

# The Effect Of Development Communication On The Agricultural Enhancement Process In Surulere Local Government Area, Oyo State

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**Abstract:** This study examines the effect of development communication on the agricultural enhancement process in Surulere Local Government Area, Oyo State. The study made use of a survey research design. The population of this study are local farmers in Surulere Local Government, Oyo State. A total number of 150 respondents were selected using cluster sampling. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researcher and data analysis was done using descriptive statistics. The result of the finding showed that majority of the respondents agree that community communication is one of the types of communication strategies used in agricultural sector, traditional media such as radio and television are effective communication strategies for reaching out to broader audience and agricultural extension officers can make use of interpersonal communication strategy to demonstrate new techniques and offer training. Furthermore, challenges identified affecting the effectiveness of development communication in agricultural development include poor road networks, limited electricity supply, poor telecommunication signals, lack of financial support. The study recommends that both traditional media and modern media should be upheld as a means of disseminating agricultural information for effective agricultural enhancement processes.

**Keywords:** Agricultural Communication, Development Communication, Farming, Information, Radio broadcasting, Technology

## Introduction

Nigeria's economy still depends heavily on agriculture, which employs more than 70% of the country's rural population and makes a substantial contribution to both national income and food security (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Nevertheless, the industry still faces a number of obstacles in spite of its potential, such as low productivity, restricted access to contemporary technology, and a lack of awareness regarding recommended farming methods. The information gap between agricultural researchers, policymakers, and rural farmers frequently makes these problems worse.

Communication for development (C4D), also known as development communication, has become a critical tool to close this gap. According to Servaes (2008), it entails the application of communication techniques and resources to support knowledge transfer, social and behavioural change, and community engagement in development initiatives.

In the agricultural sector, development communication plays a crucial role in empowering farmers by delivering timely information on innovations, climate-resilient practices, pest management, market opportunities, and improved seed options through platforms like radio, mobile phones, extension services, and community outreach programs (Manyozo, 2012). In Nigeria, several efforts have harnessed development communication to boost agricultural productivity. Initiatives such as the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) and the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) integrated communication tools to share essential information and foster farmer participation. However, the success of these strategies is often limited by challenges including low literacy rates, limited access to communication technologies, language diversity, and cultural factors (Akinfeleye, 2015). Considering the vital role that access to information plays in agricultural development, it is important to evaluate how effectively development communication has supported agricultural progress in Nigeria. Such an assessment can help shape future communication policies and interventions aimed at strengthening farmer capacity and improving agricultural outcomes.

## Statement of the Problem

Although agriculture remains central to Nigeria's economy and food security, the sector continues to face persistent challenges such as low productivity, limited uptake of improved farming methods, and inadequate access to critical information among rural farmers. A key factor contributing to these issues is the weak connection between agricultural research, policy implementation, and grassroots-level farmers—largely stemming from ineffective communication systems (Arokoyo, 2003). Development communication is designed to close this gap by promoting the exchange of information, encouraging knowledge transfer, and influencing behavior to support agricultural advancement. Yet, in many rural communities across Nigeria, the effectiveness of these communication efforts remains limited. This is due to factors such as inadequate infrastructure, language diversity, poorly trained extension personnel, and restricted access to mass media and digital technologies. As a result, many farmers remain uninformed about modern agricultural practices, weather forecasts, market dynamics, and government support programs that could significantly boost their productivity.

and livelihoods. Additionally, while some agricultural initiatives have incorporated communication strategies, there is limited evidence on the actual impact of these efforts on agricultural development. The lack of consistent evaluation makes it difficult to determine how effectively such communication approaches are driving improvement in the sector. Therefore, this study aims to explore and critically assess the implementation and impact of development communication strategies in enhancing agriculture in Nigeria.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to examine the role and effectiveness of development communication strategies in enhancing agricultural processes and outcomes in Nigeria. The secondary objectives are to:

- i. To identify the types of development communication strategies used in Nigeria's agricultural sector.
- ii. To examine the challenges affecting the effectiveness of development communication in agricultural development.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Communication**

