Tanzania Journal of Development Studies, 19(1): 1 - 31.

The Challenge of Participation in Community Development Activities in Rural Ghana: Implications for Effective Development Communication

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Abstract

Despite increasing calls for adequate measures to promote participatory development, stakeholder satisfaction with participation in development projects remains a challenge. This study explored the views of beneficiaries of Cocoa Life Project interventions and local authorities of Wassa East District of Ghana regarding their satisfaction with participation during the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of a development project. The study used sequential-dependence mixed methods design. A total of 410 respondents including farmers, members of Village Savings and Loans Groups, Head of District Agriculture Department, Head of Business Advisory Centre, District Education Planner and Extension Agents were selected for the study. Interview schedule, focus group discussion and interview guides were used for data collection. The study found that, apart from awareness creation on development problems and problem identification, project beneficiaries and local authorities were lowly satisfied with participation in planning activities. Again, satisfaction with participation in evaluation activities of the project was low among beneficiaries and local authorities. Also, no significant difference manifested in the overall satisfaction with participation among project beneficiaries irrespective of differences in sex and marital status.

Key words: *community development, development communication, participation, project interventions,*

Introduction

Community development has been on the agenda of governments and development actors all over the world. It involves the provision of economic, social and cultural services, programs and projects geared towards improving the lives of the people (Omofonmwan& Odia, 2009). As a multi-dimensional concept, community development deals with the physical, social, cultural, economic, political and environmental spheres. The origin of the concept can be traced to the formation of societies where people lived a communal life (Marah, 2006). Phillips

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and Pittman, as cited in Odoom (2021), traced the modern history of community Development back to the 1960s war on poverty which occurred in America. Around this period, community development became a tool for solving societal problems. Thus, the authors argue that the history of community development in America is appreciated in the context of how neighbourhood housing development projects and citizen participation approach occurred around the 1960s.

Community development has been one of the development strategies especially for rural areas in most developing nations. In the African context, community development has been driven by the spirit of self-help. Over the past decades, self-help has become the practice through which social services are provided in many parts of the continent. In Malawi for example, in the late 19th century, self-help schemes were used to supplement the insufficient resources available for education in rural areas (Rose, 2003). Again, in Kenya, Eshiwani, as cited in Omofonmwan and Odia (2009), found that almost all primary schools built and equipped after independence had initially been the result of self-help effort. Ghana's history of community development can be traced to the 1940s after the World War II when the British colonial administration instituted the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. Indeed, the spirit of self-help and mutual aid (known as nnoboa) characterized community development in Ghana; which led to the provision of health, educational, agricultural and economic services throughout the country (Amakye, 2017). Kishindo (2001) sees community development as a rural phenomenon focusing on the provision of social services like education, health and transport. Community development also deals with the creation of improved socio-economic conditions through collective action, social relations and voluntary co-operation (Nikkhah&Redzuan, 2009).

Effective community development requires that development actors create conditions to enable community members to fully take part in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects (Mammah, 2006). Participation in development projects involves the total inclusion of men and women in the decision-making process in order to maximize the benefits of development programs. It is about how project beneficiaries fully take part in decisions which affect their lives (Mosse, 2001). Westergaard, as cited in Odoom, Opoku, Yeboah and Osei Wusu (2018), defined participation as "collective efforts to increase and exercise control over resources and institutions on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto, excluded from control" (p.14). This definition highlights a mechanism to ensure participation. Armitage, as cited in Odoom*et al.* (2018) sees participation as a process by which citizens act in response to community concerns, voice their opinions about decisions that affect them, and take responsibility for changes to their community. According to Agarwal (2001), participation in community development interventions is critical because it promotes sustainable development.

Despite the importance of participation in development programs, there are several concerns with its manifestations in development practice. Many development organizations do not support participation that will give community members the opportunity to meaningfully influence already-formulated development plans. This is ascribed to the fact that development organizations see participation as a hindrance to their plans and programs. Development organizations often argue that participation in development services of community members may lead to deviation from an existing development agenda developed by donors or international development organizations (Open University, 2001). Participation enables community members to examine their own situation, organize themselves as a group and work effectively towards improving their society (Nampila, cited in Odoom*et al.,* 2018).

In fact, some development organizations resist participation of local people in decision-making. This stance is very problematic to effective development processes (Francis, 2002). This author continues to argue that participation in development programs should not be limited to only facilitators or be influenced by outsiders. Rather, it should involve devolution of power, so that community members, who are the beneficiaries of development interventions, can be empowered and become active participants in decision-making and implementation. When adequate conditions are created by development organizations to enable community members to participate in project decisions, results will be for the ultimate good of society. Meaningful participation in development decisions is the truest way by which stakeholders can cause positive change in the lives of the people they claim to serve (Mohan, 2008). When community members become satisfied with their participation in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of development interventions, they tend to show more commitment in sustaining the interventions and in supporting future development activities. In recent decades, there has been an increased call for participation in development projects and interventions (Tufte &Mefalopulos, 2009).

No effective participation in development projects occurs without effective communication. At the heart of effective participation is participatory communication. Stakeholders of development can get involved in development projects and interventions effectively, only if there is participatory communication. Participatory communication refers to the use of free and open dialogue among stakeholders, and to marginalized groups, time and space to express their concerns, to define their own needs, to set goals, and to act on them. Within the context of effective development communication, participatory communication becomes indispensable (Tufte &Mefalopulos, 2009). Development communication refers to well-planned communication strategies, processes and methods to bring about mutualdialogue among all stakeholders, to

promote and build partnerships and links in order to effectively address developmentproblems. It mainly focuses on the meaningful use of communication models, principles and techniquesby stakeholders to promote positive social change. Effective development communication is evidenced by the use of participatory approaches in the delivery of development services (Mefalopulos, 2005; Odoom, 2020). Servaes (2008) explains that effective development communication practice takes into cognizance the interests, needs and capacities of all stakeholders concerned. Thus, effective development communication hinges on meaningful participation. Meaningful participation in development projects occurs when participation becomes dialogic, empowering and liberating (FAO, 2010; Mefalopulos, 2005; Odoom, 2020). When participation in development projects is dialogic, empowering and liberating among stakeholders, they often become satisfied with their role in development projects. However, for this to happen, development actors need to put in place adequate participatory approaches which are especially vital in development communication.

Cocoa Life aims to invest $400 million USD by 2022 to empower at least 200,000 cocoa farmers and reach one million community members in six key cocoa growing countries including Ghana. It is a holistic program designed to create an important foundation for sustainable cocoa production while transforming the lives and livelihoods of cocoa farmers and their communities. Cocoa Life project seeks to create empowered cocoa farmers in thriving communities in order to develop and maintain a sustainable cocoa supply. It is the ultimate goal of Mondelez International to source all of its cocoa sustainably, mainly through this project (Mondelez International, 2015; Mondelez International and Cocoa Life, 2013).

