will be help the Niger Delta a lot. Even I must tell you that the programme for the Erema community has been helping a lot of us in terms of change of ways. The Prof. and Dr. and the rest of team inspired us a lot. The Niger-Delta region no doubt will benefit from the programme, I will recommend that it is taken across all communities in the Niger-Delta region. I tell you it will go a long way to affect things very positively in the Niger Delta especially among Oil communities.

If you ask me the programme should be done on a regular basis because it is very educative channel that local communities will use to help themselves in education and enlightenment. It may be difficult though but it is not impossible. Drama and all the community discussions can attract the community attention and help especially the Youths. For instance some Youths members who have been tempted to join others in the creeks began to have a change of heart. So you see that the programme has in a way avoiding some Youths to be militants. So I will repeat my point that we need more of these programmes.

Researcher: Beyond the use of TFD, can we also say that other approaches like Radio, T.V and Prints that is Newspaper and Magazines have also contributed to the social change of the community.

Comrade Gentle: Yes I guess you are talking about using these media to create positive changes in the community

Researcher: Yes

Comrade Gentle: Well when you talk about these media you realize that they have so many problems, although they can be helpful but not as the drama that we had in the community. Because you see most of these media station are after making money. This is because they are profit oriented and are more ready to satisfy their employer which is the government. Secondly T.V and Magazine are more for urban people and sometimes you should not forget that for you to enjoy the use of Television and Radio you need PHCN which is not always available. But when you gather people together and enlighten them most time it works better than going into the other aspect of using electronics and print media.

Researcher: Ok looking at what TFD has done for the Erema community, I really don't know if you are aware of a Community Action Plan that was left behind for the community, so far how has the community carry on with the action plan?

Comrade Gentle: The community action plan was initiated towards the end of the programme. It was written out and all of us have agreed that we need to carry on with this plan. But you see I must tell you that after they left us, some of us who participated in the programme have gone out of the town in search of greener pastures, like me I am in PH now, and this also has contributed to the problem of fully implementing the community action plan. But more seriously we lost a very important member of the community in the person of Chief Okpokiri. He would have helped a lot but so many things which we have achieved so far are contained in the Community Action Plan.

Researcher: Now what do think the community can do in term of making this kind of project a part and parcel of the community?

Comrade Gentle; If we want to really continue this project, I think I must first of all play my role. I must be ready to gather other Youths in the community and do something about it. You

see if I am not significant to things of such I don't think anybody will refer you to me. For that reason I am also calling on the well-meaning Youths of Erema community because we will not leave everything in the hands of our Fathers.

Researcher: Thank you very much, it is not a long one but it is of great value. I think I have gained a lot of information in regards to what is needed to be done. Because we are talking about social change and social change has to do with how people respond to the social challenges in their community and bring out some positive outcomes. This can be done when effective pathways and methods are employed. One of these ways which of course you were a witness and which you have appreciated so much is the use of TFD.

Gentle: (cuts in) Vey well

Researcher: And you have said you are of the opinion that it should not be a one of experience but something that must be done from time to time so that it can inculcate a new culture of peace, of collaboration and of handling issues in much more enlightened way.

Comrade Gentle: Exactly exactly! And I thank you very much for this opportunity and I am very grateful, please say me well to Prof. We had of the shock of Dr Martins Death. Please greet his family for me, and may God grant you journey mercies.

Researcher: I shall deliver your message. Thank you once again and God bless you.

APPENDIX SIX:

FGD with Leaders and Youth Members of Otuasega Community held in the Community Town hall on the 28th of September, 2016

In Otuasega community, the FGD was done with leaders and members of the Youth group in the community town hall. It featured 12 of them. A majority of them were participant in the NPTA programme that was undertaken in their community. The FGD began with an introduction of the researcher and his purpose for coming into the community by the Mrs. Gloria Igbeta, a former Women Leader in the community. The researcher introduced himself and appreciated their honouring the invitation. He also threw more light on the purpose of the discussion. With these necessary preliminaries, introduction of names were done by each person as they came in. Participants in the FGD included: Gloria Igbeta, Ikpo Makeni, Comrade Sunday Ikpo, Comrade Moscow Paul, Chief Friday O. Aleke, Okilo Precious, Comrade Omonibo Teddy, Phil Godswil, Harieth Okilo, Ogbilo Fidelis, Doubu Onemaya, and Adah Francis.