Oyinloye (2017) emphasized that the study of communication is inherently linked to linguistics, whether explicitly stated or not. Linguistics encompasses both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication. Within this framework, five core language skills are essential for effective communication: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and visual literacy. Afe and Aje (2011) define communication as the totality of messages and information exchanged among individuals, groups, organizations, and nations, using mutually understood symbols and conventions. For communication to be meaningful, it requires all participants to share a common communicative foundation; otherwise, societal progress may be hindered. Communication serves specific purposes and is inherently goal-driven. Its primary functions include conveying information, generating knowledge, fostering social interaction, engaging in dialogue, offering entertainment, expressing emotions, and resolving conflicts. Individuals and institutions rely on communication to transmit information and expand understanding. Through communication, people learn about each other and their environment. In educational contexts, communication facilitates formal learning, with teachers delivering content and students responding—making it central to the teaching and learning process.

Additionally, communication is used as a tool to persuade and influence, particularly by politicians during campaigns and by religious leaders seeking to attract followers. It also serves recreational and emotional purposes, enabling people to share joyful moments and provide emotional support, empathy, and solidarity. Moreover, communication allows individuals to express love, admiration, or disapproval. Whether it conveys appreciation or criticism, communication reflects human emotions and attitudes toward people, situations, or objects (Aniyi, 2018).

#### **Traditional Communication Media**

Majmudari (2000) argued that traditional communication media possess the flexibility to adapt to the socio-political dynamics of rural communities and are among the most effective tools for disseminating information in rural and tribal areas, particularly among illiterate populations who may not comprehend modern forms of communication. These indigenous media serve a crucial role in rural communication and information sharing. Their functions include the transmission of knowledge and experiences, the promotion of moral values, the provision of answers to significant human concerns, the relaying of historical information, and the education of rural populations—such as raising awareness about sexually transmitted infections through performances like dances and songs (Stichele, 2000). Similarly, Infospace.com (2017) observed that blending songs, drama, and music to convey messages about social issues—such as child labor, environmental concerns, health matters, and gender equality—can leave a powerful and lasting impression on audiences. Onwubiko (2006) added that oral tradition, a key component of traditional communication, represents the cultural identity and heritage of a people, passed down from generation to generation through spoken word.

#### **Development Communication**

Development is intrinsically linked to change and is considered a hallmark of modernization. As a transformative process, development aims to reduce exploitation and inequality, empower economically marginalized groups, and diminish the concentration of social, political, and economic power. It also encompasses fair resource allocation, improved healthcare, and access to quality education for all. The integration of communication in development processes is largely driven by technological innovation. Advances in technology have turned the world into a global village, making nations increasingly interdependent. As a result, communication has become essential for interaction and rational decision-making among people and nations who now share common global interests. The use of communication to promote positive social progress is termed *development communication*. According to Mefalopulos (2008), development communication engages various stakeholders and decision-makers, creates supportive environments, assesses risks and benefits, and encourages the exchange of information to foster sustainable social transformation.

Strategies used in development communication include public education, behavior change communication, social marketing, social mobilization, media advocacy, communication for social change, and active community participation.

### **The Role of Mass Media in Agricultural Development**

The extent to which mass media is employed to mobilize and inform the public significantly influences the success of agricultural development. Agricultural planners in developing countries recognize that the strategic use of mass media can fast-track the dissemination and adoption of new agricultural technologies. Radio and television, in particular, are celebrated as powerful tools for delivering scientific and technical knowledge to the wider population (Oba et al., 2020). These media platforms educate farmers on how to use modern technologies to enhance agricultural productivity. Television, in particular, offers an engaging way to visually demonstrate farming techniques, making it easier for farmers to grasp complex operations and procedures. Meanwhile, radio stands out as a valuable resource for agricultural communication due to its widespread availability in rural areas and its ability to deliver timely information. According to Okunlola et al. (2022), radio broadcasts tailored to agricultural themes are essential for informing farmers. Olaniyi (2019) further recommended that radio-based agricultural education should be a consistent, long-term strategy in agricultural extension programs, as it encourages the adoption of improved practices and boosts farm yields.