Wassa East District (WED) has been a beneficiary of the Cocoa Life Project, with World Vision Ghana (WVG) as the only NGO which was mandated to implement the project in the District. WED is one of the two districts where the project was first implemented by WVG. So far, a number of cocoa growing communities in the District have benefitted from various development interventions under the Project. The Project mainly aims to increase cocoa yields, create thriving communities, improve livelihoods of farmers, empower the youth and enhance environmental sustainability in cocoa growing areas. In WED, WVG has undertaken a number of development activities under the Cocoa Life Project. They include formation and development of farmers' cooperative societies; development of community action plans; construction of teachers' residential facilities; construction of classroom blocks; and provision of 2,461 solar lanterns for communities. Other interventions include distribution of 1,500 mosquito nets; construction of hand-dug wells and boreholes; promotion of savings and loans groups; the formation of livelihood groups in communities; as

well as sensitization of school authorities, parents and pupils on absenteeism in school and child labor in over forty (40) communities in the District.

Although some studies have been conducted on Cocoa Life Project interventions generally in Ghana, no specific comprehensive study has been done on the situation at WED. Even the few studies done on the Project generally in Ghana have not paid any particular attention to whether or not beneficiaries and local authorities were satisfied with their participation during the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of the interventions. This creates a knowledge gap especially with respect to Cocoa Life Project interventions in the country. Besides, effective participation is critical in the success of development activities and projects. Effective participation is at the heart of meaningful development communication. Importantly, the existing gap is at variance with the Cocoa Life Program which requires implementing partners to conduct needs assessment, design, plan and implement development interventions with the active participation of community members. Against this background, this study sought to examine the level of satisfaction among beneficiaries and local authorities with respect to their participation in planning, implementing and evaluating the Cocoa Life Project interventions in WED. The study also presented the implications the prevailing situation has for development communication.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing participation

As a concept, participation has been subjected to different interpretations. Whilst some scholars believe that participation is an end in itself; others see it is a means to reach a certain goal (Servaes, 1996; World Bank, 1996). Despite the different positions and interpretations of the concept of participation, many scholars have attempted to explain and define participation. In the views of Brager, Specht, and Torczyner, as cited in Odoom*et al.* (2018), participation is a way to educate citizens and to increase their competence and wealth in the development process. This definition suggests that participation is a vehicle for influencing decisions that affect the lives of citizens and an avenue for transferring power. Also, according to Chowdhury (1996), participation entails involving a substantial number of persons in situations or actions which improve their wellbeing; including their income, security, or self- esteem. Chowdhury further classifies the ideal conditions for meaningful participation into three aspects. These are: the kind of participation under consideration, the participants, and the process through which participation may occur.

Chappel, as cited in Odoom*et al.* (2018), argued that participation refers to a reaction to the traditional sense of powerlessness felt by the general public in matters regarding the influence of government decisions. Chappel.s definition implies that empowerment is crucial in meaningful participation. In support of

Chappel's position, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) defined participation as the process of empowering people to handle challenges and influence the direction of their own lives. This means that meaningful participation occurs when stakeholders influence the very processes which affect their own lives. Again, inherent in the definitions of Chappel and Tufte and Mefalopulos is the importance of empowerment. The authors agree that for participation to be effective there is need for people to be empowered. Thus, where citizens are powerless it becomes very difficult for meaningful participation to occur. Participation requires that the community members are given the opportunity to identify and define their needs since they understand their local situations better than anybody else (Thwala, 2010). This implies that participation becomes effective in the provision of development projects only when beneficiaries assume a central role in problem identification and definition of feasible solutions. On their part, Lee and Jan (2019) suggest that for participation to be effective at the local level, community members should take ownership of development processes.

Participation includes sharing of ideas among actors, making an active contribution to the development process and being involved in decision-making at all levels of project execution (United Nations, cited in Desai, 2002). The World Bank Participatory Learning Group (WBPLG) (1996) sees participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them (Nelson & Wright, 1995). Contrarily, Oakley, as cited in Hilhorst (2003) views participation as a form of voluntary contributions made by people who might be involved in public programs which are geared towards national, regional or community level development but they are not supposed to make any contribution through decision-making or influence any policy formulation or implementation. In fact, unlike Oakley's conception, the WBPLG's (1996) position does not go far enough to encourage the inclusion of community members in decision-making or their influence in development policy formulation. But, in order to influence development policy, plans and outcomes, people should have the opportunity to participate on equal terms at all stages of development.

Mosse (2001) asserts that participation in development programs should lead to a more effective and sustainable process. According to Jaksic, as cited in Odoom*et al.* (2018), even though community participation concerns voluntarily influences of people in terms of issues that affect their own lives, people are often denied the opportunity to actively take part in shaping the program or criticizing its contents. Jaksic explained further that it is a moral humiliation to develop structures for community participation without regard for the interest of the community members. Bessette (2004) deepens Jaksic's position by stating that community participation is vital only when it becomes a process of facilitating the active involvement of different communities and groups together with other stakeholders

involved and the numerous development and research agents who work with the community and decision makers. Participation in development interventions occur at various stages including the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of (Singh, cited in Abiona&Niyi Bello, 2013).

There are various perspectives with regard to the types and levels of participation. Each type and level of participation has implications for policy options and decisions in development projects and services (Sirpal, cited in Odoom*et al.,* 2018). The level and form of participation differ based on stakeholders' capacity. Participation by stakeholders may range from passive participation to active participation. In passive participation, people are just told what is going to happen or has happened already whilst with active participation people take responsibility for and actively contribute to project planning, design, implementation, evaluation and any other forms of activities which affect society (Sirpal, cited in Odoom*et al.,* 2018). In their review of literature on participation, Brodie *et al.* (2011) identified three main forms of participation. They are: public participation, social participation and individual participation. Public participation refers to the engagement of individuals with the various structures and institutions of democracy. Public participation is also viewed as political, civic, or vertical participation and/or participatory governance. Also, social participation is conceived as the collective activities that people are involved in as part of their everyday lives. It includes being a member of a community group or a trade union. It also includes supporting the local health facilities by volunteering or running a study group on behalf of an NGO. Individual participation deals with the decisions and actions that people make as part of their daily lives. Such decisions and actions symbolize the kind of society they desire to live in. Individual participation is sometimes called 'everyday politics' which may include donating monies to charities or writing petitions to demand the provision of certain services (Brodie *et al.,* 2011).

In the context of development, some scholars prefer to see community participation along a continuum with passive participation and self-mobilization on the extreme ends (Chambers, 2005; Kumar, 2002). In the views of Pant (2009), community participation best thrives in democratic systems and contributes to democratization. Pant added that participation can be coercive and manipulative in non-democratic societies. However, Pant admitted that even in democratic nations, there is the possibility of passive participation for some groups. Evans and Boyte, as cited in Odoom*et al.* (2018), mentioned direct participation which involves the idea of free and active debating from ancient Greece. They argued that certain uncontrolled public places in a community become important venues for alternative discourses to develop. Beyond the above positions, scholars have listed seven distinct levels of participation, ranging from low level to high level. They include passive participation, participation by information giving, participation by consultation, participation for material incentives, functional

participation, interactive participation and self-mobilization (Pretty &Scoones, cited in Mammah, 2006).

