

**PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION, HOST COMMUNITIES'
DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC POLICY REFORMS:
AN APPRAISAL OF NIGERIA'S PETROLEUM
INDUSTRY ACT 2021-2024**

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Abstract

The long and tedious walk to the eventual implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act after different stages of publichearings atstakeholders' level and committee stages at the National Assembly became feasible following President Muhammadu Buhari's assent in 2021. Chapter 3, section 240 of the Act gives consent for 3 percent annual profits from oil companies operating in different communities in the Niger Delta for host communities' development to be administer by Host Communities Development Trust Fund and supervised by the Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission NUPRC and the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPR). Even though the passage of the PIA heralded a supposed new dawn for oil producing communities to overcome different throes of oil extraction induced underdevelopment as part of the gains of public sector reforms such as the PIA, yet participatory communication driven interaction through development oriented communication to acquaint every host community with key provisions of the PIA to get them involved in decision making and implementation of the policy thrust seems elusive. This study therefore

seeks to, efficacy of participatory communication in engendering stakeholder's interest in the composition of Board of Trustees of Host Communities Development Trust Fund and utilisation of funds for development purposes, possible breaches and channels that monitor provisions of Petroleum Industry Act to enhance its operational efficiency for Host Communities Development. The study was anchored on the development media theory and participatory communication theory. Survey method was adopted for the study with questionnaire and In-Depth Personal Interviews as instruments for data collection. Using multi stage sampling technique, data were analysed in simple percentages presentation and themes. Among other findings, the study revealed that lack of in-depth knowledge and abysmal awareness on the provisions of the PIA often results in breaches against chapter 3 of the PIA advocating for openness and transparency in implementing PIA provisions on host communities. The study recommends that international organisations, environmental rights agenda, state governments and development partners should sponsor the media to carry out quarterly open dialogue on transparency in the implementation of the PIA, to entrench an aggressive, indigenous and strategic media campaign to drive comprehensive knowledge about the PIA in different host communities across oil producing areas and total responsibility of safeguarding oil facilities should be borne by oil operators rather than putting a caveat on the host communities as requirement for benefiting from the 3 percent profits for Host Communities Development Trust Fund.

Keywords: Petroleum Industry Act, Host Communities Development, Participatory Communication, Oil producing Areas, Implementation, 3 Percent Profits, Comprehensive Knowledge, Safeguarding Oil Facilities, Participatory Communication Theory.

Introduction

Participatory communication encourages strategic communication that fosters and encourages sharing of information aimed at enlightening members of a given extractive or oil producing host community with relevant information about public policy reforms and what they stand to gain from such reforms in their respective areas for implementation. Thus, on July 1, 2021, the Nigerian Senate achieved a major landmark in the downstream, upstream and gas resources sector following the passage of Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). The passage of the public sector reforms Bill

into an Act became feasible following reports of the Joint Committee on Petroleum comprising; upstream, downstream and gas resources. It made provisions for 3 percent equity shareholding for host community's development contained in chapter three of the Act as measures to drive development across oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region. Equally, the clause on equity shareholding gives constitutional framework in favour of host communities and streamlines duties of oil companies to plough back into different host communities for development purposes in education, health care services, economic empowerment and advancing community interest.

In its entirety, chapter three of the Petroleum Industry Act aggregates community development interest and this may not be in full glare and understanding of supposed beneficiaries which necessitates the use of participatory communication techniques to drive understanding and implementation of its constitutional provisions. The imperative of participatory communication aligns with (Bibiana 2019,p.8) who opined that the media as an instrument of change projects the idea that the media can be used to stimulate debate and promote development issues such as the PIA particularly in mobilising resources and stakeholders or host communities to rally support for implementation of reforms as pivotal to development interventions.

Holistically, Price Waterhouse and Coopers (2021) explained that the Petroleum Industry Act provides legal, governance, regulatory and fiscal framework for the Nigerian petroleum industry and development of host communities and contains 5 Chapters, 319 Sections and, 8 Schedules dealing with rights of preemption; incorporated joint ventures; domestic base price and pricing framework; pricing formula for gas price for the gas based industries; capital allowances; production allowances and cost price ratio limit; petroleum fees, rents and royalty; and creation of the ministry of petroleum incorporated.

