AN ASSESSMENT OF JAMA'A DIALOGUE FORUM AS A PARTICIPATORY PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGER STATE, 2008-2012

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AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, NIGERIA

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BEING A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, NIGERIA,IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF AMASTER OF ARTS DEGREE (M.A) IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

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FEBRUARY, 2017

DECLARATION

I ONIFADE, OLAWALE ABAYOMI declare that the work in this dissertation entitled "**An Assessment of Jama'a Dialogue Forum as a Participatory Platform for Community Development in Niger State,2008-2012**" has been carried out by me in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria under the supervisions of Prof. M. I. Umar-Buratai and Dr. (Mrs.) RasheedahLiman. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this project was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other Institution.

OlawaleAbayomi ONIFADE	_____	_____
Name of Student	Signature	Date

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled "**AnAssessment of Jama'a Dialogue Forum as a Participatory Platform for Community Development in Niger State,2008-2012**" by ONIFADE; OLAWALE ABAYOMI meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts (M.A) in Development Communication of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies	Signature	Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the glory of God and my lovely family for their support during the course of this programme.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation assesses the use of People's Dialogue Forum (Jama'a Forum) as a platform for participatory community development in Niger State. The fact that communicating and implementing community development from the top-down is one of the challenges that can affect participation, ownership and sustainability of community development projects. Thus, Niger State government in an effort to ensure that the people enjoy the dividends of democracy and to make the people have a sense of ownership of community projects came up with a community dialogue forum strategy. This dialogue forum was established to enable government exchange ideas with people on what their needs are and how government can help in achieving them. This study paid critical attention to why most developmental projects implemented in the state are not sustainable, despite the fact that the stakeholders had adjudged the forum to be a laudable people's participatory platform. Through the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods and tools, this study discovered people's participation was denied at projects implementation stage, as government dealt directly with selective representatives (symbolic representation). People were only allowed to participate in discussions and suggestions at the forum's meetings, but were not involved at the projects' implementation stage. Consequently, this resulted in a decline in people's participation and a loss of interest in the Forum's community development projects initiatives. Furthermore, most of the community projects implemented are not the most pressing needs of the people because they were not empowered to own the process, as such; the process lacked higher community development initiatives, ownership and sustainability. Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) and Community Development Theory (CDT) were deployed to underpin this study. For data collection instruments, the Questionnaire, In-depth Interview and the Documentary Observation methods were used to gather responses from the respondents in the adopted communities in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State. Based on the findings, the researcher proposes that the entire planning and implementation of community development projects and initiatives should be left for the people to decide, while government plays supportive and monitory roles. In this way, a community centered and sustainable projects will be achieved by government through people's efforts and voluntary actions.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In an effort to achieve sustainable development, several communication approaches have been introduced in communicating development interventions and project implementation in communities. Some of these communication approaches allow for participation and inclusion, while others do not. The intention of this study is to assess Jama'a Forum, a participatory platform, with a view to determine its effectiveness in communicating sustainable development in Niger State.

1.1 Background to the Study

Community Participation has been a constant theme in developmental dialogues for the past 50 years(Adekola 2010:1). In the 1960s and 1970s, it became central to the process of developing projectsas an appropriate approach for development sustainabilityparticularlyfor the developing countries (Adekola 2010:1). This is evident around the developing world; as a number of initiatives were being taken to make people's participation effective in achieving an ideal model of sustainable development and good governance. Nigeria; the most populous country in Africa has no choice than to align with the rest of the world on this beautiful idea (Adekola 2010:1).For instance, several efforts were made in Nigeria to involve the people in community development activities; Local Government areas were organized in 1996 in Nigeria to engage local people in local development programs. The Local Governmentarrangement calls for a single tier-system with 776 local government bodies. This simply means that the local government bodies in are controlled by a single head in every states in Nigeria.However, developmentalprograms

are still implemented in a top-down process where local people have no access to the local government. “Voting is only one element of citizen participation for Nigerian local government” (Dibie 2003:1066). “Development implementation is controlled by the bureaucrats” (Dibie 2003:1066).

Nevertheless, the advent of democratic governance in Nigeria has served as an impetus to several Non-Governmental Organisations(NGO’s), Government Agencies, and Scholars in the field of Development Communication who are in search of better ways of ensuringsustainable development.Thus, the awareness about the potentials of Community Dialogue Forum and Community Participation has sparked critical consciousness among government and policy makers in Niger State and Nigeria as a whole. Hence, stakeholders and the people are beginning to recognize the importance of Dialogue Forum in communities and itsimpact on development. In view of this recognition, Niger State Government put in place a platform known has ‘Jama’a Dialogue Forum to mobilise and provide a springboard for the people of the State to voice their opinions on how best to empower themselves and affect desired changes accordingly.

Jama’a Dialogue Forum started in Niger State on July 27th 2008. It was initiated by Governor Mu’azuBabangidaAliyu who saw the need to have a communal (round-table) discussion because of the disconnection that exists between the government and the governed.

Hitherto before now, Lieutenant Colonel Garba Ali Mohammed, the Military Administrator of Niger State in 1986 had initiated a similar forum which was referred to as People’s Dialogue Forum. However, this forum was held three times before a public confrontationensued between the administrator and the people,and led to the suspension of

the Dialogue Forum in the State. Thereafter, the introduction of a democratic system ofgovernance in Nigeria, which allows participation of people in the process of decision and policy making, re-opened the need for a Dialogue Forum. In view of this, Jama'a Dialogue Forum was officially established by Mu'azuBabangidaAliyu(Account of Jama'a Forum Activities in Niger State, 2014:20). The mission of Jama'a Forum is to provide a platform for sourcing reliable information from the peoplein orderto assist the government inproviding the desired needs and aspirations of the people at the grassroots level. For instance, Government, through Jama'a Forum had been able to source information concerning the condition of capital projects in the state andhas immediately taken action on itYahaya, (2014:15). Yahaya further explains thatJama'a Forum is a strategy for community mobilization and participatory engagement that input people into development agendato provide formidable environment for the promotion of capital project in the state and give accelerated development to individual and group creativity.Another mission of Jama'a Forum is to bring government close to the people(Yahaya, 2014:15). This simply implies that governmentprovides a platform for the people to participate in the governing process (voice to the people), allow the people to determine their needs and desiredchange in their community, as well asenable the people check government activities and ensure practical and result oriented government.

Similarly, some objectives were put in place to archive the mission statement of Jama'a Forum: To painstakingly arrive at project agenda through engagement and negotiation that will make the people have a sense of ownership of community projects, enforce democratic accountability on the part of government and bridge the gap between

the government and the governed. Kolos (2008) cited in Account of Jama'a Forum Activities in Niger State, (2014:7)clarifies that:

> To achieve the afore-listed objectives of the Jama'a Forum, the Governor, the Executive Council and Directorate of Jama'a Forum defied all odds to sit under the same canopy with the people of the community. When it is the time for the Governor to speak he stands up and responds to the people's numerous questions. He sometimes allows the Executive Council, Directors, DGs and other arrowheads of the Forum to stand up to give answers to the questions and complaints of the people(Kolos, (2008) in Account of Jama'a Forum Activities in Niger State, 2014:7).

Kolos clarifies that Jama'a Dialogue Forum is conducted on quarterly basis by the Governor, Members of the Executive Council and Jama'a Forum Directorates' Heads. Hefurther explains that instead of town Hall meeting, the Dialogue Forum meets with the communities in open-air where everybody in that local government or communities is a participant. Each community sometimes provides a representative to ask a question, in order to save time because everybody cannot be given a chance to talk, otherwise the meeting will be held for many days in one community. So the representative, who might have earlier discussed some salient issues with his or her community members, comes out as a mouth piece to tell the Executive Council the mind of the community and the project they agreed on amidst people in the forum' dialogue meeting.

Hence, if the representative chosen by the communities identifies the communityneeds and challenges, the Executive and the Forum directorates will collate the entire request made by the community representatives, then give answers to all the questions that needed urgent response and immediate action. The Governorensures that some of the requests were included in the budget, but where the issues are matters of urgency, he directs the necessary Ministry to take over instantly. For instance, the issue of leaking roof of schools, lack of chairs; benchand desk, teaching facilities, health care

centres and others that cannot wait for budget implementation are addressed as fast as possible (Account of Jama'a Forum Activities in Niger State, 2014:20).

AbdullahiBawa the Commissioner, Ministry for Local Government, Community Development and Chieftaincy Affairs, Niger State, explains thatso far, the Directorate had executed a total of 1,600 projects and 200 projects are on-going. The project includes: clinics, schools, drainages, roads, culverts, places of worship, palace renovations, electrification, bore-holes (both motorized, solar and hand-dug) court renovations, police station renovations and so on(Account of Jama'a Forum Activities in Niger State, 2014:20). With all achievements, the peopleperceived the contributions of Jama'a Forum as astep in the right direction. They therefore see the contributions as significant pointers to democratic dividends. Thus, they explain that with the various substantial projectsinitiated, owned, claimed and maintained by the people, there isno doubt that in conception, design and execution, the Forum is a facility for social development and perhaps the most important informal avenue thatbrings the electorate and their elected representatives together for the purpose of dialogue in an atmosphere of mutual respect and responsibility, for the betterment and transformation of Niger State. This study therefore seeks to assess the activities of Jama'a Forum in order to establish its relevance in facilitating sustainable participatory development in Niger State.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

In an effort to involve people in governance and the execution of development projects, theNiger State Government established "Jama'a Dialogue Forum" as a platform to give citizens the opportunity and leverage to participate in the planning and implementation of community projects, in order to achievesustainable development. The idea of this is to make people enjoy the dividends of democracy. However, contrary to the aspiration of

achieving sustainable participatory development, there is public dissatisfaction over themanner and conduct of Jama'a Forum's activities especially its claim to participation side-by-side with the absence of people's involvement in project location and implementation. Consequently, there is apparent loss of interest in the Forum's activities, evident from the decline of participation in its programmes and the abandonment of projects in the communities.

Adjudging from the foregoing, the imperative is to assess the extent of participation in Jama'a Forum with a view to determining its relevance as a participatory platform for facilitating sustainable development in Niger State.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to assessJama'a Dialogue Forum, a participatory platform, with a view to determine its effectiveness in communicating sustainable development in Niger State.

1.4 Objectives of the study

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the nature of participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation.
2. Determine factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation.
3. Identify ways through which people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation can be achieved.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

1. What is the nature of participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation?
2. What are the factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation?
3. How can people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation be achieved?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Community Participatory Dialogue Forum is a concept that tends to bring different stakeholders together for problem solving and decision making. This implies that, the process of Community Participatory Dialogue involves people in the community in project implementation with little or no external assistance. Lately, Governmental Agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Development Communicators and Community Development Facilitators are being officially challenged to begin to increase and improve their communication strategies and approaches, to engage, interact, encourage and empower community members to be more participatory by jointly participating in the processes of community development projects. In the light of this, Thwala (2010:974) explains that for community participation to be successful, project must include special components such as dialoguing with villagers in all phases of designing, implementing, monitoring, supervising and evaluating the project.

Meanwhile, Okafor (2005:28) concludes that when communities participate in their own project, the following are usually observed: local participation yields better projects, better outcomes, greater transparency and accountability enhances service delivery and also encourages donor harmonisation. That is why, Olukontun (2008:21) in firm support for the idea of participatory community dialogue in project implementation, clarifies that

development is meaningless if it does not harness the potential of the beneficiaries who are the primary stakeholders. It is therefore the active involvement of these primary stakeholders in project of their own that will enhance sustainability in community development. This implies that the role of Community Dialogue Forum cannot be jettisoned in the overall process of initiating a sustainable community development project. However, it was noticed that the inappropriate involvement of the people in community development projects most times haveadverse effect onpeople's participation, representation and implementation of community development projects.

Therefore, this study isnecessary because it will help examine the level of people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects in Niger State. It will also help in identifying the possible factors responsible for decline in people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community developmental projects and also identify ways through which Jama'a Dialogue Forum can regain people's full participation through community Dialogue Forum because it is essential for the sustainability of developmental projects.

Furthermore, the outcome of this work will provide workable solutions to encourage active community participation in the formation of community development, improvement in the living conditions of the rural people and other community based developmentproject that government will embark on in future. It is further hoped that the findings will serve as a frame of reference for the development programmes which are taking place in rural areas in Nigeria.

Additionally, findings of this research will provide a leeway for Niger State Government, development communicators, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and

Community Facilitators to achievean effective and sustainable community developmental project through a well organised community dialogue forum in the State. It willserve as a reference point for the Federal Government Agencies saddled with the responsibility of initiating developmental projects in the country.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is centred on the use of Jama'a Dialogue Forum as a participatory platform for community development in Niger State.

In order to find out from the field the nature ofparticipation in Jama'a dialogue Forum's community development projects and to identify the factors responsible for decline in people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects, six communities were selected in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State. The six selected communities Egwa/Gwada, Gussoro/Zumba, Ubandoma, Kato, Bangajiya and Lapa/She are under Kuta the Headquarters of Shiroro Local Government Area in Niger State. The reason for selecting these six communities in Kuta the Head Quarters of Shiroro Local government is because Kuta is cosmopolitan (multiethnic) in nature. That is, Kuta the Headquarters of Shiroro Local government consist of different ethnic groups such as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Nupe, but predominantly Gbagyi, unlike rural communities in other Local Government Areas where almost ninety-five percent of its residents are one tribe (Niger State Bureau of Statistics, 20014 and Kuta, 2008:39). These communities were also selected becauseit gives the researcher theadvantage of gathering information from several tribes in the stateworking in Local, State and Federal government ministries and parastatalswho are educated and capable of fillingcopies of questionnaire properly.As such, itenables the researcher gatheradequate and cross reference information that will enhance the findings of this study. Also to get more views on Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community

development projects implementation in Niger State the researcher interacted with the non-educated residents of the selected communities for further background information.

Similarly, in order to balance the information gathered in this study, video documentation of Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community activities in twelve (12) Local Governments Areas within 5years (2008-2012) were studied. These Local Government Areas are Lapai Local Government 26th March 2008, Magama (Nasko) Local Government 12th March 2008, Bida 27th March 2008, Shiroro (Kuta) 18th April, 2009, Bangi Local Government 28th August 2009 and SabonWuse, Tafa Local Government 11thAugust 2010. Others include, Mokwa Local Government 15th April 2010, Edati Local Government 21th April 2008, KontagoraLocal Government 26th January 2008, Rijau Local Government 13th March 2009, Agaie Local Government and Borgu Local Government 24th June 2009,as well as, United Nations (UN) and Jama'a Forum's activities in Niger State, 11th August 20012.

1.8 Terminologies

Jama'a Dialogue Forum

Jama'a Dialogue Forum in this study refers to a dialogue platform that brings the government and the governed (people) together on a "communal; round-table" discussion, in order to close the disconnection that exists between them. The word 'Jama'a' means 'People', therefore, Jama'a Dialogue Forum means People's Dialogue Forum. A dialogue platform established by Niger State government to source reliable information from the peopleto assist government procure the desired needs and aspirations of the people at the grassroots (community).

Community ownership

Community ownership in this study means collective ownership, collective mobilization and organized action that entail a new kind of awareness-building. A strategic and coordinated action of communities and popular movements to gather together people for community development initiative and decision-making, for the benefit of a small, less powerful and the ruling class in communities.

Community Dialogue Forum

In this study community dialogue refers to any purposeful interaction and interpersonal conversation among the people in community towards a common goal and social well-being (community development). This mostly happens when community members gather together to talk about concerns, opportunities and plans. It can involve two people talking, thirty people meeting at the community hall, or anything in between, in order to identify needed changes, own the changes and sustained it for the benefit of the whole community.

Sustainable Development

There are many definitions for sustainable development. For the purpose of this work, Brundtland definition is adopted which state that sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations.The process where by a project or program continues even after external support (sponsor) has been phased out. The indicators of sustainability include project continuity, continued injection of resources into the projects by the communities, continued existence of the project structures that were established from the beginning, among others.

Assessment

The term assessment in this study means monitoring and evaluation of community development projects implementation and other activities meant to improve community situations.

Community participation

This is the active involvement of people in the design, implementation and evaluation of activities meant to improve their situations. It is also an active process where the people themselves, guided by their own thinking and using institutions and mechanisms over which they can exert effective control, take initiatives.

Development projects

These are a set of related activities directed towards achieving specific goals. They are usually meant to address problems in the communities.

Community managed projects

These are projects that are designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated by the communities themselves.

Beneficiaries

These are the targeted population who directly reap from the projects implemented in the communities.

Accountability

This refers to providing evidence that a previously agreed pact has been fulfilled and reasons for any short falls given in a transparent or open manner. Level of accountability here is measured by honesty of communities to Plan, level of trust of project

committee members by communities and level of community involvement in major project decisions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature reviewed in this chapter is basedon Rural Development in Nigeria, Community Development, Community Participatory, Dialogue Forum, Decision Making, Empowerment and Capacity Building, Ownership and Sustainable Development, as well as Empirical Studies. This chapter also consists of the theoretical framework used to underpin this study.

2.1 Rural Development in Nigeria

After the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the need for massive reconstruction work led to a revival of the communal spirit of self-help which is deeply rooted in their rich traditions. Most communities realized that the only way for immediate reconstruction of the war-ravaged facilities was through self-help (Adagba, 2002:16). This period also marked the evolution of a multiplicity of social clubs with aims that arein consonance with social insurance and self-help. Further efforts by government to motivate development at the grassroots led to the enactment of the 1976 Local Government Reform to create new growth centres for further spatial spread of development (Dibie 2003:1066). In addition, the creation of local government service commission at the state level, the conferment of wider powers and functions to the Local Governments by the 1979 constitution and the enactment of the special Development Fund Law, generated more funds for community development at the local level(Nwosu et al; 2007).

. Thus, deliberate government support became necessary to increase the spate of development activities by the various communities. The period between 1973 and 2007

marked a watershed in rural development efforts in Nigeria (Chigbo 2001:15). The period witnessed deliberate government efforts at mobilizing the people for rural development. A number of task forces and bodies were set up to oversee, organize and to direct partnership with the people on self-help activities. They include: Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural infrastructure (DFRRI), Rural Electrification Schemes; Credit Schemes to small holders through various specialized institutions such as People's Bank, Agricultural and Cooperative Development Bank, Community Banks, NERFUND, SME Credit Schemes, the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Universal Primary Education Schemes and Low Cost Housing Schemes, Health Scheme as the Primary Health Care Programme, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life for Rural Women Programme as well as the Family Support Programme (FSP). More recent programmes include the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) as well as the Small and Medium Industries Equity Investment Schemes (SMIEIS). Various State Governments had also articulated blueprints on rural development, adopting the Integrated Rural Development Strategy as their strategic option to carry development to the masses (Nnoli, 1993: 220). From the foregoing historical analysis, two principles underlying community development activities have emerged. These are:

i. The principle of individual and corporate survival and
ii. The principle of societal "felt need".

These two principles have variously acted as the motivational force in organizing and mobilising the people in the pursuit of self-development and development of the communities in which they reside (Muoghalu, 1992:18).

Reacting to this, Onikosi, (2008:190) explains that one of the problems with Nigerian leaders is the failure of non-involvement of the people in policies, decision making and developmental programmes among others. Also, those who hold political offices see complete participation or dialoguing with the people at the grassrootsinevery development intervention as a threat and a personal confrontation to their authority and therefore should be resisted by **'talking to'** the people instead of **'talking with'** (dialogue) them. In agreement with the submission of Onikosi, Abah (2004:140) affirms that people are always talking; talking about many different things (work, joy, pain, freedom, etc.). But it is also a common observation that people's voices were always ignored when they are crying against injustice, against oppression and suppression of freedom(Abah, 2004:140). It is observed that government most times prefers to ignore voices when they are calling for change. This implies that government is erroneously jettisoning the place of the people participation in development issues. In the same vein, Rahman (2005:56) explicates that government must encourage participation and ensure transparency, accountability and predictable governance for its people. Viewing it from the idea of community development, Manowong and Ogunlana (2006:43) argue that the concept of community development "has to be not just pro-people or people-centered; it has to be owned by people". This establishes the fact that good leadership is a fundamental element for community development in Nigeria. Good leadership enhances community development.

This study is strongly in agreement with the submissions of these scholars quoted above, in the sense that, the quest for development which is the desire to transform the country by providing infrastructure, ensuring human capital development as well as social and political development is far from realization in Africa, most especially in Nigeria.

Therefore, one may say thatthe concept of community development exist merely in utopian; as ordinary paper work and propaganda.Government in Nigeria is yet to fully encourage participation and ensure transparency, accountability and predictable governance for its people.Many decision, policies and development project are still implemented in top-down approach, government still talking to people instead of talking with them. Therefore, there is a need for an urgent awareness on the importance and the advantage of effective participation of people in governance and development initiatives in Nigeria. In order to ensure thatdevelopment is not pro-people or people-centered only, but it has to be owned by people, as Manowong and Ogunlana (2006:43) put it.

2.2 Community Development

Community development combines two words, community and development. The first is based on people's interaction while the second is based on proposed action (Floral & Floral, 1993). The term community has many interpretations. In the social sciences, community generally refers to a group that has some sense of shared identity and belonging, often within a geographic and political context, where they satisfy many of their needs (Schaefer, 2004:297). Communities have common values, traditional interests, institutions and experiences. They also have social networks and systems within and beyond boundaries such as mutual help, traditional and social safety nets, which build support and cooperation. In this sense, community evokes the ideal of a homogeneous social group with shared interest. Members work together harmoniously for the common good of all (Cornwall, 2006:27). That is, working together for the common good and shared interest is mostly towards the development of their community. While, in a social context; 'development' is often seen as 'a social evolution framework and often refers to the notion of a better life and is frequently expressed in economic terms' (Kenny 2006:11). A

commonunderstanding of the process of development is that, it is closely related to qualification and statistical indications such as income percentage, literacy rate and productivity. These types of measurements are regularly used to demonstrate the extent of the development of a country (UNPFA, 2003; UNDP, 2003). However, genuine development in any given sense goes beyond the initiators. Kenny (2006) describes the 'key objectives' of development as:

> Increasing the availability and widening the distribution of sustaining goods such as food and shelter, social fabrics as well as raising the standards of living and expanding the range of economic and socio-cultural choices that are mostly endogenous and sometimes exogenously needed to secure the means of obtaining a better life (Kenny 2006;11).

This simply means that community development is the process where a local community advances processes that necessitate the need for initiation of projects, programmes, and interventions that would and could lead to the improvement of infrastructure, educational and economic empowerment.Thus, helping their community become better fundamentally, so as to enable them manage transformation (Melkote and Steeves, 2001; Servaes 2002 and Srampickal, 2006). Community development also involves the improvement of decision-making process. It is not just about improving the situation of a community economically but also ensuring that the community functions strongly by itself. It is about the overall direction of being in a community. Therefore, community development means that 'a community itself engages in a process aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental situation of the community' (Cavaye, 2001:3).

Considering all the above descriptions and definitions, emphasis on community development approach is placed on empowering individuals through education, training and equal opportunities to participate in a wider social, cultural and organizational context, where all sectors of the community can become involved. Helping a community to build its

capability for development is the primary goal of community development. Its aim involve building social capital, strengthening the social interaction within the community that can later lead to genuine dialogue, understanding or social action (Talbot and Verrinder, 2005; Ife, 2006). Importantly, it is clear that community development is all about improving the abilities of individuals within a community to collectively make better decisions about the use of local resources and knowledge. The concept of community development involves increasing individual participation and networking in a community. It is essential to recognize participation as a means of strengthening local communities and to build people's skills in community issues, as this is vital to the survival of local community (Talbot and Verrinder 2005). For this to take place, the community members will also need to be able to engage with each other (dialogue) and find solutions to issues that affect them as a group. Furthermore, community residents are encouraged and allowed to come together, plan, generate solutions and take action. This process develops the evolution of the social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of the community.

The term community development again refers to an approach, a profession, a method or an intervention and is applied in many disciplines including sociology, anthropology, psychology, social work, and economics. Community development is about how one interprets when initiating community development programmes (Christenson and Robinson, 1989). However, Cavaye (2002) clarifies that:

> The basic elements of collective action, ownership and improved circumstances are common to all the ideas. There many slight differences in emphasis. For example, while community capacity building focuses on enhancing the assets and abilities of the community, the term is essentially synonymous with community development (Cavage, 2002:4).