### **Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory, first introduced in the field of communication by Rogers in 1962, explains how new ideas and technologies spread within a social system over time. According to the theory, diffusion is the process through which an innovation is communicated via specific channels over a period to members of a social group. Rogers emphasized that the individuals who introduce new ideas—known as *opinion leaders*—must be perceived as credible and impartial by potential adopters. The theory identifies four key components involved in the diffusion process: innovation, communication channels, time and social system. Rogers (2003) defines an innovation as any idea, practice, or product that is perceived as new by an individual or group. He also outlined five characteristics that influence the rate at which an innovation is adopted:

1. Relative Advantage – The extent to which an innovation is viewed as superior to the idea or method it replaces.
2. Compatibility – How well the innovation aligns with the existing values, experiences, and needs of the target social system.
3. Simplicity (Complexity) – The perceived ease or difficulty in understanding and using the innovation.
4. Trialability – The ability to test or experiment with the innovation on a limited basis before full adoption.
5. Observability – The visibility of the innovation's benefits or outcomes to others.

With respect to communication channels, Rogers (2003) explains that they serve as the vehicles for transmitting information from a sender to a receiver. He differentiates between mass media and interpersonal communication: In essence, while mass media is effective for informing large audiences, interpersonal communication plays a crucial role in influencing actual adoption behavior..

### **Empirical Reviews**

Obiora et al (2021) studied the use of mass media for agricultural information among farmers, focusing on combating food insecurity, poverty, and unemployment. The study found that adequate mass media, including broadcast, film, internet, podcasts, video games, and newspapers, is crucial for farmers' success. However, inadequate funding, unpredictable power supply, and poor reading levels limit farmers' ability to effectively use mainstream media. The study of Njinma et al (2024) explores the role of mass media in promoting food security and zero hunger in Nigeria. It highlights the importance of raising public awareness, advocating for agricultural innovation, and promoting healthy diets. The study also addresses challenges like food distribution inefficiencies, population growth, gender inequality, and climate change. Recommendations include investing in sustainable agriculture, improving rural infrastructure, empowering smallholder farmers, and implementing social protection programs.

### **Research Methodology**

The research adopted the descriptive survey design. The reason why descriptive survey research design was used is because data was collected using a structured questionnaire which does not involve any manipulation of variables in the study. The population of this study are local farmers in Surulere Local Government, Oyo State. The study used a cluster sampling technique to select the respondents used for the study. The population was divided into smaller clusters based on demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, years of experience etc. A total number of 150 respondents were selected for this study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics used were frequency tables and percentages.

### **Data Analysis**

For the data analysis, a total number of 150 respondents that are local farmers were used in this study. Frequency tables and percentages were used in analysing the responses from the questionnaire administered to them.

### RQ1: What are the types of development communication strategies used in Nigeria's agricultural sector?

**Table 1: The types of development communication strategies used in Nigeria's agricultural sector (N = 150)**

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
Community communication is one the types of communication strategies used in agricultural sector	44 (29.3%)	91 (60.7%)	12 (8.0%)	3 (2.0%)	-
One of the types of communication strategies used in agriculture sector is development broadcasting	56 (37.3%)	12 (8.0%)	68 (45.3%)	-	14 (9.3%)
Traditional media such as radio and television are effective communication strategies for reaching out to broader audience	21 (14.0%)	65 (43.3%)	29 (19.3%)	35 (23.3%)	-
Agricultural extension officers can make use of interpersonal communication strategy to demonstrate new techniques and offer training	62 (41.3%)	22 (14.7%)	35 (23.3%)	31 (20.7%)	-
Communication strategy such as educational communication can be used to reach out to farmers	47 (31.3%)	64 (42.7%)	36 (24.0%)	3 (2.0%)	-

Table 1 showed types of development communication strategies used in Nigeria's agricultural sector. It showed that 91 (60.7%) of the respondents agree that community communication is one the types of communication strategies used in agricultural sector, 44 (29.3%) strongly agree, 12 (8.0%) were undecided while 3 (2.0%) of the respondents disagree with the statement. Also, 56 (37.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that one of the types of communication strategies used in agriculture sector is development broadcasting, 12 (8.0%) of the respondents agree, 68 (45.3%) were undecided while 14 (9.3%) strongly disagree on the statement.