Passive participation, is a one-sided announcement by an administration or program management without listening to people's responses. The information which is being shared belongs to only consultants who work on projects. In the case of passive participation, the community members keep a distance and never intervene in the activities; they are told what is going to happen or what has happened already (Roodt, 2001). On the contrary, active participation is open and community members actively take part in all stages of the project. Decision making and other important activities including planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of the projects, are done by the people (Mikkelsen, 2005). More so, participation in information giving occurs in situations where people participate by answering questions posed by researchers and program managers. Tools such as questionnaires and interview guides are often used to gather information. Here, individuals are denied the opportunity to influence proceedings as the findings of the research program are neither shared nor checked for accuracy (Becker, cited in Odoom*et al.,* 2018).

In addition, participation by consultations manifests itself in situations where people are being consulted by external agents to elicit views. These external agents outline both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's reactions. Consultation offers opportunities for the public to express their opinions on the project proposal initiated by the service providers. Arduous planning and implementation of projects are undertaken only after extensive discussion and consultations are made. Consultation involves education, information sharing and negotiation with the aim of achieving a better decision-making process through consultations among stakeholders (Becker, cited in Odoom*et al.,* 2018). Indeed, the weakness with this approach is that, development facilitators and professionals are not obliged to take on-board people's views.

Again, participation by material incentives happens when people partake through the provision of resources such as labor in return for food, cash or material incentives. Such people are often not part of the experimentation and have no stake in maintaining activities when incentives end (Agarwal, 2001; Mikkelsen, 2005; Odoom*et al.,*2018). Indeed, previous studies (Chili, 2017; Moyo&Tickaawa, 2017) have established that people participate in projects because of incentives such as money and materials they obtain from it. Also, functional participation occurs in situations where people take part by forming groups to meet pre-determined objectives related to the program, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such participation does not occur at the early stages of program cycles or planning. Such early decisions are often made elsewhere. Institutions

which believe in this approach tend to depend on external initiators or facilitators (Agarwal, 2001; Mikkelsen, 2005).

Furthermore, interactive participation happens when people take part in joint analysis as well as the planning process. With this, the members of the target community improve their existing structures and also take charge of their development process. The joint analysis is expected to lead to action plans and the formulation of new local groups or strengthening of existing ones. It often involves interdisciplinary methodologies which seek various perspectives and make use of methodical and structured learning processes (Mohan, 2008). Self-mobilization is defined as a situation whereby people take part by providing initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. Here, the community members themselves initiate, design, plan, implement and evaluate their own development interventions. Community members identify their own needs and provide solutions for the betterment of the community. Such self-initiated mobilization efforts help to challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power (Agarwal, 2001; Mikkelsen, 2005). Here, community members are the engineers of development.

Despite their relevance, the various definitions and conceptualizations of participation still seem broad, diverse and sometimes contradictory. This implies that more clarification ought to be brought to bear on the concept so as to avoid its misuse and abuse. In fact, issues such as when to participate, what sort of participation is appropriate and at what stage participation is necessary still remain unresolved (Clemente, 2003; Lane, 1995). This complicates efforts, especially for development organizations and facilitators in demonstrating the practical relevance of the concept of participation. Besides, the wide-range of aims and objectives of development organizations and the diverse expectations of communities, complicate efforts for the acceptance of a particular typology of participation as appropriate. Moreover, the unequal distribution of power and resources, and the seeming lack of willingness of some community members to be part of decision-making process present a challenge to the practical value of participation (Dixon, cited in Odoom*et al.,* 2018a). Nonetheless, Hickey and Mohan (2004) maintain that effective participation is critical in any meaningful development services and programs. This occurs at various stages such as initiation, design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. In this study, satisfaction with participation was examined based on the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of the Cocoa Life Project interventions implemented in the WED.

Understanding development communication

Diverse views have and continue to characterize development communication as a concept due to the different perspectives and positions of scholars and organizations. This diversity, despite its importance, calls for some clarity on the

concept to avoid confusion in the minds of people. According toRoggers (1976), development communication which is sometimes called communication for development (C4D) deals with the study of social change through the applicationof communication research, theory, and technologies in order to bring about development. This means that C4D is a field which focuses on the study of social change promoted by the use of communication research, theory and technologies which address development needs of people. The Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] (1984) sees C4D as a social process, purposely designed to achieve a common understanding among all the participants of a development initiative, in order to create a basis for concerted action. This suggests that C4D is a process, not an event. Indeed, both Rogers (1976) and FAO (1984) agree that C4D is about transformation of society. However, whilst FAO (1984) is explicit that the purpose of C4D is to achieve a shared understanding among stakeholders, Rogers (1976) does not appear to have presented a clear view on the place of shared understanding in C4D.

Servaes (2008) reinforces the position held by FAO (1984) by stating that C4D is a social process which involves the sharing of knowledge mainly to reach a consensus for action. The author explains further that effective C4D program takes into cognizance the interests, needs and capacities of all stakeholders concerned and maintains that the aim of C4D is to achieve a shared understanding among stakeholders of development in terms of the kind of efforts needed to bring about development. Communication only becomes a useful tool for development if it is able to ensure a common understanding among stakeholders on the priorities of development and the approaches and techniques required to bring about development. Again, whilst FAO (1984) appears quiet on the nature and form of communication needed to achieve a common understanding among stakeholders, Servaes (2008) submits that interpersonal communication is critical in promoting a shared understanding. Servaes adds that communication media are critical tools in achieving a shared understanding but their use is not an aim in itself. Implicit in Servaes' position is the recognition that the main concern of C4D is about the appropriate use of communication models, methodologies, principles and techniques by stakeholders to achieve a common understanding required to address development problems.

In the views of Fraser and Villet (1994), C4D entails the strategic application of communication techniques, activities and media which give people powerful tools both to experience change and actually to guide it. It is about an increased exchange of ideas among all sectors of society which can lead to the greater participation of people for achieving a commoncause. On her part, Owusu (2013) sees C4D as an intentional effort of sharing information through the use of appropriate techniques and methods among stakeholders in order to reach a common understanding that supports and sustains the goals of social, economic, political and cultural development. Indeed, Owusu's definition suggests that C4D

is about deliberately making efforts to share information among stakeholders by using proper techniques, methods and tools so as to improve the social, economic, political, cultural and ecological aspects of people (Odoom, 2020). Both Fraser and Villet (1994), and Owusu (2013) assert that communication techniques, methods and strategies are key in ensuring effective C4D programs.