The researcher is inagreement with Cavaye (2002) statement above becausecommunity development is a multidisciplinary field that is frequently associated with terms such as

community engagement, community capacity building, community strength, empowerment, rural development and self-reliance. Most of these are methodologies or processes that could be evolved and adopted collectively and inclusively to allow participants achieve the target and needed community development. That is why Kretzmann(2005) explains thata successful community development engagement approach is commonly asset based; need sharing, internally focused and relationship driven as well as ownership intervention by the community. But Dunham (2010:172) in a different view describes community development as a process of developing the people by engaging and empowering them to act positively for the social goods of their community. Similarly, Williams (2010:16) assertsthatcommunity development entails that the people themselves exert their own efforts along-side those of government authorities to improve their economic, social and cultural conditions. However, Okafor (2005) is of the opinion that if the initiative is not forthcoming from members of the community concerned, then the government can stimulate their interest through various strategies, including enlightenment campaigns, the initiation of projects and financial aid for specific projects. Williams (2010:17) has identified four essential elements in the complex process of community development:

i. it encourages analysis of local problems with a view to improving the level of living and as much as possible on the initiative of those concerned;
ii. it provides technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative and cooperation;
iii. It considers the local community, the basic unit for planning and development; and
iv. It diffuses the decision-making power by emphasizing the principle that those affected by community change should themselves select and manage such change.

This implies that, community development can only be achieved by letting people have a say through participation and engagement in their development.

Concurring with thescholars' definition and explanation of community development above, the researcher believes that community development is not concerned with anyone aspect of life such as agriculture, business, health or education: it is concerned with the total community life and needs. Ideally, it involves all the members of the community and requires their fullest participation in first making and then implementing decisions. The people work together to shape their future. However, this can only be achieved if the governments, leaders and the system of government existing in such community allow the full participation of the people in all sphere of development and decision making processes. Anything otherwise, meaningful development is far from realization.Thus, the concept of rural development depends largely on the existence of committed community indigenes and leaders in the rural areas who are concerned. It also depends on the extent to which government encourages local planning and participation.

2.3 Philosophy of Community Development

In many developing countries in Africa and Asia, community development activities are dependent on and influenced by governments through socio-economic and political policies. These policies are commonly 'implemented through public administrative structures' (Kenny, 2006:13). In these developing countries, the government and the public administrative agents are the 'community development practitioners because they have the fund. They have the capability to take action, and to empower their community to understand and achieve the objectives of the planned community development programmes' (Kenny, 2006:235). Ideally, government and its development agencies can act as facilitator. However, it is the community that needs to mobilize themselves, control the

decisions, and take actions on available community resources; then the government and its development agencies can help by assisting the community as part of social responsibility or at the invitation of the community (Cavaye, 2004). This is because the community members themselves are in the best position to identify their needs and problem solving solutions. The role of development practitioners generally leans more towards facilitating rather than direction, because development was viewed as a 'process of helping the community to achieve a goal' (Green 2011:72) through starring up consciousness, concernedness and actions which Community Dialogue Forum has a role to play prominently in this study. Furthermore, in many situations development facilitators and practitioners often help community members to identify the potential resources of the local community that will enhance the community's capacity to address their opportunities. These they do by deploying methodological processes like need assessment, pair-wise ranking, community action board and community dialogue that can help in organizing the community's effort and enable them achieve their goals.

Additionally, attempting to bring people together, participatory Dialogue Platform (Forum) is a viable means of achieving effective participation, decision-making, inclusiveness, knowledge sharing, leadership, evaluation and sustainability (Christenson and Robbinson, 1980; Green, 2011).

From the explanations on the idea (philosophy) community development, the researcher is totally in disagreement with Kenny (2006) and Cavaye(2004) submission that say that the communities are the one that need to mobilize themselves, control the decisions, and take actions on available community resources; then the government and its development agencies can only help by assisting the community as part of social

responsibility or at the invitation of the community. In most part of the world governmenthardly allowcommunities to freely mobilize themselves, control the decisions, and take actions on available community resources. Also, there is rarely any government institution across the world, no matter how democratic, would freely allow a community to identify their needs and problem solving solutions without any interference. Take for instance,in Nigeria many communities had mobilised and organised themselves for the ideally and painted picture of community development process by Kenny and Cavaye, but several time government in fear of over empowering the people, several time has denied communities (people) the control of decisionsand taking actions on available community resources. Most community development process in Nigeria is controlled by the government and it agencies, the people are just passive recipient. Therefore, Kenny (2006), Cavaye(2004)Christenson and Robbinson, (1980) and Green, (2011) explain that the idea of the ideal community development process is far from being a reality in Nigeria. This is because several community development interventions are still being carried out in a top-down approach. Thus, to address this issues participation and involvement of the people in community development initiatives must be intensely instituted.

2.4 Participation and Involvement in Community Development

Participation and involvement is a widely used concept in community development. According to contemporary development scholars like Melkote and Steves (2001), Inagaki, (2007), Tufte and Mefalopolous (2009), participation and involvement places emphasis on people having a role in decision making.Particularly, the people who are usually excluded from having control over resources and institutions. In community development practice, there is no superior line to distinguish the difference between the terms ‘participation’ and ‘involvement’ and vice versa. Both participation and involvement enable people to

influence activities or programmes in such a way as to enhance their wellbeing and they are therefore viewed as integral to the empowerment process. Furthermore, participation in community development can be viewed as an outcome or as a process (Ife, 2002; Kenny 2011). It refers to individual's engagement with a project or activities at different levels (Cavaye 2001; Ife 2002; Kenny, 2011). This describes how participation can become a meansto a predetermined and short-term process to mobilise and achieve an objective; and also end a long-term process, to actively and dynamically empower a community development effort or programme (Oakley, 1991; Cavaye, 2001; Kenny and Clarke, 2010).

Participation will be based on the lower levels of the ladder-to be fully engaged in a process,while involvement refers to the upper levels of the ladder-to be involved and be committed. Ideally, a community is expected to participate, be involved in their own local community development programmes or activities (Kenny, 2010). Encouraging participation is a difficult task and requires hard work. However, it is fundamental for the community to understand that non-participation is neither natural nor inevitable. They need to know that participation is a critical part of the community development process.Currently, participation within intervention has become widely accepted as a minimum requirement for a successful and sustainable community development outcome (Clarke, 2010). The community Dialogue Forum that this study examines is primarily based on participation and involvement of the community members and stakeholders in developmental discussions; with the view of achieving the sustainability of whatever decision on development that is reached at the end of the dialogue forum(Hoeper, 2007). This therefore, requires a substantial Decision Making process through a meticulous dialogue forum and consensus of opinions.

2.5 Decision-Making

Decision-making is another important element of development idea, which is largely adopted in Community Dialogue Forum approaches to develop project initiation, design, implementation and evaluation. Through this process, members of the community come together and make collective and communal decisions through identification of their most pressing needs (needs assessment). This process could be very tasking and time consuming but painstakingly carried out for the overall interest and good of the community. Everyone is allowed to participate and share in the process, as it is an all-inclusive process, which is aimed at achieving collectiveness of decision. In achieving a successful community decision-making, the community members must first share basic beliefs and values of the community. According to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural affairs, successful decision-making requires that,

> Every community members has to have strength and concern about their needs, they must also have the ability to solve their own problems and achieve their own goals accordingly. They have to realize that decision-making must suit the area where the challenge exists and that they must encourage involvement and participation by all those affected at each stage of the process. Most importantly communities need to identify their own needs, set priorities, plan for the future and take responsibility for their own future (OMAFRA, 2011).(ife, 2006)(Placeholder1)

This statement above simply implies that the benefit of community decision-making process is that it can contribute to broadening the knowledge and understanding of an issue. In addition, it can reflect and promote broader discussion of a problem and enhance the quality of the decision-making in assisting the local community's social and economic process. But the problem and the reality is thatcommunity members can only be allow to have strength and concern about their needs, but most time do not have the have the ability to solve their own problems and achieve their own goals accordingly. They are deniedparticipation and involvement in decision-making, let alone allowing the people

identifying communities' needs, setting priorities, planning and taking responsibility for their own future. This is because several community development initiatives all over the world, especially Nigeria still characterised with bureaucratic and bottleneck(top-down) approaches. That is, non-involvement and non-participation of the communities who the development initiative is targeted at. Therefore, community participation in development initiativesis anindispensablefeaturebecause its approach involves active movement of people in the design and implementation of community needs; for better standard of living of the whole community.

2.6 Community Participation

The conceptof community participation is compelling because it acknowledges that permanent improvements in living standards are rarely attainable without the involvement and cooperation of the beneficiaries. De Berry (1999) suggests that the participatory approach credits people with the ability even in the most extreme circumstances –to engage with the issues that face them. Although initially inspired by the ideas of Gandhi (1962) and Freire (1970). Also, the writings of Chambers (1983), Escobar (1995), Scott (1998) and Sen (1985, 1999) amongst others have helped raised support for a bottom-up approach. This simply means, allowing the people at the grassrootsto take over their community development initiatives with or without external interference. According to Burkey (2000:59) community participation involves organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in a given social situation, on the part of groups and movement of those hitherto excluded from such control. Kakumba and Nsingo (2008:109) explain that community participation lies on the involvement of citizens in a wide range of administrative policy-making activities, including the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects in order to orient

government programmes toward community needs, build the entire public support, and encourage a sense of cohesiveness and humanity within the society. The common belief is that involving citizens in rural programmes and empowering them have the potential to boost their livelihoods and foster development in their area (Kakumba and Nsingo, 2008:109). The development efforts should start by recognizing people's potential, and proceeds to their enhancement and growth.

Community Participation in development is being sought world over. As a result of this, it is seen as a platform capable of empowering the primary beneficiaries of developmental programmes or projects by helping them to break away from a dependency mentality (Burkey, 2000:53). Creighton (2005:19) also explains that community participation promotes self-confidence and self-awareness. Nampila (2005:40) agrees that this heightened consciousness makes people continuously aware of the reality about them and of their own capacity to transform it. When people have the freedom to participate in activities, it gives them dignity and self-respect (Ministry of Agriculture.1993:37). Likewise, community participation encourages community self-reliance. Many development interventions have been seen to create a kind of dependence syndrome. For instance, in India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, and other developing countries, thereare widespread of government development programmes such as: road construction, rural health scheme, poverty eradication programmes and bore-hole water construction. Thus, these development programmes had made people to start depending on government for solutions to every problem that they face (Kumar, 2002:27). The ultimate objective embraces all the positive effects of genuine participation by rural people. Self-reliance demolishes their over-dependency attitudes, enhances awareness, confidence and self-

initiative. It also increases people's control over resources and development efforts, enables them to plan and implement and also to participate in development efforts at levels beyond their community. As such, it will teach communities how to resolve conflicts and allows for different perspectives to be heard. In this way, learning is promoted and people will be able to help themselves (Baum, 1999 in Nampila, 2005:41). Communities will be able to assess their own situation, organise themselves as a powerful group and work creatively towards changing society and building up a new world Nampila (2005:41). This increased capacity of individuals, allow communities to mobilise and help themselves to minimise dependence on the state and leads to a bottom-up approach (Nampila, 2005:41).

Similarly, community participation contributes to the development of appropriate policy, legislation and regulations. When people participate, it assists them in identifying key issues of concern that need to be considered. Due to diversity of opinions and perspectives from different role players, community participation helps to obtain a balanced perspective of key issues and to identify creative solutions to problems.For example, the partnership-in-planning approach and community dialogue forum (interaction). Ordinarily, community participation is difficult to state. The social, economic, educational and other conditions of a community differ from those of other communities; as such their forms and degrees of involvements in development activities vary. It is therefore a continuum of involvements of people in decision making processes in order to implement programmes, share benefits of development programmes, as well as evaluate such programmes.

The characteristic feature of this type of community participation is that people are given the chance to ‘formulate’ their own development, to influence or ‘have a say’ in the decision making processes regarding the programme or project initiated for them.

Olukotun(2008), buttressing this type of participation observes that development is meaningless if it does not harness the potentials of the beneficiaries who are the primary stakeholders. It is therefore, through the active involvement of these primary stakeholders (beneficiaries) in projects of their own that participation in community development project can be achieved.Thus, self-help, communal-help and community based-development, as well as empowerment and capacity building must be highly considered, so as to boost the understanding, confidence, self-esteem, collective and individual action to gain control over their lives.

2.7 Empowerment and Capacity Building in Community Participation

Empowerment as a component of community participation is seen as a continuous process whereby individuals and communities gain the confidence, self-esteem, understanding and power necessary to articulate their concern, ensures that actions are taken to address them and more broadly, gain control over their lives (Schuftain, 1996). Eade and Rowlands (2003) stipulate that empowerment is a measure of people's capacity to bring about change, which is concerned with analysing and addressing the dynamics of oppressions and assisting groups and individuals to play an active role in decisions whichaffect their lives. This concept goes beyond participation and hence, is conceived as a process by which the people are able to organise and influence changes on the basis of their access to knowledge and decision making processes. Zuofa (2008) sees empowerment as a process whereby authority is given to an individual or group to take a particular self-fulfilling course of action. Throwing more light on this, Adams (1996) notes that empowerment is the means by which individuals, groups and communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximise the quality of their lives.

Hence, the World Bank (2002) refers to empowerment as the expansion of freedom of choice and action. It recognises the coming together of the people as an avenue towards which they can interact as to improve their lives and subsequently sustain projects conceived by them. To properly achieve this individual and community empowerment, there is a need for capacity building; that will encourage self-confidence and activeness in community development initiatives. This clarifies the fact that capacity building is a component of community participation and a mechanism that enables local people to determine their own values, priorities and act on their decisions. Eade (1997) sees capacity building as enabling institutions to be more effective and efficient in the process of identifying, implementing, monitoring and the evaluation of development projects. It is therefore an approach to community development that raises people's knowledge, awareness and skills to use their own capacity and available support systems, to resolve the more underlying causes of underdevelopment (Schuftan, 1996). Thus, capacity building is a vehicle that promotes the wellbeing of the people through their collective involvement in decision making. It also presupposes the sustainability of their outcome that is obtained through collective decision. This clearly signified that the 'relevance' of community participation in development process cannot be over emphasis or undermined.

2.8 Relevance of Community Participation

Community participation is one of the key ingredients of an empowered community (Reid, 2000:1). Community participation occurs when a community organises itself and takes full responsibility for managing its problems. Taking full responsibility includes identifying the problems, developing actions, putting them to place and following through. Theron (2005:124) points out that there are considerable differences of opinion as to what community participation is, and it follows that there will be many arguments about the

collective definition. This view is held whilst taking cognisance of the fact that development does not occur successfully if beneficiaries are not part and parcel of the process of planning and implementation.

Community participation provides individual with the opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision making process (Cogan and Shape, 1986:283). This definition of citizen participation can be further divided into two categories according to the will of the people wishing to influence policy decisions; passive participation which includes a simple one-way information delivery or request for information and active participation which includes formation of a consensus on specific issues, monitoring administrative activities and administrative requests. The methods of community participation play a crucial role in terms of meaningful participation (Nekwaya, 2007:11). Community participation is rooted in democratic approaches to public policy, community planning and development, which assume that people have a right to make decisions that affect their lives. In short, a community that gives up the ability to make its own decisions loses "some essential humanity". Citizen participation must be understood in relation to local and regional patterns of power and powerlessness, that is, individual and collective experiences of influence, acquiescence, privilege, or exclusion based on membership in dominant or disenfranchised groups. Having shed light on the 'relevance' of community participation in development process, there is also a need to understand the 'implication' of community participation to community development process.

2.9 Implications of Community Participation

There are two broad implications of community participation which are identifiable, those that view community participation as a means and those that view it as an end

(Kumar, 2002:25). Community participation as a means or end is an issue which has bothered both development thinkers and workers. Burkey (2000: 58) indicates that the proportion of the second view often maintains that development for the benefit of the poor cannot occur unless the poor themselves control the process through the praxis of participation. Burkey (2000:58) also points out that until recently, the notion of participation as a means to achieve effective development still dominates rural development practice. Oakley and Marsden (1989:23), state that there are two main vehicles for implementing this notion of participation;

i. Community development programmes which were aimed at preparing the rural population collaborate with government development plans and
ii. The establishment of formal organizations (cooperatives, farmers association, etc.) which were to provide the structure through which the rural people could have some contact with, and voice in, development programmes.

Burkey (2000:60) provides the evidence which suggests that only a few achieved any meaningful participation and benefit by means. Oakley and Marsden (1989:23) assert that this strategy has not resulted in meaningful participation of the community in rural development. In fact, it is the strategy that has resulted in current situation, failing to confront the issue of the lack of meaningful community participation in rural development. Public participation is an end in itself, and is the unavoidable sequence of the process of empowering and liberating the community to understand the process of development (Oakley and Marsden, 1989:23). Kumar (2002:25) agrees that community participation as an end is self- mobilizing where the local people themselves are in total command. There is no doubt that meaningful participation is about achieving power: which is the power to

influence the decisions that affect one's livelihood. Community participation is viewed as an end if it becomes a long-term process, the purpose of which is to develop and strengthen the capabilities of people in order to participate directly in development initiatives (Kumar, 2002:26). This comparative analysis is presented briefly below:

Table 2.1 Comparative Analysis: Participation as a means or an end

Participation as an end	**Participation as a means**
Implies the use of participation to achieve some predetermined goal or objective	Attempts to empower people to take part in their own development
Attempts to utilize existing resources in order to achieve the objective of the project/programme	Ensures increased role of people in Development initiatives
Common in government programmes, specifically for mobilising community to improve efficiency of delivery system	More favoured by Non- Governmental Organizations than by government
Stresses the achievement of the objective rather than the act of participation itself	Focuses on improving the ability of the people to participate rather than just achieve predetermined projects objectives
Participation take a more passive form	It is relatively more active and dynamic

Source: Kumar (2002:25)

Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that meaningful participation of the rural poor in development is concerned with direct access to the resources necessary for development, and some active involvement and influence in the decisions affecting those resources (Burkey, 2000:59). The meaningful participation in community development implies the ability to positively influence the course of events (Oakley and Marsden, 1984:24). Likewise, the idea of community participation 'as a means' and 'as an end' can

further be broadening by examine the typologies (levels or ladders) and mode of community participation.

2.10 Levels (typologies) and Modes of Community Participation

It is important for the development experts to understand the levels and modes of community participation in development process. Theron (2005:126), states that some levels are more relevant than others to ensure authentic public participation. These approaches become more relevant when the impact of participation is assessed in relation to a programme or project, and the degree of participation becomes a central feature in this regard (Fokane, 2008:45). The seven levels of community participation as highlighted by (Theron, 2005:115) are as follows:

Passive participation: Passive strategies very often involve a one-way flow of information from the planners to the public (Kumar, 2002:25). People "participate" by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. Participation relates to a unilateral top-down approach by the authorities. The information being shared belongs to outsiders or professionals.

Participation in information giving: This level does not constitute community participation because they merely require the community to judge a finished or almost finished product. People participate by answering questions posed in questionnaires or telephone interviews or similar public participation strategies. The public do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings as the findings of the research are neither shared nor evaluated for accuracy.

Participation by consultation: People participate by being consulted as consultants/professionals/planners and external officials listen to their views. The professionals define both problems and solutions and may modify these in the light of the

people's responses. The process does not include any share in decision-making by the public, nor are the professionals under any obligation to take on board people's views.

Participation for material incentives: People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for material rewards. This helps to reduce overall costs, and participants in return receive a resource (Nampila, 2005:39). This typology takes place in rural environment, where, for example farmers provide the fields but are not involved in the experiment or learning process, also where people identify community problem and likely solution to the problem, but their ideas was ignored at implementing stage. The people have no stake in prolonging the activities when the incentives end.

Functional participation: People participate in a group context to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which may involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisations. Such involvement does not tend to occur at the early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may also become self-dependent.

Interaction strategies: People participate in a joint analysis, the development of action plans and capacity building. Participation is seen as right, not just the means to achieve project goals.

Self-mobilisation strategies: People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. This bottom-up approach allows people to develop contacts with external institutions for resources and the technical advice they need, but they themselves retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated, bottom-up and self-reliant mobilasation and collective actions may or may not challenge an existing

inequitable distribution of wealth and power. Nekwaya (2007:35) pointed out that the route to effective community participation would depend on selecting the right combination of approaches. However, this would determine whether the community authorities actually allow the community to participate and make its own decisions. It is also important to understand the modes of participation as, these overlap with the levels of community participation, and are necessary for community participation. Theron (2005:115) highlights these modes as follows:

Anti-participatory mode: Community participation is considered as a voluntary contribution by the community to a programme/project, which will lead to development, but the public is not expected to take part in shaping the programme/project content and outcomes;

Manipulation mode: Community participation includes community involvement in decision making processes, in implementing programmes, sharing in the benefits and involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes;

Incremental mode: Community participation is concerned with organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulate institutions in given social situations for groups or movements excluded from such control;

Authentic public participation mode: Community participation is an active process by which the community influences the direction and execution of a programme with the view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values which they cherish.

For effective implementation of community participation, it is essential to understand its principles and core values. This thorough understanding would help to

change the perception of the government towards community participation in terms of development planning and service delivery. The people-centered development seeks to return control over resources to the people and their communities to be used in meeting their own needs. There is a wide spectrum of views and ways of achieving community participation in development. Fokane, (2008:60) states that there is no definite method that can be used to come up with a one-size-fits-all combination of strategies, because strategies range widely in complexity, creativity and impact. It is believed that each strategy has its advantages and shortcomings. Their efficiency depends on other factors, such as the competence of the public participation practitioner and the appropriateness of tool in use (Fokane, 2008:60). The various strategies for community participation can be classified into a variety of groups depending on one's interest.

A lengthy discussion as being done on community participation, its relevance, its implication, levels (typologies) and mode, there is also a need to look at 'community participation in development project'. This is because any community developmental project needs effective community participation before it can be implemented successfully.

2.11 Community Participation in Development Project

The most important process in any development project is the encouragement of the active participation of the local community. Without community participation it is not possible to determine what the problems, constraints, and local desires for a given community are. According to Harvey and Reed (2007) participation of project beneficiaries' is of great essence, in the sense that, it enhances the sense of ownership among members.

Community participation ensures that projects are developed according to the needs of the people (Raniga and Simpson, 2002:135). This can improve the outcomes of projects

through cost sharing, increased efficiency and effectiveness. Mansuri and Rao, (2004) claim that community participation's current popularity is largely attributable to the 1980s disenchantment with large-scale government-led development projects. But, Kumar (2002:27) says that through community participation, resources available for development projects will be used more efficiently and fewer costs will be incurred if the people themselves are responsible for the project (Kumar, 2002:27). This community participation concept can bring different stakeholders together for problem solving and decision making. Putnam (2000) refers to it as people's engagement within the community that plays an essential and long standing role in promoting quality of life. This definition sees community participation as the involvement of people in a community in development initiatives to implement their own projects with little or no external assistance for enhanced standard of living. Thwala (2010) explains that for community participation to be successful, project must include special components such as recruiting villagers in all phases of designing, implementing, monitoring, supervising and evaluating the project. Recruiting villagers within the context of this study entails engaging (dialogue) the community members' in the identification of their felt needs through several forms of interaction, approaches toward achieving these needs, and strategies to sustaining them. This recruitment is characterised by the active involvement of community members in addressing their needs and infrastructural projects in their communities. Stressing the need for community participation in development projects Okafor (2005) concludes that when communities participate in their own project, the following are usually observed:

i. Empowering community improves efficiency
ii. Local participation yields better projects, better outcomes

iii. Greater transparency and accountability enhances service delivery

iv. It also encourages donor harmonisation

Consequently, Aref and Ma'Rof (2008) clarify that concepts of community participation in development projects should be based on the following terms 'participation, empowerment and capacity building'. As a result of this, World Bank (2004) sees participation as an important determinant in project performance and sustainability. It further states that for it to be effective, it must respect people's knowledge, skills and empower them to take control of their lives by focusing on training, resources, and supporting them to make their own decisions. Community Participation is seen as a way of reducing the risk on project failures and the cost of risk on the project. It is aimed at actively involving the communities in the identification of problems, formulation of plans and implementation of decisions over their lives. This statement is in cognisance with Oakley's (1989) observation that rural development project will benefit from more direct participation by the local people.

According to Mushtaq (2004), community participation in development projects is a process by which people from all groups of community (rich, poor, Men, women, uneducated, educated, and so on) can influence or control those decisions, which affect their lives. This involves participation of project beneficiaries, women and men in decision making, design, construction and operation and maintenance of community projects. Community participation is vital in all projects implemented in a community. Communities should be involved in all stages of the project, from the planning through to the building and managing, of systems, by doing this, long term solutions can be found that are suited to their own needs and locally available resources. Rather than being imposed by outsiders,

e.g. development agencies, donors and governments projects should solve the communities' own problems which in most cases are different from other communities. Community participation is very crucial especially during the initial stages of a project. With clear understanding of the how and why of their projects or systems, communities will be committed to their projects and feel a sense of ownership for them.