Researcher: Thank you very much, since we have limited time we will just start up immediately. So can we say something about the TFD project that was undertaken in your community?

Francis: I must seriously say that the programme with the lecturers from ABU was very successful; it was done in our community around 2010. The programme involved majorly some lecturers from ABU and they were here with some few people from SDN. The last CDC Executives and the Youth Association were part of the project. So they had some activities with us and part of those activities included: training in which some community members were taken to Port-Harcourt for training, and we also had some programmes in the community. Some of us did some trekking around the community and some acted Drama inside this Hall. The Drama

always had questions and answers session because it was much more than drama because we were actually discussing mainly about the problems of the community. Even before the drama we also had things like drawing of the community on the map. Although it has taken a long while now but still I must say that it was a very interesting time with the people that came from Zaria and we wish for more of such kind of programme.

Researcher: That is wonderful, can we also hear from others?

Gloria: Yes he has actually summarized everything. The programme involved majorly some lecturers from ABU and they were here with some few people from SDN. So they had some important activities with us and part of those activities includes Drama and community meeting.

Chief Friday: Yes, in addition to what he said because I was part of the training I can say that it was very successful. Because they thought us many community development things like using drama to affect our community positively and things like community mapping.

Researcher: Now base on the experiences you all had, how did it affect the community?

Moscow: The drama helped us by then to seriously address the court problem which the community was having by then. The court case came up after the election that brought in the former CDC excos. So there were problems and factions. But after the drama the lecturers talked to us, and the discussions took a long time but at the end it was resolved that the case should be withdrawn from the court which was done. I can say that it was very helpful to the former leaders because the problem was almost tearing the community apart.

Comrade Omonibo: Another area which it helped was in the area of Youth development. The Drama was very useful in this area. Because it talked about the problem of Youth unemployment, violence; and also because of the drama we were able to address the issue of the community market. If you go down a little, you will see the reconstruction of the community

market. It was as result of the programme we had as at then. Now a lot of our Youth especially our Youth leaders have been trying to organize some enlightenment programmes that can better the lives of youths in the community.

Chief Friday: Sorry let me also add a little to what has been said. The programme also touched the area of community leadership a lot. We addressed the issue of how our community leaders should effectively play their roles in the community. Although we now have a new set of leaders in the community the impact of that meeting which I was part of helped the community a lot to start organizing ourselves in such a way that will avoid social crises in the community. Also the Youth are now making efforts to do more creative programmes especially during the end of the Year.

Gloria: It was also very helpful in the area of bringing about the amendment of the community constitution, during the period we were able to review and amend our constitution under the last regime. Apart from this we looked seriously at the issue of scholarship and the multi- national companies' manner of handling scholarship. Many of our young ones were unfairly treated in the distribution of scholarships and academic benefits. We were told to request to gain audience with those concerns in the different multi-national organizations through dialogue with them.

Precious: Finally I want to add that we tackled some social amenities issues. With regards to the new road construction I can tell you that after all the way and manner money was spent to construct the this road, it was at this programme that made us to address the issue very well. Our leaders were made to be more accountable and serious about the completion. By today I can tell you that it did not take long before the road was constructed.

Researcher: That is great to hear, but by the way I know that after the programme that was done, there was some kind of Community Action Plan that was left for the community, so how far has the community gone on it?

Gloria: Yes, the Action Plan was about some of those things that they left behind for us to continue and the issue here is that many of us that were leaders as at then are no more in the community. I myself I live in Yenagoa. Usually after such programme the Community Chairman is given such document. But as it stand the last CDC chairman now lives in Port Harcourt and I believe he maybe with such a document. But actually, most achievements which is in the plan has been mentioned here.

Researcher: But I will encourage that such a document be gotten by the new excos as it will help you to carry out your leadership agenda for the community. Nevertheless having seen what TFD has done for the community what do you think the community can do to sustain this process?

Onemaya: What I think we can do something as a community is for us to try and pursue seriously development and empowerment of our youth. We must shun violence because it cannot lead us to anywhere. And I believe if we always come together like this with people from outside the community to join us and discuss with us, so that we can see areas where we need to improve then I believe we can become a totally changed and developed community.

Comrade Omonibo: Let me also add that we need from time to time to be helping our Youth to learn skills and shun unhealthy social vices. As a member of the Youth Association Executives, we are already thinking of organizing such programme in collaboration with some NGOs come December.

