Communication Strategies of Hyprep for Environmental Remediation in Ogoniland

Gbenenee Charles Tamyira
Faculty communication and Media Studies
Department of Mass Communication
Rivers State University
Email: Charles.gbenenee@ust.edu.ng

Nsereka B.G
Faculty communication and Media Studies
Department of Mass Communication
Rivers State University
Email: barigbon.nsereka@ust.edu.ng

Njoku Christopher Jsutice
Faculty communication and Media Studies
Department of Mass Communication
Rivers State University
Email: justice.njoku@ust.edu.ng

Abstract
The study tends to examine the communication strategies employed by HYPREP for environmental remediation in Ogoniland, giving critical evaluation of the existing communication channels/strategies, the audience awareness level, their attitude towards the programme, as well as the challenges of the communication process towards the implementation of the clean-up programme in Ogoniland. The study adopted the Goal-Oriented Communication Theory (GOCT), Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) and Stakeholder's Theory. The study also adopted the survey research design with a multi-stage sampling technique. With a sample size of 384 the said sample was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. The research instrument used for data collection was a set of questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage with WMS. Findings of the study reveals that Ogoni audience have a high level of awareness of the HYPREP clean-up/ remediation programme in Ogoniland. However, they have a very negative attitude towards the communication plans for the implementation of the clean-up programme. This is traced to the fact that stakeholder's view are not capture and an audience-development-centred communication approach is not encourage by HYPREP hence, the study recommends that: communication practice should be all inclusive and more of face-to-face (interpersonal communication) as well as regular town hall meetings in other words, there should be media integration approach to audience engagement SMS, social media, podcast, Radio alone cannot be successful in bring audience to participate in a particular development programme. HYPREP should make their activities very open and people oriented so as to enhance an even development in Ogoniland.

Keywords: Public Relations, Communication, Strategies, Environmental, Remediation, Hyprep, Ogoniland

Introduction

The Ogoni people are one among other indigenous majority groups in Rivers State which occupies a measurable geographical territory within Southern Nigeria. Blessed by nature, the Ogonis are known Traditionally, for their various agricultural activities that revolves around planting of farm produce and fishing. This implies that their value for healthy environment and the livelihood of its habitat is second to none. Thus, they belief in nature for the fertility of the land, so as to enhance bountiful yield during harvest and same to the sea for the safety of aquatic lives.

Contrary to above, the activities of oil multinationals have inflicted Ogoniland so much that it farms produce is now more of a penurious harvest, scanty catches from the sea and other ailment and diseases resulting from the environmental degradation and pollution that have plagued the Ogonis ranging from the oil impacted areas to the destructions of it farm produce. These activities are traced to the era from which oil discovery was done in Ogoni and other areas in the Niger Delta region in Nigeria has subjected the Ogoni people to abject poverty, perpetual hunger backed with hardship with no choice than to indulge into deviant behaviours that span across, criminalities, gansterism, cultism, kidnapping amongst other social vices. In the same vein, abled bodied youth involve into activities often described as bunkering just to make ends meet thereby contributing to more environmental pollution that results to death due to fire outbreaks with its adverse effects detrimental to the society at large hence, needs for orientation and reorientation so as to curtail the excesses. In response to these challenges emanating oil exploration activities, the United Nations Environmental Programme Assessment (UNEP) of Ogoniland was carried out in 2011 to evaluate the level of damage and environmental pollution done on the Ogoni land.

Results show that unlike other Niger Delta regions, pollution from over 50 years of oil operations has penetrated further and deeper than expected such that it has led to the contamination of drinking water, land, creeks and the destruction of the ecosystems such as mangroves. It will interest you to know that this environmental and social menace as witnessed in Ogoni land can be traced to two main factors: Genuine exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the area by Shell and other oil firms, and the activities of artisanal refiners (bunkers) whose lack of knowledge or technical know-how as well as unprofessional conduct has further worsened the already polluted environment amidst other social menace associated with it.