Ultimately community participation in development projects is all about creating an enabling environment for communities to help themselves. By utilizing their own skills and resources communities are able to take their first steps out of poverty and move towards sustainable development. And once these basic services are in place and communities develop the skills and resources for changing their environment they continue to further their development (Keen, 2007). If community water, health, agricultural and sanitation projects are to succeed, technical, social, economic and environmental aspects must be well coordinated. A very important contribution to these aspects is the participation of the community involved in the project. Without the interest and support of the target beneficiaries using the system, no project will succeed; however well designed and planned. The success of a project depends on the people's understanding; accepting and using systems they have selected for themselves. In all, the responsibilities of the community should be present at every stage of the project implementation. In this way, the community assumes responsibility, authority and control over its own development. Attention should be given to the community involvement in all the stages of projects implementation (Gicheru, 2012). In this approach, the beneficiary is given more information, responsibility and decision making power in diverse project areas including the project's focus, the targeting of beneficiaries, the implementation strategy and assessment.

Thus, projects will fail if the community participation approach in project management is not adopted. For instance, Dandaura (2006) during a Theatre-for-Development (TFD)programmein Nasarawa state made mention of water supply project that went awry in Anjinda community, Nasarawa state. According to him, the project was fashioned for the rural community by bureaucrats and politicians in the State capital. Dandaura further explained that when his team got to the community, they discovered that a few weeks after the water scheme was commissioned by the governor, the tap went dry. Buttressing theabovestatement, Emman .S. Dandaura cited the commentof one ofthe leaders of Anjinda village, GlarenMoren in a focus group discussion held on Saturday 27th May, 2006:

This (motorized bore hole) has been dry for several years now. No one has found it useful again few weeks after the government people came here …. Water has never been our problem. Our women and children never complained that the stream was far from home until the government brought this trap (sic) to spoil them. Now they no longer enjoy going, to the stream, because government said the (borehole) would give us water at home. We have contributed money several times to repair it but the (engineer) has more stories than water for us. Just last week he was asking for more money for wire. How do we get more money when that broken bridge you crossed to get here would not let cars come here to convey our farm produce to the market? That bridge was even better until the big motor (that conveyed the borehole drilling rig to the village) the government sent here … scattered it.The bridge and the bad road had been our problems since then but no one listens. Now you said you want to help us and people are still talking (borehole) which has extorted my little money for pesticide over the years. We don't need it. That bridge is our

problem. We need to take our good to Andaha (a nearby town) market. We need to get to the hospital quickly when or children fall sick. If you had visited in the rainy season would you have driven your car to this place?

The challenges and short comings of government sponsored community projects ascited by Emman Dandaura inGlarenMoren's comment is in agreement with the basis of this study because itclarifies that to attain any sustainable development the people must be well consulted and thoroughly engaged in a dialogue forum, in order to know the general and immediate problem of the people. Not only that, the people must also be allowed to carry out or partake in the implementation of their community development projects. Anything aside this participatory and involvement approach, threatens the acceptability (ownership) and sustainability of the projects. This is why Mwakila, (2008) says that dissemination of information, community member's involvement in all stages of project implementation and use of local knowledge in implementation of projects are very crucial, as this would make the projects more sustainable in the long run (Mwakila, 2008).

Another advantage of community participation is sustainability (Kumar, 2002:28). Generally, development interventions are funded either by government, foreign Aid, donor agencies, etc. Experience has shown that development interventions from external assistance projects usually fail to sustain the required level of development activity once support or inputs are diminished or withdraw by funding agencies. People's participation is regarded as an essential prerequisite for the continuity of activities. The involvement of local and utilisation of local resources generates a sense of ownership over development interventions to the community. Sense of ownership is essential for the sustainability of the interventions even after external funds cease to flow (Kumar, 2002:28).

2.12 Sustainability of Community Development Project

Over the years, the definition of sustainability in development literature has varied widely and broadened in scope. The concept arose in response to economic growth models that characterized development approaches over the last half century. It was eventually recognized that such models did not adequately address social inequalities and led to environmental degradation. The concept gained wider use after the World Commission on Environment and Development (WECD) "Our common future" (Brundtland 1987). The IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010 (IFAD 2007) gave the following definitions of sustainability: 'Ensuring that the institutions supported through projects and the benefits realized are maintained and continue after the end of the project ….'IFAD's Office of Evaluation adds to this definition by considering resource flows. Itacknowledges that assessment of sustainability entails determining "whether theresults of the project will be sustained in the medium or even longer term withoutcontinued external assistance". This explains the fact that it is an embodiment of a process of development that is socially responsive and just. It acknowledges the magnitude of poverty, exploitation, disempowerment and inequality that exist within communities, classes, countries and between nations. Addressing these enumerated acknowledges, World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report, Our Common Future explains that:

> Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future… It is a process in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspiration (WCED Report on Sustainable Development in New York December, 2002:57).

This comment above simply indicates that, for individuals and communities to meet their current needs without hampering the environment for the future generations to fulfill their

needs. However, the research is of the view that the method of achieving sustainable development is difficult to "absolutize". Conversely the crucial elements in the actualization of sustainable development are "knowledge and enlightenment" which results from appropriate and effective participation (Mohan, 2007:781). This underlines the inestimable role of effective participation in the practice of sustainable development.

Expatiating on Participation as a key strategy or means to sustainable development, we must be reminded that, it worth nothing that, prior to the "development age" most societies developed naturally, they took steps to meet their needs as the needs arise. They were the ones that initiated the process and implemented it. This is the "Participation as an end" which a lot of experts believe should be ideal. But what happened in most development campaigns is "Participatory as a means" (Wright 1995). Hence, the chances of success are high when effective participation is ensured. It further expands on the concept of programmesustainability by distinguishing among several factors that either contribute to ordetract from the long-term impact of interventions (IFAD 2006):

- *Political sustainability:*government commitment, an enabling policy environment, stakeholder interests, strong lobby groups and political influence/pressure;
- *Social sustainability:*social support and acceptability, community commitment, social cohesion;
- *Ownership:*whether or not communities, local government and households accept and own the outcomes of the project in ways that are sustainable;
- *Institutional sustainability:* institutional support, policy implementation, staffing, recurrent budgets;

- *Economic and financial sustainability:*resilience to economic shocks, financial viability, reduced household vulnerability and increased capacity to cope with risk/shocks;
- *Technical sustainability:* technical soundness, appropriate solutions, technical training for operations and maintenance, access to and cost of spare parts and repairs;
- *Environmental sustainability:*projects' positive/negative contributions to soil and water preservation and management, resilience to external environmental shocks.

This study considered ownership: in which communities, local government and households accept and own the outcomes of the project in ways that are sustainable. Theron (2005:123) explains that community participation should lead to sustainable development. Community participation and sustainability involves local choice because people are the local experts, in line with the idea of an indigenous knowledge system (Theron, 2005:123). This implies that people's participation in community development is indispensable in achieving sustainable development. In agreement with this view, Enwefah, (2007:17) maintains that the active participation of people in community development initiatives is an indispensable feature of sustainable development. Therefore any intervention with the goal to achieve real and sustainable improvement in the living conditions of people is doomed to fail unless those at whom it is targeted are actively involved in the process.

Sustainable Development as described above should be the premise on which development initiatives in Nigeria should be predicated. This is because it encapsulates all that conventional development approaches failed to behold and moves human welfare and dignity to the frontiers of actual fulfillment. Thus, Sustainable Development is understood,

defined and applied through the following components: needs satisfaction, popular participation, self-reliance, appropriate technology and human, democratic rights, ecological integrity and cultural dynamics. From this definition it can be referred to as an amalgam of the various features of alternative development.

Contrarily, some schools of thoughts in development communication have argued that Participation is not a panacea for sustainable development, considering the fact that, the processes are not suitable for solving all problems in all contexts or time frames.Some problems suchas: outbreaks of cholera, road connection, and school roofs renovation, maternal and so on need quick action instead of dialoguing or waiting for general participation for solution(Mansuri and Rao, 2004). The above submission byMansuri and Rao, (2004) seemingly opposing the concept of 'participation' opines by (Theron, 2005:123).

Mansuri and Rao, (2004) seeing 'participation' from the angle of manipulation, saidpeople are cajoled to participate in development activities already nurtured and planned by external interventionist, knowing full well that the idea will benefit and serve their immediate interest and needs. This 'participation' process described byMansuri and Rao, (2004) assumed that the villagers have nothing better to do with their time. However, time is valuable to them (villagers), therefore, the'participation' they needed is the one that will yield instant and quick change in their social well-being.Thus, the social communicator should put this into consideration when entering the village or slum. Accentuating on the deviance in participatory development, White (1999) maintains that authentic participation of grassroots people may still be more of an ideal than reality. Buttressing white's idea, McCall (1987) explains that, although participatory ideology within development discourse

seeks to define development in terms of social change and community empowerment, placing value on non-tangible ideas like equality and freedom, it becomes a way to lubricate outside involvement.

Similarly, they also argue that the community participation approach has achieved its status and reputation mainly based on the attractiveness of the ideas underpinning the approach, without providing evidence of benefits. The approach is widely used and regarded as a best practice in the development field, yet it is not clear that it is deserving of these accolades. They further explain that the evidence on the performance of community participation approach is scant. However, Mansuri and Rao, (2004) acknowledge that the work that is available suggest that practitioners may be overoptimistic and naive about the benefits of the approach (Mansuri and Rao, 2004a). Given that participatory processes are known to be expensive, demanding and time-intensive, it is vital to better understand patterns of success and failure in the application of the community participation approach. Although it is clear that community participation has the potential to improve the outcomes of development projects, there is not much systematic and scientific evidence on its track record to date. This simply means that there is no single or unified way of implementing the approach. It is based on trial and belief that it will work since it is being initiated by the people in the community. Forgetting that some factors such as; culture, interest, environment, resources, level of education and political system can be a hindrance to the implementation of community participation approach in any given community or State. In fact, Mansuri and Rao (2004:57) conclude that little is known about the impact of community participatory projects. They attribute the ignorance on this matter, to a lack of thorough and systematic evaluations with counterfactuals. They add that robust evidence

regarding the influence of community participation is required urgently. All these scholars' argument clearly show that participation and the community participation approach is not a clear cut (absolute) method to achieve sustainable development but it is capable of allowing the people take control of their own community development initiatives. For the fact that it is a community based approach, it can mobilise the community to participate in the planning and implementing stage of any community development initiatives if it is well organised and utilised.

There is also no doubt that the word 'participation' and 'community participation' are becoming rhetoric as democracy; government can use them as a legitimizing smoke screen in the political arena with no intention of putting any but the most self-serving into effect. Therefore, for government and organizations working to secure peace and human rights, empower the poor, and improve community infrastructural facilities, promote human and economic development and to strengthen democratic institutions; most of these identified weaknesses and the underlined assumptions on participation and community participation must be considered while deploying it for any community development interventions in Nigeria. Community Dialogue Forum may be an ideal approach to achieve a participatory sustainable development because it places the power of 'what' and 'how' in the hand of the intended or targeted community. Power of 'what' and 'how' means 'what' are their needs and aspirations and 'how' do they want government to help in achieving it.

2.13 Empirical Study

Empirically, many studies have been conducted on participatory communication, community development,community participation, rural development project, community mobilisation and empowerment across the globe.Most of these studies basically dwell on

communication strategies, health communication,community empowerment, community participation, ownership and sustainability.

For instance, a study conducted by Baumann (2009), shows that 55% of all the rural projects in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya are non-operational. 94% of respondents confirmed that various factors have attributed to this failure; the lack of demand of the project by the beneficiary community, high recurrent costs, neglect of the water facilities especially on operation and maintenance, use of inappropriate technology, placement of water points far from the community and lack of proper training.The study suggests that governments need to seek people's opinion before embarking on any community project, in order to avoid non-sustainability.Thisimplies that the rural project failed becausepeople's opinions were not soughtbefore embarking on the community development projects. Therefore it lacked ownership and sustainability.

Ochelle, (2012) also did an assessment on factors influencing sustainability of community development projects in Kenya; a case of water projects in Mulala division, Makueni County. The study shows that there was not adequate communication between the beneficiaries and the water project sponsors. Similarly, Ngetich(2009) looked into factors influencing sustainability of community water projects in Keekonyokie Central Location of Kajiado district. The study also discovered that there was no adequate platform for people to participate in the design and the implementation of the water project. Therefore, the water project was sighted in a wrong location.

Boru (2012) did a study on determinants of community ownership of water projects in Kenya with reference to Central Division, Isiolo County. He found that community involvement, type of technology, distance, governance structures and training influences

the level of community ownership of water projects. However, in Tanzania surveys carried out on the proficient andsustainabilityof community development projects shows that only 46% of existing community development projects is efficient while 54% is not efficient. The study also only looks atthe proficient andsustainabilityof community development projects. The study however shows that lack of community participation during project selection, design and implementation which resulted in lack of ownership andsustainability.

Likewise, Revena (2009) conducted an assessment of factors influencing sustainability of foreign aid projects, a survey of Imenti North district, Kenya and recommends for further studies variables that influence sustainability, such as conflicts among local leaders should be studied. It also identify that lack of adequate participatory dialogue is a factor that influenced the sustainability of foreign aid projects in theImenti North district, communities in Kenya. The study shows that projects were implemented in a top down approach, as such it lack people participation.This study basically was on assessment of factors influencing sustainability of foreign aid projects.

Meanwhile, Christian and Charity (2014) in a study conducted on how to Achieve Sustainable Community Development Projects through Community Participation in Rivers State, Nigeria revealed that the extent of community participation in the sustainability of community development projects in Rivers state was low. 95% of the respondents revealed that meetings were not held with the contractors as well as informed them about the projects while 5% of the respondents thought otherwise. The study also revealed that there were several factors that constrained community participation from achieving sustainable community development projects in Rivers state. These factors included ignorance of members of the community and high level of poverty and corruption of some community

leaders. The study further stressed that the non-sustainability of most of the community development projects in Rivers State was characterised by corruption of most community leaders in the non-use of quality materials by contractors, lack of close monitoring and maintenance by the community. Likewise, leadership was also observed as the main problem of many community participatory projects inRivers state. Several community projects have been appropriated by the community leaders with very little attempt to include community members at any stage. In many instances, such exclusions resulted in serious face-off and misunderstanding that destabilized the community further,community participation.

A study conducted by Oghenekohwo (2014) on the impact ofcommunitysocial development projects **(**CSDP) in rural communities in Bayelsa State shows that specific micro projects of intervention has significant impact on community and social development of the rural dwellers. There were five specific areas in which the quantum of such interventions were evident. Among these five micro-projects were health care, water supplies, creation of wealth and job creation among youth,all accounting for a positive response of 72.5% of the total responses. Besides, CSDP micro projects promoted economic engagements through youth employment.Effective and efficient community resource management was (75%). This study isonly conducted onimpact ofCommunitySocial Development Projects **(**CSDP). It also show that the initiative lack adequate participation of the beneficiaries.

In the same vein,Ojebode (2008)conducted a study on the level of people's participation in Government Mobilise Community Development (GMCD) projects in Abeokuta North Local of Ogun State. The study findings show that community

participation was rarely felt in community development projects as their inputs are most often not sought before embarking on projects. The study further identified some of the contributing factors to community participation in community development projects as: high rate of poverty, ignorance, lack of transparency and corruption. This study is also based on the level of people's participation in Government Mobilise Community Development projects.

Similarly, a study conducted by Okafor, (2011) on Community Participation in Sustainable Rural Development on selected association in Anambra State shows that 252 respondents representing 67% reported that failure to attend to the people's immediate and most pressing needs and lack of interest by people in predetermined community projects affected the community development projects implementation. The study further explained that people ideas were neglected at the implementation of the community development projects. This study only looked at community participation in sustainable rural development.

The factors militating against the attainment ofparticipatory community development project, ownership and sustainability in some countries in Africa asreviewed in this study may vary from the situation in Nigeria.But the common challenge to all islack of effective community dialogue forum, lackof participation in the design and the implementation of community development projects and lack ofownership and sustainability.However, the issue with the prevalence of non-involvement and non-inclusion in community projects implementation is not a problem of knowledge, technology, resource and mobilization. But the challenge with the waycommunity development is being communicated; there is no mutual interaction between the

government and the governed, thereby denied people participation in the process of community projects implementation.this study seeks to look beyond community participation to the concept of People's Participatory Dialogue Forum, due to the fact that much attention has not been given to the use of effective Dialogue Forum for mobilising, dialoguing andempowering the community to participate in theprocess of community development projects implementation.It is on this premise that this study seeks to assessJama'a Dialogue Forum activities in Niger state, in order to establish its relevance in facilitating sustainableparticipatorycommunity development. By so doing, the researcher hopes to fill the gap that previous studies have created.

2.15 Theoretical Framework

Community Development Theory and Participatory Communication theory were utilized in this study to unravel the importance of Community Dialogue Forum in the process of communicating sustainable development in the community. These two theories were adopted in this study to enable the researcher argue that, a participatory and sustainable development can effectively be achieved if the process is basically based on dialogical or linear (bottom-up) communication rather than vertical (top-down) communication. The two theories are also important to this study because they both emphasis on participatory and collective process in research, problem identification, decision making, implementation and evaluation of change communally. Furthermore, the two theories acknowledge that the most important process in any development project is the encouragement of the active participation of the local community. Without community participation it is not possible to determine what the problems, constraints, and local desires of a given community are. Participation Communication theory projects that if development initiatives in the communities are dialogically identified and participatorily achieved,

sustainability of the development initiatives is certain in the communities while,Community Development theoryfocuses on the participation of beneficiaries and not that of personnel from the implementing agencies in development projects. It clarifies that community participation is attained through collaborative or joint involvement of project beneficiaries and the implementing agencies.

These two theories were used to give proper direction to the positions and contemplation made in this study. They were also used by the researcher to justifiably analyze, evaluate facts and figures objectively.

2.15.1 Community Development Theory

This theory introduced by Allison Tan in 2009 as a practical framework capable of bridging the micro-macro divide in social work; the tenets of this theory have implications for the ways social workers can seek to make large-scale change within a community.

York (1994) summarizes the foci of Community Development Theory as the organization of community agencies, the developing of local competences, and political action for change. Paiva (1997) describes Community Development Theory as the tenets of structural change, socioeconomic integration, institutional development, and renewal. Pandey (1981) refers to the strategies of Community Development as distributive, participative, and human development. Schiele (2005) summarizes the work of Community Development as collective problem solving, self-help, and empowerment. Payne (1997) refers to developing social capital, social inclusion and exclusion, and capacity building. Each of these authors may offer their own perspective and language in the description of Community Development Theory; however, the general truths are common in all of their work and descriptions of the theory's tenets.

The theory therefore gives less priority to the expertise of the social worker and emphasizes the need for the client to be a part of their own changes (Mullaly, 2002:43). Community Development is the most practical framework for social workers seeking lasting behaviour change in individuals, communities and societies in which they live. It focuses on the centrality of oppressed people in the process of overcoming externally imposed social problems. When the people of the community are appropriately engaged and empowered, the role of the social worker in a Community Development framework lands heavily on the facilitator's side of the expert-facilitator continuum. That is why, the Clinicians and other workers trained from the Community Development perspective often cite this anonymous Chinese poem to summarize their work and the goals they have for change:

SERVING THE PEOPLE
Go to the people
Live among them
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build on what they have:
But of the best leaders
When their task is accomplished
Their work is done
The people all remark
"We have done it ourselves."
(Anonymous, as cited in Gordon, 1995: 87)

This theory focuses on the centrality of oppressed people in the process of overcoming externally imposed social problems; therefore, it will enable the researcher to establish the point that participation and dialogue process can spur people to active action in the process of community development interventions. It will also help to evaluate the participatory view of the Jama'a forum within and outside the community power distribution.

2.15.2 Theory of Participatory Communication

The focus of participatory communication is on dialogical communication rather than linear communication. It emphasizesparticipatory and collective process in research, problem identification, decision making, implementation and evaluation of change, communally (Rockefeller Foundation, 1997). The "Rockefeller process" led to a definition of communication for social change as "a process of 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 marking, and community-based implementation of solution to development issues (www.communication socialchange.com). The primary principle of participatory communication is to create opportunities for people to participate in their own development. They must be free to develop as individuals. The redistribution of resources and decision making powers which places emphasis on the ideals of self-reliance, the available natural and human resources and the ability of individuals to define developmental problems, set goals and make decision independently and in accordance with their own social and cultural ethos. The theory further posits that to ensure genuine participation, effective communication should occur among all parties affected, ensuring that all have similar opportunities to influence the outcome of the initiative.

The essence of participatory communication theory which is highly influenced by Paulo Freire's critical Pedagogy (1970) is premised on the inalienable rights of the people to participate in the decision making process through praxis, that is, dialogue in a cordial atmosphere in order to arrive at a conscientization that will spur action from both the people and the development experts. The terminal of such communication understanding is empowerment and local ownership of development projects and intervention. In this study,

this theory enhances the researcher to interrogate the degree of participation of the local communities in the Jama'a Dialoguing Forum. This will help to actually place the people's participation in a particular level along the chain of participatory communication as envisaged by Freire (1970) Pedagogy of The Oppressed. This theory justified the importance of community dialogue in bridging the communication gap that existed between government and the people in community development initiatives, as well as the ways people and social workers can seek to make change within the community through participatory dialogue forum. These theories were chosen to analyse the participatory level and the impact of community development on the social well-being of the people in Niger State communities. The two theories also helped the researcher to take a viable stand on the synergy between Participatory Dialogue Forum as a viable platform for achieving Sustainable Community Development and good Governance. They gave the researcher leverage for extensive analysis by taking a stand from these theories postulations to strike a balance on argument and position of the respondents in the finds.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with description of methodology and procedure used in this study. Therefore, it comprises of the research design, study area, research population, instrument for data collection, sampling techniques and instrumentation. Other sub themes include procedure for data collection and procedure for data analysis.

3.1 Study Design

In order to properly situate the concept of Jama'a Dialogue Forum as a participatory platform for sustainable community development projects in this study, the researcher actually combined qualitative and the quantitative research tools. Qualitative research is characterised by its aims, which relates to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generates words rather than numbers. Since, the aim of this study is to assess people's participation in community development projects implementation through Jama'a Dialogue Forum then qualitative method is often appropriate.

Qualitative methodologyis used in this study to understand people's experience and knowledge about sustainable community development projects via a participatory dialogue forum.Using qualitative research has equally assisted this studyto gain in-depth knowledge about social variables most likely responsible for the decline in people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development Projects in the selected communities.

On the other hand, the quantitative method was used to quantify the problem of the research by way of generating data that can be transformed into useable statistics. The following definition, taken from Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), describes what we mean by quantitative research methods;quantitatively research is 'Explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods'.

The quantitative research method was used to quantify perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, and other defined variables; and generalized the findings from the randomly selected sample population in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

Thus, the responses of the respondents in the questionnaire survey were quantified using the Likert Scaling of frequency. The quantitative research method was also used to analyse the collected data along the frequency scaling of (Agreed, Strongly Agreed, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, Undecided, Yes and No). This was also used to analyse the in-depth interview by numerically placing the responses based on the number of the respondents for each variable in percentage. It should be stated that quantitative research method uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of survey: online survey, mobile survey, and face-to-face interview. In this study, the paper survey (questionnaire and face-to-face interviews) were used.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in Kuta the Headquarter of ShiroroLocal Government Area in Niger State. On the West and East, Kuta is bounded by Muyan and Rafi respectively, while on the North and South, the Town is bounded by Bosso and Paiko respectively.Kuta is cosmopolitan (multiethnic)in nature because numerous settlers from

other parts of the country live in several of it communities compare to other local government areas, aside Bida and Minna. This is as a result of the presence of large market,Federal Science and Technical College, Yam Processing Factory, Government Ministries and Parastatal, Kanji Dam, Immigration and Customs Barracks and among other.

Niger State Map



Source: Adapted from the Map of Niger State Bureau of statistics, (2014).

Brief Note on Niger State:

Niger State was created on 3rd February, 1976 from the defunct North-Western State during the regime of General Murtala Ramat Mohammed; however, the State actually began functioning on April 1st of that year. There were originally Nine Local Government areas (LGAs), namely: Chanchaga, Rafi, Bangi, Gbako, Etswan, Suleja, Mariga, Magama and Lavun. Agaie and Lapai LGAs were later created out of Etswan Local Government

Area. Between 1979 and 1983 when MalamMuhammaduAwwal Ibrahim was Executive Governor of the State, eighteen LGAs were managed by the administration, namely **Kuta,**Paikoro, Chanchaga, Rafi, Gbako, Katcha, Lemu, Lapai, Agaie, Suleja, Mariga, Bangi, Magama, Auna, Lavun, Mokwa, and Jima-Doko. But when the military came into power in 1984, it returned to the original L.G.A structure. Chanchaga was however divided into two:-Minna Municipal Council, with headquarters at Minna and Shiroro LGA with headquarters at**Kuta**. These two LGAs are cosmopolitan in nature because of the in flock of diverse people from other part of the country.

The LGAs in Niger State became Nineteen (19) in 1991 when President Ibrahim Babangida created Nine (9) States and additional LGAs in Nigeria. However, by 1996 when late General SaniAbacha created six (6) additional States and 182 LGAs, in the entire country, Niger State got additional six (6) LGAs, namely, Katcha, Munya, Mashegu, Edati, Tafa and Mariga, bringing the total to 25 LGAs. In the year 2002, the Civilian Administration of Engineer Abdulkadir A. Kure responded to the clarion call of the people for the creation of additional Local Government Areas. To this end, additional 17 new Local Government Areas were created out of the existing ones; bringing the total number of Local Government Areas to 42. The new LGAs were however dissolved and converted to Area Development Councils because they were not gazetted by the National Assembly as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Thus, the status-quo of 25 LGAs was maintained.