Again, C4D refers to the planned and organized use of communication through inter-personal channels, ICTs audio-visuals and mass media to bring about social change. It is noteworthy that if development programs and projects are to be sustainable, they must commence with mechanisms which ensure broad participation by all those who have some interest in the intended change. In situations where a segment of the society is ignored in the pursuit of development services, the outcomes of such decisions may be disastrous (FAO, 2004; Odoom, 2020). C4D helps to ensure the integration of interpersonal communication methods with conventional and new media channels, such as radio, video, and print. C4D also helps to encourage all stakeholders at all levels to actively participate in the process of development (Odoom, 2020). Thus, participation is very crucial in any effective C4D programs. As already stated, effective C4D hinges on participatory communication (Mefalopulos, 2003). Participatory communication entails a deliberate activity grounded in clearly defined participatory processes and on media and interpersonal communication in order to promote dialogue and discussion among all stakeholders involved in development interventions or initiatives. Participatory communication is a two-way communication process based on proper interactions and dialogue between people, groups, and organizations which empowers various stakeholders to equally share and exchange information, knowledge and experience (Bessette, 2004; FAO, 2004; Musakophas&Polnigit, 2016). C4D is about inclusive approach to the planning, design, execution and evaluation of development programs and projects. It ensures that all stakeholders influence development processes and activities.

Methodology

This study employed the sequential-dependence mixed method research design. Sequential-dependence design occurs where the data collection for one research approach precedes another approach but the data analysis of one approach will depend on the other approach (Guest, 2013). In this research, the FGDs and interview guide administration followed after administering an interview schedule. Also, the issues in the interview schedule informed the issues in the FGD and interview guides. Lastly, the analyses of the data obtained from the FGD guide and interview guide were done based on the results from the interview schedule. This approach helped to enhance the validity of findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The study population consisted of active members of the Cocoa Farmers' Cooperative Societies (CFCSs), Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), Gari Processors' Groups (GPGs), and the soap makers of

beneficiary communities. Unlike the CFCSs, VSLAs and GPGs, soap makers did not have any recognized groups for identification. However, the researchers involved soap makers in the study due to the fact that they also participated in the Project. Also, the study involved a District Director of Agriculture (DDA), Head of Business Advisory Centre (HBAC), District Education Planning Officer (DEPO), and Extension Agents.

Purposive, stratified, simple random and convenience sampling methods were relied upon in selecting respondents for the study. The DDA, HBAC, DEPO and Extension Agents were purposively selected for this study due to the role they played in the project interventions. For instance, the HBAC played a key role in implementing many of the alternative livelihood interventions provided under the Project. Apart from the key informants, the project beneficiaries were stratified into farmers, members of VSLAs, GPGs and soap makers. There were 456 farmers who were active members of CFCSs in the District. Of this figure, 213 farmers were selected based on Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula, at a margin of error (0.05), using simple random sampling method (lottery approach). Also, as part of the strategy to maximize the benefit of the project interventions, WVG formed VSLAs in some of the beneficiary communities including Kwabaa, Nyankonakpoe, Apatebi, Esumankrom, Ebukrom Nkwanta, Nkapiem and Amposaso. Members of these associations benefited from interventions such as training on business skills, financial literacy, alternative livelihood programs, etc. provided under the Project. Members of the VSLAs were mainly farmers, petty traders, gari processors, soap makers and other income generating groups in the communities. However, not all the VSLAs were actively in operation due to two main reasons. First, some VSLAs had experienced theft cases with regard to the savings of members. For instance, at Kwabaa the loss of over Ten Thousand Ghana cedis (GH¢10,000) savings had discouraged many members to take part in the activities of the Association. Second, the departure of WVG from the WED after the delivery of the project interventions in the District reduced the interest of some members in the VSLAs. Thus, there was a total of 120 active members of VSLAs in the beneficiary communities out of which 92 were selected through simple random sampling method (lottery approach) based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size distribution table, at 95 percent confidence level and 5 percent margin of error.

More so, a total of 75 members of gari processing had active and well-organized groups in the communities. Based on the formula proposed by Yamane (1967), 63 members of the GPGs were sampled for this study using simple random sampling technique (lottery approach). As already stated, unlike members of CFCSs, VSLAs and GPGs, soap makers did not have any recognized groups for easy identification. Thus, the researchers involved 38 soap makers from beneficiary communities based on their accessibility, availability and proximity to the researchers. In all, 410 respondents made up of four key informants, 213 farmers,

92 members of VSLAs, 63 gari processors, and 38 soap makers were involved in the study. Research instruments used in this study were interview schedule, FGD guide and interview guide. The interview schedule was relied upon to collect data from the selected beneficiaries, a key informant interview was conducted whilst the FGD was organized for selected beneficiaries. The instruments were pilot-tested in Fanteakwa District which shares similar characteristics with the study setting. Besides, an interview guide was used to generate data from the key informants. There were two FGDs which were conducted for selected beneficiaries from Daboase and Ekutuase Area Councils. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, independence samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were used for the quantitative analysis. Thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data obtained on the field.

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion section is in two parts. The first part considers the findings of the study based on the background features of project beneficiaries involved in the study and the level of satisfaction with participation in the project interventions. In this study, satisfaction with participation was measured based on respondents' views on the process of participation and how their participation influenced the planning, implementation and evaluation activities of the project interventions. The mean ranges from 5.0 to1.0, where 3 represents the middle range, 5.0 and 1.0 represent the highest and lowest mean scores of satisfaction with participation respectively. The second part looks at the implications the findings present for development communication.

Background characteristics of project beneficiaries

Background features of beneficiaries considered in this study were sex, marital status and ethnicity. These features are of importance to development services and participation ((Khatun & Roy, 2012; Mphande, 2016). On sex composition of project beneficiaries involved in the study, the study found out that, more than half of them (53.8%) were males while 46. 2 percent were females (Figure 1). This means that there were more male beneficiaries of the Project who took part in this study as compared to females. This result is relevant because an awareness of sex composition of a group of people helps in understanding group dynamics, roles and expectations of different people in society. Furthermore, tasks men and women perform are often not the same (Khatun & Roy, 2012).