In line with the recommendation of the UNEP report to put up measures that can help restore the oil impacted and polluted lands, the Federal Government of Nigeria under the then President Goodluck Jonathan in 2012 established the Hydrocarbon Pollution and Restoration Project (HYPREP) to evaluate all polluted sites in the Niger Delta and other parts of Nigeria. The inauguration of HYPREP, according to Opara (2013) in Olaniyi (2018), was based on the provisions of the Petroleum Act CAP 350 LFN 2004, as a special unit under the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources. According to him, HYPREP was to investigate all hydrocarbon polluted communities and sites established as impacted by hydrocarbon pollution in the Niger Delta.

These seamless efforts led to the establishment of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) in 2012 that is aimed at carrying out the remediation and restoration of Ogoni land. Essential in every communication message is to educate and persuade target audience to support programme whether at the national or global levels. This is important because audience mobilization and participation are indispensable in order to attain success, true and sustainable development in any society, and overcome challenges in any organization (Ebigbagha, 2010). This is achieved only when communication takes place between and among individuals, thus Moemeka (1991) affirms that communication does not mean mechanical transfer of facts and figures, but an interactive process that works in a

circular, dynamic and ongoing way with no permanent sender and no permanent receiver. Stressing that the roles of sending and receiving change hands depending on who is talking and who is listening. Thus, resulting to freedom, equality and shared interest. Also, one cannot deny the fact that communication is characterized by complex process. Be that as it may, Uche, (1999) in Asadu (2012) defines communication:

> A rule-governed, dynamic ongoing process of either transmitting messages or expressing one's/groups'/community's/nation's/feelings, ideas, views, values, attitudes, facts, opinions either verbally or non-verbally, from a communication source, through both conventional and non-conventional channels, to a receiver, for the purpose of establishing mutual understanding and exchanges for peaceful co-existence, conflict resolution the cumulative development, progress and wellbeing of a social system, nation state, the international community and their inhabitants. (p. 4).

It is without doubt to say that communication process is not just initiated to inform people of something, rather it creates space for people to share messages that must be beneficial to the parties involved. In light of the above, communication has been viewed to have gone beyond the transfer of information or ideas to involve what the information is used for. Thus, for the communication of development message by HYPREP to communities affected in Ogoniland, practices adopted remain vital and the message must be development-driven as well as people oriented.   In the view of Asadu (2012), despite the fact the fact that development ideas/message usually originate from a certain quarter, either from the leader or the led, the most important thing is to communicate the development message to the people for discussion and adoption as these, create seamless opportunities of positive response to the message.

Recall that, effective communication is essential for the successful implementation of any environmental clean-up project. It plays a crucial role in engaging and informing the various stakeholders involved, including the affected communities, government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the media. Therefore, assessing the communication practices employed by HYPREP in engaging its diverse range of audiences becomes of utmost importance for ensuring transparency, accountability, and the ultimate success of the clean-up efforts/programmes in Ogoniland.

Statement of Problem

The Federal government of Nigeria in 2006 commissioned the United Nations Environment Programme to ascertain the extent of environmental damage of Ogoni land by activities of the oil giant Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC).   The report identified and recommended the clean-up and restoration of the Ogoni environment, a process that is estimated to last for over thirty years. Communication is central to the attainment of organizational objectives and the communication approaches adopted by any organization in relating with its environment determine to a large extent the success and failure of such organization.   It is often described as indispensable in all aspects of human and business endeavors. It is the life wire and key to the success of all organizations including HYPREP. Key to any action which aim at inducing change in any given society as it plays a vital role of provision of information that enable people to understand and appreciate the need to participate in development initiatives. Since the inception of the implementation of the clean-up exercise by the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP), there has been no/limited study that seeks to know how the Ogoni stakeholders assess and perceive the communication actions and strategies the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project

(HYPREP) being an agency responsible for the cleanup exercise and so this gap is the problem this study set out to resolve.