Location: The State lies on latitude 80o to 11o:30’ North and Longitude 03o 30’ to 07o 40’ East. The State is bordered to the North by Zamfara State, West by Kebbi State, South by Kogi State, South West by Kwara State, North-East by Kaduna State and South East by

FCT. The State also has an International Boundary with the Republic of Benin along Agwara and Borgu LGAs to the North West.

Land Mass: As at 26th August 1991 (before the merger of Borgu and Agwara LGAs), the State covered a land area of 74,244 square Kilometres, which is about 8% of the total land area of Nigeria. With the merger, the land mass is now 76, 469.903 Square Kilometers (about 10% of the total land area of Nigeria) out of which about 85% is arable.

Population: As at 1961, the population of Niger State was 1,194,508. The 1991 population figure indicates Niger State as provisionally containing 2,421,581 people. The 2006 Population and housing Census put the State's population at 3,950,249 and it subject to Annual Growth Rate based on the 3.41 National Population Projection.

Soil: The soil types in Niger State are two: Ku soil and Ya soil. The Ku soil has little erosion hazards, while the Ya soil has better water holding capacity.

Occupation: The majority of the populace in the State; 85% are farmers while the remaining 15% are involved in other vocations such as white collar jobs, business, craft and arts.

Religion: The people of Niger State are predominantly Muslims and Christians with very few Traditional Religionists and Atheists.

Tribes and Ethnic Divisions: Although there are three major ethnic groups (Nupe, Gbagyi, and Hausa) in the State, other tribal groups include - Kadara, Koro, Baraba, Kakanda, GanaGana, Dibo, Kambari, Kamuku, Pangu, Dukkawa, Gwada and Ingwai. Niger State also has numerous settlers from other parts of the Country living peacefully and contributing their quota to the development of the State.

3.5 Study Population and Sample Size

Population is a group of people or object that the researcher is interested in obtaining information from for the purpose of analysis and solution to the identified problem. Defining the population means identifying characteristics which members of the universe have in common and which will identify each unit as being a member of a particular group (Creswell, 2003).

Thus, the questionnaire (semi-structured) was administered to one hundred and sixty-two respondents in the selected communities in Shiroro Local government. This is drawn from the total population of 361,257 (Population Projection Based on 3.41% Annual Growth Rate. 2015) people living in Shiroro Local Government Communities. The one hundred and sixty-four sample size drawn from the total population was gotten from the statistical data formula formulated by Yamane (1967). According to Taro Yamane (1967) sample size can be determined by the following formula: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ Where: n = Sample size, N = Total Population and E = Level of precision or Error limit = 5% or 0.05 (See appendix v for full sample size calculation).

Therefore, for a population of three hundred and sixty-one thousand, two hundred and fifty seven people in Shiroro Local Government Area, the simple random Sample technique was used to administer twenty seven copies of the questionnaire in each of the six selected communities. In total, one hundred and sixty-two were engaged in this study but only One Hundred and Fifty questionnaires were filled and returned.

In addition in-depth interview was also conducted to gather information from the Director General (DG) Jama'a Forum, two Reporters from the Print and Broadcast media. Also, villages Heads that have adequate knowledge of Jama'a Forum Activities

wereinterviewed. This helped to generate more information on community development projects implementation. The interviews were conducted in English and Hausa Language with thehelp of local interpreter.Some of the village heads who are learned spoke in English while others spoke in Hausa Language.The researcher has a moderate knowledge of the HausaLanguage. This made easier for the researcher to notice and minimize some ambiguities in the interpretation by the local interpreter.

3.2 Instrument of Data Collection

This research which is on assessment of Jama'a dialogue forum as a participatory platform for community development in Niger State is therefore, premised on both primary and secondary data gathering. The study used three tools, namely:

i. Document Study;

ii. In-depth Interview and

iii. Questionnaire.

3.2.1 Documentary Observation Method

One existing qualitative research methods for data collection is document study. Existing records often provide insight into a setting and/or group of people that cannot be observed or noted in another way especially where the events have taken place a long time ago. This information can be found in document form. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define a document as 'any written or recorded materials' not prepared for the purposes of the evaluation or at the request of the inquirer. Documents can be divided into two major categories: public records, and personal documents (Guba and Lincoln 1981). Public records are material created and kept for the purpose of 'attesting to an event or providing an accounting' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Public record can be collected from outside (external) or within (internal) the setting in which the evaluation is taking place.

Examples of external records are census and vital statistics reports, county office records, newspaper archive, and local business records that can assist an evaluator in gathering information about the larger community and relevant trends. Such materials can be helpful in better understanding the project participants and making comparisons between groups/communities. Personal document are first-persons accounts of events and experience. These 'documents of life' include diaries, portfolios, artworks, schedules, scrapbooks, poetry, letters to the paper, and so on.

Personal document can help the evaluator understand how the participant sees the world and what she or he wants communicate to an audience. And unlike other source of qualitative data, collection data from document is relatively invisible to, and requires minimal cooperation from, persons within the setting being studied (Fetterman, 1989). Therefore, this study employed documents study to collect information from documents, records, video recording of Jama'a Dialogue Forum activities in Niger State from 2008-2012. The effect of this was that the study was able to discover number of projects carried out in most Local Government Areas in Niger State by Jama'a Forum.

3.2.2 Questionnaire

Usually, a questionnaire consists of a number of questions that the respondent has to answer in a set format. A distinction is made between open-ended and closed-ended questions. An open-ended question asks the respondent to formulate his own answer, whereas a closed-ended question has the respondent to pick an answer from a given number of options. The response options for close-ended question should be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Four types of response scales for close-ended questions are distinguished:

i. Dichotomous, where the respondent has two options

ii. Nominal-polytomous, where the respondent has more than two unordered options

iii. Ordinal-polytomous, where the respondent has more than two ordered options

iv. (Bounded) Continuous, where the respondent is presented with a continuous scale

A questionnaire is a series of questions asked individual to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary). When properly constructed and responsibly administered, questionnaire becomes a vital instrument by which statement can be made about specific groups, or people, or entire populations. Questionnaire is frequently used in quantitative and social research; this inform its choice for this study; Jama'a Dialogue Forum (People's Dialogue Forum). They are valuable methods of collecting a wide range of information from a large number of individuals, often referred to as respondents. Adequacy in questionnaires construction is critical to the success of a survey. Based on the nature of this study the questionnaire contained:

i. Close-ended questions with multiple choice from which the respondents had alternatives to choose and

ii. Scale questions, which allowed for responses to be graded on a continuum (range).

For the purpose of this study, the Likert scale was employed in the questionnaire. The responses were graded on a range of percentage i.e. 100%.

The scaling employed in this study is the most widely used approach to scaling responses in survey research. It was convenient here because it did not demand too many statistical configurations which may make the study out of humanities. When responding to a Likert

questionnaire item, respondents specified their level of agreement or disagreement on a scale for a series of statements. Thus, the range in the questionnaire capture the intensity of the respondents understanding of a given item (Burns and Burns, 2008) for a non-distorted, smooth discussion and analysis in a forward-backward manner. In this study the Dichotomous questions (where the respondent has two options), the Ordinal-polytomous (where the respondent has more than two ordered options) and the Bounded Continuous (where the respondent is presented with a continuous scale) were used.

Copies of these questionnaires were personally administered with the assistance of the Public Relation Officer of Shiroro Local Government and some youth leaders who volunteered in the selected communities. This helped in tracking the field copies for quick collection within the space of five days. Copies of the questionnaire were administered in the Morning at the Local Government Secretarial and at the villages in the Evening after farming activities. This helped the researcher to capture general responses of the respondents in the community irrespective of their occupation.

3.2.3 In-depth interview

In-depth interview is in many ways similar to personal interview which involve asking an individual some predetermined questions for a period of time. Interview is described by Marzcyk, Dematteo and Festinger (2005) as ‘a form of self-report’ because the questions often uncover personal perceptions, opinions and perspectives. In-depth interview is less structured; which simply means that the questions are open-ended and not rigid. In-depth interview also covers only one or two issues extensively. It is aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of respondent’s perception and account; therefore it tends to be longer and more detailed than personal interview (Patton and Cochran, 2002).This is relevant to

this study because it is an essential instrument in a qualitative research; it is a relevant qualitative data collection instrument.

As opined by Wimmer and Dominick (2005), in-depth interview uses smaller samples for a longer period of time.Thus, allowing a lengthy observation of respondent's non-verbal responses which adds values to the data collected. In addition, the loose structure of this form of interview makes it possible to adapt it to each respondent. This also gives the researcher the freedom to pursue any relevant issue that may emerge during the interview without fear of tampering with the structure of the interview.

This study therefore used an in-depth interview to gather live experiences on the activities of Jama'a Dialogue Forum's in Niger State from the Director General (DG) of Jama'a Dialogue Forum, two Reporters (prints and broadcast media) covering the Forum's activities and the six Community Heads and some of the Locals of the communities who are non-literate but have experiences on Jama'a Forum's activities.

3.2.4 Secondary Sources of Data

The researcher also made use of information collected from the Internet and relevant publications (e.g. books, journals, memos, reports, and newspaper). The data were used to establish the background to the study, situate the statement of the research problem, find justification for the study as well as deploy the theoretical framework that underpin this study. Furthermore, information from the secondary sources was used in the review of related literature in the study. All authors cited in this study have been acknowledged accordingly.

3.3 Validity of the instrument

Validity defines the accuracy, truthfulness and the meaningfulness of the inferences that are based on the data obtained from the use of a given scale for each variable of the

study. Content validity allows the test to measure intended domain of the indicators or content of a particular concept. Reason behind pre-testing is to assess the clarity of the instrument items so that those found to be inadequate in measuring the variables are discarded or modified to improve the quality of the research instrument. To access the content validity of the instrument, the questionnaires were scrutinized by the two supervisors on this study; their comments were used to improve the quality of the instruments. Afterward, a pilot study survey was carried out using 10% of the total sample size; this was done to further test the validity of the instrument.

3.4 Reliability of the instrument

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Reliability answers the question; are scores and findings constant over time when the instrument is administered a second time(Creswell, 2003).To ensure that the instrument is reliable for the study; the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha formula. A pilot study was conducted using 10% of total sample size which is 20 respondents; a coefficient of 0.68 was obtained. A coefficient of 0.6 – 0.7 indicates *acceptable* reliability (Mugenda 2008).

3.6 Procedure for Analysis

The method of data analysis and presentation used in this study is Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis. The two data sets: qualitative and quantitative were synthesized, analysed, and brought together as a set of tangible information for the final discussion. The quantitative method is basically based on the descriptive statistical method which includes simple percentage, frequency and figures. This simple percentage statistical method is essential to this study because it helped the researcher to reduce the presentation and interpretation of data to a meaningful understandable level.

This way, the researcher was able to triangulate the responses gotten from the research instrument by bringing to the fore the views of the government and the people on the factors responsible for decline in people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects. Then suggesting how Jama'a Dialogue Forum can contribute to a better sustainable community development projects, social change and social well-being of the people, as envisioned by a wide range of expertise in development communication and community development facilitation. Also the researcher used the theoretical framework as a tool of analysis on the assessment of Jama'a Dialogue Forum's activities in Niger state.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter captures the presentation and analysis of data collected through three research instruments: the questionnaire, the in-depth Interview and Documentary Observation Method. The research adopted the mixed research method (qualitative and quantitative research) for data collection and analysis.

To elicit responses from randomly selected people, One hundred and sixty-two questionnaires were administered, out of which one hundred and fifty were filled and returned.

Nine people were purposively sampled for an in-depth Interview because of the adequate knowledge they have on Jama'a Dialogue Forum activities in Niger State. They included the Director General (DG) Jama'a Forum, one reporter each from Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Minna and News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) as well as six Village Heads from the selected communities in Shiroro Local Government Area.

Furthermore, the descriptive statistical method: simple percentage, frequency tables as well as figures were used to analyse data obtained from the Questionnaire. In view of this, the analysis in this chapter is divided into five sections: A, B, C, D and E. The first section (A) represents the demographic characteristic of the respondents while sections B, C and D, are analyses of data gathered based on the objectives of the study which are to:

i. Examine the nature of participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projectsimplementation.

ii. Determine factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projectsimplementation.

iii. Identifyways through whichpeople's participation inJama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projectsimplementation can be achieved.

Section E encapsulates the discussion on data presented and analysed in the preceding sections (B, C and D).

4.1 SECTION A: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table: 1. Distribution of respondents based on community

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Egwa/Gwada	27	18.0%	18.0%
Gussoro/Zumba	27	18.0%	36%
Kato	27	18.0%	54%
Ubandoma	26	17.3%	71.3%
Bangajiya	24	16.0%	83.3%
Lapa/She	19	12.7%	100%
Total	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Table one show that 27 respondents representing18.0% in Egwa/Gwada filled and returned the copies of the questionnaire. It also shows that 27 respondents presenting 18.0% inGussoro/Zumba and Kato filled and returned their questionnaire as well. Furthermore, 26 respondents representing 17.3% in Ubandoma filled and returned the questionnaire, while in Bangajiya 24 respondents representing 16.0% and in Lapa/She 19 respondents representing 12.7% also filled and returned their questionnaire. In total 162 questionnaires were administered in the six communities sampled but only 150 questionnaires were filled and returned. The questionnaire filled and returned comprises 83 male and 67 female as shown in the table below.

Table: 2. Sex Distribution of Respondents (Shiroro Local Government)

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	83	55.3%	55.3%
Female	67	44.7%	100%
Total	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Table 2 shows that 83 male, representing 55.3 % participated in the research study, while 67 female respondents representing 44.7% also participated in the study. This implies that both male and female in the communities are awareof Jama'a Forum and its activities in the State. Also, it shows that development programmes and social activities in the communities are gender inclusive. This will enriched the data collected from the field.

Table: 3. Distribution of Respondents based on Age Range

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
18-30	45	30%	30%
31-40	37	24.7%	54.7%
41-50	30	20%	74.7%
51-60	38	25.3%	100%
70 and above	Nil	0%	
Total	**150**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Table 3 shows that 83 respondents representing 30% sampled were within the age range of 18-30, while 37 respondents representing 24.7% were within the age range of 31-40. Also, 30 respondents representing 20% sampled were within the age range of 41-50 and 38 respondents also representing 25.3% were within the age range of 51-60. This implies that, more of adults were sampled. The implication is that, it will help in gathering reliable information to answer the questions this study seeks.

4.2 SECTION:B. Examine the nature of participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation.

Table: 4. Respondents' General Knowledge of Jama'a Forum

Questions (1-4)		(No)	(%)
1: Are you familiar with the name Jama'a Forum?	Yes	150	100
	No	Nil	0
2: Are you aware of its activities in your community and in Niger State as a whole?	Yes	150	100
	No	Nil	0
3: Are you aware that the Mission Statement of Jama'a Forum is to provide a platform for sourcing of reliable information from the people, in order to assist government procure the desired needs and aspirations of the people at the grassroots?	Yes	138	92
	No	12	8
4: Do you agree that Jama'a Dialogue Forum is a participatory platform for community based development?	Yes	150	100
	No	Nil	0

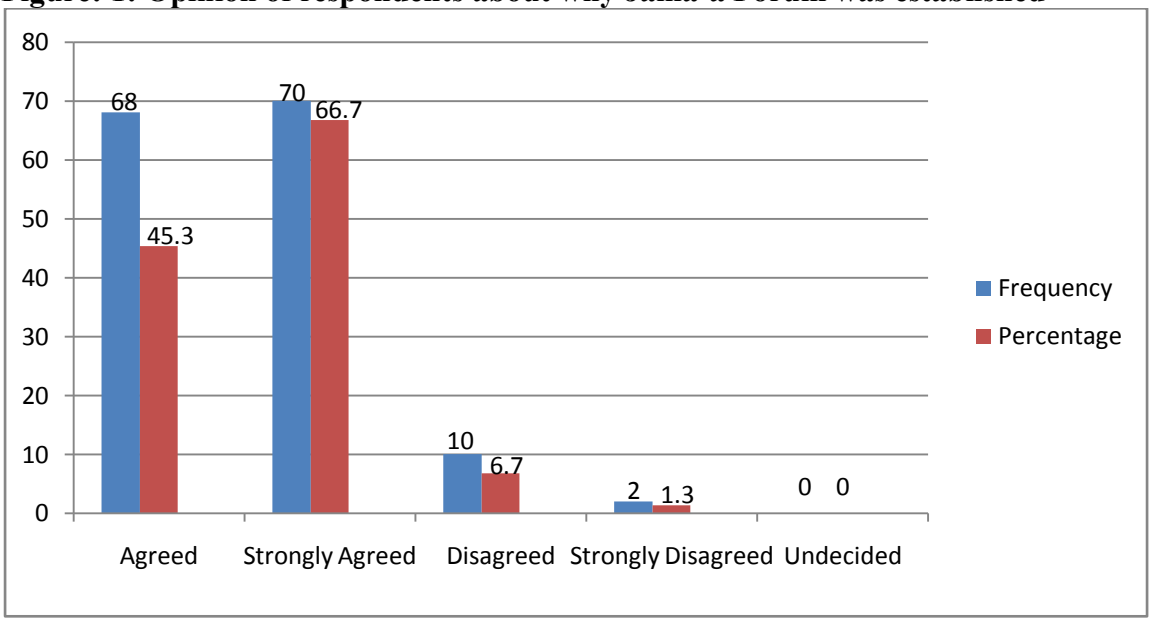
Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Table 4 shows that 150 respondents representing 100% acknowledged that they are familiar with the name Jama'a Forum and aware of its activities in their communities and in Niger State respectively. The same number and percentage also agreed that Jama'a Dialogue Forum is a participatory platform for community based development. Meanwhile, 138 respondents representing 92% consented that they were aware that the Mission Statement of Jama'a Forum is to provide a platform for sourcing of reliable information from the people, in order to assist government attain the desired needs and aspirations of the people at the grassroots (community).

From the respondents' responses, it is evident that the people generally have good knowledge of Jama'a Forum, its activities, mission statement and participatory nature. All the people interviewed also acknowledged that they are familiar with the name Jama'a Forum and its activities in the communities in Niger state. This implies that reliable and adequate information is certain from the respondents sampled.

Since, the respondents have full knowledge of Jama'a Forum and its activities; they were further asked if they agreed or disagreed that the Forum was established in order to bring the local communities closer to the government through community dialogue forum. The results are represented on the figure: 1 below.

Figure: 1: Opinion of respondents about why Jama'a Forum was established



Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In figure 1: the people were asked if they agree that Jama'a Dialogue Forum is a participatory platform for community based development, 68 respondents who represent 45.3% 'agreed' and70 respondents who represent 66.7% 'strongly agreed'. While, 10 respondents who represent 6.7% 'disagreed' and 2 respondents who represent 1.3% respondents 'strongly disagreed'. From the submission of majority respondents who "strongly agreed" there is no doubt that Jama'a Dialogue Forum is established to bring the local communities (people at the local level) closer to the government through community dialogue forum. These respondents submission was accentuated by all the people interviewed who stated that Jama'a Forum was established to create cordial relationship

between the government and the people. Kolos Hassan Kolos, the Director General (DG) of Jama'a Forum, in an interview explained that:

> The mission statement is to get the people fully mobilised and sensitized to know the direction of the Government and partake in the decision and policy making of the Government; as it concern their communities and the State as a whole. Also, to receive inputs from people in terms of what they want Government to do for them (Interview with Kolos, DG, Minna, 2015).

Accentuating the statement above made by the Director General of Jama'a Forum, Tanko Dada, reporter in News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) stated that:

> The Forum is established to get the actual reaction of the people and to know their needs and aspiration. Also to make them suggest how they want the government to meet their community needs and individual desires (Interview with Tanko, NAN, Minna, 2015).

Therefore, there is no doubt that Jama'a Dialogue is a platform for people to dialogue with the government on their community developmental issues.

Table: 5. What Jama'a Forum has achieved since its Inception

Options(A-G)	**(No)**	**(%)**
A: To bridge the communication gaps between the government and the governed	135	90
B: To ensure that the elected give up some of its powers by narrowing the vertical gap.	Nil	0
C: To painstakingly arrive at project agenda through conflict and compromise that will make the people have a sense of ownership of community projects.	Nil	0
D: To enforce democratic accountability in order to bring government close to the people.	150	100
E: To enable the people check balance government activities and to ensure a practical and result oriented government	96	64
F: To provide a platform for the people to participate in the governing process (voice to the people).	99	66
G: Allow the people to determine their needs and change in their communities	150	100

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Table 5 shows that 150 respondents representing 100% assented that the Forum has been able to enforce democratic accountability in order to bring government close to the people and same 150 respondents representing 100% said it has allowed the people to determine their needs and changes in their communities. Also, 135 respondents representing 90% were of the view that the forum has been able to bridge the communication gap between the government and the governed, while, 96 respondents representing 64% consented that the forum's activities have enabled the people to checkmate government activities in their communities and 99 respondents representing 66% submitted that the forum has provided a platform for the people to participate in the governing process. This submission was emphasized by some of the people interviewed who disclosed that though the forum has been able to give voice to the people in some issues concerning them and has created a platform for the electorate to meet the government in a community dialogue forum. However, there is a need for improvement as most of the Forum's objectives were left unachieved. Mary Noel Berge, reporter in Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) said that:

> The Forum was initially a good idea but at the end its mission statement and objectives were not fully achieved (Interview with Mary, NTA, Minna, 2015).

It is evident that the Forum has not been able to attain most of the fundamental objectives it set out to achieve as government has not given adequate opportunity to the people to participate in governance and thereby narrowing the vertical gap of communication. More so, it has not being able to attain a project agenda that will make the people have a sense of ownership of community projects.

Table: 6. Ways Jama'a Forum Communicate its Activities to the Communities.

Options(A-E)	Number (No)	Percentage (%)
A: Community Announcers	150	100
B: Information through Village Heads	135	90
C: Information through Media Jingles	150	100
D: Information through Inter-Personal Communication	150	100
E: Through religious leaders and worship places	Nil	0

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In Table 6, 150respondents representing 100% affirmed that they got the information through announcement in the Community (Community Announcers), while, the same number and percentage also acknowledged that they were informed through television, radio jingles and inter-personal communication. People who heard either through the community announcer or the Village Head in-turn passed the message to others (Information through Inter-Personal Communication). In the same vein, 135 respondents representing 90%said that they were informed by the Village Heads (Information through village heads). The positions above was also consented to by some of the people interviewed who explained that the Forum used theatrical means (Community Folk Media), electronic media: radio and television jingles (Conventional Media) and all forms communication that is available in the communities. Kolos Hassan Kolos the Director General Jama'a Forum in an interview said that:

> What we do is to get the people informed through Radio, Television and Prints, Bill Boards and Hand Bills. We also used local means of communication that is available in the communities; folk music, theatre group and information through the District Heads, Village Heads and community announcers. Sometime we use the party members in the Local Government like the Chairman and the Local Government communication officer to pass the message to the people (Interview with Kolos, DG, Minna, 2015).

AlhajiSaiduGaladima,Village Head of Ubandoma Community stated that:

> They used the Radio and Television Announcements and Jingles and other local means of communication that is available in various communities in Niger State. They also used Gwape theatre and Dance Groups. They used the medium to tell the people what the government has done, what they want to do and what are the contribution of the people to these ideas. (Interview with Saidu; village head Ubandoma, 2015).

This indicates that the Forum used both community (local) communication and the conventional (mass media) means of communication to communicate it activities to the people in the communities.

Table: 7. Times Jama'a Forum meeting were held in Communities since its Inception

Number of Time	Number (No)	Percentage (%)
A:5 Times	Nil	0
B:4 Times	Nil	0
C:3 Times	Nil	0
D:2 Times	Nil	0
E:1 Time	150	100

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In Table 7, 150 respondents representing 100 % were of the view that the meeting only takes place once (1 time) in their communities. This submission was also consented to by all the Village Heads interviewed who confirmed that the meeting was held once in their communities, that is why the Forum did not have an ample opportunity to achieve most of the promises they made to the mammoth crowd in the course of the Forum Meetings. One of them- AlhajiIsahTanko Baba, the Village Head of Kato Community clarified that:

> …Nobody to ask question, nobody to held responsible as the meeting was held once in our community, we did not have the opportunity to see the Governor again to lay our complains (Interview with Isah, Village Head Kato, 2015).

Alhaji Garba Ibrahim, Village Head of Lapa/She Community also confirmed the opinion of IsahTanko Baba by saying that:

> …the Forum meeting only takes place once in all these communities, there were no opportunity for the people to complain to the government, there were no

people to hold responsible for the uncompleted project in the communities (Interview with Garba, Village Head of Lapa/She, 2015).