Participatory communication approaches identified by (Bibiana, 2019) as "human centred and a systematic use of communication channels, strategic communication techniques, interaction and participation from the level of problem identification to planning and implementation stage; engage and build human capacity using appropriate information at the local levels, encourage sharing of information and utilisation of interpersonal channels of communication that create opportunities for feedback. Understanding participatory communication approaches encourages dialogue that involves circular interactive process that is very critical to the

realisation of cardinal objectives of the Act which is to foster sustainable prosperity within host communities, provide direct social and economic benefits, enhance harmonious co-existence and create framework for development of host communities.

Participatory communication reinforces (Kenechukwu, Eze and Abua, 2017, p.68) notion that it is critical for political, economic control and development initiatives such as the PIA. Mass media dissemination of news on developmental initiatives and messages in order to bring attitudinal change for the audience to make appropriate decisions. They also highlighted that the media also serve to mobilise citizens for attaining defined societal objectives because participatory communication can instill, grow and promote development of human potentials of host communities. It reflects Spaces for change (2022, p.90) argument that community participation is relevant in terms of interaction with investors for specific demands, opportunity to be involved in decision making regarding exploration of oil and improved capacity for execution of economic and infrastructure development project.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- (i) Find out the Level of citizen's awareness on the relevance of PIA and its provisions on Host Communities Development in oil producing areas in Nigeria
- (ii) Find out the efficacy of participatory communication in engendering stakeholder's interest in the composition of Board of Trustees of Host Communities Development Trust Fund and utilisation of funds for development purposes.
- (iii) Examine the potency of participatory communication in unearthing possible breaches against provisions of the act directing social and economic benefits for petroleum operators to host communities.
- (iv) Ascertain the extent to which participatory communication creates an enabling channel that monitors provisions Petroleum Industry Act to enhance its operational efficiency for Host Communities Development.

Research Questions

- (i) What is the Level of citizen's awareness on the relevance of PIA and its provisions on Host Communities Development in oil producing areas in Nigeria

- (ii) What is the efficacy of participatory communication in engendering stakeholder's interest in the composition of Board of Trustees of Host Communities Development Trust Fund and utilisation of funds for development purposes?
- (iii) What is the potency of participatory communication in unearthing possible breaches against provisions of the act directing social and economic benefits for petroleum operators to host communities?
- (iv) What is the extent at which participatory communication creates an enabling channel that monitors provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act to enhance its operational efficiency for Host Communities Development?

Statement of the problem

Nigeria's Petroleum Industry Act 2021 specifically provided that Host Communities Development Trust Fund shall undertake infrastructure development of host communities within the scope of funds available to facilitate economic empowerment in the host communities and advance or propagate educational development plan for the benefit of host communities across oil producing areas country wide . However, despite the clear provisions enshrined in the PIA, successful implementation across priority areas from 2021 remains a mirage in the ears of so many hostcommunities which remain undeveloped. Operational efficiencyof Host Communities Development Trust Fund is yet to impact positively on oil producing areas in manycommunities plague by ills associated with oil exploration activities. In fact, an oil producing community under the auspices of Coalition of Ilajestudents on the 1stAugaust2023 notified the Ondo state police command of a protest over neglect of their communities despite oil exploration (<https://saharareporters.com>).

Discontent such as the intended protest by Coalition of Ilaje students against being shortchanged as a result of oil exploration activities in their domain shows a great gulf between implementation of PIA and host communities development. For any public sector reform to be embraced by beneficiaries, formulators of such policy must entrench participatory and human centered communication approaches through the media in order to bridge the gap between policy and the people. There must be a link between the PIA, the media and the people in whom the policies are meant to benefit.

Therefore, since lack of participatory communication are suggested to be responsible for the unsuccessful implementations of host communities

development objectives in the PIA and that communication has been identified as a vital tool for enhancing host communities development, this research interrogates Petroleum Industry Act's provisions for host communities and 3 percent equity shareholding as derivative for host community's development contained in chapter three of the Act.

