PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY OF LIFE REHABILITATION FOUNDATION FOR WOMANHOOD IN TUNGA COMMUNITY, MINNA, NIGER STATE

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Bridget NgunanMue declare that this Thesis entitled “Communication and Women Empowerment in Tunga community: A Critical Study of Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood, Minna, Niger State, has been written by me in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts under the supervision of Dr Emmanuel Jegede and Prof EmmyIdegu. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of reference provided. There is no part of this Thesisthat was previously presented for another degree.

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Bridget NgunanMUE **Date**

CERTIFICATION

This dissertationtitled: "Participatory Communication and Women Empowerment: A Critical Studyof Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhoodin Tunga Community Niger State" has been written by me, Bridget NgunanMue in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts and meets the regulations governing the award of degree of M.A (Development Communication) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of Professor J.Z. Okwori, Professor S.A Kafewo, Dr. M. Ayegba, Rev Dr Godwin Ikyernum and MrIkyernumIgho.

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ABSTRACT

This study is on Participatory Communication and Women Empowerment: A Critical study of life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood inTungaCommunityMinna Niger State. The aim of the study is to appraise the process and nature of communication used by the foundation to facilitate participation and empowerment among the women. To achieve this aim, three objectives were raised. The Nair-White Transactional Model was carefully selected to underpin the work. The entire approach embodies communication as a process which takes into account the indigenous knowledge and self-reliance gained through increased information access and acquisition facilitated by external experts. Inherent in the participatory approach is making people feel being a part of the process that can bring empowerment that is sustainable. The thesis then goes further to examine the Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood to ascertaining the participation or otherwise of the Tunga women in the empowerment process. There were some key findings among which the Foundation aimed to empower women using entrepreneurial and skill development, stimulating women participation in government at all levels, improving the health and nutritional status of women and improving the literacy level among women to a minimum level of basic education,lack of participation of the women in basic issue that concerns them and the low level of participation of Tunga women in the Foundation's entire communication approaches. The study recommended that for Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood to give an empowerment that is sustainable the women should take an active role and be involved in the activities of the Foundation from the inception to the end. Empowerment participation which is the life wire of empowering people should be fused into the approaches and strategies of the Foundation. Folkloric forms of communication which encourage participation should also be used by the Foundation.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background to the Study

The term communication means different things to different people. To a layman, communication simply means the transfer of information from a source to a receiver via a medium. The word communication comes from the Latin word ‘communis’ which means ‘common’. The aim communication is to make ‘common’, and to share. Communication is achieved when the sender and receiver hold meaning in common (Mody 1991) .Participation and communication are terms with broad and multifaceted connotations. Trying to define them is a difficult task. Even harder is providing a widely acceptable definition of participatory communication. For this study, participatory communication is an approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitating their empowerment, especially for those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. (World Bank 2009).

Participatory communication is not just the exchange of information and experiences, but also the exploration and generation of new knowledge aimed at addressing situations that need to be improved. Communication is beyond the transfer of information but rather it is broad, encompassing empowerment, information, education, discussion, debate, socialization, motivation, integration and development. In this study, communication is viewed in the context of empowerment.

In the fifties and sixties, mass communication was considered the prime mover in social development. Information was thought to be the missing link in the development chain. Mass media such as the printed channels and the radio were saddled with the important task of spreading information as widely as possible among the people. Government authorities, subject experts, and extension agents would go on radio or visit villages to lecture people on how to have smaller families, increase their agricultural yields, or live healthier lives. Communication flows were hierarchical, one-way, and top-down. People were regarded as passive receivers of development information. These top-down approaches have been criticized on both theoretical and practical grounds (Stein and Harper, 2000:68).Many analysts contend that mainstream development strategies increased the socio-economic inequalities in most countries (Black, 1991,Friedmann 1992; Willies, 2005)

The search for a different vision and alternative approach in development practices and empowerment has been linked to the role of participatory communication and people's participation. Its significance consists in the attempt to transform people from passive recipients to active agents of development. The central focus of this alternative development approach advocates for people's participation andempowermentfor successful intervention. Today major agencies and development organizations adopt the concept of participation or participatory development communication in order to improve project and programme efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and to promote stakeholder's capability, self-reliance and empowerment (OECD, 1995; Narayan, 1995;Karl,2000).Communication for development is focused on sharing of knowledge and insight about the process of enabling disadvantaged groups to increase control over their own lives and environment.(Ramirez 1990)

The UN Millennium Development Goals support the argument above with specific reference to women. The third goal for instance is based on promoting gender equality and women empowerment. The renewed interests by various organizations and agencies in global development issues and particularly women empowerment provide an opportunity for development practitioners to integrate established methods and communication approaches into larger development initiatives in a greater scale. Those who conceive development as a process of social transformation view participatory communication as necessary instrument and condition for change to take place.Participatory development communication is a two-way, dynamic interaction, which through dialogue transforms 'grass-roots' people and enables them to become fully engaged in the process of development and become self-reliant (Nair and white 1987:37).

According to Nair and white (1987:37), participatory communication for development begins with the premise that all people have a right to voice their views and become active partners in the development process. The essence of this process is to generate empowerment.Empowerment is often conceived as an individual's sense of confidence, which has perhaps resulted from a self-realization of oppression or lack of freedom and opportunity. While this is valid aspect of empowerment, the framework of participatory communication would conceive of empowerment in a more holistic sense, as an outcome of establishing and strengthening interpersonal commitment and trust, and as alliances of groups of diverse individuals who share a similar sense of helplessness and lack of control

Over the years, the theory and practice of development have increasingly been criticized. This is against the backdrop that several case studies of development projects show that the participation on the part of the marginalized sector was lacking. These

studies indicate that local people or target group have virtually no say in choosing projects, setting development objectives, as the ideals and management of the initiative usually come from outside. In this process, it is also argued that empowerment as the substance in participation is mostly a requirement of funding agencies, even as little understanding exists regarding how to empower marginalized people. The concern then is that the outcome in mostdevelopmentinitiatives is but the achievements of project indicators and the forms of pseudo-participation which manipulates people to accept plans made by other more powerful people which, in turn, can even reproduce oppressive social relationships (Rahnema, 1992; Thomas, 1994; Kothari and Minogu, 2002; Gaventa, 2004; Waddington and Mohan, 2004).

Another major concern for development organization is the inherent difficulty in incorporating project concerns with participatory discourses in which communication is the bedrock. A project is a clearly designed set of activities, concerned with quantifiable costs and benefits, with time-line activities and budgets. The funded-project imperative emphasizes meeting practical rather than strategic needs, instrumentality rather than empowerment. In this context, related literatures highlight the limitation of participants' influence over the wider structural factors shaping the project and the difficulties of trying to explicitly further empowerment approaches within a project framework.(cleaver,1999).

It is against the backdrop of these arguments that the study seeks to examine the use of communication for empowerment by Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood to ascertain the claims as to the use of participatory communication that empowers people.In the context of communication and empowerment, the assumption is that participatory communication places emphasis on the process of communicating as a means for releasing an empowering force within which people can reinforce their

own communication skills, develop analytical and reflective skills which uplifts levels of self-esteem, and lead to increased self-reliance and trust in others.(Shirly White andSadanandan Nair 1987).

1.2 Statement ofthe Research Problem

With the UN millennium declaration of goal three concerning women empowerment, several government, non-governmental organizations, women associations and individuals have been involved in programmes that empower women to promote and improve entrepreneurial skills in order to help them generate wealth and reduce poverty,education of girl-child and literacy for women, improve the health and nutritional status of women, promote active women participation in government at all levels anddespite all these efforts, there have been rising cases of discrimination, marginalization, oppression and exclusion of women from key position within the society. Perhaps this suggests a missing link in the application of participatory communication strategies in theprogrammes for women empowerment by various agencies and organizations.

In view of the above, the concern arises as to the meaning, nature and practice or application of communication approaches in the empowerment programme by agencies and development organizations found in nooks and crannies of Nigeriatoday especially in Niger state. In the face of numerous setbacks that have greeted several empowerment programmes in Nigeria, this study therefore seeks to answer the following questions:

i. What kind of communication is being promoted and deployed by development agencies and organizations especially for women empowerment?

ii. How does the target group or people participate in setting development goals or agenda?

iii. Are there measurable impacts of empowerment through women's participation in the development process driven by agencies and development organizations?

iv. Are there socio-cultural, institutional challenges or requirements for participation?

Providing answers to these questions is important to identify the missing link.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to appraise the approaches used in interventions to facilitate participation and empowerment of women in Nigeria especially Niger State.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The research intends to achieve the following objectives:

(i) To assess the women empowerment strategies deployed by Life Rehabilitation Foundation and the nature and strength of communications used to achieve them.

(ii) To assess the level of Tunga women participation in the empowerment activities of Life Rehabilitation Foundation.

(iii) To suggest measures of improving communication system that can rapidly provoke and facilitate effective participation of women in development process for sustainable empowerment

1.5 Significance of the Study

Several reasons account for the significance of the study. Communication is the pillar of development and the tool of change and empowerment. But agencies, organizations and people actually need clarifications and what type of communication that can actually drive change and empower people. This study provides answers to this question by establishing the importance of participatory communication and its location in all processes of development. It is against this backdrop, that many participatory development theorists have argued that the concept of people's participation in development needs to be further explored so that it does not remain a matter of rhetoric (world-Bank, 2001a)

The study shall contribute to knowledge by revealing the strength of participatory communication and its effective use in obtaining sustainable results within the Nigerian context; the study shall bring to fore the problem of actualizing participatory communication in development, and the role of institutions and organizations. The information and knowledge from the study can be used by development planners, decision-makers, donor agencies, project management, women organizations and non-governmental and local community organizations to set policies and designs for genuine participation and plans for sustainable development intervention that brings empowerment especially of women in Nigeria.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study is on Participatory Communication and Women Empowerment in Tunga Community. The emphasis and concern of this study shall be on identifying the several women empowerment strategies put in place by Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood Minna and the nature and strength of communication approaches

deployed to realize the set strategies. The study is not on personality profile of women in Tunga community but is essentially a survey of the participation of Tunga women in development interventions and the level of empowerment experienced and its attendant implications.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWOF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the review of related literature which basically revolves around Communication, Empowerment, Historical overview of Development and Communication, Participation, The Theory of Participatory Communication, Paulo Freire and Participatory Communication and Theoretical Framework.

2.1 Communication

Mass communications, interpersonal communication, and health communication are just some of the specialties that can be found under the communication curricula of major academic institutions in countries around the world. Also included are international communication, speech communication, intercultural communication, communication education, applied communication, organizational communication, and political communication. This list could be expanded even further to include journalism, media production, information and communication technologies, public relations, corporate communication, and development communication, indicating the diversified and multifaceted nature of communication.

Dictionaries, Web sites, and other sources confirm the richness, yet they can cause misconceptions about the term “communication.” As noted by Mattelart(1996),

this is not a recent development. In 1753 Denis Diderot was already writing in the Encyclopedia, "Communication: a term with a great number of meanings."Rather than being taken as a sign of weakness or confusion, however, this diversity of conceptions and applications should be considered strength providedthat the different areas are well understood and applied professionally according to their nature and characteristics.

Communication is thus a process by which meaning is assigned and conveyed in an attempt to create shared understanding. This process, which requires a vast repertoire of skills in processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, gestures, and evaluating, enables collaboration and cooperation.