These evidences show that the Forum may not have enough time to do follow up of any project. However, getting feedback on any discussed issues in the community is very important, thus lack of feedback may mar the purpose; the objectives of the Forum in the communities.

For further clarification the respondents were asked to indicate the number of time they have participated in Jama'a Forum meetings. The results are represented in table eleven below.

Table: 8. Times People have participated in Jama'a Forum Meetings.

Time Range	Number (No)	Percentage (%)
A:1-5 Times	150	100
B:6 -10 Times	Nil	0
C:11 – 15 Times	Nil	0
D:16 – 20 Times	Nil	0
E:More than 20 Times	Nil	0

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

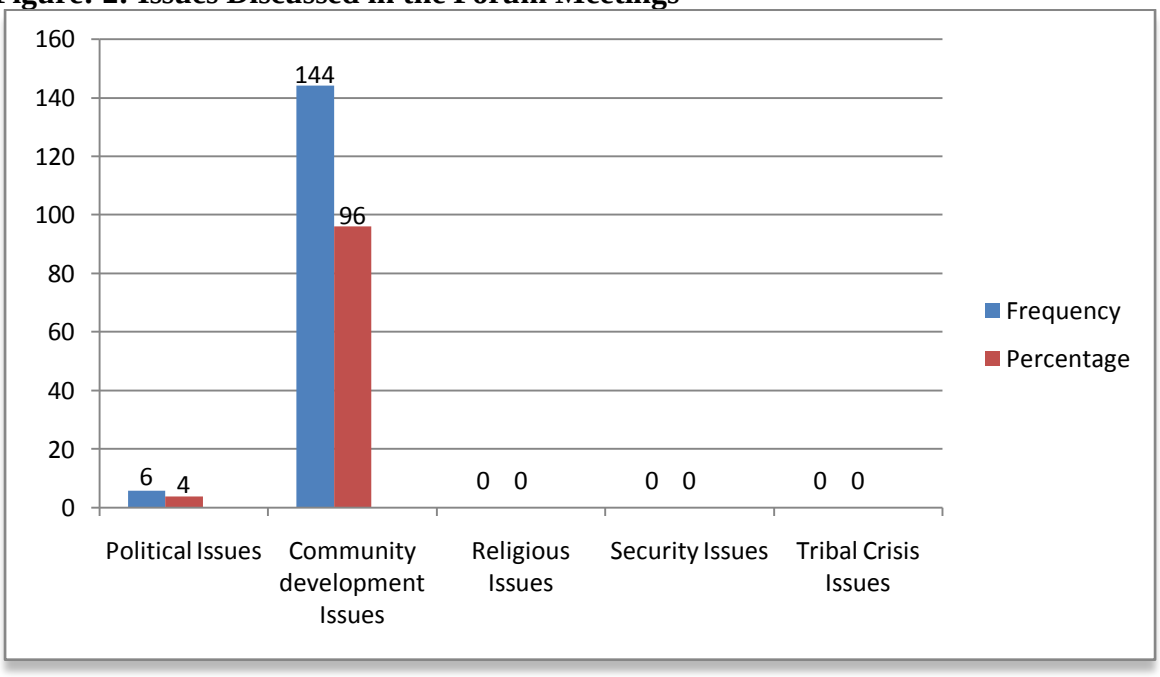
In Table 8, 150 respondents representing 100% acknowledged that they have participated within the range of 1-5 times. This implies that the people only participated in the Forum's meeting base on how many times it is held in their community. If the majority respondent submission above is compared with the respondents' submission on table 7, it may not be a mistake to say that the people only participated once, since it was held in their communities once.

This affirmation was attested to by some of the village head who clarified that the meeting held once in their communities and after that they have not gotten another opportunity to attend or hold any one in their communities. AlhajiSalihuYahaya, Village Heads of Egwa/Gwada in an interview said:

> I only attended the meetings once because it was held once in my community. Though, the meeting is a worthwhile process but it left many people in doubt as it went silent. No more such dialogue platform for the people to suggest their problem freely in the presence of the Governor (interview with Salihu, Village Heads of Egwa/Gwada, 2015).

This submission was glaring in most of the video tape and book publications on Jama'a Dialogue Forum's activities in Niger State. The Forum's meeting was held once in most the Local Governments such as: Lapai, Bida, kotongora, Borgu, Katcha, Muyan and so on. This was also the stand of Kolos Hassan Kolos, the Director General (DG) of Jama'a Dialogue Forum in an interview.

Figure: 2: Issues Discussed in the Forum Meetings



Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In figure two, 144 respondents representing 96% admitted that the issues at the front burner of the Forum's meetings were community development issues (community development matters). Although, 6 respondents representing 4% were of different view as they said that political issues are also discussed. Meanwhile, some of the people interviewed also said the most discussed topics were community development issues.

Affirming this statement, AlhajiSalihuYahaya the Village Head of Egwa/Gwada Community said:

> The people are the initiator of the discussion. The people and their representatives tell the government their problems when discussing issues that concern them; individual and community development issues that will be of general benefit to all community people as a whole (Interview with Salihu, Village Head Egwa/Gwada, Shiroro, 2015).

There is no doubt that the Dialogue Forum is participatory considering the confirmation of the respondents and the interviewees. Although, at one point or the other in the Forum's meeting political (party) issues may be discuss but the most issue discussed is on how people's social well-being can be improve and how communities infrastructural can be develop to make the communities comfortable for the people to live.

Table: 9. Initiator of Discussions in the Forum's Meetings

Questions (11-12)		**(No)**	**(%)**
11: Was government the initiator of most discussions in the	Yes	38	25.3
Forum's community meetings?	No	112	74.7
12: Were ordinary people allowed to make contribution in	Yes	135	90
the Forum's meetings?	No	15	10

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In Table 9 above, 112 respondents representing 74.7% disagreed that government is the initiator of most discussion in the community dialogue meetings, while 38 respondents representing 25.3% disagreed. On the same table, 135 respondents representing 90% agreed that the people are allowed to make contributions during the Forum meetings, while 15 respondents representing 10% also disagreed. This indicates that the people are given opportunity to participate and contribute in the Forum meetings. The village heads interviewed also confirmed that the people are the initiator of most the discussion in the meetings. This was further emphasized by two interviewees from the media. Mary Noel Berge (NTA) explained that:

> …the people were the initiator of the discussion; depending on the community and the issues raised or to be raised in the community. The common people were given ample opportunities to contribute and discussed dialogically with the government on the issues affecting their community (Interview with Mary, NTA, Minna, 2015).

Tanko Dada in the same view acceded that:

> The people are the initiator of most discussion in the Forum; the people complain (problems) and also suggest the possible solutions to the problems. Government listening and give answers or solution to minor problem here and there and where he could not solve them instantly he makes promises (Interview with Tanko, NAN, Minna, 2015).

This indicates that the people are given opportunity to participate and contribute in the Forum meetings. That is, they were given the opportunity to say their mind, rather than government forcing words into their mouths.

Table: 10.Coordinator of Discussions in the Forum Meetings

Options(A-G)	Number (No)	Percentage (%)
A: The Government officials	Nil	0
B: The Community Heads	Nil	0
C: Master of Ceremony (MC)	135	90
D: Community Political Party Leaders	Nil	0
E: The Community Representatives	150	100
F: District Heads (Community Heads leader)	Nil	0
G: Director General (DG) of Jama'a Forum	Nil	0

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Table 10 shows that 150 respondents representing 100% admitted that the coordinator of discussions in the Forum's meetings are the community representatives, while 135 respondents representing 90% affirmed that the coordinator of discussions in the Forum's meetings are the community political party leaders**.** This implies that political party leaders in the communities and communities' representatives are the coordinators of the Forum's discussions at one point or the other.

This respondents' position was acknowledged by some of the interviewees who agreed that the meetings coordinators were the representative of the community, that is, the

person collectively (unanimously) chosen to represent them in the meeting; it could be a political office holder or a learned youth in the community.

Table: 11. How contributors are identified in the Forum's meetings

Options (A-E)	Number (No)	Percentage (%)
A: They are identified by Random Selection	150	100
B: They are identified by Political Constituency	Nil	0
C: They are identified by being a Native of the Community (Local)	135	90
D: They are identified by Gender	95	70
E: They are identified by Academy and Social Status	Nil	0

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In Table 11 above, 150 respondents representing 100% said that they were identified randomly (Random Selection), while, 135 respondents representing 90% indicated that they were identified by being a native of the community and 95 respondents representing 70% acknowledged that they were identified by Gender. This position was also supported by the village heads. One of them: -Alhaji Garba Ibrahim the Village Head of Lapa/She Community said that:

> …The people were randomly selected to talk, if women like five had spoken, they allow men to also talk before given chance to the youth. They do it in such a way that everybody is given a chance to contribute to the discussion (Interview with Garba, village head of Lapa/She, Shiroro, 2015).

This implies that the contributors were mostly the natives (indigenes) of communities who were identified randomly to make contribution in the Forum's meetings, taking into account their gender in order to ensure equal representation.

Table: 12. Response on General Level of Participation in Jama'a Forum Activities

Questions (15-19)		(No)	(%)
15: Do you think the level of participation in Jama'a Forum meetings is encouraging?	Yes	140	93.3
	No	10	6.7
16: Do you consider the involvement of the people as more of participants rather than spectators?	Yes	133	88.7
	No	17	11.3
17: Have you ever made any contributions or suggestions during the forum's meetings?	Yes	128	85.3
	No	22	14.7
18: Were those contributions you made considered and responded to?	Yes	30	20
	No	120	80
19: Did the contributions you made, form the bases of project implementation in your community?	Yes	18	12
	No	132	88

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Table 12 shows that 140 respondents representing 93.3% acknowledged that the level of participation in the Forum is encouraging, while, 10 respondents representing 6.7% disagreed. This implies that the level of participation in Jama'a Forum Meetings (activities) is encouraging.

In same table 133 respondents representing 88.7% accepted that the people are more of participants rather than spectators, while, 17 respondents representing 11.3%seethe people as spectators rather than participants. This implies that the people were given opportunities to participate in the Forum's discussions in their community. That is, people are allowed to initiate and contribute to the Forum's topic of discussion as it concerns their community.

Meanwhile,128 respondents representing 85.3% percent accepted that they have made contributions (suggestions) during the Forum's meetings, but 22 respondents representing 14.7% said that they have not made any contribution or suggestion during the Forum's meeting. This indicates that the Forum is participatory in terms of contribution or suggestion. Also, 120 respondents representing 80% said that the contributions they made

during the Forum's meetings were not considered and attended to, while 30 respondents representing 20% admitted that the contributions they made during the Forum's meetings were considered and attended to. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the contributions made by people during the Forum's meetings were not considered and attended to.

Similarly, in the same table, 132 respondents representing 88% said that the contributions they made during the Forum's meetings did not form the basis for project implementation in their community, while 18 respondents representing 12% said it form the basis of project implementation in their communities.

This implies that, the contributions people made during the Forum's meetings did not form the basis of project implementation in their communities. That is, people were allowed to make contributions during the meetings, but those contributions were neither utilized by the government nor did they form the basis for project implementation in their communities.

Table: 13.Projects Executed in Communities through Jama'a Dialogue Forum

Options (A-M)	Number (No)	Percentage (%)
A: Building and rehabilitation of Schools.	135	90
B: Community clinic and Maternity Centre.	27	18
C: Provision of Bore-Hole (both motorized, solar and hand-dug)	150	100
D: Provision of Electricity.	Nil	0
E: Provision of Transformer, Wires and Poles.	Nil	0
F: Provision of Drainages.	60	40
G: Provision of Culverts.	60	40
H: Provision of Roads.	Nil	0
I: Empowerment of Individual, groups and Agro-Allied activities.	Nil	0
J: Nurses and Doctors quarters.	Nil	0
K: Police Security Posts.	Nil	0
L: Class rooms Desks and Benches.	150	100
M: Building of Abattoir	27	18

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Table 13 shows that150 respondents representing 100% said that the project executed in their community is provision of bore-hole (both motorized, solar and hand-dug), and the same number and percentage of respondents revealed that the projects executed in their communities include the supply of class room desks and benches. Also, 135 respondents representing 90% confirmed that projects executed in their communities were building and rehabilitation of schools. Meanwhile, 60 respondents representing 40% said that Projects executed in their communities is provision of drainages and the same number of respondents also consented that projects executed in their communities is provision of culverts. While, 27 respondents representing 18% affirmed that projects executed in their communities is the building of Abattoir and the same number of respondents acknowledged that the project executed in their community is community clinic and maternity center. The position of the majority respondents was also emphasized

by all the village heads; interviewed. AlhajiYusufu Dada Abdullahi the Village Head Gussoro/Zumba Community said that:

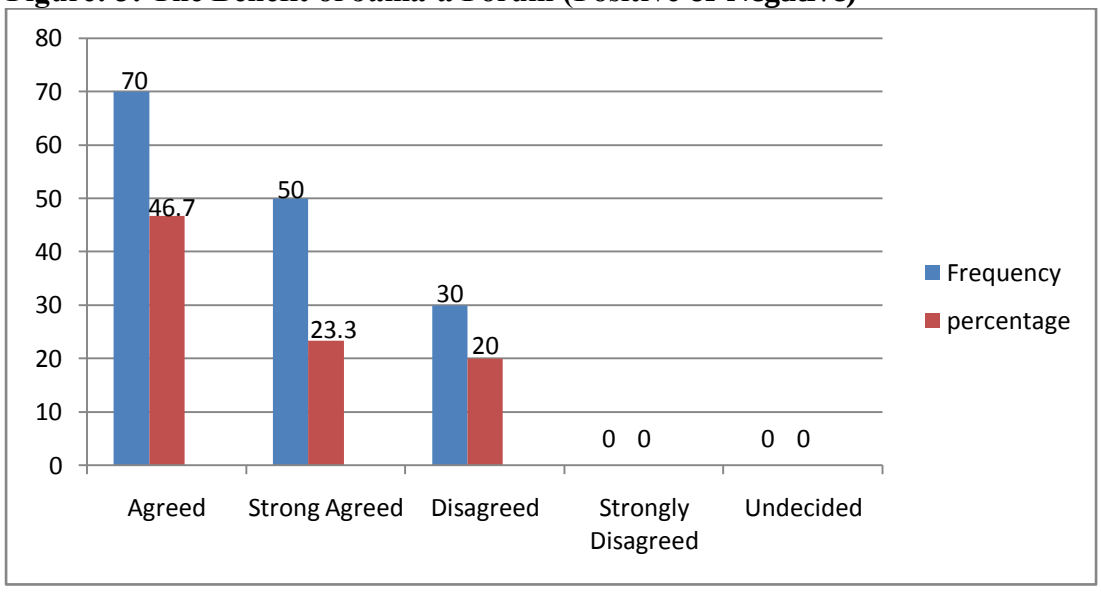
> …in my own community they roofed the community clinic center blown away by the wind, and they provide desks, benches and bore-hole water (Interview with Yusufu, village head Gussoro/Zumba, Shiroro, 2015).

This is also echoed by AlhajiSaiduGaladima, the Village Head of Ubandoma Community who indicated that:

> …in my own community the project implemented were bore-hole, renovation of school and abattoir. Desks and benches were also given to our schools. (Interview with Saidu, village head Ubandoma, Shiroro, 2015).

The Village Head's statement above agrees with the majority of the respondents' submissions; that building and rehabilitation of schools, community clinic and maternity center, provision of bore-hole (both motorized, solar and hand-dug). As well as provision of drainages and culverts, class room desks and benches, building and renovation of Abattoir were the projects the Forum have been able to achieve in most communities since its inception.

Figure: 3: The Benefit of Jama'a Forum (Positive or Negative)

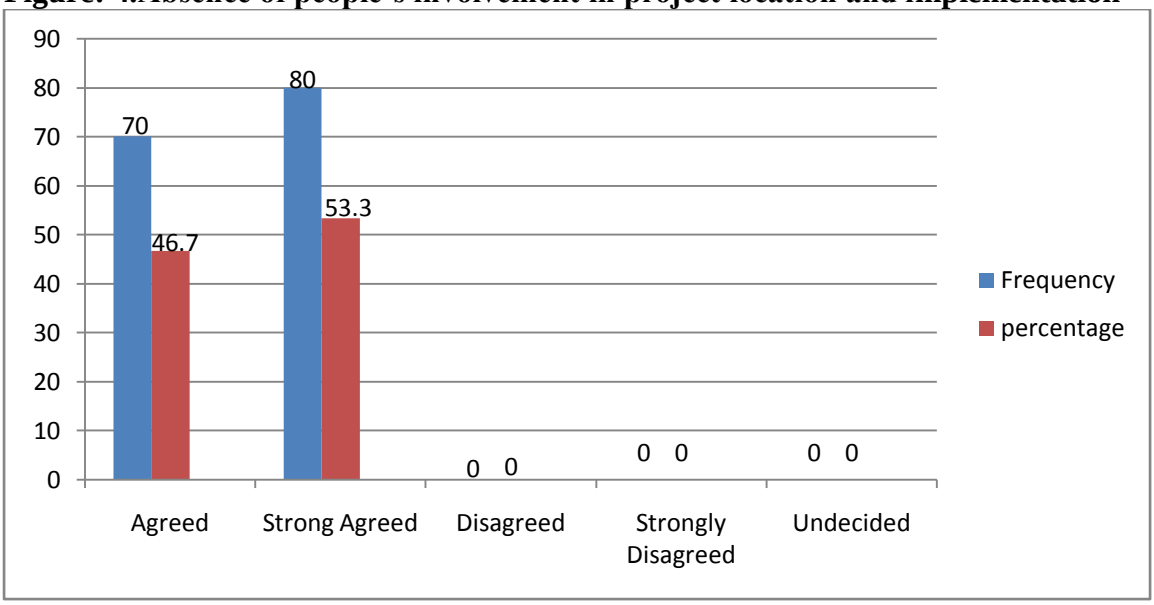


Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

Figure 3 show that 70 of respondents representing 46.7% agreed that their communities have benefited positively from Jama'a Forum activities in the State, 50 respondents representing 23.3% 'strongly agreed'. But 30 respondents representing 20% disagreed. Judging from the majority respondents' submissions above it may not be a mistake to say that many communities have positively benefited from Jama'a Forum's activities in Niger State.

4.3. SECTION: C. Determine factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation.

Figure: 4.Absence of people's involvement in project location and implementation



Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015

Figure 4 show that 70 of respondents representing 46.7% agreed that there is absence of people's involvement in project location and implementation in the communities, while 80 respondents representing 53.3% 'strongly agreed'. Adjudging from the majority respondents' submissions abovethere is no doubt that peoplewere excludedin project location and implementation. This may apparently lead to loss of interest in the Forum's activities and decline in peoples' participation.

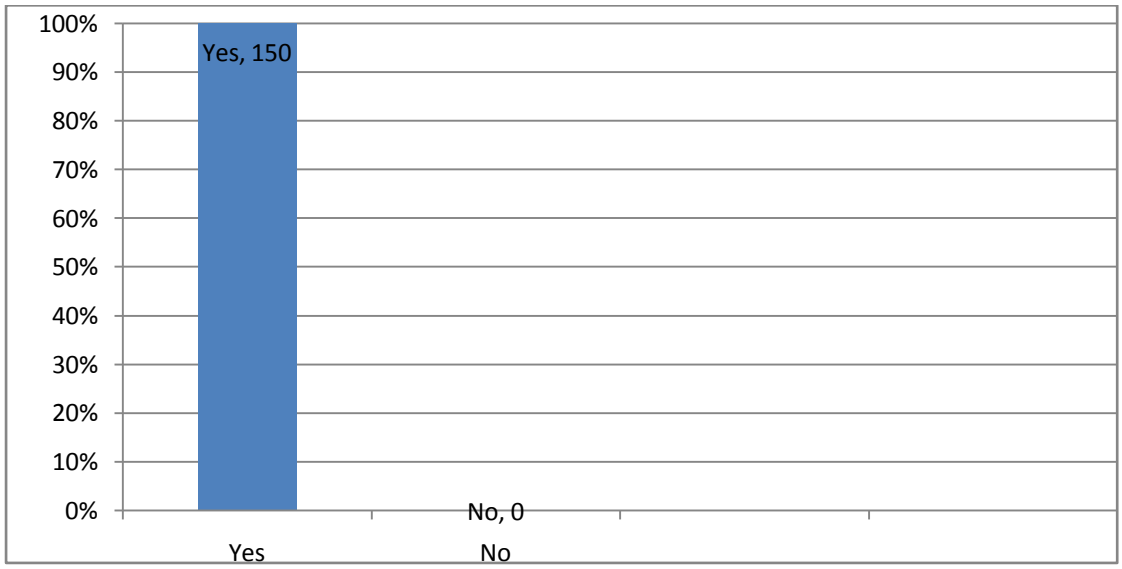
Table: 14. Factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Forum's community development projects implementation

Options (A-E)	Number (No)	Percentage (%)
A:Illiteracy	Nil	0
B:Government Order	Nil	0
C:Selected Representative Participation	150	100
D:Community Representatives' Personal Interest	150	100
E:Time Factor	Nil	0
F:Coordination and Managerial Process	Nil	0
G: Lack of skill and Technical Knowhow	Nil	0
H: Financial Constraints	Nil	0

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015

In Table 14 above, 150 respondents representing 100% said factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation is the idea of selective Representative Participation (symbolic participation). The same number and percentage of respondents confirm that Community Representatives' Personal Interest is also another factor that brought about the exclusion of people from participating in the Forum's community projects implementation.The implication of it is that ownership and sustainabilityof community projects may be lacking.

Figure: 5: Decline in Jama'a Dialogue Forum Participatory Activities



Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In figure 4, 150 respondents representing 100% were of the view that there is a decline in Jama'a dialogue forum participatory activities. This implies that there is a fall in the active and effective participation of the people in the Forum activities in communities. That is, the level of participation in the Forum activities is no longer the way it used to be.

This was also confirmed by some of the residents (indigenes) of the communities sampled. Therefore, there is a need for quick action to improve and maximize the potentials of the Forum for a sustainable dialogue between the government and governed.

Table: 15. Factors responsible for decline in people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects

Options (A-J)	Number (No)	Percentage (%)
A: Lack of Feed Back Mechanism.	150	100
B: Loss of Interest by people.	150	100
C: Poor communication.	Nil	0
D: People do not understand the concept of Jama'a Dialogue Forum.	Nil	0
E: The organizers dictate the pace to the people.	Nil	0
F: People are merely allowed to listen but not contributing.	Nil	0
G: Lack of regular community meetings.	150	100
H:Lack of Community Initiative in the programmes and community project.	141	94
I: The operational activities of the forum are not in line with its objective.	135	90
J: Inconsistent policy of programme executors	150	100

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In Table 14 above, 150 respondents representing 100% said the decline in effective participation of people in Jama'a Forum activities is lack of feedback mechanism that could help the government monitor and evaluate the Forum activities in communities. Similarly, the same numbers of respondents attributed the factors to people loss of interest in the Forum's activities in communities, lack of regular community meetings and inconsistent policy programme of projects executors are all the cause of the decline in effective participation of people in Jama'a Forum Activities. Meanwhile, 141 respondents representing 94% said that it is lack of community initiative in the programmes and community project and 135 respondents representing 90% believed it is the operational activities of the forum that was not in line with its objective. Some of the factors were also confirmed by most of the interviewees. This point was emphasized by Mary Noel Berge

reporter in NTA who participated in all the Jama'a Forum community meetings. In an interview Mary Noel Berge stated that:

> The full participation of the people was not replicated in project execution in the communities, but rather jeopardized the hope of the people in further participation which lead to the decline in effective participation of the people in Jama'a Forum activities (Interview with Mary, NTA, Minna, 2015).

From the respondents' and most of the interviewees' position it could be deduced that Lack of feed Back Mechanism, loss of interest by people, lack of regular community meetings, lack of community initiative in the programmes and community project and inconsistent policy of programme executors that was not in line with its objectives were the factors responsible for decline in people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects.

4.4 SECTION: D.Identify ways through which people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation can be achieved.

Table: 16.Ways Jama'a Dialogue Forum can regain people's full participation in community development projects.

Options (A-J)	(No)	(%)
A: Airing it live through Radio and Television Programme.	Nil	0
B: Through regular community meetings.	150	100
C: Through interpersonal communication.	Nil	0
D: Allowing Face to Face Communication to take high stake.	Nil	0
E: Provision for Feed Back Mechanism.	150	100
F: Simulation of discussion in real life community development project.	150	100
G: Appropriate timing of the dialogue meetings to enable effective and active participation of the people in the communities.	144	96
H: Higher Community Initiative in the programmes and community project.	144	96
I: Uses of more Local Content such as Language, Music, theatre and folklores in the programmes.	147	98
J: The community Dialogue Forum plans and implementation should be the responsibility of the leaders from each community instead of the Government	150	100
K: Government allowing the communities to determine the projects to be done in their community, not dictating to them.	150	100

Source: Field Survey, Research Adopted communities, Niger State, 2015.