Objectives of the Studies

The Specific objectives of the study are to:

1. evaluate the existing communication strategies and channels used by HYPREP in engaging the diverse range of stakeholders in Ogoni land;
2. assess the level of stakeholder awareness and understanding of the HYPREP clean-up project through its communication efforts;
3. explore the perceptions, expectations, and concerns of the different stakeholder groups regarding HYPREP's communication practices towards implementing Ogoni clean-up project

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on two theories, the Goal-Oriented Communication Theory (GOCT), Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) and Stakeholder's Theory

Goal-Oriented Communication Theory (GOCT)

Goal-oriented communication is a social-cognitive theory which seeks to examine the relationship between goals, communication approaches and objectives actualization. It is often classified as an audience-engagement communication tactics geared towards achieving a communication purpose. Thus, Goldreich et al. (2012) advanced a general theory of goal oriented communication where communication is not an end in itself, but rather a means to achieving some goals of the communicating parties. Focusing on goals provides a framework for addressing the problem of potential "misunderstanding" during communication, where the misunderstanding arises from lack of initial agreement on what protocol and/or language is used in communication. In this context, "reliable communication" means overcoming any initial misunderstanding between parties towards achieving a particular goal. This theory anchored the results driven communication strategy which focused on achieving measurable results. It emphasizes on the use of communication as a means of achieving some goals of the communicating parties and also a framework that ensures that any misunderstanding likely to derail the achievement of this goal are dealt with. This theory, therefore clarifies the need for the adoption of certain communication strategies in enhancing the implementation of the environmental clean-up exercise by HYPREP in Ogoniland.

A core premise of goal-oriented communication theory is that organizations are dependent on environmental resources, take in various inputs from the external environment such as raw materials, human resources, capital, and information. These inputs are then transformed into outputs such as products, services, profits, and other outcomes which are exported back into the environment (Scott, 1992). This exchange with the environment creates an interdependence - the organization depends on the environment for resources, while the environment depends on the organization for valued outputs. In light of the above, Goldreich et al. (2012) sees the essence of communication in the category as "user-server-communication approach. Stressing, they affirmed that in achieving any communication objective within a particular community, such communication must be tailored between a pair of entities, since this is sufficient to capture the essential issues of incompatibility that may arise.

Moreso, the theory seems relevant and essential with respect to its asymmetric setting of communication between parties that can be referred to as a user – who represents "the organization in the case of HYPREP" or "her objectives which revolves around environmental clean-up" and in other cases the stakeholders, who operates on behalf of the

organization– and a server (the affected audience/communities), whose assistance towards achieving a goal we seek via communication. particularly, the is characterized by a synchronous model of communication in which the parties are described by strategies that take an internal state and an incoming message profile to a (distribution over) a new state and an outgoing message profile. In the view of Juba and Sudan (2008), the core of the problems of incompatibility that may arise in course of executing the remediation plans in ogoniland are captured by considering, instead of a single server strategy, a class of possible server strategies: roughly, a user strategy is compatible with the entire class of servers if its goal of communication is achieved whenever the user is paired with any (adversarially selected) server in the class.

This is eminent to the extent that when goal-oriented communications are employed, predetermined misunderstandings and assumed misconceptions are carefully handled and communicated accordingly between and among the concerned audience-members.

Participatory Communication Theory (PCT)

Participatory communication theory first popularized by Freire (1970) hinges on the premise that the success of development programmes depends on their ability to ensure that people are involved and form part of the decision-making process (Karl, 2000). This theory calls for inclusivity and dialogue in decision making as the only sure means to attaining sustainable programmes as it ensures that all relevant parties appreciate the need and own the programme. Karl (2007) argues that the only way interventions or programmes will achieve results is by working with relevant stakeholders and communities. Freire (1970) puts forth the premise that in order for communication to attain its objectives and to be effective, it is important for it to be based on principles of participation, dialogue and mutual understanding of exchanging views. This theory lay the foundation for examining the level of adoption of participatory communication strategy and its effect on the success of the implementation of environmental clean-up in Ogoniland.