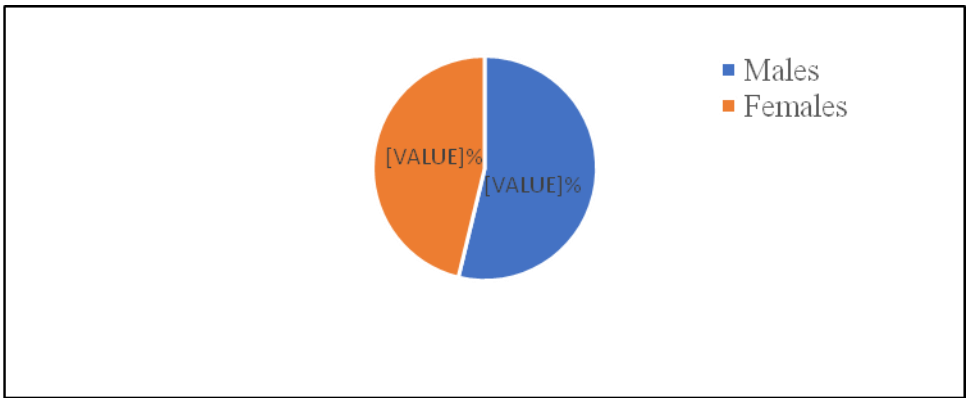

Figure 1: Sex distribution of beneficiaries involved in the study
Source: Field survey (2018)

The study further looked at the marital status of beneficiaries involved in the study. Figure 2 shows that many (61.1%) of the respondents who participated in this study were married. Marital status enhances confidence of people in decision-making, and promotes participation and is a source of prestige. Married people tend to have many responsibilities which is likely to influence attendance at meetings (Seekings&Nattrass, 2005).

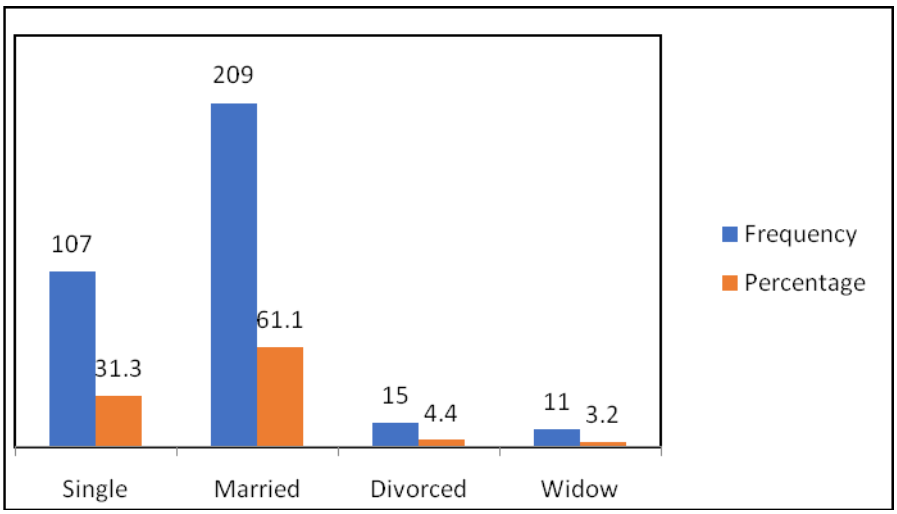

Figure 4: Marital status of beneficiaries involved in the study
Source: Field survey (2018).

The ethnic background of respondents is shown in Figure 3. Akan is the dominant ethnic group among the respondents accounting for about two-third (67.3%). This is followed by the Ewes (19%), with the Dagombas (9.9%) as the third largest ethnic group. This is not surprising because the Wassa people are Akan but it is

pleasing to note that there are other ethnic groups who have become settlers in the District. The study shows the diversity of people in the area of study which is common in Ghana. This study mirrors previous research (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2014) which found that Akan and Ewe are the dominant ethnic groups in Wassa East District.

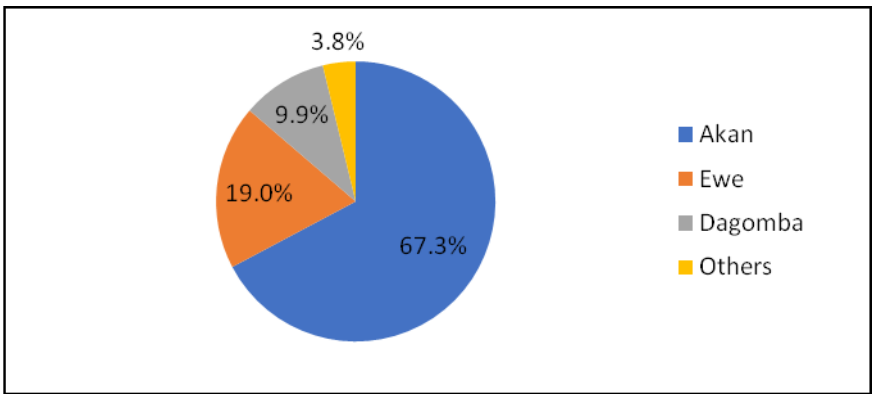

Figure 3: Ethnic composition of respondents
Source: Field survey (2018)

Level of satisfaction with participation in the Project

This part presents the results of the study based on the research aim. Tables 1, 2 and 3 capture the results based on the interview schedule. To start with, Table 1 presents the quantitative results on satisfaction of respondents with participation in planning activities of the interventions. Activities discussed are awareness creation about problems in the community, identification of problems in the community, prioritizing the needs of the communities, defining project goals, generating possible solutions, and designing the project interventions.

Table 1: Perceived satisfaction with participation in planning activities

Planning activity	Mean	Std. Dev.
Creating awareness about problems in the community	3.21	0.90
Identifying problems in the community	3.17	0.96
Ranking the needs of the community in terms of importance	2.24	1.29
Generation of possible solutions	2.21	1.25
Defining project goals	2.20	1.25
Designing the project interventions	1.31	0.63
Preparing the budgets for the project	1.22	0.51
Total	2.22	0.97

Means were calculated from a scale of: 5-Very Highly Satisfied, 4-Highly Satisfied, 3-Moderately Satisfied, 2-Lowly Satisfied, 1-Verly Lowly Satisfied
(**Source:** Field survey, 2018)

Respondents were moderately satisfied with participation in creating awareness about problems in the communities (M=3.21, SD=0.90) and identifying problems in the communities (M=3.17, SD=0.96). These results fairly confirm the position of Thwala (2010) who argues that when community members are given opportunity to identify and define their own development needs they tend to be satisfied with participation in decision making. This is not surprising because such activities took place in the communities and almost all beneficiaries participated. Respondents were lowly satisfied with participation in ranking the needs of communities (M=2.24, SD=1.29), generation of possible solutions (M=2.21, SD=1.25) and setting up project goals and objectives (M=2.20, SD=1.25).

Again, the results in Table 1 show that respondents were very lowly satisfied with participation in designing project interventions (M=1.31, SD=0.63) and preparing budgets for the project interventions (M=1.22, SD=0.51). Respondents indicated that though their executives might have been involved, most beneficiaries were not engaged during the design and preparation of project budgets. In all, although the views varied, respondents were lowly satisfied with participation (M=2.22, SD=0.97) in planning the various project interventions. Low satisfaction in participation by community members hinders ownership of projects by community members (Lee &Jan, 2019).

The results from the FGDs showed that beneficiaries were lowly satisfied with participation in planning the various interventions. For instance, participants from Daboase Area Council stated,

> "Though we were informed about the inception of the Project, our participation in creating awareness about problems in the community and in defining project goals and strategies was very low".