Significance of the study

Data obtained from this study could serve as baseline information on effective use of participatory communication to bridge the gap between designing administrative templates for Host Communities' Development trust fund and implementation of PIA to potential beneficiaries across oil producing areas. It would also heighten the use of participatory communication theory with key tenets that show that rather than encourage residents of developing societies to participate in development initiatives planned by outsiders, it encourages residents especially Board of Trustees members of the trust fund to make their own plans about developing their own communities in line with provisions of the Act.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on chapter three of the PIA and highlights specific clauses outlining responsibilities of oil producing companies to host communities for development purposes. Analysis of the PIA were restricted to identifying, appraising and suggesting ways in which participatory communication can foster judicious implementation of the Act's provisions. The geographical scope is the Niger Delta and Kogistate with participants drawn from oil producing communities in these states.

LiteratureReview

Overview of Participatory Communication

Participatory communication has been given several meanings by communication in indexing situations and context it can be applied to achieve specific goals. Thus, Auwal (2018,p.63) explained that it has relevant characteristics in the media and has been referred to as a collective communication with broad categories of print, broadcast and new media by which the populace is kept informed about day to day happenings in the society. The notion advanced above places participatory communication within the realm of communication that trigger and foster good governance and operational efficiency of the Petroleum Industry Act 2012 such that the host communities development clause is used to portray indices of

accelerating steady and effective implementation of the Act along measurable templates as enshrined in the much heralded regulatory framework for the petroleum industry in Nigeria. Participatory communication therefore considers political, socio-economic, cultural and even environmental well-being of citizens in pursuance of development and improved standard at the individual and communal level across host communities to align with the objectives of the Act.

PIA's administrative framework needs an institution such as the mass media to drive the process. Auwal(2018) also maintained that there is need for institutions such as the media to facilitate the entrenchment or deepen the full implementation of the provisions of the Act to align with general interest of the host communities. This underscores the active participation of host communities in ensuring full compliance with the PIA; signifying an exercise of rights through the media because coordinated media messages provide free flow of information and viable platform for expression of opinions and views of stakeholders whose interest has been clearly spelt out in the Act. Corroborating participatory approach to development needs such as host communities development clause in the PIA, United Nations Development Programme (2016, p.2) report advanced that human development implies that people must influence the process that shapes their lives. Human development is that which develops the people through building of capabilities and active participation in the process that shape their lives and the basic needs of the people (<http://hrd.undp.org>). It explains the role intimate relationship mediated by participatory communication between host communities, petroleum industry players, government as can exert influence on successful implantation of PIA on host communities' development.

Public Policy Reforms as legal and regulatory framework for effective governance in Nigeria

Nigeria as nation has different administrations which conceived and made public policies and engaged in reforms with support from the national assembly in their oversight roles. Some have been very successful while others remain a mirage with setbacks during implementation process. According to the IMF 2023, bold reforms are needed to reduce fiscal vulnerabilities and create space for the sustainable development along policy priorities. This indicates that public policy reforms and regulatory framework need to be priorities for effective governance and service delivery in Nigeria.

The tripod of public policy reforms in the PIA is to ensure government channels its obligation to the people, advance host community interest to drive economic development and achieve industrialization in the country. PWC 2021 also averred that the main objective of public sector reforms such as the PIA “is to promote the exploration and exploitation of petroleum resources in Nigeria for the benefit of the Nigerian people and promote sustainable development of the industry, ensure safe, efficient transportation and distribution infrastructure, and transparency and accountability in the administration of petroleum “.

Nwozor, Olanrewaju et al (2020, 184) journeyed into public sector reform quagmire such as that the PIA because it experienced different somersault with different versions of the bill in 2008 and series of balkanization amidst stiff opposition from different stakeholders against certain clauses in the proposed Bill. According to the scholars, “the first of the quadripartite bills, the petroleum industry governance bill (PIGB) was passed by both chambers of Nigeria’s National Assembly and transmitted to the president for assent. The president declined assent, thus deepening the uncertainty that characterizes the sector; opining that the trajectory of Nigeria’s petroleum sector reform, including the long delay and its impact on the sector. Importantly, its passage was envisioned to signal an upward spiral for Nigerians especially host communities which featured prominently in the PIA.