Baran (2004) defines communication as a process of creating shared meaning. This is because the participants in communication encounter are interested in obtaining messages that are understandable. That is why they have to negotiate, seek clarification and ask for explanation to ensure that they have obtained the meaning intended in the message.When we communicate we make things common. We thus increase our shared knowledge and our common sense which is the basic precondition for all community. Shared knowledge may sometimes include conflicting views and interests. It may lead to conflict rather than to community. In addition, conflicting parties also need to communicate with each other. Sometimes continued communication may then make them agree to disagree which often times brings very productive outcome for all parties involved (Rosengren2000)Communicationis the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, written, or behaviour. According to(HarperDouglas 2013), it is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more living creatures.

According to Pasquali (2006),

> Communication, then, is only thatwhich is based on a symmetrical relational scheme, with parity of conditionsbetween sender and receiver, and the possibility of one hearing or giving ear to the other, as a mutual will to understand one another.In other words, communication, especially when used for research and analytical purposes, is more effective when making full use of its dialogic features, enhancing stakeholders' voices, knowledge, and participation.

Communication may take place between units of very different sizes and complexity. It may occur between and within individuals, groups, organizations, social classes, nations, countries and regions of the world. Obviously, the character of communication varies with the size and complexity of the communicating units.

There are different types of communication media. They include the print media, Broadcasting and the new media. In the print media the successful application of print technology to the production of texts in place of handwriting, about the mid fifteen century, was the only first step in the emergence of a media institution (McQuail 2005).Furthermore; broadcasting involves the use of radio and television. They both grew out of pre-existing technologies like telephone, telegraph, moving and still photography and sound recording. More so, the expression 'new media' has been in use since the 1960s and has had to encompass an expanding and diversifying set of applied communication technologies. Lievrouw and livingtone(2002) define new media as linking information communication technologies (ICT) with their associated social contexts, bringing together the three elements, which is technological artifacts and devices; activities, practices and uses, and social arrangements and organization that form around the devices and practices.

Over the millennia, human beings have used various media to communicate in space and time, wood and stone, parchment and paper, fire and smoke, flags and semaphores', electricity and electromagnetic waves. As new media for communication

have been created, the old ones have become specialized, but none has been completely abandoned.Although communication media have changed drastically as centuries have passed by, communication shows basic characteristics common to all times. Communication is thus a phenomenon basic to all human beings and in a sense; it is common to all living beings (Rosengren 2000).

The folk media consist of a variety of forms. They include folk theatre, puppetry, storytelling forms, folk dances, ballad, and music. They have served as vehicles of communication and entertainment in many countries of the world. According to van Hoosen(1984), through the use of dialogue, action, music, song, the stage has presented a vital important view of the cosmos which has implemented basic beliefs and behaviour patterns in rural audiences. Meanwhile Wang and Dissanayake(1984) define folk media as a "communication system embedded in the culture which existed before the arrival of the mass media, and still exist as vital mode of communication in many parts of the world". Ranganath(1975) defines the traditional media as "living expressions of the lifestyle and culture of a people, evolved through the years. These definitions reiterate the origin and nurturing of the folk channels in and by the richness of the indigenous culture.

The Dominant paradigm also known as Modernization dates back to soon after World War II and has been called the dominant paradigm because of its pervasive impact on most aspects of development. The central idea of this paradigm was to solve development problems by "modernizing" underdeveloped countries and advising them how to be effective in following in the footsteps and culture of richer, and more developed countries. Development was equated with economic growth, and communication was associated with the dissemination of information and messages aimed at modernizing "backward" countries and their people. In

theModernizationeraof development, folk media was used but with time it was discarded on the grounds that it was connected with the indigenous culture. Since the traditional media were extensions of the local culture, they were regarded as vehicles that would discourage modern attitudes and behavioural patterns and instead reinforce cultural values of the community. Modernization advocated for a change in the mindset of individuals in poor countries who had to abandon traditional beliefs, considered an impediment toward modernization, and embrace attitudes and behaviorsfavourable to innovation and modernity (Lerner 1958). At the technocratic level, modernization required people with inquisitive minds who were guided by faith in the scientific method and rooted in the principles of enlightenment.

The fall of the dominant paradigm in the seventies could not have occurred sooner for the folk media. The newer concepts of development like self-help, grassroots participation, and two-way communication, brought to bear the advantages of the folk media. They have proved useful in generating grassroots participation, and dialogue between the performers and the audience. Many of the media formats are flexible, thus facilitating the incorporation of development-oriented messages in their themes. They are also relatively inexpensive and in almost all cultures, command rich and inexhaustible variety both in form and theme. The folk media has become an alternative form of communication.

2.2 Empowerment

The term empowerment has no clear definition. Empowerment is a construct shared by many disciplines and arenas: community development, psychology, education, economics, and studies of social movements, development communication practitioners and organizations, among others. How empowerment is understood varies among these perspectives. In recent empowerment literature, the meaning of the term is

often assumed rather than explained or defined. Rappoport (1984) notes that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence but difficult to define in action as it takes on different forms in different people and contexts. Even defining the concept is subject to debate. Zimmerman (1984) has stated that asserting a single definition of empowerment may make attempts to achieve it formulaic or prescription-like, contradicting the very concept of empowerment.

However Empowerment as a construct has a set of core ideals and may be defined at different levels. It could be individual, organization, and community; and operationalized in different contexts (Rowlands 1990).

According to Fawcett et al. (1984:146),

> Community empowerment is the process of increasing control by groups over consequences that are important to their members and to others in the broader community".

Rappaport (1987) describes empowerment as "a psychological sense of personal control or influence and concern with actual social influence, political power, and legal rights. It is a multilevel construct applicable to individual citizens as well as to organizations. Cornell Empowerment Group (1989) describes empowerment as "an intentional ongoing process centered at the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources". In summary Speerand Hughly(1995) state that, empowerment is the manifestation of social power at individual, organizational, and community levels of analysis.

Empowerment is the mechanism by which individuals gain control and mastery over social and economic conditions (Rapport1981; Rapport et al 1984), over democratic participation in their community,(Zimmerman and Rapport 1980), and over

their stories. The concept of empowerment cannot be understood without an understanding of power. Foucault (1980) makes us to understand that power is meaningful only in social relations. It is constituted in a network of social relationships. Rowlands (1998) states several kinds of power. They include; power over, (controlling power), Power to, (generate new possibilities without domination), Power with, (collective power, power created by group process), and power from within (spiritual strength that inspires and energizes others). Empowerment can be achieved when an individual or group possesses power.

Jo Rowlands (1998) reviews the literature of empowerment, dividing it into three overlapping dimensions. They include personal empowerment, relational empowerment, and collective empowerment. SantiRozario (1997) traces the history of empowerment concept and divided it into two primary models. One model is based on empowering the individual, not on encouraging collective social action by the oppressed while the other model is based on "conscientization and radical social action "consistent with Paolo Freire,s approach. It is important to note that in contrast to power as the degree of control exercised over others, empowerment is more of an inner condition or, as stated by Cornwall (2000: 33), "it is not something that can be done to people, but something people do by and for themselves." According to Bailey (1992), how we precisely define empowerment within our projects and programs will depend upon the specific people and context involved.

As a general definition, however, we suggest that empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important.Empowermentisclearlysomethingthatdevelopment agenciesofall

types aretakingseriously.As policy, analysis,andintervention increasinglyusethe term, thereisanurgentneedtoclearlyconceptualizeand trackempowerment.Butwhyisempowermentimportant?Intheirrecent book GrowthandEmpowerment, Stern, Dethier, and Rogers (2005) propose astrategyfordevelopment thatdemandsadualapproach: building a climatethatencouragesinvestmentandgrowthwhileatthesametime empoweringpoorpeopletoparticipateinthatgrowth.Empowermentis suggestedbothasa goal in itself and as a driver of development. Usually, a starting point in the process of empowerment is a realization on the part of an individual, group, or community of its inequitable position, its powerlessness in the system, or the relative neglect its needs by the larger society.

2.3 Historical Overview of Development and Communication

Although Worsley (1984) states that the history of development is as old as human history, the current conception of international development is usually traced back to after World War II. In his January 1949 inaugural speech, President Truman stated, "We must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas." Truman's speech is considered to mark the beginning of the modern conception of development (Esteva 1992), and it synthesized the emerging vision of the world divided between richer and poorer countries.

Since then, the issue of development has been highly debated, a debate with many different perspectives and voices, broadly classified until recently into two opposite camps. In one camp, there were those who viewed development as an effort, and as a mission, under the guidance of the richer countries, to defeat poverty and ignorance. The scope was to help poorer countries achieve steady economic growth in

order to emerge from their "underdeveloped" condition and invariably be empowered. This perspective became the dominant position in development.

In the other camp, there were thinkers and practitioners highly critical of such a conception of development. Even though they were not unified under a single alternative model, they tended to consider the dominant approach to development as an attempt by the rich countries to maintain a dominant position through political and economic predefined models, often ignoring local knowledge, needs, and realities in the poorest countries. This camp encourages participation as a key to bring about development that will change people's lives.

Whatever the perspective embraced, development was, and still remains, among the top priorities of the international political agenda. It continues to involve great financial and human resources at the local, national, and international level, as shown by the statistics of major international development organizations.

In the communication field, modernization theory led to the first systematic and rigorous attempts to research communication applications in the development context. A few scholars started to devote increasing attention to communication processes and effects, among them wereLasswell (1948), Katz and Lazarfeld (1955), and Klapper (1960), while others, such as Lerner (1958), Rogers (1962), and Schramm (1964), became particularly interested in studying how communication could be used to foster national development, which at that time was conceived predominantly in economic terms. Communication was expected to help modernize people's attitudes and ways of thinking, which would be conducive to support of the economic model already adopted successfully by the West, in accordance with the belief that individuals had to change before development could truly take off (Melkote and Stevens 2001).

Communication in the dominant paradigm is basically associated with the linear, mass media model aimed at transmitting information and messages from one point to another or many others, usually in a vertical or top-down fashion. This idea was rooted in the strong belief in the persuasive power of media, especially until the 1970s. Development communication was associated with the use of media to persuade people to achieve, maintain, and strengthen development goals, and media's role was paramount. UNESCO, for example, considered media to be a crucial means for promoting change. And in the 1960s, it provided guidelines about a country's desirable per capita consumption of television sets, radio receivers, newspapers, and cinema seats.This heavy emphasis on media was owing to the belief that this form of communication, when used properly, was capable of changing people's mindsets and attitudes.

In 1948 Lasswell provided a blueprint to decision-makers and managers on how to use communication to persuade audiences to change behaviors. His model can be summarized in the following five questions: WHO, says WHAT, in WHICH channel, to WHOM, with what EFFECT. (Development Communication Source Book)

Over time this basic model was refined and changed by other communication specialists, but it did not lose its linear flow from a central source to many (passive) receivers, as indicated by the renowned Berol's formula (1960) that illustrated the process of communication as Source-Message-Channel-Receivers, or SMCR. The common conception of strategic communication is also rooted in this theoretical framework. The failures attributed, directly or indirectly, to modernization caused a rethinking of the theoretical models of reference for communication. As it became increasingly evident that media alone could not change people's mind-sets and behaviors, Theories such the "the hypodermic needle theory" or "the bullet theory,"

which overemphasized the power of media over people, lost their relevance. With time, it became progressively more evident that media impact was not as direct and as paramount as commonly believed, and that audiences were not as passive, either. Even though communication studies reviewed and downgraded the influence of media, giving more relevance to the role of interpersonal communication, the model of reference remained the same. None of the newly emerging theoretical approaches questioned the overall validity of the one-way, and usually top-down, flow of information. Although it would be unfair to label them as propaganda, it is not difficult to see the manipulative potential of many communication applications within the modernization paradigm.