Phil: What I just want to say hear is that we have not been getting support from the Government, despite the fact that we an oil producing environment. The Oil companies even though they are trying sometimes but is far below average. Our Youth need more scholarships and employment.

Researcher: But talking about the Youth crises don't you think part of what the TFD programme was aimed at doing was to help the community see the need to think out of the box and see how they can come together to begin to address some of these things without only depending on Government and Oil Company?

Comrade Omonibo: Sir I agree with you and like I said in December we are planning to organize a programme which is centered at encouraging Youth empowerment among other things. But you see it is very frustrating when these same oil companies are giving Jobs to people in the North and other places in Nigeria leaving those who have the Oil. These are some of the reasons why the Youth are violent. Please don't get me wrong I am not encouraging violence but these boys are not just fighting for nothing.

Harieth: You see I have not been talking but let me also let you know that there are some times when these Oil companies workers will be told to assist Host communities with jobs but instead of bringing the jobs to the community they will divert it to their own people. We have cases like that (the members all concur with her opinion).

Researcher: From all indication the Youth in the community have seen great input which TFD programme aided the community in the area of avoiding violence and on the other way round channeling their reources to better agenda. Okay what are some those areas you think that the TFD project did not cover or affect the community?

Francis: Well what I can say in this regard is that the TFD did a lot for the community because these people are not Government but the little they have done with the community even some of

our leaders who say they are our representatives are not doing up to this level. Well I will just say that they did not stay long enough and since they came they have not come back again.

Ikpo: What I want to say is that we cannot really say that this is what they did not do, or were supposed to do, because they were only helping us to help ourselves. Now the only thing I can say is to add to what my Brother has just said that we supposed to have a relationship with them once at least for some ten years this will help us to understand better what is expected of us. So when you go to Zaria please tell them that the good work they have started should not be left half way.

Researcher: Sir I agree with you but you know the community has a great role to play also on this issue. What is expected is that they must drive forward some of the things which you have just mentioned as emerging from the experience. In fact that is why there was a community action plan drawn in the first place

Gloria: Let me come in here, it was not like we have not started doing something on our part. The renovation of this hall and the market was part of the action plan and other things that we have mentioned. So I thank God that you are now here with us, your presence will help us to continue from where we stopped. (They all concur)

Researcher: Ok, that is very good and I want to encourage you all to see yourselves as Brothers and Sisters and work together collectively to build a very strong community. It is possible that at some point there will be some kind of misunderstanding here and there but with the knowledge and experience of the programme that was carried out in your community; I believe you should always resolve your differences in a friendly and matured way. Just a few more questions, now I will like to find out from you how effective it will be if this programme is complemented with radio, TV and Print media

Fidelis: For me I think it will be very important because what we do with all these development programmes will only end up with us if we don't communicate further with the outside world so there is a need for the Television and other media to help show what these NGOs are doing with our community. But the problem with TV is that most time when it is not concerning what satisfy the Government positive side they are not interested and that is what I do not like about TV and Media generally.

Ikpo: I must add that the Radio and TV cannot help us the way this programme has helped us. They are after money. The only time you see them is when the community is in crises. They don't have any good agenda for the community.

Researcher: OK...anymore...Yes we have finally come to the end and I must appreciate the Chief for all the hospitality and understanding shown me. I also thank everybody who have been part of this lively discussion. It is my hope that such discussion will bring about a new spirit of readiness to develop your community. Thank you and God bless you.

Chief Friday: On behalf of the whole Elders and Youths of the community I wish to appreciate you for coming all the way from Zaria to our community. We believe that your project will be a very successful one. We also want you to extend our greetings to your Lecturers and we pray for your Journey mercies back to Zaria.

Researcher: Thank you very much.

(Having concluded I exchanged pleasantries with the FGD members and also encouraged them on the need to pay attention to things that can move their community forward. They so much appreciated my coming).

APPENDIX SEVEN:

KII with Chief Friday Oyoyo Alegbe, at Otuasega Town Hall on the 28th of September, 2016

Researcher: Good Evening Sir

Chief Friday: Good Evening and how are you?

Researcher: I am very Fine Sir and thank you for granting me extra part of your time today.

Chief Friday: No problem but please we should make it brief the day have been very tight for me sorry about that.