Highlighting regulatory public policy reforms gives government all levels opportunity to operate with timelines, targets and evaluation mechanisms, Malyshev (2002, p.3) stated that it also include the adoption of consistent approaches to the law making process and the implementation of new policy tools such as the use of regulatory impact analysis, administrative simplification and regulatory alternatives. Summarily, he emphasized that the adoption of regulatory policies meant that responsibility for elements of public policy reforms as legal and regulatory framework for effective governance in Nigeria bolster reforms such as the PIA 2021.

Host Communities Development Trust in the Petroleum Industry Act 2021

According to the official gazette of the PIA 2021, it provided for 3 equity shareholding for host communities development as measures to entrench a culture of corporate social responsibility and drive development. This clause mandates oil companies operating in different communities in

Nigeria to plough back into host communities for development purposes. Thus, the Act sought to streamline community interest in Article 4 with specific terms of reference and setting up and administrative structure known as HostCommunities Development Trust Fund.

Accordingly, the Act states that the settlor shall for the purpose of setting up the trust in consultation with the host communities, shall appoint an administrative Board of Trustees (BOT) which shall be registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). Article four in chapter three of the Act provided that CAC would regulate on the administration and safeguard the utilization of the fund such that the oversight responsibility for ensuring that projects proposed by the BOT are implemented. The PIA further strengthens that whether a third party acquires rights to exploration in a particular host community, the 3 percent equity shareholding stipulated for by the Act cannot be altered.

Specifically the PIA asserts that Host Communities Development Trust Fund shall undertake the following; shall undertake infrastructure development of host communities within the scope of available resources, facilitate economic empowerment in the host communities, advance and propagate educational development for the benefit if host communities and Support Healthcare development for host communities and other worthy initiatives in different host communities.

The Timeline of Host Communities Development Trusts in The Niger Delta

SPACES FOR CHANGE, a nongovernmental organisation hosted a national dialogue in Owerri, Imo state between September 14-15 2023 to gauge the level of compliance in setting up HCDTs in different states and harmonised best practices in achieving implementation of the PIA in Nigeria with the following times.

August 16,2021	President Buhari Assented to the PIA and Chapter 3 establishes the Host Community Development Trust to promote sustainable prosperity within host communities
August 2021	Two Regulatory Bodies, Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) and the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum (NMDPR) tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of HDCTs law established.

April 2022	NUPRC rolled out five regulatory frameworks including the Petroleum Licensing Round Regulations and Host Community Regulations for day-to-day administration of the trusts.
June 2022	Minister of state for petroleum resources awarded initial petroleum licenses for successful winners at the conclusion of 2020 marginal field bids.
April 2023	NUPRC issued a two-week ultimatum to operators of Oil Mining Lease 42 to engage host communities and register them in compliance with provisions of the PIA.
May 2023	NUPRC announced that 19 fund managers had been qualified to administer the 3% allocation to host communities and 41 host communities were incorporated with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)
May 2023	In bid to promote transparency and accountability, NUPRC introduced the Industry Digital Automated Portal (IDAP) to enhance monitoring and reporting on the Host Communities Development Trust.
May 2023	Joint Venture Partners which include the Nigerian National Petroleum Limited, Shell, Total Energies and Agip oil company introduced 16 host communities development trusts in Imo, Rivers, Delta and Bayelsa States.
July 2023	Exxon mobile and NNPC established EMOMEE and the Ibeno HDTCs in Akwa Ibom State
September 2023	NUPRC issued warning to oil companies due to delays in non-remittance of the 3% annual contribution to HDTs. The commission stated that such delays could lead to host communities' unrest with negating impact in the oil and gas sector.

Adapted from SPACES FOR CHANGE 2nd Edition of National Extractive Dialogue (NED) September, 2023

Participatory Communication and host communities needs assessment for relevant intervention by Board of Trustees (BOT)

This involves communication that conceptualizes needs assessment of host communities in the PIB ACT and global development indices that can be fostered by social and impact driven advocacy and mobilisation through deployment of appropriate communication techniques to advance their worthy cause. Accordingly, Aniefiok & Doris (2019, p. 43) categorically maintained that for communication to be towards efficiency of the management committee for host communities development, it must emanate from a community based point of view where discourse is stimulated based on needs assessment for proper communication plan. They opined that choosing appropriate communication audience should lead to understanding their needs for evaluation of whether they understand the policy thrust of the PIA in relation to host communities development. Participatory communication gives prudent and cost effective way of setting communication objectives for implementation. For instance, deploying participatory communication that evaluates needs of host communities and mapping out communities that are captured in the intervention direction of the PIA. “Besides, the use of appropriate media or forms of communication, the use of appropriate language to communicate the development programs is necessary” (Aniefiok & Doris (2019, p. 43).