Participatory communication theory highlights the central role of communication in organizational functioning, goal actualization and policy implementation with emphasis on its effectiveness and audience-engagement. Communication serves as the means through which organizations inform her targets of policies, educates such audience on benefits of the policy and avail them the opportunity to inputs their views through an established participatory communication approach and series of feedback mechanism.

Recall that, effective communication revolves around a coordinated system of participatory communication hence, Katz & Kahn, (1966) assert that participatory communication systems are vital for organizations to obtain needed resources from the external environment. Organizations communicate their needs to suppliers through purchasing orders, contracts, and requests for proposals. They also communicate offerings to customers through marketing, advertising, sales contacts, and customer service. Importing quality inputs requires strong communication linkages with external entities.

Internally, communication enables coordination between interdependent subsystems and activities. Clear communication of plans, policies, schedules, goals, and performance feedback allows different departments and teams to align their efforts. Communication problems can lead to misalignments that reduce efficiency and create dysfunction. Be that as it may, oil multinationals and any organized system that intend to execute any project or activity within any environments deserves strict adoption of a participatory communication approach as such enhances development communication. To this end, the relevant of the participatory theory to the actualization of environmental remediation activities in Ogoni land by HYPREP cannot be overemphasis this is premised on the fact that for achievement of such development which encompasses holistic clean-up of polluted sites and environment in ogoni

land, there is need to communicate the said developmental message in such a way that will interest the affected audience to key into the development objectives and such can only be achieve through participatory communication.

Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory is an extension of the General Systems and Resources Dependence perspective (Ulmer, Seeger & Sellnow, 2005). The theory was propounded by Edward Freeman in his book "Strategic management: A stakeholder approach" in 1984 (Heath, 2005). The stakeholder theory emphasizes the establishment of mutual understanding between corporate organizations and their stakeholders through participatory decision-making and other operational processes. This is based on the argument of Freeman (1984) that corporate organizations ought to maintain links with different stakeholders in order to sustain mutual understanding and reduce stakeholder conflicts (Ulmer, Seeger & Sellnow, 2005). The theory contends that organizational objectives must be pursued with the interest of different stakeholders in view.

According to Grunig and Repper (1992), the importance of the stakeholder approach is based on the fact that the implementation of job objectives or decisions by an organization often goes with implications for certain individuals or groups such as employees, host communities, customers, etc. in order to ensure the cooperation of these groups during decision or project implementation, it is instructive to involve them in decision-making or project planning. The condition that necessitates the interface in decision-making is due to the fact that the organization depends on these groups in the realization of goals. If the organization depends on some stakeholders to accomplish certain goals, it becomes imperative to involve such stakeholders in the articulation of goals that concern them. Seitel (2011) elicits that "organizations that develop strong instrumental links including communication channels with stakeholders are likely to hold a competitive advantage over organizations that do not" (p.809). The tenet of the stakeholder theory is that relationship between corporate organizations and their different stakeholder theory is an ongoing process of accommodation and that this accommodation can only be strengthened or sustain through stakeholders' participation in strategic and implementation processes.

The stakeholder management approach has remained a subject of debate two schools of thought. One of the schools recommends a business approach characterized by stakeholder capitalism and the other emphasizes the traditional shareholder business approach (Kotler, Maon & Lindgreen, 2012). While the former proposes that corporate organizations should balance shareholders' interest with those of other stakeholders – employees, suppliers, customers, host communities, etc, the letter holds the view that the sole concern of business organizations is to maximize returns for shareholders. The stakeholder theory is also criticized on the account of the difficulty in determining who business stakeholders are. Despite these criticisms, the stakeholder management approach is crucial to achieving genuine stakeholders' cooperation (Kotler, et al. 2012).