Researcher: Ok sir, we start right away. So sir how did the programme affect the community?

Chief Friday: The programme was very effective in the community. It was a big programme for me. You see the Drama was not just about entertainment. We first try to discuss some of the problems affecting the community. And after discussing the problems, we were able to bring out some very vital stories. The stories were about things that were happening to us.

Researcher: Ok what were some of the issues that formed the drama?

Chief Friday: The Issues were mainly about us knowing how to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner. We also dramatize some of the problems that were seriously affecting the Youth especially in the area of education, Youth unrest and Youth unemployment.

Researcher: So far has there been some kind of changes and improvement in these areas?

Chief Friday: One area of change I must tell you is the area of the Community Leadership crises that wanted to tear this community apart. In fact with the TFD programme we were able to do away with parallel community leadership and since then we have not had such. In the area of Youth violence it has seriously reduced it. In fact our Youth leadership is more progressive now and they are creating awareness on how to be self employed. The only problem is that most of the Multi Nationals are still not measuring up. So many jobs that our sons and daughters are qualified for, they don't consider them at all. But other places where the oil is not found they are

getting the jobs. When it comes to infrastructural development we are still lacking behind as the Government has been seriously below average. You can see for yourself. Take for all the politics around 13% derivation and all other government programme. You only hear about them but no impact.

Researcher: So do you think that such a programme that was done in your community can also be of help in some other Niger Delta communities?

Chief Friday: Yes, very well. These complains that we have in our community are not far of from what is happening in so many of these communities in the Niger Delta. We are all going through similar environmental challenge, Unemployment, crises of oil companies and host communities. It will not be wrong if I say that they may even find it more useful.

Researcher: Now that you have talk about TFD, how do you see other media such as Television and Radio also contributing to the development of the community?

Chief Friday: Well I believe that we need TV and Radio but so many a time Radio and TV are Government properties. They always want to see things from the Government angle. But when we employ TV and Radio in a way that truly captures what the people of the community are saying then it will be another great medium that we can use to reach very far to voice out some of the problems affecting the Niger Delta region.

Researcher: Thank you very much for this time and for the information you given

Chief Friday: Thank you very much too. May God grant you success.

Researcher: AMEN. Thank you very much sir.

APPENDIX EIGHT:

KII with Gloria Igbeta at Otuasega Town Hall on the 28th of September, 2016

Researcher: Good evening Madam

Gloria: Good evening and once again welcome to Otuasega community.

Researcher: Thank you very much ma. Please hope I can still have a little of your time.

Gloria: No problem I think we still have some time to spare.

Researcher: ok ma. Actually there are just two areas I want to get your views about. Firstly what do you think can now be done to further build on what has been so far achieved?

Gloria: Ok what I think can be done is to call the few of us that were in the programme to team up with the current Chairman. He was not really in town as at then; because he works in Port-Harcourt. If we come together we can be able to say these are some things we need to improve on and begin to effect some things in that regard. But we also need to partner with these NGOs NPTA and SDN as a community to further grow the community. They have done their part, is now left for us to be more serious to get them more involve in our development. Our experience with TFD and the facilitators that is those from Zaria has further helped us to be more informed and educated on the need to always come together, not minding the differences that we sometimes express. Because one thing they have helped us to know is that we must try our best to see the much we can do for ourselves and stop looking for Government all the time , when in most cases they have been failures.

Researcher: Finally Madam, how do you see this experience of TFD helping to address and voice out the issues affecting the Niger Delta region?

Gloria: From the discussions we have just had with the members of the community, you can tell for yourselves how we appreciated the process. This is because the issues are about our

problems. We are not just acting but we are telling our stories. And I want to say that there is nobody that doesn't like peace except you are an agent of the Devil. Anything that can bring peace to the Niger Delta region is something that will be highly welcome. And one aspect of TFD people is that they usually use the language that people will understand and as such they have no problem understanding what the drama is all about. So that is what I can say. Thank you my son.

Researcher: Thank you very much ma I am very grateful for the time well spent, may God bless you.

Gloria: Amen and may God continue to bless your work. Say me well to Prof. Abah. I hope to call him.

Researcher: Ok Ma

APPENDIX NINE

KII with Prof. Oga Steve Abah Foundational President of Nigeria Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) at the Theatre for Development Center (TFDC) Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria on the 5th of May, 2017.