In addition, 65 (43.3%) of the respondents agree that traditional media such as radio and television are effective communication strategies for reaching out to broader audience, 21 (14.0%) of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, 29 (19.3%) were undecided while 35 (23.3%) of the respondents disagree on the statement. Likewise, 62 (41.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that agricultural extension officers can make use of interpersonal communication strategy to demonstrate new techniques and offer training, 22 (14.7%) agree, 35 (23.3%) were undecided while 31 (20.7%) disagree on the statement. Furthermore, 64 (42.7%) of the respondents agree that communication strategy such as educational communication can be used to reach out to farmers, 47 (31.3%) strongly agree, 36 (24.0%) were undecided while 3 (2.0%) disagree on the statement.

### Research Question Two: What are the challenges affecting the effectiveness of development communication in agricultural development?

**Table 2: The challenges affecting the effectiveness of development communication in agricultural development (N = 150)**

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
Poor road networks make it difficult for extension agents to access remote farming communities	79 (52.7%)	7 (4.7%)	64 (42.6%)	-	-
Limited electricity supply affects the use of communication devices such as radios, televisions, and mobile phones	46 (30.7%)	88 (58.7%)	15 (10.0%)	1 (0.7%)	-
Poor telecommunication signals reduce mobile phone and internet access in rural areas, limiting ICT-based communication effectiveness	52 (34.7%)	83 (55.3%)	12 (8.0%)	3 (2.0%)	-

Lack of financial support affects radio programs, training, and ICT infrastructure.	102 (68.0%)	32 (21.3%)	11 (7.3%)	5 (3.4%)	-
Some farmers may be resistant to adopting new agricultural practices due to cultural beliefs and traditional farming methods	81 (54.0%)	22 (14.7%)	31 (20.7%)	16 (10.7%)	-

Table 2 showed challenges affecting the effectiveness of development communication in agricultural development. It revealed that 79 (52.7%) of the respondents strongly agree that poor road networks make it difficult for extension agents to access remote farming communities, 64 (42.6%) of the respondents were undecided while 7 (4.7%) of the respondents agree on the statement. Also, 88 (58.7%) of the respondents agree that limited electricity supply affects the use of communication devices such as radios, televisions, and mobile phones, 46 (30.7%) of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, 15 (10.0%) of the respondents were undecided while 1 (0.7%) of the respondents disagree on the statement. In addition, 83 (55.3%) of the respondents agree that poor telecommunication signals reduce mobile phone and internet access in rural areas, limiting ICT-based communication effectiveness, 52 (34.7%) of the respondents strongly agree, 12 (8.0%) were undecided while 3 (2.0%) of the respondents disagree on the statement. In the same vein, 102 (68.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that lack of financial support affects radio programs, training, and ICT infrastructure, 28 (18.7%) agree, 11 (7.3%) were undecided while 5 (3.4%) of the respondents disagree on the statement. Furthermore, 81 (54.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that some farmers may be resistant to adopting new agricultural practices due to cultural beliefs and traditional farming methods, 22 (14.7%) of the respondents agree, 31 (20.7%) were undecided while 16 (10.7%) of the respondents disagree on the statement.

### Discussion of Findings

The study is on the effect of development communication on the agricultural enhancement process in Surulere Local Government Area, Oyo State. The result of the study showed that majority of the respondents agree that community communication is one the types of communication strategies used in agricultural sector, traditional media such as radio and television are effective communication strategies for reaching out to broader audience and agricultural extension officers can make use of interpersonal communication strategy to demonstrate new techniques and offer training. This finding supports the study of Obiora et al (2021) who reported that adequate mass media, including broadcast, film, internet, podcasts, video games, and newspapers, is crucial for farmers' success.

Furthermore, the challenges affecting the effectiveness of development communication in agricultural development include poor road networks, limited electricity supply, poor telecommunication signals, lack of financial support and resistant to adopting new agricultural practices due to cultural beliefs and traditional farming methods.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, communication plays a vital role in disseminating relevant information on agricultural practices to farmers. Vital information such as improved seeds, government subsidies and support are communicated to farmers via media and communication channels. In remote areas where it is difficult to get access to television and internet, farmers can access agricultural information in their local languages through community radio stations. However, some of the challenges identified affecting the effectiveness of development communication in agricultural development include poor road networks, limited electricity supply, poor telecommunication signals, lack of financial support.

### Recommendations

- Both traditional media and modern media should be upheld as a means of disseminating agricultural information for effective agricultural production.
- There is need to invest more in various communication strategies suitable for the enhancement of agricultural extension services.

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