Drawing emerging scientific methods of data visualization stories on topical issues to unearth areas of needs in intervention plans like host communities development, Arizona State University (2020) observes that digital media are growing in popularity across the globe and the import of this is hinged on prospects of participatory communication which fosters threaded discussions on new media platforms so as to generate data visualization stories based on needs assessment for portrayal across an integrated media for prompt intervention in the interest of host communities in oil producing areas. Thus, Ekwok, Ugo & Eja (2019, p.7) corroborated that new media innovations and a climate of social media applications have encouraged multimedia communication which incorporates video, audio, still photographs, chats, messages and graphics for participatory communication. With the aid of web links on different social media platforms, users can access information in different forms relevant for needs assessment.

Spaces for Change (2022, p.91) posited needs assessment as critical in host communities development because investor/settlor is also required to undertake Needs Assessment which shall metamorphose into the

Community Development Plan and determine the project to be undertaken by the trust. Needs assessment captures the heartbeat of different host communities as key priority. What may be a felt need in a Riverine Host Community such as Nembe in Bayelsa state may not be a specific priority in Ibeno, AkwaIbom State.

Ata-Awaji (2019, p.60) espoused that emerging scientific method of journalism based on public consumption of messages and perception is determined by several societal factors. He situated availability of media experts who can craft issues based media messages based on needs assessment across host communities in oil producing areas, monopoly or multiplicity of journalism media systems. Other areas identified include audience psychographic and demographic factors and the right technology. Among these factors that influence needs assessment, technology plays significant role because the kind of development and audiences influence determine the content across a broad spectrum of media platforms.

Community Relations and Host Communities Development Plan

Highlighted the importance of mass media which has been credited with the power of enhancing development of any economy particularly host communities development in oil producing areas of Nigeria, Ochonogor (2019, p.165) emphasized that, “their news reports, analysis and commentaries emanating from the mass media help people to understand the need for development initiative in order to take informed decision whether to accept and adopt the advocated initiative or not”. This becomes imperative in view of the policy document formulating plan to incorporate host communities in areas such as economy, healthcare, education, security and infrastructure expansion for overall development.

Underscoring the imperative of community relations in line with host communities development initiatives, Wogu (2007, p.170) opined that grassroots oriented development such as host communities development plan is evolved to cater for rural dwellers in the hinterlands or sub-urban areas of a country. He averred that,

“Communication for rural development has to do with using all the communication media both traditional and modern to mobilise the villagers for development purposes. Most community development campaigns in Nigeria fail is that the people are not allowed to participate in the packaging and ideation of the message”.

Wogu (2007) further described community relations as an aspect of communication that initiates development of an understanding between an organisation and the host community and it is a sustained line of communication, action and reaction aimed at maintaining a good relation with the operational base of a company through their development projects. Therefore, the PIA 2021 has opened a legal framework and avenue for controlled synergy and interaction between host communities and companies engaged in petroleum production in their domain.

Theoretical Framework

Development Media Theory

This theory was propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987 with core tenets that situate the media as a springboard for development initiatives. Scholars assert that the theory was designed to foster development in third world countries such as Nigeria. McQuail's postulation about development media theory was intended to situate development with societal transformation. However, Asemah, Nwmuo & Uwaoma (2017) opined that the theory was intended to recognize the fact that societies undergoing a transition from under development and colonialism need better materials and condition to offset infrastructure deficit and other attendant challenges. Tracing the *raison d'être* for the theory as an offshoot of the United Nation's McBride Commission set up in 1979. The scholars highlighted that the theory seeks to explain the normative behaviour of the press in countries that are conventionally classified as developing countries.