(The interview began with formal greetings and introduction. After which the purpose of our conversation was then established)

Researcher: Thank you Prof. Sir, some years ago the NPTA carried out some TFD interventions in Erema and Otuasega communities of Rivers and Bayelsa states respectively. Sir can you recall such a programme?

Abah: Yes I do. It was done aimed at training Youth groups and community organizations to see how they leave their track of violence in addressing community challenges. It was about building healthy community relations and having healthy communication with transnational organizations working in these communities. It was about making choices hence the programme was tagged *local voices and choices*; and our assumption was that making peaceful choices will lead to social change and community development. So the thrust of the intervention in Otuasega and Erema was using TFD as a medium of advocacy that will lead to a more peaceful and progressive engagement and development.

As a way of beginning the NPTA initiated a training phase where they could discuss with stakeholders on the TFD programme at stake. The training took place both in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where the NPTA headquarters is located and also in Clock Tower Hotel in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Key persons from the communities who were to also join in the facilitation of the TFD programme were included in the training. As part of our advocacy each of

the intervention in the communities began with introductory sessions made to the Community Leaders to gain their understanding and maximum cooperation. In both communities the leaders were absolutely supportive and this actually aided our easy passage and the overall success of the programme

Researcher: Sir looking at what you did in both communities will you say that the Youth groups and those you worked with gave active participation?

Abah: In terms of participation the different groups we worked with were very cooperative. But one thing I must quickly point out is that before we went to the community a group known as SDN (Stakeholders Democracy Network) has done some work with them, but theirs were more of interviews. In fact we also worked with them at some point. However the TFD process was a more creative process that involved the people learning some approaches that gave them the opportunity to dialogue and discuss more about the issues that were emanating from the process. As part of the process we also employed PLA tools and the community groups were trained in the different PLA tools and in drama. This was with the aim of ensuring that they will have better understanding of more effective approaches to addressing conflicts and other social challenges affecting their communities. I must also add that the Youth groups were quite inquisitive to learn and understand our work with them as they were also not comfortable with the option of using violence and road blocks to convey their grievances and demands from TNCs and Oil companies.

Researcher: Sir talking about the PLA tools and the drama process, how were you able to engage the community in the usage of these tools and what was the effect for the entire process: Like I said the community members we walked with were very enthusiastic and interested to learn these processes and as such it was not difficult to engage them in the process. Essentially it

gave these communities a sense of getting to understand the issues affecting their community from a more critical and deeper dimension. The participants began to see some gray areas that needed better resolution from their community leadership and youth structures. They had the opportunity to discuss and articulate a number of social challenges better. For instance in Otuasega, they noticed that for them to tackle the challenge of leadership conflict that is bedeviling their community, they must work on amending their constitution. Both communities also noticed that the challenge of Youth unemployment and lack of Youth empowerment is something that has put them in a deplorable state. But these for them were a realization that needed a better approach to resolving them rather than the employment of violent approach with the TNCs operating in their environments

Researcher: So sir, in general what do have to say about the impact of the TFD intervention in these communities and how sustainable is it?

Abah: In terms of impact I can say that it was at different levels. Firstly you know that after a community intervention of this kind, there will be an assessment of the process in the community. Since the programme was still very fresh, the people will be able to tell how they carried out the different exercises and how it stimulated them to community action. They were able to explain what was needed to be done within the community; between community and the government, and between the community and the TNCs. So those were some of the skills which they said they learnt and they were very pleased with the entire process. With particular reference to Otuasega there were some court cases that have been lingering over the years and were causing serious leadership crises. But after the engagement with the community they saw the need for dialogue. Rather than pursue the case legally, they decided to allow the process of dialogue which they have learnt to address the issues, and we were able to resolve a number of

them out of court. Furthermore, they also began the process of amending their constitution that allowed them to have some effective legal framework that will guide and aid their leadership structure as a community. Now at the level of the long term, that I will not be able to say much on; at least you have gone to the communities and will be able to know what the current situations are.

Researcher: So can we say that accomplishing a long term goal using TFD is always a constraint?

Abah: Well you must realize that TFD is just a tool, a methodology that offers you a way of seeing things differently, on how to analyze your community issues. It offers you a methodology of engaging things more horizontally than vertically. And were interviews are not productive it offers you an opportunity of leveling relationship and making it possible to listen to each other and understand each other perspectives. Now having been given proper training on the tool, it will now depend on how committed you are to exploring and putting what has been learnt into use.