The beneficiaries from Daboase further stated,

> "World Vision had meetings with us to discuss the problems we were facing. The meetings were good but many of the problems we identified were not considered in defining project goals and in generating possible solutions".

Also, participants from Ekutuase remarked that, although WVG organized durbars and meetings for communities to help identify problems in the community, their inputs did not influence much the design of the interventions. They stated that very few beneficiaries took part in planning the various interventions. In the words of beneficiaries from Ekutuase Council,

> "The officers refused to ask us which of our many development needs should be tackled first. It is fair that at least they find out from us which development services need to be provided first and how to go about it".

Participants explained further,

> "Planning is very important and it should start with how development needs are identified. But development needs identification was not participatory enough."

Other areas of planning activities which the beneficiaries' satisfaction in participation was found to be low include prioritizing the needs of the community and budget preparation.

The views of the key informants were very much the same as those expressed by the selected beneficiaries. The informants complained about their satisfaction in participation during the planning of the interventions. One informant bemoaned,

> "In fact, I was not satisfied with participation at the planning stage. At least, as a key stakeholder in the district my inputs right from the planning are very essential."

Another informant stated,

> "We should be leading the planning of the various livelihood programs provided but unfortunately we did not lead it. This mistake should not have happened. We know the community members very well because we interact with them almost every week."

In essence, no interactive participation occurred during the planning stage of the various interventions. The informants concluded that beyond the few consultations and some pieces of information which were given to them, no active participation characterized the planning stage. In essence, the results from both the quantitative and qualitative approaches suggest that beneficiaries and local authorities were lowly satisfied with participation in planning the interventions. The informants had expected enough meetings to be organized to discuss issues regarding the design and planning of the interventions but this did not happen. This could be attributed to the fact that no interactive participation occurred at the planning stage of the interventions. This result is consistent with FAO (2005) which found that stakeholders' satisfaction with participation in planning development projects is low.

Despite the moderate satisfaction with participation the results with respect to problem identification and definition fall short of the expectations of Thwala (2010) who contended that to ensure effective participation in development services, beneficiaries should be given the opportunity to actively identify and define their needs because they are better informed about their local situation. Again, the manifestation at WED in terms of planning of the interventions deviates from Sirpal and Singh, as cited in Abiona and Niyi Bello (2013) and Agunga, Aiyeru and Annor-Frempong (2006) who posited that improved participation in development projects should begin at the project planning stage. The situation at WED generally does not conform to the dictates of effective participation. Satisfaction with participation increases only when participation

becomes functional, interactive and self-initiated (Pretty &Scoones, cited in Mammah, 2006). To achieve this, in the views of Mansuri and Rao (2012), requires dramatic changes in structures and incentives within development organizations.

The study further explored the level of satisfaction in participation at the implementation stage of the interventions and the results are presented in Table 2. Activities explored are selection of project management team members, organizing community for project delivery, deciding the time for the commencement of project, and mobilization of resources for project delivery.

Table 2: Perceived satisfaction in participation at the implementation stage of the interventions

Aspect of implementation	Mean	Std. Dev.
Selecting project management team members	4.30	0.46
Organizing community for project delivery	4.26	0.45
Deciding the time for the commencement of project	4.24	0.48
Mobilizing resources for project delivery	4.22	0.50
Delivering the project interventions	3.82	1.11
Total	4.16	0.6

Means were calculated from a scale of: 5-Very Highly Satisfied, 4-Highly Satisfied, 3-Moderately Satisfied 2-Lowly Satisfied, 1-Verly Lowly Satisfied
(**Source**: Field survey, 2018)

It is clear from Table 2 that beneficiaries were highly satisfied with participation in the selection of project management team members (M=4.30, SD=0.46) and organizing community members for project delivery (M=4.26, SD=0.45). Respondents explained that community members actively took part in selecting various team members for the management of the interventions. They added that community members were also actively involved in organizing community members for the delivery of the Project. Additionally, respondents were highly satisfied with participation in deciding the time for the commencement of project (M=4.24, SD=0.48) and mobilization of resources for project delivery (M=4.22, SD=0.50). More so, respondents were highly satisfied with participation in the delivering of the various interventions (M=3.82, SD=1.11). In all, beneficiaries involved in this study were highly satisfied with participation during the implementation of the Project interventions in spite of the variations in the views of respondents (M=4.16, SD=0.6). The importance of these findings finds expression in previous studies (Sing, cited in Abiona&Niyi Bello, 2013; Tufte &Mefalopulos, 2009).

Also, discussions with some selected beneficiaries showed that they were highly satisfied with their participation during the implementation stage of the interventions. For instance, the beneficiaries who participated in the discussion

stated that they had adequate inputs into when the various interventions were to commence. They further commented that they took part in mobilizing resources for the delivery of the interventions. In Ekutuase Council, participants remarked,

> "We are very much satisfied with how we participated during the implementation of the interventions. WVG allowed us to make inputs into the various stages of the project delivery".

At Daboase Area Council revealed,

> "All the farmers, gari processors, members of VSLAs and soap makers all made useful inputs into the implementation of the interventions."

Participants from Ekutuase added,

> "We were allowed to suggest persons to be part of the project team members. We also set the times for commencing many of the interventions. They know most of us are farmers, so getting all of us is not easy."

Furthermore, interviews with key informants revealed that participation during the implementation stage of the interventions was highly satisfactory. The HBAC said,

> "My outfit played a key role in the implementation of most of the livelihood programs."

Also, the DDA commented,

> "We played a vital role during the implementation of agriculture-related interventions provided under the Project."

Other informants admitted that they played a vital role in the Project. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative results showed that satisfaction in participation in the implementation of the interventions was high. This revelation supports a study by Mammah (2006) which discovered that beneficiaries' satisfaction in participation during the implementation stage of development interventions was high. Participation is crucial in project implementation (Sirpal, cited in Odoom*et al.,* 2018a). These findings resonate well with Mikkelsen (2005) who contends that active participation enables community members to be part of all activities which occur at the implementation stage of development projects.

Table 3: Perceived satisfaction in participation in evaluation activities

Aspect of evaluation	Mean	Std. Dev.
Monitoring the Project interventions	3.74	1.14
Assessing how appropriate interventions were to the needs of beneficiary communities	1.57	1.02
Assessing the degree to which project goals were reached	1.50	0.87
Assessment of the effect of project interventions	1.43	0.91
Assessing how funds earmarked for the projects were used	1.40	0.79

Total	1.92	0.94

Means were calculated from a scale of: 5-Very Highly Satisfied, 4-Highly Satisfied, 3-Moderately Satisfied, 2-Lowly Satisfied, 1-Verly Lowly Satisfied
(**Source**: Field survey 2018)

In addition, the study looked at the level of satisfaction with participation in the evaluation stage of the interventions as seen in Table 3. Respondents approximately indicated that they were highly satisfied with their participation in monitoring the interventions (M=3.76, SD=0.46). This result coincides with previous studies (Agunga*et al.,* 2006; Mohan, 2008) with respect to the need for stakeholders to be satisfied with participation at every stage of project including the evaluation stage.