It is pertinent to note that stakeholder theory has gained popularity in the past three decades, focusing on different perspectives on how managers of organizations should manage their stakeholders. Gibson (2000) states that stakeholder theory in contrast with traditional theories asserts that, the interest of individuals and groups affected by an organization's activities should be considered. Elias et al. (2002) state that four areas namely corporate strategy, systems theory, organizational theory and corporate social responsibilities developed out of the management approach.

    i.   **Corporate strategy:** literature suggests that Ansoff (1965) argues for rejection of the stakeholder theory in his classic book Corporate Strategy since it considered objectives and responsibilities as synonyms. This was part of the fight for the survival

of stakeholder theory. Strategic planning literature began to feature prominently stakeholder theory in the late 1970's. Taylor (1971) predicted that the importance of stakeholders will diminish because businesses were going to run for other stakeholders.

ii. **Systems theory:** this nevertheless contributed to the development of stakeholder theory. Ackoff (1974) argues for stakeholder participation in system design importance of when he suggested that stakeholder interaction and support helps in solving societal issues.

iii. **Corporate social responsibility:** many researchers became concerned with corporate social responsibility CSR, as management literature featured stakeholder concept. Post (1981) covered areas such as ideas, concepts and techniques of earlier researchers and included non-traditional stakeholders in literature using as a primary difference stakeholder theory concept.

iv. **Organizational theory:** Rhenman (1968), refers stakeholders as individuals and groups which depend on an organization for survival and the vice versa. The effectiveness of an organization as determined by the ability to manage the demands of interest group using a model of organization and environment. Classic stakeholder theory evolved on the basis of survival and diverged into the four areas considered (Freeman, 1984).

The stakeholder theory is a strategic management theory which involves organisational management and ethics (Phillips et al., 2003). Much of the research in stakeholder theory has addressed the subject of which stakeholders deserve or require management attention (Mitchell et al., 1997), referred to as stakeholder salience. Approaches to this question have focused on stakeholder-organisation relations based on power dependencies, legitimacy claims and urgency (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Mitchell et al., 1997). The stakeholder theory assumes that values are a part of doing business and disputes the separation thesis (Freeman et al., 2004), which asserts that ethics, and for that matter CSR, and economics are mutually exclusive. Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory is essentially a normative theory with instrumental and descriptive dimensions. It tells managers and organisations how to treat the interest of stakeholders in a moral and appropriate way.

The stakeholder theory views the firm as an entity through which "diverse participants" achieve multiple goals (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). As expected, there are and will be conflicts in stakeholder interests but they must be resolved so that stakeholders do not exit the relationship (Freeman et al., 2004).

Conceptual Review
Overview of HYPREP
the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) was established in (2012) with the aim to evaluate all pollution sites in the Niger Delta region. This was after the United Nations environment programme's assessment of Ogoniland, an oil producing region in the Niger Delta.

According to the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Achim Steiner, who double as the United Nations secretary general, in his "forward" to the UNEP report on Ogoniland's environmental assessment as seen in Olaniyi (2018) describes the history of oil exploration and production in Ogoniland as a long, complex and often painful one, which has become seemingly intractable, in terms of its resolution and future direction. Steiner maintains that the tale has put people, politics and the oil industry at logger heads, rendering a landscape characterized by distrust, paralysis and blame, set against a worsening situation for the communities.

As a result of the distrust and neglect on the parts of government, oil industries operating in the area, the people were pushed to engage the activities of illegal bunkering, oil theft and artisanal refining which further degraded the already polluted environment.

As part of effort to end the many years of neglect and environment degradation in Ogoni, the then president Olusegun Obansanjo initiated the United Nations environment project's environmental assessment of Ogoniland in October 2006 which was continued in the short administration of late president Umaru Musa Yar-Adua. Social action in a report titled "still polluted monitoring government and Shell's responses to UNEP's environmental assessment of Ogoni land in 2014 accounts that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) commenced and independent environmental assessment of Ogoni land on invitation of the Federal Government of Nigeria from 2008.