Until the late 1980s, most development institutions conceived and applied communication primarily for the dissemination of information and adoption of innovations. (Development Communication Source Book,)

The emphasis placed on tangible communication products neglected the potential of communication as a dialogic, cross-cutting investigative tool. This emphasis was so pervasive that the medium appeared to be more important than the content itself, echoing Marshall McLuhan's famous slogan, "The medium is the message."Unfortunately, the available data indicated that the most important message was that media were not the answer to development problems, at least not in the way they were being used. It was only during the late 1970s and early 1980s that new perspectives in development communication began to grow stronger. The Latin American school of thought was very influential in promoting the new communication conception, based on the two-way horizontal model. Luis Ramiro BeltránSalmón (2006a [1979]) and Juan DíazBordenave (2006 [1977]) were some of the most influential scholars working on this idea.

Nowadays, most development programs seem to carry the participatory mark, as a sign of purification from the mistakes of the past. The wide convergence in participatory approaches, nonetheless, has not resulted in a unified paradigm. Rather, it has generated a number of theoretical approaches still seeking a unified and consistent common framework. The following are some of the most renowned: the multiplicity paradigm (Servaes 1991); the empowerment approach (Friedmann 1992); another development (Melkote 1991; Jacobson 1994), derived from the conception are a number of reasons for this shift, a major one of which is presented by Ascroft and Masilela (1994: 282), "If peasants do not control or share control of the processes of their own development, there can be no guarantee that it is their best interest that is being served."

The radical alternatives arising from the dependency paradigm critique of dominant development theory included a participation to support people's capacity to rise above and eliminate social inequality and exploitation.

World Bank (2007) considers development communication as an:

> Interdisciplinary field based on empirical research that helps to build consensus while it facilitates the sharing of knowledge to achieve positive change in development initiatives. It is not only about effective dissemination of information but also about using empirical research and two-way communication among stakeholders. It is aSocial process based on dialog using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels, including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating, and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communication

Development communication therefore support sustainable change establish conducive environment in development operations for assessing risks and engaging key stakeholders.

2.4 Participation

Participation is a concept that has been gaining increasing recognition and prestige in the development discourse and its practices. Participation in the development context is a process through which all members of a community or organization are involved in and have influence on decision related to development activities that will affect them. This implies that development projects will address those community or group needs on which members have chosen to focus, and that all phases of the development process will be characterized by active involvement of community or organization members. People initiate, discuss, conceptualize and plan activities they will all do as a community.

Khan(1998) summarizes the definition of participation as:

> ... an organized effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions, it is people' involvement in decision-making, implementation, benefit sharing, and elevation of programmes, it is also people's capacity to take initiative in development, to become "subjects" rather than "objects" of their own destiny and this can only be achieved through a de-professionalization in all domains of life in order to make "ordinary people" responsible for their own well-being; participation involves a reversal of role playing, people should be the primary actors and government agencies and outsiders should "participate" in people's activities.

Participatory approaches require a shift in the way individuals are considered, from passive recipients to active agents of development efforts. Common features of this perspective are the emphasis on people, the endogenous vision of development, and the attention to power and rights issues.

While the quest for participation in development programs and projects has existed for a long time, in recent years it has gained voice and become a stronger concern. Participation is a principle in development with support coming from many different stakeholders; governments, donors, civil society, nongovernmental organization and ordinary citizens.

From the 1970s and onwards, voices of both development practitioners and academics from developing countries have raised fundamental questions about the Western domination of the work and debate in development. The questions include who voices the concerns of the poorest and most marginalized populations, how is policy developed, and who participates in the decision-making processes? At the core of these concerns lies the quest for participation of the "voiceless" from developing countries, the marginalized and poorest sectors, as well as the disabled and women.

No consensus exists around a common definition of participation: it varies depending on the perspective applied. Some stakeholders define participation as the mobilization of people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution. Others define it as the reach and inclusion of inputs by relevant groups in the design and implementation of a development project. These examples represent two of the main approaches to participation: a social movement perspective and a project-based or institutional perspective. These perspectives share a common understanding of participation as the involvement of ordinary people in a development process leading to change. Their scope and methods, however, can differ.

Development efforts have been refocused to increasingly engage stakeholders and pay attention to aspects of social life previously neglected (culture, education, and so forth). The new priorities, well beyond the economic dimension, are reflected in the Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, adopted in the 1990s by the United Nations and other development organizations as key challenges to be addressed successfully. In addition to poverty reduction, they include objectives in women empowerment,education, gender equality, and health issues. Most development priorities are outlined within political frameworks based on the adherence to good

governance and democratic principles and people's participation is also key in this context.

The role of Communication in development especially in the third world countries is linked to the evolution of development and communication models that have characterized development efforts up to now. Development communication is participatory in nature and engages people in resolving vital issues that border them which is invariably empowerment.

Kothari (1988) laid out the charge for rethinking and changing communication perspectives in the 1990s.

> Development communication has to be thought of not as specialized concern, but as part and parcel of the struggle for human liberation, freedom and justice, strengthening the struggles of communities and cultures, of national entities that are thought to be marginalized, and of already marginalized peoples within these and other societies. It should be communications that exposes the hypocrisy of the rhetoric in the international forums, which is in direct contrast to same elites' behaviour in their own societies. Communication should be a process that contains the forces of backlash and promotes the forces of transformation and survival.

Over the years, the concept of participatory communication has received increasing support from development practitioners, and organizations. Most organizations now incorporate participation in their projects In Nigeria today, in the 36 states of the federation all the state governors' wives have state- based NGOs that carry out empowerment programmes for women. Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood in Tunga,Niger State is one of such organizations that is aimed at empowering women in socio-economic, health, education, cultural, political, and all forms of inequality and underdevelopment among women.

In fact, the World Bank (World Bank, 1999a) findings indicate that participation promotes ownership, brings about long term attention to human right issues, improves sustainability of development programmes, as well as promote

learning and result based orientation. It is against this background that it becomes imperative to test the efficacy of participatory communication especially in the context of empowering women.

2.5 Theory of Participatory Communication

From the outset the focus of participatory communication was on dialogical communication rather than on linear communication. The emphasis was on participatory and collective processes in research, problem identification, decision making, implementation, and evaluation of change. Most recently participatory approaches to communication have reinforced the emphasis on structural and social change. A broad-based policy debate initiated by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1997 and pursued by the Communication for Social Change Consortium in subsequent years has focused on structural inequality and social transformation. The "Rockefeller process" led to a definition of communication for social change as "a process of public and private dialogue through which people themselves define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their own lives. It utilizes dialogue that leads to collective problem identification, decision making, and community-based implementation of solutions to development issues (www.communicationforsocialchange.org).

The primary principle of participatory communication is to create opportunities so that people can participate in their own development. They must be free to develop as individuals. Participatory communication enables people to understand the oppressive structures that are responsible for inequality and oppression that cause people to be disempowered. One important aspect of effective participatory communication is the learning and ability by the people to make more effective

demands on government, so that change in their lives can be brought about by mutual consent and organization. Other outcomes of effective participatory communication are citizens becoming aware of structural causes of their oppression as basic, and the information of organizations with leadership to enable them exercise more control over their lives.

Another core element of participatory communication is for empowerment. The redistribution of resources and decision- making powers which place emphasis on the ideal of self-reliance, on the available natural and human resources, and on the ability of individuals to define developmental problems, set goals, and make decisions independently and in accordance with their own social and cultural ethos.

To be genuinely participatory and truly effective, communication should occuramong all parties affected, ensuring all have similar opportunities to influence theoutcome of the initiative. Optimally participatory communication would be part of the whole project process, from beginning to end. Since this approach promotes the active involvement of stakeholders in investigating options and shaping decisions regarding development objectives, participatory communication also facilitates empowerment. In this way, the effects go beyond the project boundaries, spilling into an empowering force that remains with the individual.

2.6 Paulo Freire and Participatory Communication

The ideas of Paulo Freire have provided a central organizing framework for people centred development interventions and examining the themes of his work is important to this study. Freire was the first to introduce the concept of conscientization. He was disappointed with the educational systems in Brazil and Chile and advocated for a more librating type of communication education that would contain more dialogue

and would becentred on the people and more conscious of social structure (Diaz-Bordenva, 1976).

In the view of Freire's education and literacy, are universal rights achieved through cultural communication and not through cultural transmission from teachers (educated people) to students (uneducated people). The central focus of Freire,s theory of liberation, a process of overcoming oppression, is conscientization. Conscientization refers to a process in which people are perceived as knowing subjects, achieving a deepening awareness both of socio-cultural reality which shape their lives and capacity to transform their reality.

Freire also explains that "concientization implies going beyond the spontaneous phase of apprehension of reality to a critical phase where reality becomes a knowable object. Awareness raising is not an abstract idea, for it implies taking action to bring change:

> Obviously, I cannot transform it in my head: that would be to fall into the philosophical error of thinking that awareness creates reality; it would be decreeing that I am free, by mind (Freire,1971).

Freire argued that in the traditional pedagogical systems, the receivers were supposed to be uncritical and passive following strictly the world view of the elites and then perceiving their problems in terms of elite-dominated rationality. Freire argued that in the pedagogical system he proposed , the receiver would be liberated from his/her mental inertia, penetrate the ideological mist imposed by the elites and perceive the realities of his/her existence (Daiaz-Bordenave,1976). He called this process conscientization. Armed with new knowledgeof their existential situation, the peasants could then come up with a plan of action that would liberate them from their dependent and exploited status. Freire used a photograph, a picture or a drawing to represent the existing reality.

A discussion was then initiated which sought to conduct an autopsy of existing realities and encouraged the participants to question why things were as they were,what could be done to rectify the situation, etc. In other words, communication channels were used in this approach to generate a dialogue, to help people talk together and understand each other. Communication was used as a vehicle of liberation from mental and psychological shackles that bound peasants to their existing situations.

Participatory communication values indigenous knowledge to build the self-confidence of local people. The approach makes use of indigenous knowledge which is the information base for a society. It also finds relevance because of its adaptation and value for ordinary people's knowledge, and posits that knowledge does not belong to or, need not to be transmitted by few experts to mass illiterate; as knowledge already exists among the people (Freire 1971). In this context, Freire uses the word "conscious being" to describe people as being aware of themselves and their world.

Participatory development communication recognizes that people fail to exercise their freedom because of the prevailing social and political structures, which perpetuates a culture of silence. The approach, therefore assures that meaningful impact can be achieved only when practitioners reverse their roles, learn from the community members and value people's active participation. Through active participation and dialogue, communities can help identify their needs and address them with available resources. As a process, it provides opportunity for people to learn and create their knowledge, hence leading to social change. The use of such knowledge boosts the confidence of local people and contributes to planning for change. Inclusion of local knowledge within planning programmes is an empowerment and booster and encourages participation, (White; 1993). Empowerment can only be achieved through dialogue, which is capable of generating critical thinking that will lead to people's

empowerment. For people to become liberated, they must be part of knowledge generation process which Freire believes occurs through problem- posing rather than giving information to people, and regarding them as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge.