In table 15 above, 150 respondents representing 100% were of the opinion that the Forum could be made more effective in its participatory roles if its meetings is holds in the communities regularly, if there is provision for feedback mechanism, and if the government can allow the communities to determine the projects to be done in their community, as well as government allowing the Forum projects plans and implementation to be the responsibility of leaders from each communities instead of the government. Meanwhile, 144 of respondents representing 96% suggested that the Forum could be made more effective in its participatory roles if the time of the dialogue meetings is conducive for the people and same number of respondents opined that higher community initiatives in the

programmes and community projects will help the Forum in regaining people's full participation in community development projects. However, 147 of respondents representing 98% percent of the total respondents said the use of more local content such as language, music, theatre and folklores in the programmes can make the Forum more effective in its participatory roles. These positions were also emphasized by all the Village Heads. Kolos Hassan Kolos the Director General (DG) Jama'a Forum in an interview disclosed that:

> ...the government should create committee of account for the sake of accountability and to punish the erred person in terms of community project money embezzlement. The Forum should exist based on the legislative promulgation to make it a legal bonded Forum. The Forum's meetings should be constantly held in community and controlled by the locals of the community (Interview with Kolos, JDF, Minna, 2015).

From the respondents' submissions, it is evident that the Jama'a Forum's community dialogue platform needs to be modified to complement the local and common culture of the targeted people in the communities. It should emanate from the people themselves, instead of the government. That is, the Community Dialogue Forum should be people oriented in order to make it more participatory for community development purpose.

4.5 SECTION E: Discussion of Results

Base on the general findings of this study, Jama'a Dialogue Forum is a potential participatory platform for community development, most especially community development projects, if it is maximally organised and utilised. This is reflected in the submission of the 150 respondents representing 100% and most of the interviewees who agreed that Jama'a Dialogue Forum is a participatory platform for community based development. Similarly, same number of respondents' response and percentage also reflected that the level of participation in Jama'a Forum meetings is encouraging, that is,

people's involvement is more of participants rather than spectators. The contributions and suggestions during the Forum's meetings were made by people.

However, considering the fact that the Dialogue Platform was majorly established to provide a platform for people to participate in governing process, in order to dialogically arrive at project agenda through conflict and compromise that will make the people have a sense of ownership of community development projects. As well as allowing the people to determine the needs and changes in their communities. Majority of respondents indicated thatthe level of people's participation in the Forum's community development projects is very low. This was confirmed by 120 respondents representing 80% and 132 respondents representing 88% respectively who said that the contributions and suggestions they made were not considered and did not form the bases of projects implementation in their communities.

Therefore, it is pertinent to interrogate the submission made by the majority of respondents who said that the level of people's participation in the implementation of community development projects is very low if they formerly acknowledged that the participation of the people in the Forum's dialogue meeting is encouraging. That is, if the people were the initiators and coordinators of the Forum'smeetings and were permitted to make contributions and suggestions on their community challenges and possible solution to it, then, why will they adjudge the people's participation in community development projects as 'very low'? In respect to this question, Tanko Dada a reporter in News Agency of Nigeria in an interview said:

> Honestly, the role of the people and their participation was so high in the sense that they are the one that determine what should be done and how it should be done. But in terms of projects execution the Forum has many

> lapses to cover. That is, people are left out at this stage (Interview with Tanko, Minna, 2015).

This was also the observation of Mary Noel Berge, a reporter in NTA Minna. According to her:

> The full participation of the people was not replicated in Forum's project implementation in the communities, but rather jeopardized the hope of the people in further participation in the dialogue forum meetings (Interview with Berge, NTA, 2015).

With these interviewees' submissions, it is correct to say that the reason why people adjudge the level of participation in Jama'a dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation as 'very low' is because the projects implemented in the communities were executed without people's consent. That is, the process was not like the way it was during the planning stage where everybody in the community sat down to dialogue on the issues that concern their community. Rather, the projects implementation was based on selected representative system, as against the open and participatory system experienced at inception. Government deal directly with the selected representatives from each community,instead of the entire community as it is used to be from the inception (symbolic participation). This participationis what Theron, (2005:115) called 'Participation by Consultation' on the typology (level or ladder) of participation. People participate by being consulted as consultants/professionals/planners and external officials listen to their views. The professionals define both problems and solutions and may modify these in the light of the people's responses. The process does not include any share in decision-making by the community, nor are the community representatives under any obligation to take on board people's views. Similarly, Arnstein, (1969) refers to this nature ofparticipation as "Tokenism": participation that often occurs when participants hear about interventions and may say something about them, which power holders denote as 'input'. However, the voice

of the of participant will not have any effect on the intervention; thus participation does not lead to change. In the same vein, White (2014) refers to it as "Nominal Participation". Sarah White saidit is often used by more powerful actors to give legitimacy to development plans. Less powerful people become involved in it through a desire for inclusion. But it is little more than a display, and does not result in change. This typology takes place in rural environment, where, for example people identify community problem and likely solution to the problem, but their ideas was ignored at the implementation stage. As such most development projects implemented in the communities were not the most pressing needs of the people. This statement can be further confirmed via the Village Heads' testimonies during the interview. They explained that "the people's hopes were dashed as government did not fulfill their desired needs by involving them directly in the implementation of many of the development projects". IsahTanko Baba the Village Head of Kato Community said:

> …community people only participated in the discussion by laying complains and asking question on their needs and aspiration, also suggesting what the government should do for them. Every other process is handled by community representative who are politicians (interview with Isah, Village Head of Kato Community, 2015).

This statement was also re-emphasis by AlhajiSaiduGaladima the Village Head of Ubandoma Community. Saidu said:

> The strategies used for the projects implementation is not good. It is not good for the development of the community and the progress of the people. In my own community the government gave us bore-hole and re-builds school and abattoir, also provided desk and benches for our schools. But what we needed the most were electricity and the grading of our road for easy access and motorable. But what they gave us has not change anything in our life, as many of our sons traveled far to ground grains for consumption and watch sports infaraway town of Kuta (interview with Galadima, Village Head of Ubandoma Community, 2015).

This shows that most of the projects executed in the communities were not the most pressing needs of the people. Take for instance, the people in Egwa/Gwada community also

complained that they told the government in Jama'a dialogue forum's meeting that they needed abattoir; that their abattoir is a sorry sight and not hygienic for slaughtering activities anymore, they also laid complains that they do not have clinics and good roads but what government did for them was hand-dug borehole, which they have alternative for as at that time. The researcher visited the abattoir to ascertain the level of deterioration and what was discovered was not encouraging.It was indeed a sorry sight.

HarunaBarde the head of Gwape dancing group said that the problem is not only in Shiroro Local Government; 'it is the same in most of the twenty-five Local Government in Niger State. He further said that if government had allowed communal implementation of the projects,that is, allowing the people in the communities to unanimously carry out the projects themselves, the most pressing needs of the people could have been implemented first. But the idea of allowing the representative to execute the projects on behalf of the people jettisoned people's participation in community projects and resulted in the inconsistencies.This is participation in development (participation as a means) instead of participation fordevelopment (participation as an end). This type of participation is often used to achieve some predetermined goal or objective; in order words itstresses the achievement of the objective rather than the act of participation itself (Kumar, 2002:26).

Meanwhile, the information gotten from the observed documents: published books and video tapes on the 'account of Jama'a Forum activities in Niger State' claimed the achievement of several projects that were far from the realities on ground in most of the communities the researcher visited. For example, with regard to the development projects inSabonWuse, Tafa Local Government Area government, one of the account of Jama'a Forum's published volume claimed that they have done Nomadic Education, water ways,

good road, cattle routes, clinics, Veterinary Hospital, electricity, renovation of market, distribution of fertilizers and presentation of cheques to several groups as beneficiaries under the NAPEP. Contrary to the publication however, the youth leader of Tafa Local Government, AbaraDangana said all these published information are far from the truth. The youth leader further explained that the community development projects they have been able to achieve are; hand dug bore-hole water, hundred thousand naira group empowerment fund, renovation primary schools and provision of desk and benches. While most pressing needs like hospital, good road, electricity water ways and fertilizers were not met.

Similarly, youth leaders in Bida Local Government Area, JubrilMuhammed;Mokwa Local Government Area, Abdullah Nasiru andEdati Local Government Area, Salawudeen Raman who are temporarily residing inMinna the capital of Niger Statebecause of their University education explained that most project implemented in their various communities were useful but they are not the main pressing need of the people. Separately, they said if government had monitored the processes of the projects' implementation, thing would not have been the way they were then. The youth leader of Agaie Local Government Area AlhajiAliyu .K. Abdul said:

> Many people kept silence thinking the project would be done phase by phase not knowing everything was supposed to be done once. All the projects done were implemented without the consent of the village heads, the community leader that supposed to intimate the people about the project just brought people to do it. As a matter of fact there was no one to hold them accountable for this decadence (Interview with Abdul, the youth leader, Agaie, 2015).

Clarifying the submissions of these youth leaders earlier mention the Director General Kolos Hassan Kolos said:

> …there is supervisory body at the level of Ministry for Local Government that goes around to each Local Government to ensure that the money

> released for community development projects are well utilised. However, they discovered that there were a lot of irregularities in the implementation of the community development project. Most of the projects were not done; some were started but not completed. Government having discovered these corrupt acts set up community to look into it. In some communities the people concerned were held responsible to pay back or sanctioned (Interview with Kolos, JDF, Minna, 2015).

From the foregoing, it is clear that the level of people's participation in Jama'a dialogue Forum's community development projects is not encouraging because the people were not critical about the activities of their community representatives or hold them accountable since they act as a link between them and the government. These representatives left unmonitored, execute projects that furthers their selfish interest. This is contrary to the tenets of community development as stated by the United Nations in its definition of development "development must be the process which involve the efforts of the people themselves and united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress" (United Nations, from Biggs, 1999). This is also in line with the submission of Enwefah (2007:17) who explains that any intervention with the goal to achieve real and sustainable improvement in the living conditions of people is doomed to fail unless those at whom it is targeted are actively involved in the process. Community development activity must be carried out with the people and not for them. People must be allowed to determine their problem and proffer necessary solution to solve it themselves with little or no external supports (Enwefah, 2007). This simply means that, viable and sustainable community projects can only be achieved through the collective effort of the community with little or no external influence. That is why Berry (1999) suggests that the participatory approach should credits people with the ability, even in the most extreme

circumstances, to engage with the issues that face them. That is, the participatory approach should give more information, responsibility and decision making power in diverse project areas including the projects focus, the implementation strategy and assessment to the beneficiaries (people). Anything aside this participatory approach, is "participated in participation"; participation with predetermined intents and purposes.Community participation enhances the efficiency of community development projects. This is the reason several writers come to agree that genuine community participation increases the efficiency, effectivenessand sustainability of development projects in a community.It recognises the direct involvement of beneficiaries in the planning and at the implementation stages.In view of this, the theoretical framework brings to bear that the top down approach cannot bring about sustainable development unless it is aligned with community structures to address social needs and empowerment (Mendes, 2008:3).No wonderParticipatoryCommunication Theory emphasis the use of dialogical communication rather than linear communication. It stresses on participatory and collective process in research, problem identification, decision marking, implementation and evaluation of change, communally (Rockefeller Foundation, 1997). Also,Community Development Theory postulation is not different from it because it acknowledged that Community Development is a collective problem solving, self-help, and empowerment(Schiele 2005).

However, a quest to determine factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation revealedthat the idea of community selected representative participation andtheir personal interest are major factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a

Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation.This therefore brought about aloss of interest in the Forum's activities and a declinein participation.

Also, lack of people's participation in the implementation ofcommunity development projects as earlier discussed and other factors such as: lack of regular community dialogue meetings, lack of feedback mechanism to monitor and evaluate community projects and programmes, inconsistency of projects and programmes execution and loss of personal and collective interests are inevitable consequences of a top-down communication approach to development where community efforts are sidelined. These aforementioned features discovered in this study, therefore, provide the answer to the research question that seeks to know thefactors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation in Niger State. These findings are in contrast with the proposal of Mohan (2008:781) as presented in the literature review because it did not adhere to the institutional perspective of stages of a development projects: the people must be involve from the research stage (planning), design stage, implementation stage, monitoring and evaluation stage. Reiterating the importance of stages in development projects Hollnsteiner, (1976:370) clarifies that community engagement in community based projects would be better maintained if local communities participated in the planning and implementation stages. Also seeing it from the postulations of the theoretical framework used in this study: Participatory Communication Theory and Community Development Theory, it is correct to say that the forum displayed what is popularly called " pseudo participation" or "participated in participation" instead of local involvement, self-implementation and effective participation marked as the bases for ownership and sustainable development.

This typology (level) of participation: ‘participation by consultation’ is fully embedded inTokenism ladder of participation. No wonder Nekwaya (2007:35) points out that the route to effective community participation would depend on selecting the right combination of approaches. The right approach that could have help in achieving the desired mission and objectives of Jama’a Forum would have been‘Self-mobilisation Strategies’, Citizenship Control’ and ‘Interaction Strategies’. This is because the strategiesallow people participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems.People participate in joint analysis,development of action plans and capacity building. This bottom-up approach allows people to develop contacts with external institutions for resources and the technical advice they need, but they themselves retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated, bottom-up and self-reliant mobilasation and collective actions may or may not challenge an existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.However, this would determine whether the community authorities actually allow the community to participate and make its own decisions (Theron, 2005:115).

For instance, 150 respondents representing 100% sampled confirmed that lack of regular community dialogue meetings in the communities have caused serious setback in the activities of Jama’a Dialogue Forum. This is because the Forum’s meeting that was supposed to be held quarterly in each community took a year or more than that before its being held in some communities, the people sometime have to wait anxiously for many months, days and hours before they could hold any meaningful meeting with the government to present their requests and complaints

Another factor as earlier mentioned is lack of feedback mechanism. This was also the positions of 100% of the respondents sampled in this study who clarified that the Forum

lacked feedback mechanism or platform that will enable it to know the aftermath of its actions and activities in the communities. This is because government gives more preference to the dialogue meeting (forum) only; that is, gathering people to interact with them to get ideas and suggestion. This interactions end when the government disburses funds to the community representatives to carry out the project without putting in place a monitoring and evaluation method to know if the needs of the people were actually met or not. This was also confirmed by some village heads and two media personnel. The village head of Kato community, AlhajiIsahTanko Baba who said:

> …Although, they started some projects but they were uncompleted. Nobody to ask question, nobody to hold responsible as the meeting was held once in our community. We did not have the opportunity to see the Governor again to laid our complaints (Interview with Isah, village head Kato Community, Shiroro, 2015).

This implies that the lack of feedback mechanism has also contributed to the setback in Community Development Projects' implementation. Cumulatively, this process is based on 'ConsultationStrategies andFunctional Participation', asTheron (2005:115) put it on the ladder (typology) of participation. People participate in a joint analysis, the development of action plans and capacity building but left out at executing stage.Nekwaya (2007:35) explains that participation is/should be seen as right, not just the means to achieve project goals. Contrary to this, Jama'a Dialogue Forum participatory approach was just a 'means to achieve project goals'.As a result of this, people stopped attending the dialogue meetings whenever it is brought to their community because they did not feel it was useful again. They feel everything had already been decided and afterwards they were allowed to discuss it. All these shortcomings were as a result of the political selfish interest of the community

representatives who deprived the people of participating in the implementation of their own development projects. The Village Head of Lapa/She Community, Alhaji Garba Ibrahim explain that:

> If the people had been allowed to implements all these community projects collectively as intentionally planned by the government, the story won't have been the way it is today in all the communities where people are saying that the Forum left much to be desired (Interview with Garba; Village Head of Lapa/She Community, 2015).

This is because they believed that the initial intention of the Forum and enthusiasm exhibited by the people never replicated in projects implementation; people's most pressing needs were not satisfied. Mohan, (2008)views this participation in development projects as "an end in itself," because people's participation in the Dialogue Forum is for intrinsic reason,rather than purely instrumental reasons. Also, Mikkelsen, (2005) calls it participation as "an end by itself". Meanwhile, Gaventa, (2006) clarifies that some time sits purpose is to change underlying social and power relations in favour of the poor. But Chambers, (2005) observes that the role of local people is being analysts or actors. Thus, to achieve a complete people oriented and inclusive community development projects, governments and stakeholders must beginning to think towards community driven and self-help development projects. Cheshire (2006) acknowledges that community driven and self-help development projects recognise that poor people are not passive subjects; rather they are capable and prime actors in the development process. Individuals and communities take responsibility for their own development and "pull themselves up by their own bootstraps".

For Jama'a Dialogue Forum to fullyachieve people's participation in community development projects implementation, all development plans and initiatives should beginning from the people and end with the people. That is, the people should be thesubject

and the object of the Forum's community development programmes. It should be all about "putting people first", people themselves should recognise or identify their situations including their capacities and challenges, analyse their realities, suggest their own solutions and implement them(Burkey 2000; Mikkelsen 2005). This position was confirmed by 99.5% of the respondents sampled in this study. These respondents advocated for a power shift from the government, intermediaries and community representative to the people, that is, the people should determine the projects to be executed in their community; from the conceptual stage to the implementation and evaluation stage. It should be a bottom-up approach that involves extensive discussions, conversations, and decision-making with the intended (target) communities. Community members should create content according to their capacities and interests. These findings are in line with the submission of Hoeper, (2007) quoted in Mohan, (2008) as presented in the literature review. Bernhard Hoeper in his article "You cannot 'buy' development; beneficiary communities must own the projects" explains that participatory development must engage populations in development projects, in order to give them a part in initiatives designed for their benefit, in the hopes that development projects will be more sustainable and successful if local populations are engaged in the development process (Hoeper, 2007 quoted in Mohan, 2008:781).

This implies that the mobilization of people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution will empower the process of people handling challenges and influence the direction of their own lives. That is, the people are capable and willing to initiate the process and take part in the analysis that can encourage joint decision making, about what should be achieved and how it should be achieved in their community

(equal partners in the development effort). Ownership and control of the process should rest in the hands of the local people.

Some of the interviewees and 100% of the respondents sampled in this study agreed thatpeople's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation can be achievedthroughregular community meetings, provision of feedback mechanism and the simulation of discussion in real life community development project. Others are, setting aside a convenient timing for the dialogue meetings, effective and active participation of the people in the communities, higher community initiative in programmes and community projects, as well as, the use of more local content such as language, music, theatre and folklores for easy communication. Likewise in an interview, the Director General of Jama'a Dialogue Forum, Kolos Hassan Kolossuggested that:

> If the Jama'a Forum want to sustain and regain people's full participation in its community development projects, the present (newly elected) government must ensure that the people in the community do the project their way without the interference of political leaders or representatives in the community. The government should create committee of account for the sake of accountability and to punish the erred person in terms of community project money embezzlement. The Forum should exist based on the legislative promulgation to make it a legal bonded Forum. The Forum's meetings should be constantly held in communities and controlled by the locals of the community. Government should only pay visit to the communities for feedback sake and to know how they spent the funds; if truly work is going on or done in the communities and this should done quarterly as usual (Interview with Kolos, DG, Jama'a Forum, Minna, 2015).

This was also re-echoed in an interview by AlhajiYusufu DadaAbdullahi, the village head of Gussoro/Zumba Community who said:

> The only alternative strategies that can be deployed to make Jama'a Dialogue Forum more effective in the discharge of its objectives and regain people's full participation in its community development projects are to allow the people dictate the pace totally. Let the people do their community projects themselves instead of giving it to politicians in the communities to control or implement. They should also form a pure community dialogue base platform that the people

> will control themselves for the purpose of community development; government should just provide funds only. When they have access to a genuine community development project, they will value it and achieve it collectively (Interview with Abdullahi, village head of Gussoro/Zumba, Shiroro, 2015).

Majority of these respondents sampled and the interviewees' responses as well agreed with the two theoretical frameworks used in this study that propagates the relocation of power back into the community. Community Development Theory contends that relocating power into oppressed communities requires collaboration with community members, an investment and belief in the potential of individual people to solve their own community's problems, and an understanding that this type of community transformation will also result in improved individual and community lives. Similarly, Participatory Communication Theory calls for a process of community dialogue through which people themselves will define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their own lives. That is, the process should be a collective problem identification, decision marking, and community-based implementation of solution to development issues. This simply means that community development activity must be carried out with the people and not for them.

From afore-discussed findings, it is observed that the Forum's intentions are different from what obtains (the realities). The Forum's objective is to bridge the communication gaps between the government and the governed, make the people have a sense of ownership of community projects, enforce democratic accountability by bring government close to the people, ensure practical and result oriented government and provide a platform for the people to participate in the governing process. As well as, allowing the people to determine their needs and changes in their communities through a systematic community dialogue meeting between the government and the governed.

However, the reality is far from the Forum's intention, in the sense that the level of people's participation in the Forum's dialogue meetings has not in any way bridged the communication gaps between the government and the governed. That is, there are still wide information gap that exist between the government and the governed because there is no sustainableplatformavailable for the people to interact with the government. The people have not in any way had a sense of ownership of community projects, most projects were implemented without the general consent of the benefiting communities.

On the contrary, the information gathered on Jama'a Dialogue Forum's projects implementation from the documents review (documentary observation): "video tapes" and books published on "the account of Jama'a Forum in Niger State," show that every stage in Jama'a Dialogue Forum Activities involve the people. There were so many sensational information published that were in contrary to the reality on Jama'a Dialogue Forum activities in the communities. Many "Concocted" or "make believe" pictures of community development projects that do not exist were displayed as achieved projects in the communities. For instance, in Edati Local Government Area there is a documented information that projects such as: electricity, road construction, resuscitation of water irrigation, construction of Diko to Guzzan of Lafiagi road to link up Kwara State, basic health centers, provision of qualifies teachers in all the schools, rehabilitation of class rooms, renovation of school buildings and provision of desks and benches and so on. But all the information was far from the truth.

The youth secretary, Ibrahim AliyuDonko and Alhaji Mohammed N. Jiya who are natives of Guzzan community in Edati Local Government said all these published achievements of Jama'a Forum in their Local Government are not true. They further clarify that bore-hole

water, desk and benches and renovation of class rooms were only projects implemented in their community. IbrahimAbdukadir, the youth secretary of Guzzan community added that 'the bore-hole machine is faulty and the community leaders are deliberating on how they can make it work again'. Aside this, many Local Government Area in Niger State according to the documentation were said to have enjoyed gigantic community development projects implementation, but all these are far from the reality seen on ground. All these information published are just a "make believe". In the sense that, government published what communities' political leaders and Local Government Area chairman said they have achieved without investigating it. As a matter of fact, the problems still boil down to the fact that government never monitor, evaluate and check the activities of the people it saddled with the responsibility of getting the community development projects done.

Therefore, Jama'a Forum that could have been an equitable dialogue platform for mutual interaction between the government and the people is politically high-jacked by the politicians in the communities who see it as a medium of achieving their own selfish and political interest (Interview with Noel Berge, 2015). However, there is no doubt that 'Community Dialogue Forum' is a viable platform for achieving effective participation, ownership and sustainable development projects in the communities in Nigeria if it is well explored and utilised.

Some countries have maximized the potentials of Dialogue Forum platform to mobilise their citizens for political, cultural and socio-economic participation. For instance, dialogue forum platform can be seen in India where (village council) called Panchayati Raj was established in the 1950s, to ensure community participation in rural development programs (Tayler, 2005). Similarly, Bangladesh government has taken different reform

strategies for its local government bodies to foster people's participation in development programs. At present, rural people in Bangladesh elect local leaders to represent them in development projects that are implemented by local community bodies (Morshed, 1997). In Thailand, Public Hearing Regulation was introduced in 1996 to ensure people's participation in development program implementation (Sarker, 2006). For Kenya, participatory community development approach was used to mobilize community action in the implementation of development projects (Karanja, 1998). In Indonesia, the citizen forum named 'Forum Wargas' was also formed to strengthen civil societies at local level. Through the 'Forum Wargas' approach, local people, officials, business men and other sectors meet and discuss any issue to reach a solution (Geventa, 2004). In Uganda, the local community is involved in participatory approaches to develop priorities and fund allocation for the national budget. Local government bodies organize meetings with the local communities (Awio, 2001). These Dialogue Forums Platforms above-mentioned in other parts of the world to some extent are said to have achieved the aims of their creation. Although, most of these countries mentioned above may be geographical, constitutional, political, cultural and socio-economical different from Nigeria, notwithstanding, Niger State government and Nigeria as a whole can take antecedents from these countries to re-establish, improve and utilize participatory potential of Community Dialogue Forum, so as to meet rural needs and ensure sustainable community development in the communities and in Nigeria as a whole.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Summary

This study set out to assess the use of people's dialogue Forum as a participatory platform for community development. Thus, this study paid critical attention to how Niger State Government used Jama'a Forum as a citizen consultative platform (participation by consultation) instead of partnership participation (participation by partnership) that will create a mutual interaction between the people and government. That is, an interactive platform that will allow citizens to be heard and align with the implementation of development projects through community efforts and voluntary actions.