The relevance of the theory to the study under review is that the theory confers on the media a critical role that advocates media support for government policies the Petroleum Industry Act. It suggests the need for participatory communication for host communities to be involved in needs assessment and implementation under the Host Communities Development Trust Fund. For efficient use of this theory, strategic communication must be amplified by the use of local languages such support is likely to help in the implementation of the PIA in different host communities. However, the major weakness of the theory is that development role of the media is erroneously assumed to be propaganda. The theory portrays the press as a captured media instead of having a mutual conception of partnership for development purposes even if it takes the adversarial stand against BOT if it fails to implement relevant provisions in the PIA.

Participatory Communication Theory:

Propounded by Paulo Freire in 1970, it stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities in the implementation of PIA in host communities. In order to share knowledge, information, trust, commitment and a rights of privileges embedded in the PIA, participation is very important. According to Anaeto, Osifeso and Onabanjo (2008, p.181), the participatory theory is fragmented and devoted to local village level or rural efforts. The theory assumes that rather than encourage residents of developing societies to participate in development initiatives planned by outsiders, it encourages residents to make their own plans. This theory therefore endeavours to determine what exactly comprises participation and how participation can be effectively accomplished in pursuing a focused driven implementation of the PIA for the benefit of host communities.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional developmental survey method which Nwankwo (2011, p70) posited that it is concerned with identifying changes that occur in features and variables of a given individual or groups over a period of time. The researcher also utilised the In-Depth Personal Interview (IPIs) from environmental reporters covering the 30 selected host communities in oil producing areas in the Niger Delta Region. In the study under review, the sample is composed of 10 selected host communities through a systematic random sampling in each of oil producing states such as; Imo state with a population of (5,408,756) people, Rivers (7,303,924) people, Bayelsa state (2,277,961) people (<https://www.spacesforchange.org>). The study utilised the multi-stage sampling procedure which considers different types of sampling methods in the process of selecting a vast or large area for minimal sampling errors. The study utilised a sample of one hundred and seventy five (175) respondents across 30 host communities in Imo, Bayelsa and Rivers States.

The appropriateness of the multi-stage sampling technique became necessary because the study deals extensively with large region spanning over 9 states in Nigeria. The instrument of data collection was the multi-variant questionnaire which was developed in sections measuring different variables as contained in the research objectives and simple percentages and tables were used as analysis techniques and generation of findings as the research analysed the In-Depth Personal Interviews in themes.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Level of citizen’s awareness on the relevance of PIA and its provisions HDTC in oil producing areas in Nigeria

Responses	Frequencies(r)	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agree	31	18
Agree	27	15
Disagree	106	61
Strongly Disagree	11	6
Total	175	100

Source: Field work 2023

Table 1 above shows that virtually all respondents(106) representing 61 percent and another 6% showed reasonable degree of lack of in-depth awareness on the provisions of the PIA for host communities development. It implies that the PIA is very strange to so many people in oil producing communities as a result of poor awareness and knowledge about PIA as indigenes of host communities. Thus, there is no comprehensive knowledge about the PIA in different host communities which may place these communities to the whims and caprices of few opinion leaders in such communities.

Table 2: Effectiveness of participatory communication in engendering stakeholder’s interest in composition of Board of Trustees of Host Communities Development Trust Fund

Responses	Frequencies(r)	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agree	120	69
Agree	39	22
Disagree	9	5
Strongly Disagree	7	4
Total	175	100

Source: Field work 2023

The data in table 2 indicates that 120 respondents, representing 69% strongly agreed participatory communication plays key role in the composition of the BOT of Host Communities Development trust fund and that some host communities are often neglected in the composition of BOT, allocation and disbursement of funds for projects in oil producing areas. In effect, it shows that participatory communication has potentials of driving

serious awareness against any deviation from policy thrust of Host Communities Development Trust Fund. Invariably, it can also be adduced that stimulates discourse that lead to needs assessment by BOT of the trust fund for proper and inclusive budgetary provisions for all host communities. This approach ensures proportional distribution of projects according to size and population of host communities.