Besides, respondents were lowly satisfied with participation in assessing how appropriate interventions were to the needs of beneficiary communities (M=1.57, SD=1.02) and assessing the degree to which project goals were reached (M=1.50, SD=0.87). Further, respondents were very lowly satisfied with participation in assessment of the effect of project interventions (M=1.43, SD=0.91) and assessing how funds earmarked for the projects were used (M=1.40, SD=0.79). In effect, though there were various views expressed in this study, respondents were not very much satisfied with participation in evaluating the interventions (M=1.92, SD=0.94). The general observation with respect to satisfaction in participation during the evaluation stage of project intervention is a departure from the expressions in the works of Mikkelsen (2005) and Roodt (2001). In particular, Mikkelsen (2005) submits that meaningful satisfaction with participation is of relevance in every stage of development project including the evaluation stage.
Moreover, the FGDs showed that the level of satisfaction in participation in evaluating the interventions was very low. For instance, satisfaction with participation in assessing the extent to which the project goals were achieved and also how funds earmarked for the Project were used was very low. Beneficiaries from Daboase Council who took part in the FGDs noted,

> "No comprehensive efforts have been made to evaluate the effects of the interventions on our lives".

Participants from Daboase further said,

> "We do not know the amount of money which was given for the Project and how much was actually spent on the Project. We wouldn't even ask because we will not be told. Besides, they do not prepare their budgets with the inputs of community members."

Also, participants in the Ekutuase Area commented,

> "We are not aware of any evaluation which has been done on the various interventions. We are looking for the opportunity to express views on the various interventions based on what we expected to be done for us."

Again, the key informants revealed that they were poorly satisfied with the evaluation of the interventions. The informants said that they had not been involved in evaluating the Project. One informant said,

> "Am told some beneficiaries have been spoken to on their views about the Project interventions. I really do not think proper evaluation has been done. You cannot speak with five or ten people and call it project evaluation!"

Other informants complained that not much effort had been made in terms of evaluating the various interventions and this raises questions about the value placed on the evaluation of the Project. They added that no meetings were organized to discuss matters relating to the evaluation of the various interventions.

The results from the FGDs and the key informant interviews generally revealed that there was a very low satisfaction with participation in evaluating the interventions. The results further prove that the nature of participation at the evaluation stage seems one-sided (Roodt, 2001) as some of the respondents who are key stakeholders could not even tell whether or not the interventions had been evaluated at all. The inability of some respondents to tell whether or not evaluation had taken place deviates from the submission of Chowdhury (1996) who maintained that the kind of people who participate in the project and the process of participation are critical to the success of participation. Moreover, the findings with respect to satisfaction in participation during the evaluation stage of the interventions are in line with previous studies (Kinyanjui &Misaro, 2013; Mammah, 2006) which reported low satisfaction in participation in evaluating development projects. The situation is problematic since participation in evaluation stage of projects is key in effective development programs delivery (Mikkelsen, 2005; Zakaria, 2011). Furthermore, the findings are at variance with the position of Singh, as cited in Abiona and Niyi Bello (2013). The author observed that development partners are to pay much attention to participation of stakeholders during the evaluation of the project interventions.

The study further looked at the overall satisfaction with participation in the project interventions. The overall mean satisfaction in participation in the Project based on the interview schedule was approximately 3.00 which indicates that the overall satisfaction with participation among project beneficiaries was moderate. This revelation falls short of the expectation of Amakye (2017) who contended that meaningful participation is a critical factor in successful community development projects and services. That, it is always problematic in situations where community members are not well-satisfied with their participation in projects and services aimed at improving their communities.

Hypothesis testing

Based on the overall mean satisfaction with participation in planning, implementation and evaluation activities, further analyses using independence samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were done. For example, an independence samples t-test analysis sought to determine whether or not differences manifested in the overall satisfaction with participation in the Project for male and female respondents as shown in Table 4. From Table 4, the p-value of 0.31 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in mean scores for males (M=63.94, SD=12.20) and females (M=66.49, SD=11.75). This means that both male and female beneficiaries perceived their overall satisfaction with participation in the Project as moderate. In other words, sex composition of respondents did not influence how they perceived their satisfaction with participation in the Project. The present study appears to highlight the position held by Mosse (2001) that participation aims at bringing onboard both men and women in the activities and process which affect them. When both men and women equally participate in development projects it leads to maximization of development benefits.

Table 4: An independent samples t-test for the overall satisfaction with participation in the Project for male and female respondents

Item	Sex	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig.
Overall satisfaction in participation	Female	184	63.94	12.20	-47.13	339	.31
	Male	158	66.49	11.75			

(**Source**: Field survey, 2018)

Table 5 presents the results on the differences between marital status and the overall satisfaction with participation in the Project. Subjects were divided into four groups (Group 1: Single; Group 2: Married; Group 3: Divorced; Group 4: Widow). The significance level (p=0.63) which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05 shows that no significant differences existed along marital status of beneficiaries with respect to their satisfaction with participation in the Project. This suggests that the overall satisfaction with participation in the Project was the same irrespective of beneficiaries' marital status. The finding on marital status of respondents and overall mean satisfaction with participation contradicts that of Seekings and Nattrass (2005). The authors suggested that marital status can hinder equal satisfaction with participation due to the differences in responsibilities of people. They added that married people tend to have many responsibilities which are likely to influence their participation and overall satisfaction with participation. However, this particular study could not validate the position that married people are often hindered in terms of their participation and subsequent satisfaction with participation.

Table 5: ANOVA test of marital status of beneficiaries and the overall satisfaction with participation in the Project

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between groups	248.569	3	82.856	.568	.63
Within groups	49130.739	338	145.789		

Total	49379.308	341			

(**Source:** Field survey, 2018)

Implications for Development Communication

This section presents the implications the findings present for development communication especially in Ghana. To start with, the study observed that the overall satisfaction with participation in the Project was moderate. This means that respondents could not adequately influence the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Project. Clearly, though participation occurred in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of the Project, it was merely by consultation. As a form of participation, consultation does not oblige development facilitators and professionals to take onboard beneficiaries' views (Becker, cited in Odoom*et al.,* 2018). The deficiency associated with consultation as a form of participation in the context of development communication is not in doubt (Odoom*et al.,* 2018a). Consultation is not interactive enough to bring out the desired results.