It is against this theoretical background that an appraisal of Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood shall be attempted. Participatory communication allows for equitable and active involvement of all stakeholders in formulation of development policies and strategies and in the analysis, planning, and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development activities. There are however degrees and types of participation.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The Nair-White Transactional Communication Model

The theory that has been selected to guide and underpin this work is The Nair-White Transactional communication model. The transactional model can be defined as the opening of dialogue, with the source and receiver interacting continuously, thinking constructively about the situation, identifying development needs and problems, deciding what is needed to improve the situation, and acting upon it. The model assumes that participation is contextual, situational, transactional, and processual. The model is intended for development and renewing societies of the world where there is a widening information and socio-economic gap between the rich and the poor (Nair and White, 1999). The model incorporates such concepts as ‘ bottom up’ development, ‘grassroots’ involvement, participatory decision-making, citizen empowerment, power sharing, indigenous knowledge and media, self-reliance, egalitarian rights, participatory message development, media integration ,team building, interpersonal trust, dynamic dialectical process, interface of “top-down” and “bottom-up” information flow.

The entire approach embodies a communication process which takes into account indigenous knowledge and self- reliance gained through increased information access and acquisition, facilitated by external experts. Inherent in the participatory approach is making people feel being, 'a part of the process'. The model seeks to integrate the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' and unite them through transactional communication. In the transactional model, the basic elements-source, message, channel, and receiver are combined with organizational and socio-cultural change interfaced by process of communication and participation. Feedback in the transactional model is two-way and processual, reflecting the inherent characteristic of dialogue.

The model conceives development as a social process implying a participatory communication that facilitates horizontal exchange of information among all parties involved driven by dialogue. In this model, there is no pre-determined sender or receiver since everybody is expected to be both at the same time. The basic approach in participatory communication is dialogue, and therefore planning of development projects that claims to be participatory can no longer be decided in faraway offices, but should be carried out in relevant communities with the target people. Another characteristics of the model as a participatory communication is the fact that it should be considered as a process rather than being represented as static model. In the context of development communication, it implies a fresh look at communication roles, knowledge acquisition, knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, and media interface in the process (Diaz Bordenave, 1986)

The Transactional Model is relevant to the study in determining the organizational structure of Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood as well as

encouraging a communication that is participatory in nature which brings change and is built on the culture of empowerment and self-reliance.

The Nair-White communication model therefore provides a framework for analyzing the organizational structure and strategies, and encourages the use of participatory communication. The model is therefore very important in the study as it provides a working knowledge of the issues in modeling a participatory communication framework in an organization for maximum impact.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study focuses on Communication and Women Empowerment in Tuga Community: A critical study of life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood Tunga, Minna. The study is set within the paradigm of descriptive survey research. (Bello and Ajayi, 2000), define a descriptive survey research as:

> Those studies which aim at collecting data through Observation, interview or questionnaire and describing In a systematic manner, the characteristics, peculiarities, nuances or facts about a given phenomenon or population.

The adoption of case study as a strategy for the study therefore offers more opportunity for an in-depth analysis and description of many components of participatory communication processes such as the structure of the project, participation, organization, for participatory communication, the attitude and character of staff and management of implementing agencies, local communities and their grassroots organizations. This is quite different from a quantitative research based on statistics to draw conclusions.

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative approach is adopted for this study and the adoption of qualitative research approach for the study helped the researcher to understand the world-views of the research participants, as well as the degree of impact of participatorycommunicationprocesses. The adoption of qualitative approaches for the study provided an opportunity for the researcher to deeply understand human actions, motives, feelings, and what is considered meaningful empowerment from the participants own frame of reference.

The qualitative approaches entail additional advantages for the study as it offered both the researcher and the research subjects the possibility to ask questions and clarify issueswhen the need arose.

3.2 Data Sources and Collection

Mercer (2006) points out that in order to conduct research on non-governmental organization's practices, the following methods are helpful; interviews with key informants, interviews or focus groups with project beneficiaries, surveys in the project location, participatory appraisal with project beneficiaries, and document analysis of non-governmental organization reports and baseline surveys.

For this study, observation, and interviews with key informants and project beneficiaries form the main sources of data that were collected and triangulated with documents of Life Rehabilitation foundation for Womanhood such as annual and project reports. The library and internet sources are also very instrumental to this study. They include reports, books, journals, and etcetera.

3.2.1 The Interview Method

This method is very suitable for this research because of its nature. It is one of the concrete and reliable ways of getting data for the study.(Osemwotaet-al 2008) perceive interview method as an evaluation process that involves two parties in an oral discussion either face to face or on phone with the aim of obtaining information from the respondent. Interviews for research are different from interpersonal conversation because they seek to get important and specific answers to questions, in an attempt to clarify knotty issues.

When designing an interview schedule it is imperative to ask questions that are likely to yield as much information about the study phenomenon as possible and also be able to address the aim and objectives of the research. In a qualitative interview,

good questions should be open-ended (i.e. require more than yes /no answer), neutral, sensitive and understandable. It is usually best to start with questions that participants can answer easily and then proceed to more difficult or sensitive questions, this can help put respondent at ease, build up confidence and rapport and often generates rich data that subsequently develop the interview further.

In-depth Interviews: This refers to the process of interaction in which the researcher directs certain questions to staff of project implementation organization and beneficiaries while on field. The nature of such questions is spontaneous based on the immediate observation within aprogramme and activities carried out at a particular time by an organization. In-depth interviewrefers to the process of interaction were the researcher directs specific questions from a checklist to managers, officers, staff of a Foundation and the community members to ascertain certain facts.

In-depth interviews were conducted with programme managers, officers, and staff of the foundation and the community members. In view of this, interviews were used to get data for this study and were conducted with key informants, beneficiaries, women groups. This is because these are the people who are mainly involved that could give relevant information. The interview found out the forms and the pattern of communication use in the foundation. This gave the researcher first-hand information from people directly involved.

3.2.2 Field Interviews

Besides the In-depth Interviews, Field interviews were conducted during the field research and observation was used too. The field interviews were conducted with staff of project implementing organizations and beneficiaries. The structure of the field interviews was similar to the structure of the more formal in-depth interviews.

3.2.3 The Observation Method

Data were collected through the Observation Method in communities with the mutual agreement of the staff of Life Rehabilitation Foundation and the researcher. This involvement gave the researcher the opportunity to observe the activities of the Foundation in detail. Furthermore the observation approach provided a detailed understanding of values, motives and practices of those being observed (Collins and Hussey 2003). As far as possible, the views of the people observed were captured in their own words. The strength of this approach is suitable as it makes data collection easier as the community or group became more comfortable with the researcher, enabling the discovery of appropriate language for questions and provided a culture context for information.

3.2.4 Internet and Library

Internet has become a viable tool for students when doing research and assignments. However research on the net is very different from traditional library research. The net is a tremendous resource, but it must be used carefully and critically while the printed resources you find in the library have in most cases been thoroughly evaluated by experts before they are published.

Furthermore, when books and other materials come into the library system, they are painstakingly and systematically catalogued and cross-referenced using procedures followed by research libraries the world over. This process is the basis for the way materials are organized in the library, and it makes possible the various search functions of the Web catalogue. In recognition of the resource materials available in libraries, this research obtained materials from the Net and library.

3.2.5 Documents

This is another source of information which was utilized to enable the researcher discover information about specific situation and confirm or question other information collected.

To reduce bias, search for both published and unpublished information was under-taken. These materials include annual reports, proposals, and reports of empowerment programmes of the Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of NGOs in Nigeria, brief information on Tunga communityand a brief history of Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood, analyzes the approaches used by the Foundation to empower the women and gives a discussion and further critique on the approaches and strategies used by the Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood to empower the women.

4.1 An Overview of NGOs in Nigeria

A non-governmental organization (NGO), also often referred to as "civil society organization"(CSO) is a not-for-profit group, principally independent from government, which is organized on a local, national or international level to address issues in support of the public good. NGOs are task-oriented and made up of people with a common interest. NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring public concerns to governments, monitor policy and programme implementation, and encourage participation of civil society stakeholders at the community level. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights. NGOs have been partners of the United Nations since 1947(United Nations Rule of Law, 2014).

In accordance with Article 71 of the UN Charter, NGOs can have consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Their relationship with entities of the United Nations system differs depending on their location and mandate. For example, NGOs which have an information component can become associated with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) to help disseminate information on the work and aims of the Organization. Many UN

Specialized Agencies operate their own accreditation programmes for NGOs which are relevant to their area of work.

Typically, NGOs are governed by voluntary boards of directors and make extensive use of volunteers to deliver programs. Some may also engage in public education activities or speak out on social policy issues that relate to developing safe communities.

Some non-government organizations provide services and programs to people in areas like counseling and information for victims, victim-offender mediation programs, assistance with obtaining pardons, or supervision of offenders on release. There are also some service providers that may have interest in areas such as education, health, social work, child welfare women empowerment and others. Other agencies provide services or support to parents, extended families, children, or spouses involved in family law or divorce courts and of course to women and girls.

In Nigeria, the issue of president's and state governor's wives involved in reaching out to the less privileged members of their communities by way of NGOs have been an issue of attention and political interest.

The activities of Maryam Babangida with the introduction of Better Life Programme forRural Women(BLPRW) turned the traditionally ceremonial post of First Lady into a potent force for women and rural development in Nigeria. The programme sought to empower women's social, economic and political status in many areas. At the end of November 1993, BLPRW had facilitated the establishment of 9,492 cooperatives, 1,435 cottage industries, 1,784 new farms and gardens, 495 new shops and markets, 1,094 multipurpose women's centres, 135 fish and livestock farms and 163 social welfare programmmes. It was also during the era of Mrs.

Babangida'sBLPRW that the National Centre for Women Development was built in Abuja. It was commissioned on October 17, 1992 (Ojo, 2013).

After Maryam Babangida came Mrs. Maryam Abacha. She also launched her pet project, Family Support Programme(FSP) and an offshoot known as Family Economic Advancement Programme(FEAP). In 1995, Mrs. Abacha through her FSP was able to influence the upgrade of National Commission for Women into a full-fledged Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. Maryam Abacha also launched Family Support Trust Fund in 1994. Through the monies realized from this Fund, Mrs. Abacha built National Women and Children Hospital in Abuja. This hospital was commissioned on May 22, 1999 by the administration of General AbdulsalamiAbubakar and was renamed National Hospital in 2000.

In 1999 when AbdulsalamiAbubakar assumed office after the demise of Gen. SaniAbacha, his wife Hon. Justice FatiAbubakar established a Non-Governmental Organisation known as Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative. WRAPA as the organization is better known was set up for advocacy, mobilization, promotion and protection of women's rights; the elimination of all forms of repugnant practices as well as violence against women and the enhancement of their living standards.

On return to civil rule in 1999, Mrs. Stella Obasanjo also set up her own project known as Child Care Trust. CCT was established to care for physically and mentally challenged children. One of the major achievements of CCT was the establishment of a Special Children Model Centre in Bwari, Abuja. The centre was built at an estimated cost of N600m. Mrs. TitiAbubakar, wife of ex-Vice President AtikuAbubakar, also started a pet project known as Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication

Foundation while her husband was in office. She was able to advocate against child and women trafficking through WOTCLEF. She also was able to integrate some of the affected women back into normal life.