They maintained that the assessment was a response to over two decades of protests and agitations against environmental degradation and human rights abuses penetrated by Shell and the Nigerian government in Ogoni which is made up of Gokana, Khana, Tai and Element Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

On completion of the environmental assessment, the United Nations environment programme (UNEP) relegated its report on 4th August 2011 to the then President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan with recommendations and revelations, needed to be attended to be clean-up and environmental remediation exercises.

Parts of the UNEP report which form the essence of this study as recorded in social Action (2014) are the operational recommendations which states thus:

Immediate steps must be taken to prevent existing contaminate sites from being secondary sources of ongoing contamination while further risk assessments and investigations are undertaken for detailed planning of cleanup of Ogoniland during recommended transition phase. All sources of ongoing contamination including the artisanal refining which is currently ongoing in the Creeks, sediments and mangroves can begin.

Overview of Communication

Several definitions as to what constitute communication has been advanced by different scholars and practitioners of communication. Hence, communication can be defined as an exchange of information as regards certain situation or occurrences, between and among individuals. This strengthened the fact that what can be defined as communication to party A might sounds different or not more like communication to party B. recall, that the term communication is derived from the Latin word, (Communis), which means "to share" thus, parties involved in a communication process are bound to share in common variables such as idea, feelings, emotions, messages, information amongst others (Baran, 2002).

Considering the necessity of interactions among human beings, kenechukwu, (2014) noted that the survival of any contemporary society and its inhabitants is dependent on the communication flow pattern, processes, effects and usage. This he said is due to the fact that communication is more of expressing and conveying one's thought, feelings, opinions, and ideas to another person or persons with a careful consideration of the effectiveness of the message on the receiver through the acknowledgement of the feedback mechanism in what is considered a circular flow pattern as against a linear flow pattern. Stressing, he added that communication is a transaction involving the meaningful exchange of information between the sender and the receiver through a process whereby messages are encoded, transmitted and decoded with emphasis on how the message is transformed by the process (Pp.2).

It is however interesting to know that the term communication has earned the word different definition as people assumed they communicate differently as the obvious has it that man cannot avoid communication thus he continually engages in interactions process with humans, creatures and habitats of his environment. Be that as it may, Uwakwe, (2010) citing Gerber,

(1967) views communication from a simple traditional sense to involve the interactive transmission of message from an encoder (also source, sender) to the decoder (also the receiver, target) operating amidst intervening variables such as culture and noise. Emery, et a (1969) in Kenechukwu, (2014), sees communication as an art of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another.

To Hoffman, (2007) communication involves the meaningful exchange of information between sender and receiver as well the process by which messages are encoded, transmitted and encoded and how the message is transformed. To this end, the definition of communication is acceptable to the extend, the theorist conceptualizes the concept as that serves the opportunity of its usage. thus, communication can be seen over the years been viewed as a pivot for the functioning and effectiveness of an organization as well as its bedrock. sequel with, Musheke, M. and Phiri, J. (2021) citing Farmer, Slater, & Wright, 1998, noted that communication is used to transfer information to their audience about the organizations' mission and vision, policies, and procedures, tasks and duties, and various activities within the company. Despite the simplicity of communication messages and its processes, research has shown that communication can build or destroy an organization's existence.

Therefore, a good communication strategy is essential for a business to survive. Communication acts as a link between decision-makers and all employees. When poorly carried out, communication has been said to cause interpersonal conflict in organizations. What people hear or understand is largely based on experience and background. People have preconceptions about what people are going to say, and if these preconceptions do not fit into their framework of reference, adjustments are made until they do Baskin et al (1997) in SCRIP, (2023).

It is imperative to note that the commonness emphasized in the meaning of5 communication gives relevance to the communication message more so, (Ezezue, 2008) affirms that sharing would enable one to partake and co-operate hence it is a social activity. However, if there are no common understanding results from the transmission of symbols (verbal or non-verbal), there is no communication therefore, for any organization of which HYPREP is not an exemption, to be effective, there is need for effective communication. Effective communication is strategic for organizational goal achievement.