Table 3: Potency of participatory communication in unraveling breaches against provisions of the PIA about host communities' development

Responses	Frequencies(r)	Percentages (%)
It advocates for openness and transparency.	34	19
As platform to register complaints on breaches against host communities	33	19
Positions host communities to be fully active and involved	38	21
It triggers needs assessment	37	21
It enhances harmonious co-existence between companies and the host communities.	33	20
Total	175	100

Source: Field work 2023

Table 3 which sought to know the Potency of participatory communication in unraveling breaches against provisions of the PIA about host communities' development. From the analysis, respondents advocated for openness and transparency in implementing PIA provisions in host communities, participatory communication can be used register complaints on breaches against host communities, positions host communities to be fully active and involved and triggers needs assessment that enhances harmonious co-existence between oil companies and the host communities as enshrined in the Petroleum Industry Act.

Table 4: Extent at which participatory communication creates an enabling channel that monitors provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act to enhance its operational efficiency for Host Communities Development

Responses	Frequencies(r)	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agree	150	86
Agree	19	11
Disagree	4	2
Strongly Disagree	2	1
Total	175	100

Source: Field work 2023

Data in the table above highlighted that 150 respondents representing 86 percent affirm that participatory communication helps in the following ways; understanding the position of the PIA about host communities development in oil producing areas, propels appropriate communication objective and strategy that examines conduct of BOT members in line with the Act’s provision, creates avenue for monitoring and evaluating data which measure progress, spread and impact of the PIA across host communities and brings stakeholders together and creates an action plan of advocacy for proper assimilation of PIA on host communities development in oil producing areas in Nigeria. Thus, the implication of these responses connote that evolving community relations strategy that initiates understanding between licensees/leases and the host communities across oil producing areas and involving host communities in needs assessment, ideation and packaging of intervention schemes in line with community interest can be very useful towards integrating participatory community centered media outfits that serve as an open dialogue link between companies and the host communities across oil producing areas.

Table 5: List of Selected Oil Producing Host Communities in the Niger Delta

Imo State	Bayelsa State	Rivers State	Total
Assa	Keme-Ebiama	Egi	3
Etekwuru	Elebele	Ahaoda	3
Izombe	Ondewari	Gokana	3
Obile	Kalaba	Bonny	3
Ochia	Ibidi	Indama	3

Awarra	AyibaAma	Oyigbo	3
Orsu	Olugbobiri	Akpabu	3
Abeezi	Edema	Ali-Ohuru	3
Mmahu	Otuabagi	Bomu	3
Obokofia	Otuesega	Etche	3
10	10	10	30

Source:Field Work 2023

Analyses of IPIs in Themes

ThemeOne: Level of citizen’s awareness on the relevance of PIA and its provisions on Host Communities Development in oil producing areas in Nigeria

Respondents maintained that in several oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region, the level of awareness about the PIA is abysmally low. Not many people in the community are aware that the PIA has made provisions for 3percent profit of oil companies should come to the host communities. Perhaps the few that have the awareness are those who belong to the host communities cluster boards in the Niger Delta. Many do not know what it looks like andtotally not aware of the conditions for accessing the 3 percent profits for host communities’ development especially that which states that host communities must safeguard criticalinfrastructure in order to qualify for this. The PIA is still very far from the people and have not read the Act or gotten interpretation in their local dialects to know responsibilities and consequences as host communities.

ThemeTwo: Efficacy of participatory communication in engendering stakeholder’s interest in the composition of Board of Trustees of Host Communities Development Trust Fund and utilisation of funds for development purposes

According to the data obtained from IPIs, participatory communication is very important because with participatory communication, a lot of people in the community would be aware that they need to take part in the process of constituting those that would take part in overseeing the funds. It would enlighten them because if messages are packaged in such a way that there is constant interface with the people at the community like town criers and interpreters. Participatory communication would ensure the people actively

participate in the process. This is because the host communities are supposed to be actively involved in the entire chain of oil exploration activities. It fosters a sense of ownership to communities and it would bridge nonchalance on the part of companies operating in the area. It also helps ensure transparency and accountability in respect of the proceeds from the 3 percent.

ThemeThree: Potency of participatory communication in unearthing possible breaches against provisions of the act directing social and economic benefits for petroleum operators to host communities.

Responses from the IPIs indicate that participatory communication helps members of the community to discover possible breaches from oil operators. The first is to know what the PIA provision is all about and equipping them with relevant provisions of the act in the language they understand would be very useful in monitoring the activities of oil operators in the Nigeria Delta.