By the time former President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua assumed power in 2007, his wife Turai also toed the line of previous First Ladies by setting up Women and Youth Empowerment Foundation (WAYEF). WAYEF health sector interventions are in five broad categories. They are: The VISION project aimed at reducing cataract and childhood blindness; Maternal and New Born Health Improvement Programme; Screening programme for breast and cervical cancer; HIV/AIDS and STDs intervention programme and Diabetes awareness and education programme. WAYEF also embarked on interventions in the area of poverty reduction, drug abuse and lifelong education. Turai's WAYEF rehabilitated Katsina'sVesico Vaginal Vistula Centre, donated grinding machines and a bus to Yangoji Leprosy Village in Kwaili Area of the Federal Capital Territory and equipped Suleja Prison workshop with working tools to make inmates skillful and self-reliant after serving their jail terms.

Dame Patience Jonathan started her pet project while she was in Bayelsa as wife of Governor of the state. Her NGO then was known as AreueraReachout Foundation. It was established in 2006. The foundation was said to have provided training for over 2,000 women in catering, hat making, beads making, sewing and making of plantain and beans flour. The pet project took up the challenge of providing medical support and assistance to people with heart conditions, empowering the youths and women to overcome challenges through skills acquisition and development for productivity and wealth creation as well as rehabilitation of female ex-convicts especially in the Niger Delta. Also the foundation extended its mission of reaching out to the elderly with gift items, such as foodstuffs and provision of drugs. When her husband became the

president of Nigeria at the death of President Yar'Adua, Mrs. Jonathan launched another pet project known as Women for Change Initiative.

It is noteworthy that at the state level, wives of governors who are first ladies in their states have also been launching different pet projects in the states. For instance the wife of former governor of Edo State, Mrs. EkiIgbinedion launched Idia Renaissance, an NGO working through research, education and enlightenment towards the restoration of the dignity of women, youths and children in Nigeria. The foundation was established to combat the disturbing scourge of human trafficking, prostitution, maternal mortality, drug abuse, cultism, youth restiveness, HIV/AIDS and other social and health problems prevalent especially among children, youths and women in the society.

Likewise the wife of former Oyo State Governor Mrs. MutiatLadoja launched Idera De foundation. Wife of former Lagos governor now a serving Senator, Mrs. OluremiTinubu established New Era Foundation under which Spelling Bee competition were held annually across the state with the overall winner becoming a one day governor of the state. Also to mention is the wife of Ogun state governor,Mrs. FolusoAmosun who set up various initiatives ranging from getting children to be involved in the protection of their environment through tree planting to helping persons with disability with business starter packs for economic empowerment and support to the aged.

This draws us to the NGO established by the wife of the Niger State governor, the Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood. The fulcrum of this project is on the total empowerment of women and girls of communities in Niger State.

A critical look at the various pet projects of first ladies both at the state and national levels will reveal that the interventions are in six major areas. These are: Economic empowerment; Educational empowerment; Skills acquisition; Political empowerment; Health and Social welfare and Social justice for women. In fairness to these amazons, their pet projects, as highlighted above, have made a lot of impacts in the society especially in bettering the lives of women and children. However, the major challenge they face is lack of continuity immediately the tenure of their husbands end. Even for those who registered theirs as NGO they also face funding challenge once their husband is out of power. Many of the government contractors and political appointees who willingly dole out money to support their initiatives turn their back once they know that 'oga and madam' no longer wield influence in government. Many of these pet projects also lack professional staff to drive them as appointees are mostly cronies of madam first lady who may not have what it takes to run NGOs successfully. Another minus to these pet projects is lack of accountability and transparency in their finances. When fund-raisers are held, the public don't get to know how much was donated and by whom. There is no gainsaying that state and administrative resources are deployed illegally to the Office of the First Lady by their husbands

4.2 Tunga Community

Tonga is a community under Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State. Its inhabitants are mostly of the Gbagyiethnic group. Nupe, Hausa and other ethnic groups can also be found within the community.

The predominant religious groups are Islam and Christianity. The community has an area of "42 km and population of 118,492" (2006 census).The women in the community are predominantly traders, farmers and artisans. Considering the nature of their work, the Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood has offered them an

opportunity for empowerment by making provision for their welfare and for them to achieve their desired goals. As a medium for facilitating development and incorporating them into the process, the Foundation considers it a necessity empower the women in the area of economic, socio-cultural and political life by situating the main office of the Foundation within the community.

4.3 Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood in TungaCommunity

Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood was established in May 2007 by the wife of the Niger state Governor HajiyaJumaiAliyu.(Life Rehab 2010).The Foundation is also chaired by the founder, the wife of the governor of Niger state, followed by the board of trustee members, and then, the implementation team.

The document of the Foundation states that, the vision of the Foundation is to facilitate and promote an equitable society where women are respected and actively involved in all aspects of the development process in Nigeria and Niger state in particular. Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood envisions women and children well-being in sustainable communities in Niger State, using local capabilities and resources.

The mission of the Foundation is to build community capacities and strategic responses to tackle the social, economic, cultural, political, and health of women and children of Niger state for the purpose of improving their quality of life.

The basic aim of the foundation is to improve the quality of life of women and children and to empower them effectively within the state. The strategies deployed by the Foundationto achieve the aim include:

1. Entrepreneurial and skills development for women in Niger State.
2. Stimulating women participation in government at all levels.
3. Improving the health and nutritional status of women and children.

4. Improving literacy level among women to a minimum level of basic education and contribute to the improvement of girl-child enrolment and retention in school.

It is believed that the right and appropriate deployment of the above strategies will build the capacity of women and empower them adequately for good quality of life and healthy living.

Now, having highlighted the strategies deployed by the Foundation, it is therefore pertinent to investigate the nature and style of communications used to convey the above strategies to the women.This investigation will not only help immensely in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the communication approaches but will also reveal the level of empowerment of women attained by the Foundation.

4.4 Life Rehabilitation Foundation for WomanhoodStrategies and Communication Use

Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood has four strategies aimed to achieve the set aim which isfocused on the empowerment of women. The researcher therefore carried out some interview to critically analyze the strategies of the Foundation vis-a-vis the communication approaches employed to realize them.

In an interview conducted with the Communication Officer of the Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood on how the aim and strategies of the Foundation are bringing about the empowerment of women, it was revealed that to realize the aim of the organization, the Foundation uses certain strategies built around a four thematic areas as highlighted above. She stated that the aim of the Foundation is to improve the quality of life of women and children in the state. The strategies and

approaches used by the Foundation to achieve the set objectives of empowering the women are elaborated below.

4.5 Entrepreneurial and Skills Development for Women

This is one of the Strategies the Foundation isusing to empower the women. It is all about training women in entrepreneurial skills and development. A recent World Economic Forum report into entrepreneurship education defines an entrepreneur as someone who is creative, innovative and risk taking, and has an ability to translate 'ideas into action' (Volkmann et al 2009). Dana (2001) highlights the fact that 'there is no universally-accepted definition of entrepreneurs or of entrepreneurship' in the literature.

This evident lack of a comprehensive and widely accepted definition does not detract from the reality that entrepreneurship possesses distinctive features including 'a capacity for innovation' (Bruni, Gherardi&Poggio 2004). Nor does this apparent definition deficit alter the fundamental and important role that entrepreneurship plays in promoting economic development and vitality.Entrepreneurship also widens and strengthens participation in economic activity, particularly for historically marginalized groups such as women (Hisrich&Ozturk 1999).

Plumly et al (2008) detail out a range of key skill building areas that they recommend covering, communication, leadership, teamwork, negotiation, strategic planning, basic business law, innovation and technology, and product life-cycle and development.Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood isa Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that seeks to develop women through entrepreneurial and skill training like hair dressing, tailoring, rice farming and milling, cassava production, liquid soap making, Shea butter production, goat and sheep raring, fish farming etc to empower the women in Niger State.The Foundation communication Officer stated that

to achieve the above, the organization uses the Rural Wealth Scheme (RWS). The RWS aims to promote and improve the entrepreneurial skills of women and empower them to generate wealth and reduce poverty. The researcher's interview with the communication officer also revealed that the organization has the board of trustee members and the implementation team who plan and develop activities according to the strategic work plan of the organization and also budget for any empowerment outing they decide.

In order to realize the entrepreneurial and skill acquisition of women in the state,approaches used include appraisal method, building of partnerships and networking with all stakeholders of the formulation and implementation of development initiatives for the overall improvement in the quality of life of women in Niger state. The interview also revealed that another communication approach used is mobilization and sensitization of women for change in attitudes, values, and practices.

The wives of the local government chairmen and their assistance are engaged to mobilize the women at the grassroots through their co-operative societies and appraisal method to select the women who are mostly in need or indigent. Some members are selected from each co-operative society to be trained and empowered in different entrepreneurial skills as stated above so that they can train other members in their communities. The training of the women by the Foundation emphasizesmoney management and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills with emphasis on the use of locally available raw materials gotten within their communities. To present more light on the nature of communication approaches above in delivering entrepreneurial and skills development to the women of Tunga community the researcher present the following:

Appraisal Method: This is the process where the Life RehabilitationFoundation's board of trustee members, implementation team and the project manager evaluate the entire request and needs made by women co-operative group members through their leaders in all the local government areas of the state and select the women which they consider as more indigent to train in different skills and support them to own productive resources for capacity building purposes for them to train other women in their different locations within their local government areas..

Building of Partnership and Networking with stakeholders: This process that enables the Foundation to partner with Internationalorganizations, government agencies at state and local level and as well as schools, banks, the media, health institution for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of development initiatives for the empowerment of women within the state. The Foundation carries out this programme by partnering with other organizations to make the empowerment programme of the women within the state to be successful.

Mobilization and Sensitization of Women: This process is carried out through organized community town-hall and village square meetings to discuss with women on their developmental challenges and how to proffer solution so as to create opportunities for them in decision making process and the implementation of the Foundation's empowerment programmes to impact on the lives of women.

Furthermorethe communication officer also stated that under entrepreneurship and skill development, 186 women-based cooperatives drawn from the 15 local government areas within the state were trained in different skills like fish farming, goat and sheep rearing, bead making, fashion design and tailoring, Shea butter production, liquid soap making, rice farming and milling, cassava production etc for support and

capacity building from 2008 to 20014.The women that were trained were mandated and given financial support to train other women within their co-operatives in the various local government areas of the state.

In the same programme, 100 women cooperative groups were appraised and 44 women co-operative groups out of 100were supported to own productive resources and businesses in 10 local government areas within Niger state. Each of the co-operative groups in the different local government area was given technical and finical support to operate in the skills they received so that the women can successfully be empowered in the various areas of their training. For instance 'EnaMana' Women cooperative group in Agaie local government area were trained ingrand nut cake(kuli-kuli) production and were assistedfinancially and were given machine for a production. The women now export grand nutcake (kuli-kuli) outside the state and this has improved their income level. Also 63 groups of dry season farmers were also trained and supported with 189 bags of Urea and NPK fertilizer to boost food production in the state as a form of empowerment.

Furthermore the interview revealed that 24 widows and 40 women from Tunga community were trained in different skills and provided with economic empowerment equipment ranging from deep freezers, grinding machines, sewing machines, sim-packs to improve their economic activities. She stated that the Foundation is operating a skill acquisition centre in the Minna prison constructed in partnership with Unity Bank to train inmates especially the female ones in different types of skill ranging from Carpentry, Laundry, Beading, Cobbling, Compute Information Technology, Electronic and Fashion Designing etc to empower them when they are dischargedfrom the prison to be responsible and own their own businesses.

The Foundation in collaboration with UNDPrenovatedand upgraded 3 existing skill acquisition workshops in Minna Medium security prison and is now in use.Also 175kva capacity electricity generating sets were procured and installed at both the old and new prison in Minna to power the skill acquisition workshops for constant electricity supply for empowerment purposes.