Again, the study showed that WVG helped to create awareness about development problems in the beneficiary communities under the Project. Awareness creation is one key communication strategy used in development service delivery. Despite its importance in communication, awareness creation has been found to be a problematic strategy especially in the context of effective development communication framework. This is due to the fact that awareness creation is a one way-directional, vertical and monologic form of communication. It also is often a top-down or vertical approach, involving an agency or organization telling people what to do without any dialogic mechanisms. Clearly, awareness creation is not enough in bringing about the development problems of a community. Theoretically, awareness creation communication is prevalent in the modernization paradigm which has become the dominant paradigm in the delivery of development projects over the decades. The proponents of modernization theory believe that a shift in traditions, cultures, beliefs, values and attitudes is the best way to achieve development (Moemeka, 1999). The notion of development based on modernization is influenced by the Sender, Message, Channel, Receiver (SMCR) model of communication. This model is a one way, linear and vertical form of communication which envisions a sender transmitting a message through the appropriate channel to a receiver (or group of receivers) (Mefalopulous, 2008). With this model, participation in development projects is reduced to provision of information, with community members providing no useful inputs into the process.

Moreover, the study revealed low satisfaction with participation among project beneficiaries during the planning of the various interventions. Similarly, the local authorities involved in the study were not enthused about their participation during the planning stage of the Project. Indeed, these findings present a challenge

to the practical relevance of the Alternative development theory (ADT) which is at the heart of modern-day development communication. As an emerging paradigm within the framework of C4D, the ADT enjoins development actors to create favorable conditions to promote meaningful stakeholder participation in planning development projects (Mohan, 2008; Pieterse, 2010). Effective development communication ensures that all stakeholders fully understand the problems people face and the solutions required to tackle them. When project beneficiaries become well-satisfied with participation during needs identification and definition of appropriate solutions, they tend to commit more to sustaining the interventions. The general lack of active and interactive participation which characterized the Cocoa Life Project interventions in WED departs from the tenets of the ADT which have become the new direction of C4D. What is more, low satisfaction with participation with respect to the planning stage of the interventions seems to validate the concerns of Cornwall and Brock (2005). The authors bemoaned that participation has been a rhetoric commodity employed in development practice. Instead of being a two-way directional and dialogic as envisioned by the ADT, communication throughout the delivery of development projects is often one-way directional.

More so, low satisfaction with participation during the planning and evaluation stages of the interventions poses a danger in the face of the theory of reasoned action which is critical in development communication. The reason is that as more people become poorly satisfied with their participation in a given project, they tend to be unwilling to support and actively take part in subsequent development interventions as argued by Fishbein and Ajzen. Thus, the prevalence of low satisfaction with participation during the planning and evaluation stages will potentially make it very difficult for community members to embrace and support new development projects and interventions in the locality. This fear seems to be strengthened by the social cognitive theory which states that people learn through observation and the outcome of the observed behaviour. Inherent in the social cognitive theory, whose architect is Albert Bandura, is the contention that observed behaviour will be modeled by people if the observers become convinced of the outcomes of such behaviour. The implication of the social cognitive theory in this study is the argument that community members of WED who observed the behaviour of their colleagues who participated in the project interventions and were not much satisfied with their participation are likely not to show increased commitment to future development projects and interventions in the district. Social cognitive theory has been a vital theory which largely influences the field of development communication.

Furthermore, the issue of low satisfaction with participation during the planning and evaluation stages of the interventions evident in this study constitutes a major test to development communication practice especially in Ghana. In support of this position, Agunga*et al.* (2006) submit that for development communication to

be effective there is the need for meaningful participation at all stages of development projects. Besides, the present study further deepens the revelation by Owusu (2014) on the state of development communication practice in Ghana. In her study, Owusu (2014) established that development communication practice is not given the needed attention in Ghana. The situation, arguably, is due to poverty of understanding regarding the conceptual intentions of development communication and the seeming low commitment in terms of comprehensive policy frameworks to guide development communication practice in Ghana. According to Odoom*et al.* (2021), participation by all stakeholders especially at the local level is essential in effective development. However, the authors concede that failure to bring all actors onboard in the delivery of development services at the local level in Ghana is an indication suggests of poor of appreciation and application of development communication in the country.

Alhassan (2004) provides a rather tragic description of the state of affairs regarding development communication in the country by asserting that the practice of development communication in Ghana is characterized by some confusion which hampers the theoretical and conceptual positioning of the field. This suggests that more efforts need to be put in place to improve not only the practice but also the conceptual intention of development communication. Effective development communication seeks to promote dialogue, access to participation, collective action and mutual understanding among all stakeholders who are involved in development initiatives. As already said, a vital aspect of effective development communication is participatory communication which represents a major shift from merely disseminating information to a far more inclusive and interactive communication involving all stakeholders of development. In support, Musakophas and Polnigit (2016) identified two main principles of participatory communication. These are the dialogical pedagogy of Paulo Freire and the issues of access, participation and self-management which were proposed by UNESCO in the 1970 (Servase, 1996).

Owusu (2014) suggests that achieving effective development communication practice in Ghana requires that stakeholders make conscious efforts to share information among themselves using proper communication techniques, strategies and tools with the sole aim of improving the social, political, economic, cultural and ecological aspects of people. Participatory communication is at the heart of ADT. Indeed, participation is an indispensable feature of the new paradigm within the field of development communication. Development communication is also about understanding the social settings within which development interventions are carried out. However, Owusu (2014) concedes that to achieve effective development, communication practice in the country requires serious investments in capacity building. A deliberate effort and commitment towards building the capacity of the poor, the excluded, the marginalized, the

illiterate and the vulnerable in society is indispensable in making development communication practice especially meaningful in Ghana.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Generally, the level of satisfaction with participation in planning and evaluation activities among project beneficiaries and local authorities leaves much to be desired. For example, beneficiaries and local authorities are generally lowly satisfied with participation in planning activities of the interventions except in awareness creation on problem situation and problem identification. However, stakeholder satisfaction with participation in the implementation activities of the Project is high. The prevailing situation with regard to Cocoa Life Project in Ghana suggests that the one-way monologic form of communication continues to be the dominant form of communication employed by development actors in the country. This means that in order to achieve a more interactive and inclusive participation more investments need to be made in the field of development communication in Ghana. Development agencies should invest more in strategic communications so as to be able to achieve their set goals in the face of the ever-changing nature of citizens' expectations.

As a way of recommendation, WVG is encouraged to ensure that beneficiaries become very highly satisfied with participation in planning activities of project interventions. All planning activities should be done with active involvement of community members. Ownership of projects and development interventions will require that beneficiaries and local authorities become more involved in the various stages of project interventions. It is recommended that WVG and Cocoa Life should consider using gadgets such as radio sets, pictures and audio visuals to ensure that participation in ranking of development needs and generation of possible solutions is successful. The government of Ghana and development agencies operating in the country need to pay critical attention to development communication. Deliberate efforts should be made by government and development agencies in the country to employ professional development communicators to facilitate effective development services. Building the capacity of the poor, the excluded, the marginalized, the illiterate and the vulnerable in the country should be on the agenda of all stakeholders including state actors and development organizations. Also, the research community is encouraged to help in constantly interrogating how communication is used by development actors when delivering development services in Ghana and possibly suggest measures to improve the prevailing situation.

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