Researcher: Ok Sir what will you say were the constraints of employing the TFD process in the Niger Delta Communities of Erema and Otuasega?

Abah: The constraints for both communities were similar. One serious constraint was that of synergizing the different community Youth groups to get to understand the goal of the programme that was been undertaking in their communities. Some of Youths were more concerned with their personal gains and as such they did not respect any community leadership structure. Although we achieved some mileage in this regard, but we cannot say that we tackled the problem completely. Perhaps the second problem is that you are using donors funding to do the work and that was a serious limitation. This is because most donors do not provide money for

you to go back and continue the work; that is to work on the Community Action Plan (CAP) which has been developed from the intervention. This is always a big challenge for any development work.

Researcher: Now looking at the gap which the TFD process poses can we say that it will be useful to combine it with other communication approaches?

Abah: Well in terms of disseminating the ideas, yes. Because TFD happen on location and the community will always have the opportunity to learn from the processes and the experiences. However when it comes to sharing the knowledge so that other communities and people can benefit from the experience then you talk about the social media and the electronic media. Through them you expand the horizon and therefore reach a wider audience with the knowledge of what has happened in the community were the TFD has taken place. Through that process you generate more discussions that can affect more communities positively.

Researcher: Sir having taken a look at the impact of the TFD intervention in both Erema and Otuasega communities, do you think that if extended to other communities across the Niger Delta it will still be of relevance?:

Abah: Looking at what was achieved in Erema and Otuasega communities, it is important to state that TFD becomes a viable tool for dialogue, for building community synergy and the possibility of solving crisis situation after a clearer understanding of the issue is a major contribution which the TFD can make to the nagging issues of the Niger Delta. Furthermore TFD offers them an opportunity to understand that no meaningful change can be achieved in the community except they create an environment of peace. So I can say that it does have huge relevance for the Niger Delta communities and it can be applied.

Researcher: Ok sir with this I believe we have come to the end of this session and I must sincerely appreciate the time spent with you.

Abah: Thank you and I wish you the very best

Researcher: Thank you very much sir.

APPENDIX TEN:

PHOTOS OF NPTA TFD INTERVENTIONS IN EREMA AND OTUASEGA COMMUNITIES:



Community mapping during the NPTA TFD Intervention at Erema Community



The Egwoba Community Traditional Festival during the NPTA TFD Intervention at Erema



Audience Participation during Drama and Post Performance Discussions at Erema Community



Participants in front of Erema Community Hall with NPTA Team during the TFD Intervention



Drama Performance at Otusega Community during the NPTA TFD intervention in Otusega



Community mapping during the NPTA TFD Intervention at Otusega Community



Otusega Community Hall where the TFD intervention at Otusega was done



Abandoned Farmlands at Erema Community as a result of Oil Spillage



Abandoned Highway road project in Otusega Community

APENDIX ELEVEN

PHOTOS OF RESEARCHER'S ENGAGEMENT WITH OTUASEGA AND EREMA COMMUNITIES



Researcher with FGD Participants at Otuasega Community



Researcher with Erema Youth Members, after a FGD session done with them in their renovated Library, which was brought about from the TFD intervention done in the Community by NPTA



Researcher at the entrance of Erema Community



Researcher at the entrance of Otuasega community where Shell flow station is located



Construction of Erema Multi-Purpose Building Complex which was decided by the community to foster Youth empowerment after the TFD Intervention done in the community



Researcher with Mrs. Gloria Igbeta, a Community Mobilizer in Otuasega and key participant at the NPTA TFD Intervention done in Otuasega



Researcher with Chief Friday Alegbe, former CDC Vice Chairman in Otusega and key participant at the NPTA TFD intervention done in Otusega



Researcher with Mr. Creativity Ugoma, a former Youth Leader in Erema and key participant at the NPTA TFD intervention done in Erema



The building of Community Market at Otusega to foster Youth and Women empowerment as decided by the community after the TFD intervention done in their community.



The Researcher at the NPTA TFDC office, ABU, Zaria.



The Researcher and Oga Steve Abah, a key Facilitator of NPTA for the TFD intervention done in Erema and Otusega, at the NPTA TFDC Office, ABU, Zaria.



The Researcher and Oga Steve Abah, at NPTA TFDC Office, ABU, Zaria during a KII session