For instance, 3 discharged female prisoners were trained by the Foundation in different skills and assisted with working equipment like sewing machines and hair dressing machines, deep freezers and also given capital to start their own business Life Rehab (2010). Pictures were presented by the communication officer to back up the Foundation's activities in the area of entrepreneurial and skill development.



Groups of Women (dry season farmers) trained and supported with 189 bags of Urea and NPK fertilizer to boost food production and empower them economically.



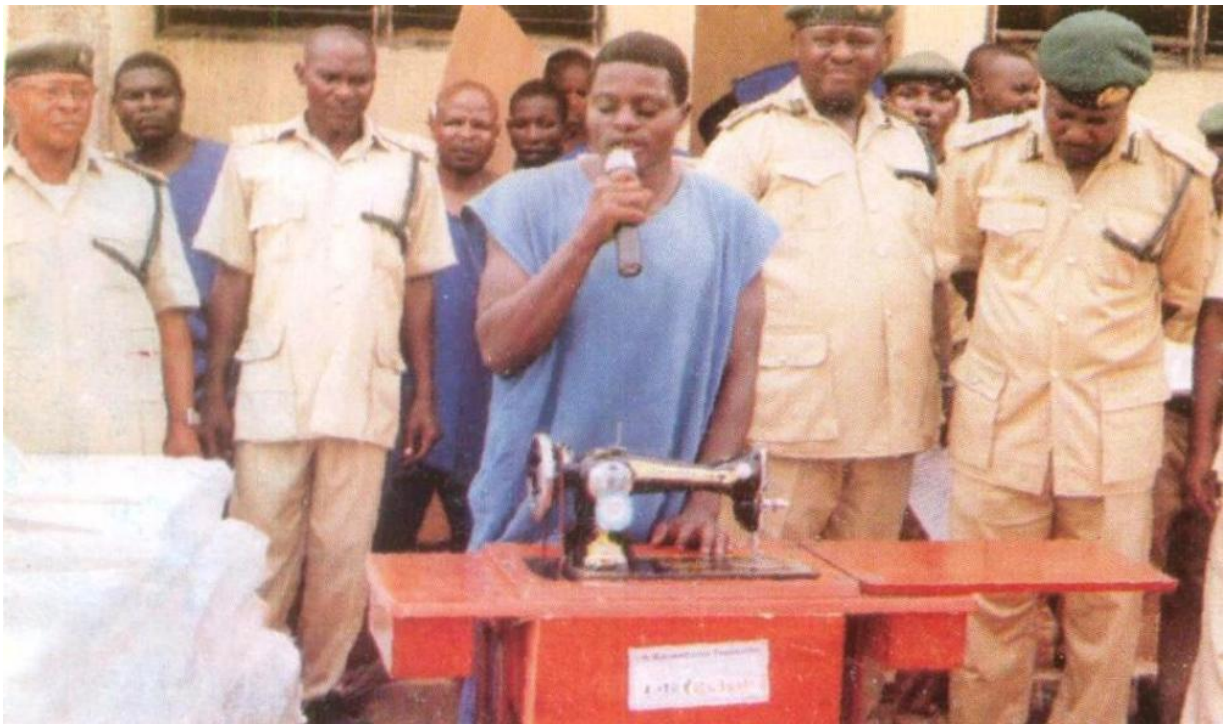
3 discharged female prisoners were trained and given working equipments which included hair dryer, sewing and designing machine and capital to start up their own businesses with the aim of empowering them.



24 widows and 40 women trained in skills and empowered with working equipmentslike deep freezer, grinding machines, knitting machines etcand capital to start their own businesses in the state.



Equipment swing machines, coolers, deepfreezers, knitting machines, and power generating sets distributed to Mashegu women in health co-operative society, Paiko Divine Fisheries Women co-operative chanchga, Malaktrading co-operative chanchaga, and Kungiyanshinkafa by the Foundation to empower the women.



Sewing and designing machines, carpentry and beading equipments donated by the Foundation to fully equip the skill acquisition centre in the Minna prison to help train female inmates.

The researcher in an interview with groups ofwomen (who are the beneficiaries of the programme) on the issue of how the programme of the Foundation has impacted on their lives and how they are communicated to, it was revealed that the women got entrepreneurial and skills development as planned by the implementation team of the Foundation led by the programme officer. The women appreciated the efforts made by the Foundation in reaching out to them in their programme of activities of empowerment but observed that there was a communication gap. The women stated that in most cases, they are not well informed before certain activities are carried out within their community. For instance, in terms of entrepreneurship training,, the type of entrepreneurship training programme is decided by the Foundation and they are only selected to participate and asked to write out their needs and submit to their co-operative women leader. For exampleHajiyaSalamatu who is a widow living in Tunga community revealed:

> Since my husband died I have been selling provisions in front of my house to look after my children. I have been doing this business for many yearsbut the business has not really improved as it should because of huge familyexpenses. I really needed a deep freezer to sell kunu and zoboin order to improve my business. I was trained by the Foundation in Shea butter production sheep and goat rearing and. I requested for deep freezerthrough my co-operative women leader but was given grinding machine which i never asked or requested for during my training.(Interview with HajiyaSalamatuIsah…..at… TungaMinna, Niger state)

Also the interview revealed that the women are not involved from the beginning of the programme rather all the decision on the programme of activities are planned by the Foundation and then the women are just informed to join. In most cases the organization carries out a selection process of those they will support with some empowerment items through what they term appraisal method. The interview also revealed that most of the women eventually sell out machines given to them as empowerment materials if they are given something different from what they earlier

requested for during the need assessment and appraisal process. This is because some of the women complained of lack of interest in what they are offered, and capacity to keep and maintain such machines given to them; hence it is not useful to them.

The strategies used by the Foundation to promote entrepreneurial and skills development for women empowerment like mobilization and sensitization methods are good. This is because to an extent, the women are trained and given some form of assistance to better their lives. But however the issue of sustainable empowerment goes beyond mobilization, sensitization, giving physical materials and money to the beneficiaries. But the strategy has a communication gap. This is due to the fact that procedure used by the Foundation in carrying out entrepreneurship training is not participatory enough and therefore the empowerment may be short lived. First and foremost, the board of trustee members and implementation team developed activities and strictly followed the organizational work plan without getting the women involved from the inception of the whole programme in order to let them decide on what kind of skill they need most before the training is carried out. The researcher believes that communication should be stepped up to the level of using effective empowerment participation to build the capacity of the women.

What does this empowerment participation mean? Mefalopulos (2008) puts it this way; empowerment participation is a process where primary stakeholders are capable and willing to initiate the process and take part in analysis. This leads to joint decision making about what should be achieved and how it should be done. While outsiders are equal partners in the development effort, the primary stakeholders are equal partners with a significant say in decisions concerning their lives. Dialoguing which is communication process identifies and analyzes critical issues and encourages an exchange of knowledge and experiences which leads to solutions. Ownership and

control of the process rest in the hands of the primary stakeholders. In this process participation by the stakeholders should be very active.

In the multiplicity of communication approaches applied in development interventions over the years, two main schools dominate and co-exist in today's development practice. On one hand, the diffusion model encompasses a broad range of strategies aimed to solve problems due to "lack of knowledge and information." External change agents drive the processes, with little or no room for participation. This approach is linear, monologue-like, top-down communication which has not contributed positively in the past. On the other hand, is the Participatory Model based on PaoloFreire's liberating pedagogy from the 1960s, which was renewed in more recent debates about development? This school takes globalization, transnational networking, new media and governance into account.

The centre of attention in the Foundation the empowerment of women should be by their by their active involvement in the identification of problems, development of solutions and implementation of strategies. The researcher believes therefore that when communication is stepped up to the level of empowerment participation, the women will initiate the kind of entrepreneurial skills suitable for them and also suggest to the Foundation the kind of assistance they need for them to operate effectively and successfully so as to remain empowered in that area. Entrepreneurial process and skill training in the Foundation involves high level of creativity, innovation, risk taking and the ability to translate ideals into action which widens and strengthens participation of women in economic activity.

It means that with a better communication approach involving the full participation of women in the Foundation intervention a better result in the entrepreneurial and skill acquisition will be achieved in helping to empower the

womenand help create positive economic impact in their lives, families andthe country as a whole.

4.6 Stimulating Women Participation in Government at All Levels

This is another strategy the Foundation is using to carry out empowerment activities for women development. This strategy is all about strengthening women's political skills and encouraging them to participate in politics at all levels of government. Women constitute half of Nigeria's population. They make an essential and largely unacknowledged contribution to economic life and play a crucial role in all spheres of society. However, established restrictive practices and constraints, have not allowed them to take advantage of their numbers and position in order to significantly influence the decision making processes.

As a result, the potential of half of the Nigerian population remains unexplored and the scope of labour, energy and human resources available for national development is restricted. Nigerian women have been marginalized in the formal political systems owing to traditional belief and practices which inhibit their advancement and participation in public life.

The researcher asked the communication officer of the Foundation on how participation of women in government at all levels could lead to their empowerment? The communication officer stated that, to achieve the strategy, the Foundation uses communication approach such as Rural Advocacy Development (RAD) developed by the interim implementation committee of the Life Rehabilitation Foundation. The Rural Advocacy Development (RAD) developed strategies and tools, and identified priorities for action, for the effective and appropriate participation in local and state fora of representatives of local women communities in decision making, participatory politics and rights to natural resources for their own development. This strategy is articulated

through the use of community hall and village square meetings to mobilize women and create opportunities for them in different communities to identify their development challenges and proffer solutions and be actively involved in the decision- making process.

The communication officer further revealed that this process is done to promote knowledge on local, state, and national policies affecting the quality of lives of women; Promote and support the participation and access of women to the process of control over their resources for meaningful development; influence and sensitize government, non-governmental organization and private sector operators on the rights, expectation, priorities of rural women. Support, partner and provide support for initiatives that impact on the social wellbeing of women and to Promote and support sustainable gender sensitive environmental practices. The Foundation mandates the local government chairmen's wives to get individuals to mobilize and educate the women at the grass root level on civic education, before any election or its processes.

The communication officer also stressed that Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood as an organization has not done much in this area as required but had carried out activities to encourage the women to come out and vote for the candidates of their choice. She stated that finances, religion and culture have been a setback in this area. In the area of religion, it was noted that in Islam, women are supposed to be under the men or their own husbands; this causes most women to lack the interest to come out and for any elective position during politics because they believe that, they should only support the men or their husbands. This is even more prominent in rural areas.

She said the lack of interest has resulted in very few women signifying their interest in elective positions at the federal, state and local government.

The researcher in an interactive group discussion with the women in Tunga community who are the beneficiaries of the programme, it was discovered that some of the women if given the opportunity have interest in vying for elective positions as well as being in leadership position but lack courage and financial capability this is because political processes in Nigeria are expensive. The women noted that despite their desired interest in leadership positions, they hardly have enough money to run the domestic expenses in their homes and cannot afford the huge amount of money needed to participate in politics to get positions at all levels in government.