Understanding the PIA would enable communities to engage in open dialogue that can address disruptions, divide and rule maneuvering by operators who may use that to shy away from making remittance to host communities' trust fund. Understanding the PIA would engender inclusiveness in terms of women, youths and people living with disabilities in constituting HCDDTs.

ThemeFour: Extent to which participatory communication creates an enabling channel that monitors provisions Petroleum Industry Act to enhance its operational efficiency for Host Communities Development

Data obtained from IPIs assert that participatory communication is used in monitoring the operators and very important for the communities to embrace participatory communication if painstaking effort is not made towards participatory communication to inform the people that the provision of the PIA. Rights responsibilities they would not know their rights. When operators dangle any little thing before them, they may just be satisfied with what is being thrown at them. Once they have knowledge of PIA. They can easily tell them they are not adhering to the provisions of the PIA on host communities' development. NGOs who have tried like Environmental Rights Action (ERA) tried to bring community folks together and educate them on some of these things. They advanced that only NGOs cannot do it government should take responsibility too. Local, State federal Government should educate the people and help them get

organized too so that companies would not take them for a ride because companies are using manipulative ways to get things out without following the provisions of the law.

Discussion of Findings

The study under review was guided by four research objectives and the findings proffer solutions to the four research questions formulated to guide the study. Findings indicate the following;

- (i) Lack of in-depth knowledge and abysmal awareness on the provisions of the PIA for host communities' development; resulting to poor awareness on the provisions of the PIA which has remained very strange to so many people in oil producing communities.
- (ii) Participatory communication plays a vital role in the composition of the BOT of Host Communities' Development Trust Fund and that some host communities are often neglected in the composition of BOT, allocation and disbursement of funds for projects in oil producing areas. Participatory communication would ensure the people actively participate in the process of implementing 3 percent equity shareholding for host communities if messages are packaged in such a way that there is constant interface with the people at the community level like town criers and interpreted
- (iii) Participatory communication advocates for openness and transparency in implementing PIA provisions in host communities, it is used to register complaints on breaches against host communities, positions host communities to be fully active and involved and triggers needs assessment that enhances harmonious co-existence between oil companies and the host communities as enshrined in the Petroleum Industry Act.
- (iv) Participatory communication helps in understanding the position of the PIA about host communities' development in oil producing areas, propels appropriate communication objective and strategy that examines conduct of BOT members in line with the Act's provision, creates avenue for monitoring and evaluating data which measure progress, spread and impact of the PIA across host communities and brings stakeholders together and creates an action plan of advocacy for proper assimilation of PIA on host communities development in oil producing areas in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings, it can be concluded that; lack of comprehensive knowledge about the PIA in different host communities place many host communities to the whims and caprices of few opinion leaders who often negotiate their personal interest above collective interest. Participatory communication stimulates discourse that lead to needs assessment by BOT of the trust fund for proper and inclusive budgetary provisions for all host communities. It fosters open dialogue and transparency in the implementation of PIA which enhances harmonious co-existence between oil companies and the host communities as enshrined in the Petroleum Industry Act. Participatory communication helps in evolving community relations strategy that initiates interpretation of the PIA in the local dialects of different host communities in order to foster knowledge based understanding between licensees/leases and the host communities across oil producing areas. This is critical because involving host communities in needs assessment, ideation and packaging of intervention schemes in line with community interest can be very useful

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends the following;

- (i) There is need to entrench an aggressive, indigenous and strategic media campaign to drive comprehensive knowledge about the PIA in different host communities across oil producing areas.
- (ii) There should be sustained integrative media advocacy towards discourse that leads to needs assessment by BOT of the trust fund for proper and inclusive budgetary provisions for all host communities.
- (iii) International organisations, environmental rights agenda and development partners should sponsor the media to carry out quarterly open dialogue on transparency in the implementation of the PIA.
- (iv) Oil producing companies should strengthen their community relations strategy for mutual understanding between the host communities across oil producing areas in Nigeria.
- (v) Total responsibility of safeguarding oil facilities should be borne by oil operators rather than putting a caveat on the host communities as requirement for benefiting from the 3 percent profits for Host Communities Development Trust Fund.

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