To achieve the aim and the major objectives of this study Simple Random Sampling was used to collect data through questionnaire administered to people in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State. The responses gotten from the respondents were categorized, tabulated, represented and analysed using tables and simple percentage statistical analysis method. The analysis was also based on the responses gathered from the In-depth Interview. Also documents, reports and video tapes of Jama'a Forum's activities were analyzed from 2008 to 2014 in order to get factual information on the activities (meetings and projects) of the Forum in Niger State. Community Development and Participatory Communication Theories were also deployed to underpin the study while arguing for a proper maximization of dialogue forums in the interest of the people.

The research findings show that people's participation in Jama'a Forum activities was restricted to attendance, contributions, ideas and suggestions only. That is, people were not allowed to implement their own community development projects themselves, thereby

leaving so many community needs and desire unmet. This is a case of participation in development instead of participation for development (doing community projects for people instead of doing it with them); a platform that aimed at carrying people at the grass-root along in community development projects rather than imposing on them a self mobilised project(s).

However, majority respondents sampled in this study and the interviewees are of the opinion that Community Dialogue Forum is capable of instituting tremendous changes in the communities in Niger State and Nigeria as a whole if the democratically elected government allows the people to own and manage the community dialogue platform themselves, while they perform monitoring, evaluation and financier role.

5.1 Key Findings

Based on the responses collected on the three objectives of this study from the field on Jama'a Dialogue Forum as a participatory platform for community development, the following key findings emerged.

i. The level of people's participation in Jama'a dialogue Forum's community development projects was very low; people were only allowed to participate in discussions and suggestions at the forum's meetings, but were not involved at the projects implementation stage.

ii. There was decline in people's participation in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects as a result of inconsistency in its programmes and project execution, irregular dialogue forum's meetings and lack of feedback mechanism to monitor and evaluate community development projects which led to people's loss of interest in the Forum's community dialogue meetings.

iii. There is a need for Jama'a Dialogue Forum to regain people's full participation in its community development activities, so as to attain a higher community development initiatives and sustainable community development projects.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of this study on Jama'a Dialogue Forum as a Participatory Platform for Community Development in Niger State, it was established that the past Government of Niger State under the leadership of Dr. Mu'azuBabangidaAliyu who initiated Jama'a Dialogue Forum had the intention of creating a communal (round-table) discussion (dialogue forum)between the people and the government because of the communication gap and disconnection that exist between the government and the governed (bridges the gap between the government and the governed). That is, to make the people have a sense of ownership of development projects in their community. However, it was very clear that people's participation in the Forum's activities was so high at the initial stage but started dwindling as the people began to notice that they were deniedparticipation at the projects' implementation stage. That is, there was no communal implementation of community projects. For instance what ought to be was different from what was on ground, that is, government's original intention was different from the reality on ground (what obtained). The idea of achieving people centered projects implementation was defeated by the dishonest and stinted attitude of the political leaders chosen by the people as their community representatives. However, the Forum can be made to perform better if the communities are allowed to initiate and execute projects in their communities themselves, for the purpose of ownership and sustainable community development. This afore-mentioned ideal sustainable community development is the major proponent of the Community Development Theory and Participatory Communication Theory used to

underpin this study. The two theories agreed thatto ensure genuine participation, effective communication should occur among all parties affected, ensuring that all have similar opportunities to influence the outcome of the initiative. The whole process should thereforerecognise the direct involvement of beneficiaries in the planning and at the implementation stages. That is,active involvement of the localpopulation in the decision making andimplementation of developmentprojects will bring about ownership and sustainability. Thus, this study is advocating for the proper use of Community Dialogue Forum in the interest of the masses and sustainable development.

5.3 Recommendations

From the foregoing, the researcher recommends that:

i. The entire planning and implementation of community development projects and initiatives should be left for the people to decide, while government plays a supportive and monitoring role. That this, people participation in community development projects should not be restricted to consultation alone, rather, they should allow people's contribution and suggestion to constitute the basis for empowerment and projects implementation in the communities (partnership participation). In this way, a community centered and sustainable projects will be achieved through people's efforts and voluntary actions.

ii. Dialogue Forum's meetings should be held regularly and the timing should be conducive for the intended communities (people) and a feedback mechanism should be put in place to monitor and evaluate each community's government financed self-help projects. As well as, creating a committee of account to check and take legal action against the persons who may divert or embezzle community project funds.

iii. The potentials of Community Dialogue Forum should be maximized to communicate sustainable development in both rural and urban communities. The proper maximization of Dialogue Forum's communicative potentials will help elected officials and professional managers (development facilitators) to tap into citizen talents and energy. As well as enhancing more carefully planned and sustained interactions (close gaps in communication) that will enable government and citizens work effectively together for the greater good of the communities and the State as a whole.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

i. The study has shown that aside the use of Dialogue Forum as a platform for conflict resolution, political negotiation, diplomatic interaction, decision and policy making, it is also a participatory platform for communicating sustainable development in communities.

ii. This study has also shown that higher community initiative in development projects will bring about a collective sustainable change in the community and State as a whole. That is, if the process is a collective problem identification, decision marking, and community-based implementation of solution to development issues, sustainability is certain.

iii. The study has shown that Dialogue Forum can enhance people's participation in democratic governance by aiding elected officials (government) to hear many citizen concerns in a timely way. That is, it can aid more carefully planned and sustained interactions that will enable government and citizens to work more effectively together for the greater country good.

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INTERVIEWS

Interview with Tanko Dada; Assistant Editor-in-Chief News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Minna, 27th December, 2015.

Interview with Mary Noel Berge; Assistant-News-Editor Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Minna, 27th December, 2015.

Interview with Kolos Hassan Kolos; Director General (DG) Jama'a Forum, Minna, 27thDecember, 2015

Interview with AlhajiSaiduGaladima; Village Head of Ubandoma Community, 28th December, 2015.

Interview with AlhajiYusufu Dada Abdullahi; Village Head Gussoro/Zumba, 28th December, 2015.

Interview with Alhaji Garba Ibrahim; Village Head of Lapa/She Community, 28th December,

Interview with AlhajiIsahTanko Baba; Village Head of Kato Community, 28th December, 2015.

Interview with AlhajiSalihuYahaya; Village Head of Egwa/Gwada Community, 28th December, 2015.

Interview with HarunaBarde; Head of Department (HOD) of Council for Arts and Culture Niger State and Heads of Gwape Dancing Group Niger State, Minna, 2th December, 2015.

APPENDIX I

PHOTO-SHOTS FROM FIELD SURVEY



An uncompleted Groundnut Oil processing factory community project abandoned in Egwa/Gwada and a supposed renovated abattoir (slaughterhouse) that is still sorry-sight till today.



Bore-Hole Water Project in Lapa/She, Ubandoma,Gussoro/Zumba and Kato Communities in Shiroro Local Government Area.



An abattoir and booking-office (community project) renovated in Kuta town and Bangajiya community in Shiroro Local Government Area in Niger State.



Newly built and renovated classrooms (community projects) in Gussoro/Zumba, Kato, Ubandoma and Lapa/She



Eight Pumps Bore-hole water projects at Sidi Saba and renovation of twins 2 Bedroom Staff quarters for Doctor and Nurses at Katcha Local Government Area.



An In-depth Interview Section with Mary Noel Berge, Assistant-News-Editor Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Tanko Dada, Assistant Editor-in-Chief News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Minna, as well as some the of Village Heads; AlhajiSaiduGaladima; Village Head of Ubandoma, Alhaji Garba Ibrahim; Village Head of Lapa/She Community and AlhajiIsahTanko Baba; Village Head of Kato Community.

APPENDIX II

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Response from Kolos Hassan Kolos (Director General Jama'a Forum)

My name is Kolos Hassan Kolos, I am a graduate of History and Political Science and I graduated from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in 1978. I had my Youth Service (NYSC) in Saint Augustine College Imo State. After which I came back to my State and started working as Information Officer in the Ministry of Information. I was moved 1986 to start the State Print Media known as Newsline which is still in existence till today. I did press secretary to two Governors; I was the head of press secretary division of the Ministry of Information during Auwal Ibrahim's tenure who the first civilian government in the State and I was the secretary to the press secretary to the then Military Governor; David Mark. I also work in UBA bank for six years as grade one Manager from there I was moved to Media Cooperation as Director General and after which I have continuously serving with the Government till the end of Mu'azuBabangidaAliyu's tenure.

My role in Jama'a Forum is beyond participating only because I was the brain behind the Forum initiation in BabangidaAliyu's tenure. When the Governor came into power I advised him to set up people from the Ministry of Information to look into the setting up of the Forum to enable close to the people in order to relate with them so as to let them feel the dividend of Democracy. I told him to think about it and he said I will think about it. Next day around 5am in the morning after my prays I got a call from the then Secretary to the State Government; Professor YayahKuta that they have decided to make me Director General (DG) of Jama'a Forum and they want me to pilot it up, they said the concept is your do any way you like do it and that is the way it started.

The mission statement is to get our people fully mobilised and sensitized to know the direction of the Government and partake in the decision and policy making of the Government as it concern their communities and the State as a whole. Also, to receive inputs from people in terms of what they want Government to do for them for the sake of good governance and that we got a lot. The main objective is to bring government closer to the people at the grass root and to ensure that developmental ability of the people in the community are well exploited

What we do is to get the people informed through Radio, Television and Prints, Bill Boards and Hand Bills. We also used local means of communication that is available in the communities; folk music, theatre group and information through the District Heads, Village Heads and community announcers. Sometime, we use the party members in the Local Government like the Chairman and the Local Government communication officer to pass the message the people; time of the meeting, the venue of the meeting and other necessary information the communities must be aware of before we get to the community where the meeting we be held.

Like I said the Forum has been in existence since the regime of the then military Administrator Colonel Garba Ali before I re-awaken it during the tenure of Talba; the Chief Servant of Niger State. So, Jama'a Forum is as old as over twenty years but it is actively in existence in 2007. Later, the Forum gave birth to Community Development Projects which also known as Ward Development Projects. This is because the Forum wants to allow the community people to be fully involved the planning and implementation of their development. We went to the communities in the whole twenty-five Local Governments in Niger State.

As I said before, we use all available means that exist in their community and the common one like radio, television and print media. We also used people' language and other local forms of communication to reached to them.

People's participation in the dialogue meetings is very encouraging and can said to be beyond the Government imagination. For the first time people came out in mass from their various comfort zone to discussed on the issues that concerned them without doubt in their mind that this Forum may as well be like other Forum mobilised politically.

The Government is the organisers and the initiator of the programme, so they play the role spectator and participant because they were also presents in the meetings and contribute when necessary; solving people's problems and answering questions.

The people of course, they were the one that know where the shoe pinches them, a sick person explains to the doctor the nature of his or her sickness, and then the doctor examines and prescribes drugs to cure the sickness. The people were the initiator of most discussions in the Forum by lay down complains, questions and suggestion to the government, and then money is provided by the government to solve the problem where applicable.

If I want to be fair the projects and programmes implementation discussed in the dialogue meeting were achieved to some extent, although, some are still there uncompleted as a result of insufficient funds and the mismanaged of funds meant for community project by some corrupt politicians in the communities.

I will say that Jama'a Forum is a success not a failure because the Forum had achieved more than people's expectation since the creation of the State. Before now the people cannot sit and talk one on one with the Commissioner let alone the Governor but this Forum made it happened. The people were given equal ground, liberty and apple opportunities to people to table complains and make suggestion on to solve it and then the government disbursed funds to them for the project. The Forum since its inceptions had made great achievements on education, health security, road, drainage, culvert and portable drinking water.

The people came out in mass in the community to take their own destine into their hands as the development issues about to discuss is important their existence in the community, some of them left their work, farms and trades to attend the meeting. Therefore, I can say that participation and the role of community in Jama'a Forum development process is highly encouraging and cannot be under emphasis at all.

The communication strategies adopted by Jama'a Forum in communicating its community development projects in communities is appropriate because it meets the purpose it set out to achieve. It gave people sense of belonging and liberty to familiarize themselves with the Forum activities in their community.

If I say am not satisfied with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Forum in its community development roles I will telling lies. Of a truth I never that the see idea will turn big and participatory the it turned out to be, I thought the people will not trust the government due to their past experience on the propaganda and the lies of the government previously in the State but to my surprise we have people's trust and wonderful turn out.

If the Forum is going to be sustained, the present (newly elected) government must ensure that the people in the community do the project their way without the interference of the political leaders in the community. The government should create committee of account for the sake of accountability and to punish the erred person in terms of community project money embezzlement. The Forum should exist based on the legislative promulgation to make it a legal bonded Forum. The Forum's meetings should be constantly held in community and controlled by the locals of the community. Government should only pay visit to the communities for feedback sake and to know how they spent the funds; if truly work is going on or done in the communities and this should done quarterly as usual.

Reponses from Mary Noel Berge (Assistant news editor NTA Minna)

My name is Mary Noel Berge; I am a reporter and news sub editor in Nigerian Television Authority, Minna, Niger State. I have being working with NTA for over fifteen years now and I am fully aware of Jama'a Forum activities in Niger State being the Government House reporter for eight year; throughout the eight years tenure of Governor Mu'azuBabangidaAliyu in Niger State.

My role in Jama'a Forum is a reporting role; that is, I am a reporter in Jama'a Forum activities in communities in Niger State. I report the Forum meetings and activities in communities along side with other reporters from radio and printing media.

The objective of the Forum is to meet with the people at the grass root, to enable the people at the grass root to have a feel of governance. Also to bring government close to the people as much as possible in terms of individual and community development. Although, the Forum objectives are more than this one I mentioned, but this is just the main and major objective of the Forum.

The Forum has been able to get to the people at the grass root through different medium using Television announcement, Radio announcement and the Information Service of the State also went round to announce to the people the time, date and venue of the meeting. Sometimes, community announcer in community the meeting supposed to be held is also paid to go round and inform the people about the Forum Meetings.

The Forum came into existence in 2007; immediately the Governor came into office, though he has it in mind before he was elected as the Governor, a year into his resumption,

he has started move round local government and communities in the State to dialogue with the people.

Particularly, the local languages were being used in the sense that they want the people to have the sense of belonging, they want to identify with the people and have free flow of interaction with them. Although, the main language is Hausa but the Forum decide to use the communities' local languages. A representative among these local some is always picked to interprets the local language to Hausa and the Governor reply the question or contribute to their complains in Hausa, while, the interpreter interprets back to the people. Other Executive council present and the meeting who understand the local languages reply in the same language without an interpreter.

Honestly, this particular Forum garnered a lot of attention because it was the first time in governance where the people of locality were coming in contact with a Governor. As it has not being like that before in the history of governance in Niger State. A Governor that could go around, they feel him, talk to him irrespective of who they are; they were allow to contribute and make suggestions on the issues affecting their community. Therefore, this Forum got support and participation from the people from the onset.

The government being the initiator of the Forum plays the role of knowing the people's problem, alleviating the problem, which is, empowering the people in the communities. That was the main role of the government. They are the one promoting and spearheading the activities of the Forum by disbursing funds needed for the Forum infrastructural and physical projects in the communities such as farming, education, security, health, road and portable water and others identified by the people in the communities.

From what I saw as a reporter, I can say that the people are the initiator of the discussion, it depend on the community and the issues raised or going to be raised in the community. The government gave apple opportunities to the common people; the governor was so liberal, may be that how he wants it to be because he was so down to earth in is actions and responses. Sometimes when the moderators want to stop the people he always caution and rebuke them not to stop them, they should allow them to say their mind freely. They were only restrains when the time is no longer there to discuss further and many of them are talking on the say issues and its becoming boring.

At point I may say that the Forum is Participatory but I can also say that is a cheat, in the sense that the Forum major aim is to bring the government closer to the people. But, the question is, does government really work with the contributions and the suggestions people made at the meetings? I will categorically say 'NO' not really! We all know Nigeria factors where government will come up with policies but to implement it is the problem. The people complained on the following problems: poor education facilities, health facilities, bad road, and bad drainage system, lack portable drinking water and so on. But, another government had come to power and some of these things were not fulfilled, while some are were left uncompleted. I can say the Forum more participatory in terms attendance contribution, suggestion and political campaign but cannot be equate to its performance in the projects implementation in the communities.

Honestly, evaluating this Forum, initially it is a good idea, but, I will say at the end it is a failure because the Forum did not pay back what is initially initiated for, that is, the Forum mission statement and objectives were not fully achieved. The full participation of the people was not replicated in its project execution in the communities, but rather jeopardized the hope of the people in further participation which lead to the decline in effective participation of the people in Jama'a Forum activities. So, I can boldly say it is a failure to some extent without being bias. This may be politically motivated or otherwise. Another reason is that, the Forum meeting only takes place once in all these communities, there were no opportunity for the people to complain to the government, there were no people to hold responsible for the uncompleted project in the communities. Government also did not know what is going on in the communities because there was no feedback mechanism on ground that will monitor and evaluate the Forum activities and performance in the communities.

From what I see on ground, observed from my tape and recordings, I say, at a time the people's participation begins to decline, I mean dwindling as it was meant to take place every three months (quarterly) but after some years it did not really work like that as it take more than three month even if it not close to a year to hold another meeting in communities. It begins to take longer time and the result is not too feasible to some extent and the other communities anxiously waiting for the government are getting discouraged, at this point the turn up has become very low and participation level is not encouraging. In one community we get to people started 'abusing and stoning' governor because they felt most of the things that were promised were not done.

They had a very good communicating strategy in communicating their community development projects in the communities. But, what affected the Forum as whole is the government not being able to fulfill all it promises to the people who have trust in them at the point of the meeting discussion, the people who their hope were raised and dashed unexpectedly. Commenting on the communication strategies used, government used genuine communication strategies that really brought out the people, but government in turn did not meet up to its promises; their complains, their needs and so on. So, the communication strategies were radio and television jingles and announcement, information officer using their public address system to go around informing the people and communities announcers, as I have said earlier. The only floor I saw was the fact that the locals were not allow to do the projects their own way, rather, the corrupt politicians pocket the money and only do low capital project to deceived the people in the communities.

I am satisfied with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Dialogue Forum in its community development roles, that is why I said the communication strategies is good because it brought the people out in their thousands and also help the political leaders and Senators to meet one on one with their people in their community which has never happen before in the State. The Forum also allowed the people to hold another meeting at the local government or community level where they will be able to meet with their political leaders and bring back reports back to the government. At these levels people are encourage to have a say and equal ground was given to everybody to speak. The communication strategies were good it just that the government did not fully fulfilled its own part.

As important as the Forum is to the communities, government can embark on door to door campaign of the Forum activities that will make them really meet personally with the people. The community Dialogue Forum plans and implementation should be the responsibility of the leaders from each community instead of the corrupt politicians in the communities. They should also encourage the use of more local content such as language, music, theatre and folklores in the programmes as they are being doing. They, give more room to feedback mechanism in order to sustain real life community development projects. All these should be done in addition with the earlier strategies used.

Responses from Tanko Dada (Assistant Editor-in-Chief News Agency of Nigeria)

My name is Tanko dada; I Journalist and I work with News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). I am the Assistant Editor-in-chief of the office in Minna Niger State.

My role in Jama'a Forum started during the military regime, when Colonel Garba Ali was the Administrative Governor of Niger State. He brought the history of Jama'a Forum in trying to contact the people at the grass root level in order to know what they felt about his governance. Then I was with the Ministry of information and I remember that I was among the people that went out to organise the size of people; mobilised, persuaded and encouraged for the meeting. Then, it was calling People's Forum which is the same as Jama'a Forum because the word Jama'a means people.

The mission statement and objective of the Forum in terms of governance is to get the actual reaction of the people to what is it on their needs and aspiration and how to have government performed in meeting those needs and wants of theirs. And then, trying to establish a new hierarchy in terms of developmental trust by using the bottom-top approach instead of from the top to the bottom approach they are used to. Hearing from the people, what exactly do they want and how they want it, what exactly is their thinking and how can the government achieve it.

Well, since the government function lies in the Ministry of Information to communicate with the Ministry of Local Government, the Chairmen of the Local Government will be notified through the Ministry of Local Government and the chairmen in turns communicate to the District Heads, the Village Heads and then the people in the community through public announcers or communities announcers. And they mobilised the communities up for the Forum meetings any time it being held in their communities.

If we look at it from Colonel Garba Ali' period to this time is more than twenty something years, but from Mu'azuBabangidaAliyu's tenure we can say it started in 2007 immediately he assumed the office of the Governor, therefore, I can say more than six years now. It has being held in many Local Government and communities. It later metamorphosed into Ward Development Projects (Community Development Projects).

Since, it government' programme they used the Radio and Television Announcements and Jingles and other local means of communication that is available in various community in Niger State. They also used Gwape theatre and Dance Groups. They used the medium to tell the people what the government has done, what they want to do and what are the

contribution of the people to these ideas. The Forum mistake is that it did not use social media it could have been easier in reaching to the people in the communities.

Well, it is an active thing because people in the communities for the first time having the opportunity to see the Governor and it Executive council asking series of question, laying down several complains and suggestions on their needs and problems affecting them in the communities. The participation was so high but after a while it began to flop and dwindling.

The governments play both the role of participant and spectator because they participated in the meetings and questions are being directed to the Governor personally to answer. He answer any one he could and pass the other to the Commissioners that in the concerned ministry to enable them solve the aware and solve the problem as fast as possible where necessary. The people laid complains on the issue of roads, water supply, schools, health services and all issues that were paramount to the survival of the people in the communities. In fact, somebody was talking about culvert; a culvert just linking their community, some were saying they have schools but they were all in shambles and other pity able problems. So, I can say government play active role of listening to people's comments and also play the role of answering and solving their problem by disbursing funds for their projects that could be done here and there, but promised them where necessary.

The people are the initiator of most discussion in the Forum, like I said earlier the people are the one that have problem that needs to be solved not the Government, therefore, the people laid their grieves, complains, problems and suggestion on the possible solutions to the government and the government listening and give them answers or solution to minor problem here and there and where it could not solve them instantly he make promises. Thus, there is doubt the people are the initiator of most discussions in the Forum's meetings. The implication is that it gave the apple opportunity to people to say their mind, rather than government forcing words into their mouths.

Candidly, if you want me to talk about the objectives, it means you want me to assess the promises that were made during the meeting in the communities and how many have they meet or kept? Well, I will say by- and-large they were fulfilled to some extent because some people's needs were met elsewhere, while, some people's needs were not completely met. Therefore, it is possible for those people to see them as cheat and fake. Summarily, I can say that they have really tried even though they did not live to the level of people's expectations. One can simply say the Forum did not achieve all its objectives.

Jama'a Forum cannot be evaluated as failure at all and cannot be said to be a total success in the sense that, it allowed full participation of the people; it fulfilled most of its promises to people. For the first time a Forum that allowed the people to tabled their problem face to face with government and their local community political leaders. They were allowed to provide possible solution to their problems by making suggestions but not all these projects promises were fulfilled.

The role of the people and their participation was so high, in the sense that they are the one that determines what should be done and how it should be done. Government just provides funds to meet their needs and aspiration only. So, participation and the role of community

in Jama'a Forum development process is very encouraging and can be score ninety-five percent if not mistaken at all. But in terms of projects execution the Forum has many lapses to cover. That is, people were left out at this stage.

Like I said before it is a very right step in the right direction, which mean it is better and viable but it could have been best if the government had taken the advantage of Social Media and Networks to inform the people on the necessary information on the Forum and also use it to get feedback to know if they are satisfied or not.

Dully satisfied with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Dialogue Forum in its community development roles because it a sustainable communication strategies only that they were not practiced to the letter due to some political influences here and there. Unlike the military regime people were not free to make any comments as they were afraid of the unseen situation that may arise as a result of their contribution but in civilian government people speak freely, bottom-top approach was adopted and it work.

The people should be well informed, government should you use more of the town criers (town announcers), use their festival to take advantage of passing the information, use their local language intensively, their music, theatre and folklores and allow the people to carry out their own developmental projects communally without contracting through the community politicians that may diverts or pocket the funds. Finally, government should make the timing of the dialogue meetings conducive to enable effective and active participation of the people in the communities as some time the people complain of the timing

Response from AlhajiYusufu Dada Abdullahi the Village Head Gussoro/Zumba Community

My name is Yusufu Dada Abdullahi; I am the Village Head of Gussoro/Zumba Community the headquarters to Kuta in Shiroro Local government Area. I am a teacher by profession; I have thought both in primary school and secondary school, as well as in government owned tertiary institution. But, when I was chosen as the Village Head Gussoro/Zumba community I left the job to enables me performed my traditional function properly, as it is a task that needs duly attention. Being the village head, I settle some minor cases within the community and its environs, just like court but this traditional court, where will settle cases like land dispute, fights and other kind of quarrels that it is inevitable in the community.

My role in Jama'a Forum activities is still the Village Head; I have no any special role. I informed my people on the need to come out and meet the people coming and encourage them not to leave any stone unturned by discuss issue that they know it is important for the development of our community and private individual.