Meanwhile some of the women observed that they were mostly mobilized to vote for people, but the wellbeing of the women has not drastically improved over the years as professed by those in authority.The researcher believes that the communication approaches used by the Foundation such assensitization, mobilization and town-hall meetings with all stake holders are not bad. However, empowerment has a great deal to do with power. Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices into desired actions and outcomes (World Bank, 2003). To be empowered goes beyondthe utilization of the above approaches. Empowerment requires individuals, communities, women to be strengthened in four types of power as treated below;

- Resource power: access to, and influence over, resources to deal with development.
- Knowledge power: an understanding of how to cope with development.
- Positional power: the ability to negotiate rights and entitlements, and fulfill responsibilities and obligations to cope with development.
- Personal power: a sense of self-esteem and self-worth, a personal realization and motivation to claim resource, knowledge and positional power to cope with

development. All people have at least some form of power. Communication that is participatory in nature aims to make full use of the power found in people and strengthens it further in order to empower people and to address development together.

Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood therefore needs to bridge up the gap in communication and make full use of the power found in women so that they can be fully empowered in government at all levels and takes a rightful position in their community. Meanwhile the strategies in place to achieve empowerment of women in this direction are not strong enough. The Foundation needs to encourage the women to develop self-confidence; self-worth to reason beyond cultural, religious and social discrimination and their personal abilities should be encouraged.Therefore the Foundation needs specific steps to encourage the women in politics so that they can freely participate in various positions in government at all levels.

Democracy, as pointed out by Olowu in Afonja (1996) is about popular governance. The masses must constitute the focus of the new political culture and every effort must be made to integrate both formal and informal political structures. Women are an important part of the masses. Their development in other sectors depends on their involvement in the policy making processes for their interest to be represented. Therefore women needs to be motivated to take their rightful place in leadership position at level and this could only be successful through the development of a communication that involves the women from the inception to address the issue of participation in government at all levels.

4.7 Improving the Health and Nutritional Status of Women and Children

This is also another strategy deployed by the Foundation to get women empowered for a healthy living in Tunga. The nutritional status of a mother is important, both as an indicator of her overall health and as a predictor of pregnancy outcome for both mother and child. According to prentice (1993) Adequate maternal nutrition is needed for breastfeeding, recovery following the stress of pregnancy and labour, coping with child rearing and care and also preparation for future pregnancies. A mother who was malnourished as a fetus, young child or adolescent is more likely to enter pregnancy stunted and malnourished.

Elshibly (2008) opines that a mothers' compromised nutritional status affects the health and nutrition of her own children. These intergenerational effects can be turned into a vicious cycle perpetuating malnutrition from one generation to the next. The consequences of poor maternal nutritional status are reflected in high infant and maternal morbidity and mortality. Poor nutritional status of mothers has a direct and indirect consequence on their own health and that of their children.

This area of health constitutes a very vital and important strategy used by the Foundation under study to empower Tunga Women in order for them to live a healthy and productive life. The Foundation believes that the health of women is their wealth. The Foundation also believes that if women are healthy, they will be able to take care of their homes, children, and husbands and also be able to actively contribute to the general well-being of Tunga community. This informs why and nutritional status of women makes up a very crucial and significant strategy of empowering Tunga women for development.

The researcher in an interview with the Communication Officer of the Foundation on how theTunga women are empowered on health and nutritional matterit was revealed that for women to be fully empowered, their health comes into play. The Foundation uses the Rural Care Mission (RCM) as a communication approach to realize this aim. The aim of RCM is to improve the health/nutritional status of women and children, particularly those in rural areas that have limited access to health care and services. This is achieved by working with statutory and non-statutory agencies to promote public awareness through enlightenment campaign against maternal and infant motility, as well as cancer, HIV & AIDS, malaria and other diseases. This also assists the women to come together into mutual self-help groups. The core services of the RCM include well-women clinics, referral, home visits and drop- in sessions.

The interview with the Foundation Communication Officer revealed that the Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood deals with women in this area basically and mostly using the referral method. The women are linked up and encouraged to visit the primary health centres closest to them for medical care and seeking relevant information regarding family planning, HIV and AIDS and Cancer from time to time in order to stay healthy and keeping their environments clean to prevent malaria.

The Communication Officer of the Foundation further revealed that the organization believes that health is wealth and wealth is health. She stated that the organization believes that being healthy and free from diseases is a form of empowerment. This is the reason why the women are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle. She also stated that some health issues are handled privately by the Foundation using effective counseling session. This is done to avoid discrimination from the public on issues like HIV and AIDS. The interview further revealed that the

women are trained in entrepreneurship skills and given assistance by the Foundation in order to improve their income which will help them to improve their health and nutritional status including that of their family members.

The researcher in an interview with the Project Manager of the Foundation on how public awareness and enlightenment campaigns areused as a communication approach and how it has improved the lives of women revealed that the Foundation has done little in this area. Rather they are involved in referring health issues to primary health centres.

The researcher in a group discussion with Talba Crescent WomenTunga revealed that Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood often refers most of them with health problems to primary health centres. The women stated that the action is good but in most cases they lack understanding of some of the explanation on some basic health issues carried out in the health centres. Furthermore in a further discussion with the women it revealed that most women do not visit the health centres after referrals. It was revealed that Most of the women prefer an immediate solution to their problems within the Foundation and not referrals by the Foundation.

The researcher believes that public awareness through enlightenment campaign, counseling, self-help group, referrals are good but should be stepped up to the channels or approaches of communication that involve the people's traditional way of life that will stimulate the women into active participation and empower them on health issues. What does this traditional way of life means?

RandfallCasy (1975) puts it this way;

> There is an emerging realization that traditional elements of today's societies possess communication channels that can serve as a means to stimulate rural development, and which are compatible with mass media and extension workers. These channels are folk media which use the local idioms and are people-based.

The folk media consist of a variety of forms like folk theatre, puppetry, story-telling forms, folk dances, ballads, and mime. They have served as vehicles of communication and entertainment in many countries of the world. Wang and Dissanayake (1984) view folk media as a 'communication system embedded in the culture which existed before the arrival of mass media, and still exists as a vital mode of communication in many parts of the world, presenting a certain degree of continuity despite changes.

Ranganath (1975) also defines the traditional media as 'living expressions of the lifestyle and culture of a people, evolved through the years'. There is a saying that knowledge is power. People understand better when they have an understanding of the communication strategy being used. The researcher believes that folk media with its variety of communication channels form a bed rock which can encourage participation of women of women for empowerment that bring sustainable health.

4.8 Improving Literacy Level among Women to a Minimum Level of Basic Education and Improvement of Girl-Child Enrolment and Retention in School

This is another strategy of the Foundation to empowerTunga women.Literacy basically is a fundamental right for all girls and boys, women and men and very central to the quest for poverty reduction and sustainable development, which are essential for building democratic, peaceful and stable societies. Literacy enhances the capacity for the participation of all people in economic, social, political and cultural activities in a rapidly changing world which bring about empowerment.

As a versatile tool, literacy can contribute to a wide range of areas, including conflict resolution, nutrition, health care, employment, empowerment and livelihoods, cultural expression and improved quality of life. It is also an instrument of social justice, especially for promoting gender equality and for liberating people from discrimination and exclusion. Truly, literacy is an imperative for the attainment of Education for All. (MDGs 2000).

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan made some key policy linkages at the international launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) in New York in February 2003, when he said that "the Decade is an affirmation of the inextricable link between literacy and our work to translate into reality the Millennium Declaration, adopted by all the world's governments as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st century. Literacy is the prerequisite for a healthy, just and prosperous world."

On this issue, the researcher conducted an interview with the Communication Officer of the Foundation on how literacy is being improved among women. It was revealed that the Foundation uses Educare Mission (ECM) as a communication approach. The ECM Focuses on the education of the girl-child and literacy for women,ECM aims also to improve girl access to, enrolment and retention as well as completion of basic education, including improving literacy rate among rural women. The Foundation is also working in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies, assisting women to identify their needs in education and develop strategies for meeting them. The communication approaches used to address the above involve advocacy, sensitization and mobilization of financial and technical resources for the establishment of girl-friendly school environment and advocacy support for improved and well

managed services that address the needs of women in educationand economic development.

In the same vein an interview with the Project Officer of Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood on how this women literacy for empowerment is being realized in Niger state in general and Tunga community in particular. the interview session revealed that the organization works in partnership with the state and local government, statutory agencies and schools by mobilizing, sensitizing, encouraging the enrolment of girls in school and assisting them with educational materials like text books, uniforms, and registration and payment of fees the students in their Junior and Senior School Examinations.

The state government through the influence of the Foundation also stepped up the campaign by encouraging women through scholarship award and to enroll into the Women College established in the state so that the women who are married can acquire a Senior School Certificate. The officer further stated that some girls and women including the indigent children have been sponsored by the Foundation up to National Certificate of Education (NCE) level. The project officer who deals directly with the beneficiaries of the programme revealed that Life Rehabilitation Foundation has a Female Teachers Training Scholarship (FTTS). Direct entry forms and pre-NCE forms are purchased and distributed to women for the Female Teachers Training Scholarship Scheme (FTTS) to enable them improve on their educational standards.

According to the Project Officer of the Foundation, 36 Direct Entry (DE) forms 4 Pre-NCE forms were purchased and distributed to women for Female Teachers Training Scholarship Scheme (FTTS). Furthermore 40 indigent women from rural communities' received 3-4 years scholarship from the Foundation to acquire the

Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) under the FTTS scheme for the year 2008-2010 academic sessions to enable the acquire higher certificates.Aisha beneficiary of the Female Teachers Training scheme testified:

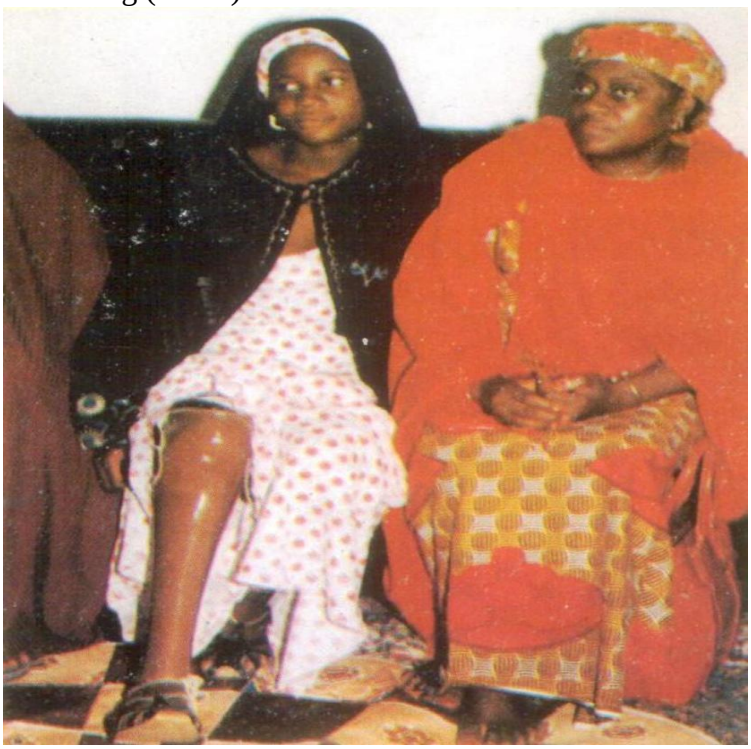
> I wanted to further my studies after my secondary school, but lost my fathershortly after I graduated from the school and Life Rehabilitation Foundation Womanhood gaveme a scholarship under Female Teachers Training Scheme (FTS) to further my studies at the Niger State College of Education to study and have an NCE certificate. I really appreciate the training given to me by the Foundation because now, I am working and assisting my mother as well as my younger brothers and Sisters.(Interview with Aisha Mohammed…at Day Sec SchTungaMinna,Niger State on 25th June 2014.)

To provide mentorship, the founder HajiyaJumiaAliu held an interactive session with female student teachers in Niger State College of Education, Minna,a physically challenged lady, beneficiary of the FTTS scheme was also fitted with artificial leg to empower her to move about freely for her studies. The Foundation also organized an interactivesession with education sector managers with 100 participants which included school principals, educational secretaries, planners, permanent secretaries and legislators to sensitized them on the need for greater funding for education in Niger state and encourage them women to enrol and complete their educational pursuit.

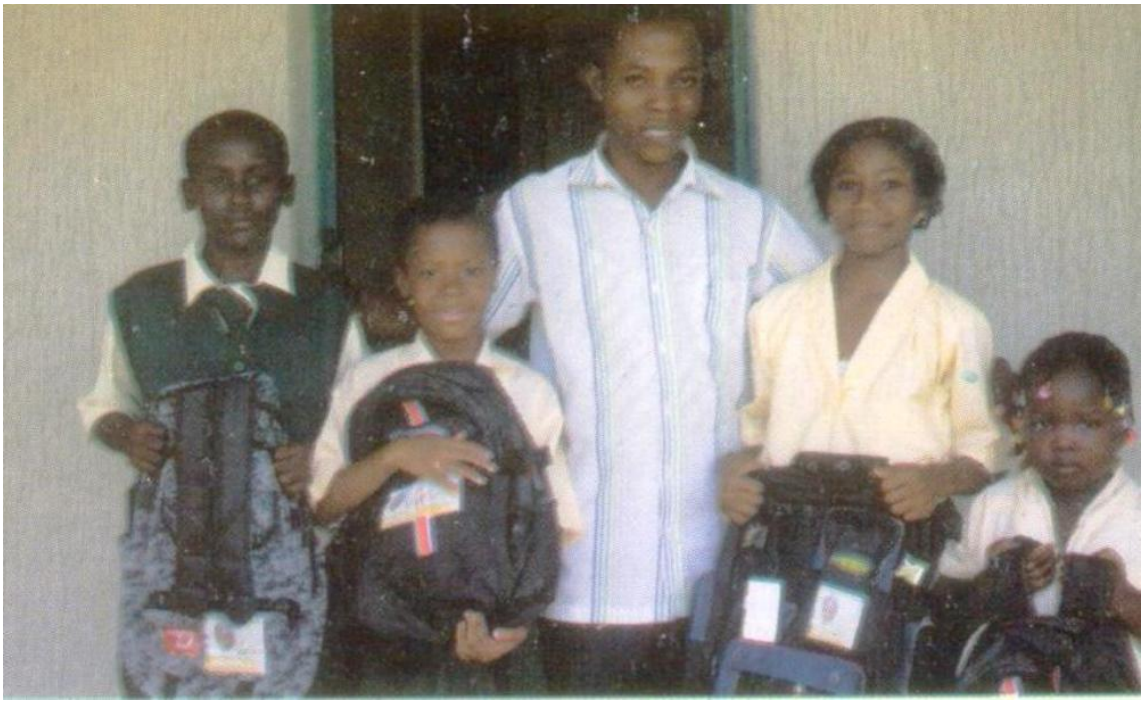
The Communication Officer and the Project Officer stated that the training of women has greatly improved the lives of women within communities in Niger state. Women and girls who were school dropouts have used the opportunity to further their educational pursuit. There has been a rise and improvement in female teacher development which has caused them to be model in their communities.



40 indigent women from rural communities received 3-4 years scholarship from the Foundation to acquire the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) under the Female Teachers Training (FTTS) scheme.



A physically challenged beneficiary of the Female Teachers Training Scholarship Scheme (FTTS) fitted with artificial leg by the Foundation for easy mobility and success in her training and empowerment.



Female pupils supported with school bags, uniforms and books by the Foundation to encourage girls to remain in school.



40 women and school For the Handicapped provided with economic empowerment equipment.

However the researcher, in an interactive interview with some groups of Tunga women who are the main beneficiaries of the programme it was gathered that some of the women are not taking advantage of the programme of the Foundation in the area of educating their children. This is due to the fact that some of their children are either dropout or not attending school while they are of school age. The interview session revealed that some of the women claimed that they were not aware of the scholarship programme of Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood which involves the women and their female children. In the interview, some of the women stated that their daughters were being prepared for marriage and must not necessarily go to school. This reveals that there is a communication gap.

The researcher believes that the absence of participatory communication has limited the impact the Foundation would have achieved in the lives of the women in Tunga community. The Foundation would make a remarkable impact where conscious and direct efforts are made to involve the women in the Foundations activities on literacy and girl child education from the inception. The women will be allowed to make input and take decisions on how the programme can be carried out successfully to impart more on their lives and empower the women and their female children better.

4.9 Discussions and Further Critique

Development communication as described by Rogers (1976) is a widely participatory process of social change in a society intended to bring about greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities for majority of people through their gaining greater control over their environment. However a critical analysis carried out on the communication approaches used by Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood in her entrepreneurial and skill development scheme reveals a top- down form of communication. In other words, communication constitutes an indispensable

part of participatory approaches. If development is to have any relevance to the people who need it most, it must start where the real needs and problems exist, that is from the women. Research from the field revealed that the Board of Trustees and the Implementation Team of the Foundationplan develop activities according to the work plan of the Foundation without considering the input of the women who are the beneficiaries of the entire empowerment programme.

According toOkwori(2013), in participation all key stakeholders have a right to play an active and influential part in shaping the decisions which affect their lives. Often people affected by development are not fully included in the process of local action on development even though it is they who have to live with the outcomes of a programme. This means that the views and opinions of people affected by development are not just listened to, but also heard. Their voices should have the power to shape and control local actions. The research from the field revealed that most of the communication approaches used by the Foundation aremobilization and sensitization approaches. These approaches are not strong enough to empower the women.

According to Freire (1970), communication should be used to provide for dialogue; exchange of views, identifying common problems, exploring solutions, reflecting on community issues and mobilizing resources.

The concept of dialogue involves relationship between the participants. There are different types of participation, and not all of these types will allow people to actively and influentially shape decisions which affect their lives. Participation in this sense is crystallized not in terms of meremobilization, sensitization, and use of town hall meetings with the women alone but should involve sharing ideas, analysing, making choices and transforming those choices into a desired outcome that will yield positive result and sustainable empowerment of the women.

From the study carried out the various interviews and discussions revealed that empowering women as part of sustainable development needs not to be decided in faraway offices but to follow guiding principles of empowerment participation. This involves effective and activedialogue, created analysis, negotiation, sharing and debate and creating an atmosphere and platform of robust discussion among the Tunga women who form the key stakeholders and programme beneficiaries. Communication groups should seek their consent on the type of skills to acquire for empowerment and other socio-cultural and economic issues of life. The process should begin with the women with their active involvement; planning and implementation and even evaluation process should mainstream them in whatever development agenda that the Foundation is bringing their way. It is on this account that the Life Rehabilitation Foundation's interventioncanstrongly impact the lives of Tunga women and make meaningful empowerment for greater productivity, healthy living and sustainable development.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the summary of the research and generates conclusion and recommendations based on the analysis of the results of the study on Communication and Women Empowerment in Tunga Community: A critical study of Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood, Minna.

5.1 Summary

Thisstudy was embarked on to appraise the process and nature of communication approaches used by Life Rehabilitation Foundation for womanhood to facilitate empowerment among women in Tunga community. To carry out this study effectively, there was background information leading to the proper understanding of this study, the statement of the research problem was stated, the aim and three objectives were provided.

Related literature on communication, empowerment and participation were reviewed. A theoretical frame work that underpinned the study was also stated. The main instrument for gathering the data of this study is interview method, observation method, internet and library and documents of the Foundation. The data gathered is presented in chapter four in thematic form.

5.2 Key Findings

The key findings of this study include the following

i. The Foundation’s aim and objectives are to empower women using Entrepreneurial andskill development, stimulating women participation in government at all levels, improving the health and nutritional status of women and children, and improving literacy level among women to a minimum level of

basic education and contribute to the improvement of girl child enrolment and retention in school.

ii. The study revealed that Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood trained and empowered women through their skill acquisition centre in skills like hair dressing, tailoring, rice farming and milling, cassava production, liquid soap making, Shea butter production, goat and sheep raring, fish farming etc and also support the women with working materials like sewing machines, hair dryers, designing machines, deep freezers, coolers as well as working capital to start up their own businesses within Niger state. The Foundation empowered women through scholarship in secondary and higher institution of learning to further their education.

iii. The study revealed the low level of participation of Tunga women in the Foundation's entire communication approaches to intervention and this hindered their effective empowerment.

5.3 Recommendations

Below are recommendations for the study in view of the findings above;

i. Empowerment participation strategy should be fused into the strategies of the Foundation to enable Tunga women effectively take part in the initiative so as to gain sustainability.

ii. This research strongly advocates the use of cultural forms of communication for awareness creation and sensitization of the Tungacommunity. These should be done in a participatory manner.

iii. The Foundation should invest in sexual and reproductive health, including community health approaches to tackle maternal mortality, meeting unmet need in family planning and addressing high adolescent fertility rates, as well as

ensuring thatTunga women living with HIV have their reproductive health needs met and are able to participate fully in shaping policy to tackle the pandemic.

iv. There should be appropriate strategies and institutional mechanisms to reach out to adult female illiterates, particularly disadvantaged women in Tunga community.

5.4 Conclusion

Women around the world often face daunting social, economic, political, and cultural challenges. More needs to be done by governments, non- governmental organizations and the society in general to eliminate all acts of discrimination and laws against women. Women need to be encouraged so that they can take their rightful position in their communities. This can only be achieved when women are actively involved from inception in planning, implementation and evaluation in programmes and activities initiated by the government, non-governmental organizations and the society in generalto empower them in any development agenda so that they can contribute their quota to the development of the nation.

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APPENDIX

List of Key Interviewees

1. Research interview with Mariam Baba, the Communication Officer of life rehabilitation foundation for womanhood
2. Research interview with Isah Aliyu, Project Manager of life rehabilitation foundation for womanhood
3. Research interview with the Talba Crescent Women Group,Tunga, Minna
4. Research interview with EnaMana Women Group, Agai
5. Research interview with Mashegu Women in Health Cooperative Society
6. Research interview with Paiko Devine Women Fisheries Co-operative, Chanchga
7. Research interview with HajiyaSalamatu, a Widow in Tunga Community.
8. Research interview with Aisha, a Female Teacher Training Scheme Beneficiary

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I am Bridget NgunanMue, a Postgraduate Student of Development Communication, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria undergoing a research thesis on the topic "participatory *Communication and Women Empowerment: A Critical Review of Life Rehabilitation Foundation for Womanhood in tunga community.*" I will be immensely honoured and delighted to have your time and cooperation for the success of this project.

Information of Respondent

1. Name:----------
2. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. Age:----------
4. Community----------
5. Occupation----------

Checklist

1. What kind of communication is being promoted and deployed by life rehabilitation foundation for womanhood.
2. Do women group participate in setting goals or agenda for their own empowerment?
3. What are the channels used in communicating to the women on the activities of the organization.
4. How is the empowerment programme or activities of life rehabilitation foundation for womanhood affecting your life?
5. Are there socio-cultural challenges or requirement for participation?
6. Are there forms of communication that could encourage participation and provoke sustainable empowerment?
7. How are these communication forms used?
8. To what extent are they impacting on the lives of the women?
9. What are the constraints and challenges associated with the deployment of communication in the intervention?