The main objective has I learnt is to get the grievances and complain from the people, the people as you know means Jama'a. Then to know the problem the people are facing in the community, to also enable the government discuss with the local people in the community so as to bring the government close to the people at the grace root. That is all I know about the objective of Jama'a Forum and I belief is their main aim and objective.

Jama'a forum communicates their meetings notification through the radio, television, community announcers in any particular community or through the village heads who in turns pass the message to it people in the particular community that he heads. That only the means I know, they may have another but I don't know at all.

Jama'a Forum as being in existence since the military regime; Col. Garba Ali's regime but it is called People's Forum then, it was done once or twice and we could not hear anything on it again. But, it re-surfaced during the civilian government, it was held during the Former governor; Mu'azuBabangidaAliyu's regime. During his tenure he came to the Headquarters here in Shiroro Local Government and other Local Government in Niger State, he gathered people of all manners, they tabled their grievances, having heard from them; he then decided to set up Community Development Projects (Ward Development Projects).

I think they used the local means of communication and the common one as I have said earlier on that the forum used the community announcers, radio and television jingle. They also used theatre group known as Gwape in Niger State. And of course people tell themselves too having heard of the Forum activities in other communities where it is held, then the anxiousness of it coming to their community set in.

To some extent I will not say the people do not involve, 'Yes' the people are fully involve in the process but, as you are aware that it is political idea that gave birth to the Forum activities in the communities therefore, I can say that the participation or involvement of the people in the Forum activities is limited to what the Government want it to be.

Government are the organisers, they play organising role in the programme. That is they are the one that institute and determine the community will be held next and also respond to question and answers directed to them by the people in the community. That is the only role I am aware they play.

It is initiated by both the government and the people but sometimes, the peoples' representative from the community initiate the discussion first before the ground is made open to the people in the community. Therefore, I can say the initiator of most discussion is the people.

When talking about the Projects and Programmes implementation discussed in the dialogue meeting, I can categorically say that most people involve are the politicians in the community, they only do it in conjunction with few people in the community to carry to those projects. Therefore, some projects are incomplete, while some did not even see the light of the day. They spent funds meant for community development project and some projects are incomplete due to the political will that is politically motivated and sometimes they said there are no funds to complete the project. But low capital project like bore-holes, renovation of schools and clinic, provision of school desk and benches and little ones that require low capital to achieve are done.

The Ward Development Project that is set up as a result of complains that was heard from the people through Jama'a Forum has been helpful, I have enjoyed it in my community

immensely: in my own community they give us Junior Secondary school which one of the most pressing needs of the community at that time, they roofed the community clinic centre blown away by the wind, they provide desk, and benches and bore-hole water. Although, most of them were not completed before his tenure ended. Therefore, one cannot say that the Forum is a failure and cannot say the Forum achieved total success but I can only say that the Forum had tried it best, however, it could have performed more than that if not that the politicians in the community jeopardized it efforts.

As I said earlier the communities are always anxious to have the meeting held in their community, therefore the people performed the role of participant, contributor, that is, tabling their problems and immediate pressing needs before the government and its entire council that come with to the community. So, the role of the community and their participation I can score it seventy percent in terms of contribution to discussion and attendance.

The strategies they used to communicate information to the people is good, but I can score it more than fifty percent as the Forum did not really educate the people on the need why they must participate and the in-depth mission and its objective to the people. In terms of community project the strategies used is political inclined and it motivated the politicians in the community to embezzled the money meant for community development projects, they could have allow the community that decide their needs to elect representatives that will direct them to do the projects or better still let the people do it themselves.

Obviously, am not satisfied the with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Dialogue Forum in its community development roles because it allows irregularities, corruption, political shenanigans and other political motivated habits in the community.

The only alternative strategies that can be deployed to make Jama'a Dialogue Forum more effective in the discharge of its objectives is to allow the people to dictate the pace totally, let the people do their community projects themselves instead of given it to the politicians in the communities to control or implement. They should also form a pure community dialogue base platform that the people will control themselves for the purpose of community development; government should just provide funds only. When they have access to a genuine community development project, they will value it and achieved it collectively.

Responses from AlhajiIsahTanko Baba the Village Head of Kato Community

My name is IsahTanko Baba; I am the Village Head of Kato community in Shiroro Local Government in Niger State. Traditionally, I am the number one person in the community. I am a civil servant before assuming this traditional office. My duty as a traditional head is to cater for my people in the community, settle any kind of disputes that may arise among them and ensure that total peace and development happen in the community.

I do not have any role in Jama'a Forum, I am just the head of community as I have told you before, they only come to me to informing me that the Forum will held its meeting in my community and I inform my people.

For me I do not know much about the Forum objectives but I can only say that they gathered people for them to meet the Government and its councils to talk about problems in their communities. That is all I know.

People say that they advertised it on the radio and television but the only means I know is the information passed in the village and the community announcer medium used to let people know about the meetings time and venue.

I know there is a programme like this before during the military regime but I don't know if it is the same as the present one but it is also known to be the Forum of the people. However, the present one is called Jama'a Forum and I could say it as being around for three to five years in Niger State. The Jama'a Forum meetings gave birth to Community Development Projects which is also known as Ward Development Projects. The Forum meetings have being held in almost all the communities in the twenty-five Local Government Areas in Niger State.

I do not know much about that, but I know they use musical and theatre group and individual encouragement. They used radio and television and public addressing system. I think it is effective but it just that they were not adequately used for long.

People participated very well in the Jama'a Forum meeting; sometime the venue is full to the extent that the crowds are uncontrollable in terms of noise, clash of interest and who is to talk first. Therefore, the level of people's participation in Jama'a Forum dialogue meetings is really good.

The government and it council being the initiator of the Forum sits and listened to the people complains and questions, then answer question when necessary. So, I can say they do not really perform any special function.

The people and the government are the initiator of the discussion of the discussion but the people and their representatives take more ground in the discussion of the issues to discussed in the meeting whenever it held, I am talking about my own community I do not know of other communities.

When we tabled the problem we have in my community, the Governor said he will do them for us, honestly it only few that was done, most important ones are not done and I do not really know the cause, when asked we were told that there is no fund or the people given the money as diverted the money into their own pocket. Although, they started some projects but they were uncompleted. Nobody to ask question, nobody to hold responsible as the meeting was held once in our community, we did not have the opportunity to see the Governor again to lay our complains.

I told you earlier, I do not really know much about Forum's objective, I can only say they have tried but not has expected from them by the people. That is, they did not record much success as it is later hijacked by the corrupt politicians in the community. Especially in my own the politician used it as the opportunity of enriching themselves.

The community people only participated in the discussion by laying complains and asking question on their needs and aspiration, also suggesting what the government should do for them. Every other process is handled by community representative and community so call politicians.

As I have said other means of passing information to the people is okay but the strategies used for the projects implementation is not good at all. They used the politicians in the community to carry out projects in the community. At one point these politicians told us to participate in the projects by contributing sand, roofing sheets and water to complete some projects in my community. But, some of them have eaten the money mean for the projects, while, some of them do the low capital project they could do and pocket the rest of the money for themselves. It is not good at all for development of the community and the progress of the people. Most, projects are there uncompleted.

'NO'! I am not satisfied with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Dialogue Forum in its community development roles because it left much to be desired. Projects are uncompleted; funds are diverted to individual's pocket and no one to account for these nuisance.

The government should encourage full community participation in the project implementation; they should set up committee that will be able to account for the money spent on every project in the community. The government should ensure that the people take the centre stage in their decision making, give the people money to do the project themselves, let the Forum meetings be done always in the community as part of community duty and an avenue to make the government know their problem and be able to solve it as they arises. Finally, it should the programme of the community, control by the community and manage local community people, not by the politicians who only come to community on weekends.

Responses fromAlhajiSaiduGaladima the DakachinKuta and the Village Head of Ubandoma Community

My name is AlhajiSaiduGaladima; DakachinKuta and the Village Head Ubandoma Community. By the virtue of the office am occupying, I enforce law and orders in the community, settling dispute and common issues that arise in the community.

I do not have any role in Jama'a Forum, I am just the head of community, they only come to me to informing us that the Forum is going to take place in our community and I talk to my people to participate for their own benefits.

I do not know much about the Forum objectives but I can only say that they gathered people in the community to meet the Government to talk about problems in communities.

I know they advertised it on the radio and television and they also make use of the village community announcer to let people know about the meetings time and venue in our community.

I could say it has been around for three to five years in Niger state and now the Forum meetings as resulted to what will now called Community Development Projects which is also known as Ward Development Projects. The Forum meetings have being held in almost all the communities in the twenty-five Local Government Areas in Niger State.

They use musical group and theatre group and individual persuasion. They used radio and television and public addressing system.

People participated well in the Forum meeting; sometime the venue is full to the extent that they were no space to pass or move out of the venue. The level of people's participation in Jama'a Forum dialogue meetings is really good.

The government and its Executives sits and listened to the people complains and questions, then answers people's question when necessary. So, I can say they were more of spectator than participant.

The people are the initiator of the discussion. The people and their representatives take more ground in the discussing issues in my village.

When we tabled the problem we have in my community, the Governor said he will do them for us; only few were done, most important ones are not done. They started some projects but they were uncompleted.

I do not really know much above Forum's objective, the little I know can make say they have tried; they do well in my community but not has expected from them.

The community people participated in the discussion by complaining and asking question on their needs and aspiration, also suggested what they want government to do for them.

The strategies used for the projects implementation is not good. It is not good for the development of the community and the progress of the people. In my own community the government gave us bore-hole and re-builds school and abattoir, also provided desk and benches for our schools, while what we need most is electricity and the grading of our road for easy access and motorable. But what they gave us has not change anything in our life, as many of our sons traveled far to ground our grains for consumption and watch sports far town of Kuta.

I am satisfied with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Dialogue Forum in its community development roles because it is good.

The government should ensure that the people take the center stage in their decision making, and they should give the people chance to do things in their own way.

Responses from AlhajiSalihuYahaya the Village Head of Egwa/Gwada Community

My name is AlhajiSalihuYahaya the Village Head of Egwa/Gwada Community; DakachinKuta and the Village Head Ubandoma Community. I enforce law and orders in the

community, settling dispute and common issues that arise in the community. All these I do traditionally in court alongside with my chiefs.

I do not have any role in Jama'a Forum, I am just the head of community, they only come to me to informing us that the Forum is going to take place in our community and then I gathered my people to participate for their own benefits.

I do not know much about the Forum objectives but I bring the people at the grass root close to the Government to talk about problems in communities and to develop our community.

I know they advertised it on the radio and television and they also make use of the village community announcer to let people know about the meetings time and venue in our community.

For three to five years now and the Forum meetings have being held in almost all the communities in the twenty-five Local Government Areas in Niger State.

They used radio and television, public addressing system, town criers and other local means of communication.

The level of people's participation in Jama'a Forum dialogue meetings is really good. In my own community men, women and children were in attendance, they talk about their problems and the Governor did some of the one he can do and some were started but not completed. The participation of the people is very good.

The government listened to the people complains and questions and answers them. By this I can say they are passive participant and spectator; not too active.

The people are the initiator of the discussion. The people and their representatives tell the government their problems when discussing issues that concern the individual or community development issues that will be of general benefit to all community people as a whole. The Governor said he will do them for us; only few were done, most important ones are not done. They started some projects but they were uncompleted.

I do not really know much about Forum's objective, but I know they have tried, they have done. However, they still have some uncompleted and some did not see the light of the day. I beg them to fulfill all their promises completely so that people can have trust in them next time.

The community people participated in the discussion by complaining and asking question on their needs and aspiration, also suggested what they want government to do for them.

The strategies used for the projects implementation is good. It is good for our community development and for the progress of the people. They gave us respect and honour, every have equal chance to talk and suggest in their own little knowledge.

I am satisfied with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Dialogue Forum in its community development roles because it is good. They talk to us in our language; they do theatre in our language and played our own tribal music in the meeting venue. It is good I like it

The government should make the people be the owner of the Forum, give the people money to do the project themselves, let the Forum meetings be done always in the community, so as to make sustainable. They should use local labourers in the community to do the work instead of bring people who is part of the community to do the work to make work achievable.

Responses from Alhaji Garba Ibrahim the Village Head of Lapa/She Community

My name is Alhaji Garba Ibrahim; the Village Head of Lapa/She Community; I lead the people traditionally to settle problems and maintain law and orders in the community, settling dispute and all issues that arise in the community.

My role in Jama'a Forum is not special, I participated as the head of community and I informed the people to participate in it.

I do not really know, all I know is they tried the best. Although, their best is not good enough but I can still score them more than fifty percent because they did they gathered people in the community to meet the Government to talk about problems in some their promise.

I know they announced it on the radio and television and they also make use of the community announcer to let people know about the meetings time and venue in their community.

I could say it has been around for three to five years. The Forum meetings established what we now called Community Development Projects which is also known as Ward Development Projects. The Forum meetings have being held in almost all the communities in the twenty-five Local Government Areas in Niger State.

They used radio and television, town crier, public addressing system, the district head, village heads, the chairman and public relations officer in the local government areas in the State.

People participated well in the Forum meeting; sometime the venue is full to the extent that they were no space to pass or move out of the venue. The level of people's participation in Jama'a Forum dialogue meetings is really good.

The government and its Executives sits and listened to the people complains and questions, then answers people's question when necessary. So, I can say they were more of spectator than participant.

The people are the initiator of the discussion. The government just answers their question and solves any problem that can wait for another within the community. Like the issue of school blown roof and lack of desk, benches and black board.

We told them the problem we have in our community; the government promised us; only few were done, most important ones were not achieve. They started some projects like building of hospital, road and abattoir but they were uncompleted.

I cannot decisively tell you the objectives of the Forum but the only thing I know is that they tend to bring development to our communities by allowing us to talk to the Governor concerning our needs and want. They do well in my community but not have anticipated.

The community people participated in the discussion by complaining and asking question on their needs and wants, also advocated for what they want government to do for them. The people were randomly selected to talk, if women like five had spoken, they allow men to also talk before given chance to the youth and children. They do in such a way that everybody be it man or woman is given chance to contribute to the discussion.

The strategies used for the projects implementation is good. I will encourage they continue to use it if it achieve better result than what it has achieved but if not they should look for better on what we need is proper development of our community.

I am satisfied with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Dialogue Forum in its community development roles because it is good.

They use the strategy of punishing anybody that does not want the project to work or complete. Government should allow the people do it in their own way, instead of calling people or contractor to do the project for them, if they do it themselves, they will achieve it fast and better because it is what they need.

APPENDIX III

OUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Prof., Dr., Sir, Ma, Mr., Mrs., Miss,

I am **Onifade OlawaleAbayomi**, a postgraduate student in Development Communication, Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (ABU, Zaria).

I am presently carrying out a research on **An Assessment of Jama'a Dialogue Forum as a Participatory Platform for Community Development in Niger State, 2008- 2012**, as a partial fulfillment for the award of Master of Arts (M.A) Degree in Development Communication.

Your enormous assistance is solicited. You have been randomly selected to respond to questions in this questionnaire. Your responses shall be strictly held in confidence and treat as confidential. Your name is not required as you are free to play anonymous.

Yours Faithfully,

Onifade OlawaleAbayomi

SECTION A
Instructions:
Please tick the box (✓) appropriately where necessary
Bio- Data of the Respondents

I. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
II. Age: 18-40 [ ] 31-53 [ ] 44-66 [ ] 57-79 [ ] 80 and above [ ]
III. Marital Status: Single [ ] Married [ ]
IV. Occupation: Student [ ] Civil Servant [ ] Farmer [ ] Trader [ ]
V. Community: Maikunkele [ ] Beji [ ] Gwada [ ] Kuta [ ]

Section B
Instruction: please thick [√] in the appropriate cell in the table below.
Indicators (Likert Scaling):

- **(i) Agreed (A)**
- **(ii) Strongly Agreed (SA)**
- **(iii) Disagreed (D)**
- **(iv) Strongly Disagreed (SD)**
- **(v) Undecided (UD)**
- **(vi) Yes**
- **(vii) No**

S/N		Yes	No
1.	Are you familiar with the name Jama'a Forum?		
2.	Are you aware of its activities in your community and in Niger State as a whole?		
3	Are you aware that the Mission Statement of Jama'a Forum is to provide a platform for sourcing of reliable information from the people, in order to assist government procure the desired needs and aspirations of the people at the grassroots (community)?		
4.	Do you agree that Jama'a Dialogue Forum is a participatory platform for community based development?		

S/N		A	SA	D	SD	UD
5.	Jama'a Dialogue Forum was established in order to bring the local communities (people at the local level) closer to the government through community dialogue forum.					

6. The following are the fundamental Objectives of Jama'a Forum. Tick any of the objectives that you think the Forum has achieved since its inception. You can tick as many as you think the forum has achieved.

S/N		TICK
A	To bridge the communication gaps between the government and the governed	
B	To ensures that the elected give up some of its powers by narrowing the vertical gap.	
C	To painstakingly arrive at project agenda through conflict and compromise that will make the people have a sense of ownership of community projects.	
D	To enforce democratic accountability in order to bring government close to the people.	
E	To enable the people check balance government activities and to ensure practical and result oriented government	
F	To provide a platform for the people to participate in the governing process (voice to the people).	
G	Allow the people to determine their needs and change in their communities.	

7. Which of these ways does Jama'a Forum communicate its activities to the communities? You can tick more than one if you think it is more than one way.

S/N		TICK
A	Community Announcers	
B	Information through Village Heads	
C	Information through Media Jingles	
D	Information through Inter-Personal Communication	
E	Through religious leaders and worship places	

8. How many times has Jama'a Forum meeting held in your community since its inception?

S/N		TICK
A	5 Times	
B	4 Times	
C	3 Times	
D	2 Times	
E	1 Time	

9. How many times have you participated in the Forum meeting?

S/N		TICK
A	1-5 Times	
B	6 -10 Times	
C	11 – 15 Times	
D	16 – 20 Times	
E	More than 20 Times	

10. What issues did you discuss in the meetings?

S/N		TICK
A	Political Issues	
B	Community development Issues	
C	Religious Issues	
D	Security Issues	
E	Tribal Crisis Issues	

S/N		Yes	No
11.	Was government the initiator of most of discussions in the Forum community meetings?		
12.	Were ordinary people allowed to make contribution in the Forum meetings?		

13. Who is the coordinator of discussions in the Forum meetings?

S/N		TICK
A	The Government officials	
B	The Community Heads	
C	Master of Ceremony (MC)	
D	Community Political Party Leaders	
E	The Community Representatives	
F	Community Heads (leaders)	
G	Director General (DG) of Jama'a Forum	

14. How are the contributors in the Forum meetings identified?

S/N		TICK
A	They are identified by Government Nomination	
B	They are identified by Political Constituency	
C	They are identified by being a Native of the Community (Local)	
D	They are identified by Gender	
E	They are identified by Academy and Social Status	
F	They are identify by Random Selection	

S/N		Yes	No
15.	Have you ever made any contributions or suggestions during the forum meetings?		
16.	Were those contributions you made considered and responded to?		
17.	Did the contributions you made formed the bases of projects implementation in your community?		

18. Which of the following projects has been executed in your community through the Forum dialogue? You can tick as many as you think your community had benefited.

S/N		TICK
A	Building and rehabilitation of Schools.	
B	Community clinic and Maternity Centre.	
C	Provision of Bore-Hole (both motorized, solar and hand-dug)	
D	Provision of Electricity.	
E	Provision of Transformer, Wires and Poles.	
F	Provision of Drainages.	
G	Provision of Culverts.	
H	Provision of Roads.	
I	Empowerment of Individual, groups and Agro-Allied activities.	
J	Nurses and Doctors quarters.	
K	Educational Secretariat.	
L	Police Security Posts.	

M	Markets and Abattoirs	
N	Class rooms Desks and Benches.	
O	Building of Toilets	

S/N		A	SA	D	SD	UD
19.	Jama'a Forum has benefited my community positively.					
20.	The level of participation in Jama'a Forum meetings is encouraging.					
21.	The involvement of the people is more of spectators rather than participants.					
22	There is absence of people's involvement in project location and implementation in the communities.					
23	There is loss of interest in the Forum's activities in the communities.					

S/N		Yes	No
24.	Do you believe that there is a decline in Jama'a dialogue forum participatory activities?		

25. What are the factors responsible for excluding people from participating in Jama'a Dialogue Forum's community development projects implementation?Tick as many as you think is the contributing factors.

S/N	FACTORS	TICK
A	Illiteracy	
B	Government Order	
C	Representative Participation	
D	Community Representative Personal Interest	
E	Time Factor	
F	Coordination and Managerial Process	
G	Lack of skill and Technical Knowhow	
H	Financial Constraints	

26. Which of the factors listed below do you think is contributing to the decline in effective participation of the people in Jama'a Forum activities? Tick as many as you think is the contributing factors.

S/N	FACTORS	TICK
A	Low level of Awareness about the forum activities.	
B	Lack of Interest by people.	
C	Poor communication.	
D	People do not understand the concept of Jama'a Dialogue Forum.	
E	The organizers dictate the pace to the people.	

F	People are merely allowed to listen but not contributing.	
G	It is used as political apparatus.	
H	Timing of the dialogue meetings is not conducive.	
I	The operational activities of the forum is not in line with its objective	
J	Inconsistent policy of programme executors	

27. Which of these communication strategies listed below do you think can make Jama'a Dialogue Forum more participatory in its community development roles? Tick as many as you think can make the Forum more participatory in its community Development roles.

S/N	**FACTORS**	**TICK**
A	Airing it live through Radio and Television Programme.	
B	Through regular community meetings.	
C	Through interpersonal communication.	
D	Allowing Face to Face Communication to take high stake.	
E	Provision for Feed Back Mechanism	
F	Simulation of discussion in real life community development project.	
G	Conducive timing of the dialogue meetings to enable effective and active participation of the people in the communities.	
H	Higher Community Initiative in the programmes and community project	
I	Uses of more Local Content such as Language, Music, theatre and folklores in the programmes	
J	The community Dialogue Forum plans and implementation should be the responsibility of the leaders from each community instead of the Government Executive Council and the Director General.	
K	Government allowing the communities to determine the projects to be done in their community, not dictating to them.	

APPENDIX IV

CHECK LIST FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

I am **Onifade OlawaleAbayomi** a Master Student in Development Communication with the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

I am researching on **An Assessment of Jama'a Dialogue Forum as a Participatory Platform for Community Development in Niger State, 2008-2012.**

This interview will be recorded (voice), and photo will be taken during the session as part of the research data collection process.

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1. Could you tell us about yourself and your role in Jama'a Dialogue Forum activities?
2. What is the Mission Statement and the Objectives of the Forum (what does Jama'a Forum tend to achieve)?
3. How does Jama'a forum communicate its meeting to the communities?
4. How many years have you learnt about Jama'a Dialogue Forum and how many communities have its meeting being held?
5. What are the communication strategies Jama'a Forum used in carrying out its activities generally and how effective has it been?
6. What can you say about the level of people's participation in the Jama'a Forum dialogue meetings?
7. What role does government play in Jama'a Dialogue Forum community meetings?
8. Who is the initiator of most discussions in the Forum: the people or the government? What is the implication of this arrangement?

9. What can you say about the Projects and Programmes implementation discussed in the dialogue meeting?
10. How would you evaluate the Forum, vis-à-vis it objective and achievement: as asuccess or a failure? What are your reasons?
11. Comment on participation and therole of community in Jama'a Forum development process?
12. What would you say about the communication strategies adopted by Jama'a Forum in communicating its community development projects in communities?
13. Are you satisfied with the communication strategies used by Jama'a Dialogue Forum in its community development roles? What are your reasons?
14. What alternative strategies can be deployed to make Jama'a Dialogue Forum more effective in the discharge of its objectives?

Interview Record

Key Informant: Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs. ----------

Sex: ----------

Status: ----------

Date of Interview: ----------

Duration: ----------

Venue: ----------

Interviewer: ----------

APPENDIX V

CALCULATION FOR SAMPLE SIZE

The total estimated population of 361,257 (Population Projection Based on 3.41% Annual Growth Rate. 2015) people living in Shiroro Local Government Communities. The one hundred and sixty-four sample size drawn from the total population was gotten from the statistical data formula formulated by Yamane (1967).

According to Taro Yamane (1967) sample size can be determined by the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Total Population

E = Level of precision or Error limit = 5% or 0.05

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{361257}{1 + 361257(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{361257}{361258(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{361257}{361258(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{361257}{903.145}$$

$$n = \frac{399.999}{15}$$

$$n = 26.667$$

$$n = 27 approximately$$

$$n = 27 \times 6$$
$$n = 162$$

Therefore, for a population of three hundred and sixty-one thousand, two hundred and fifty seven people in Shiroro Local Government communities, the researcher randomly administered twenty seven copies of the questionnaire in each of the six selected communities. Thus, the total sample size is one hundred and sixty-two.