However, ineffective communication in an organization may result in uncertainty, apprehension and dissatisfaction; these result in, poor feedback as well audience member's implementation of communication message. It is therefore necessary that organizational management/executives communicate her policies with her audience and other stakeholders effectively as it determines the extent to which an organization accomplishes corporate her goals vis a vis his ability to communicate effectively (Herich, 2008). It is against this backdrop that the place of effective communication in enhancing audience adherence to communication message and the adoption of a change behavior depends on the communication strategies employed by HYPREP as it remains sacrosanct in the implementation of environmental cleanup in Ogoniland.

HYPREP Communication Strategies/ Practices
The acutualizaton of change behaviour in an indivdidual through communication will to an extent be a dead on arrival ideology if the said communication message is mutual and disseminated in what the etymological meaning of communication described as "making common a message"(communicare, communis) and this commonness must involved the organization and the concerned audience and her stakeholders. hence the need to adopt several approaches/strategies by HYPREP in the dissemination of audience-focused message. Be that as it may, the adopted approaches can thrive effectively within the context of

stakeholders' communication. Decisions about stakeholders' organization communication and engagement are always done within the context of corporate communications (Argenti, 2007; Tench and Yeomans, 2009). The centrality of communication in engaging different stakeholders of an organisation lies in the fact that all functions and aspects of corporate communications are performed using communication. This condition makes stakeholders' communication a big business in genuine engagement. Stakeholders' communication involves the process whereby stakeholder information is exchanged among corporate organisations and their different publics (Ogunsanya, 1991; Heath, 2005; Argenti, 2007; Tench and Yeomans, 2009). What makes this communication process an exchange is that information flows from and to both the organisation and its stakeholders. The information that is exchanged may be decisions, plans, complaints, demands, etc. This exchange is based on the understanding of the importance of stakeholders' participation in the policies and processes that concern organisational or national development strategies (Pisano, Lange, Lepuschitz and Berger, 2015).

Sachdeva (2009) has identified different ways through which stakeholders' communication or what is described as corporate communication can be carried out. They include: corporate advertising; mass media channels; social media; interpersonal channels; in-house publications; and opinion leaders.

Proactivity Strategy

According to Clarkson (1995), proactivity represents the whole essence of corporate communications or stakeholder relations. This assertion finds expression in the Mexican Statement (1978) which defines public relations management as the activity of identifying issues, predicting their consequences, counseling organisational leadership and implementing actions that should serve the interest of the organisation and its different stakeholders (Jefkins and Yadin 1998; Nwodu, 2007). This proactive process begins, first and foremost, with the identification of the different stakeholders or publics of an organisation as well as their stakes on the organisation (Heath, 2005; Kotler et al, 2007; Nkwocha, 2016).

The goal of this proactive management perspective is to be in control of a situation rather than being controlled by the situation. Corporate organisations demonstrate proactivity by making effort to cultivate the sympathy of different stakeholders on time (Nwodu, 2007). This sympathy is cultivated by making friends, keeping the friends and working with friends to achieve corporate goals (Nwosu, 2006). These corporate friends are individuals and groups that can affect or can be affected by the activities of the organisation. In other words, the interest of these groups can both positively and negatively affect the activities of the organisation. Thus, Heath (2005) states that an organisation's ability to control relationships with its stakeholders saddles it with a power base. The importance of this control is that even when emergencies occur, the already established atmosphere of mutual understanding will draw sympathy from the publics of the organisation (Nwosu, 2006).

Given the dynamism of the business environment and diverse stakeholders' demands, the task of managing relationships by corporate communicators and their organisations has remained a hotbed of tensions (Regester and Larkin, 2002; Nwosu and Uffoh, 2005; Orukari, 2010). The tension is not only due to the fact that orgnisational stakeholders make diverse demands on the organisation but also because different stakeholders make these competing demands sometimes with disregard to the organisation's own challenges. It is only natural that this divergence or gap will continually be a source of management-stakeholder conflicts.

Accommodation Strategy

The place of accommodation in establishing and maintaining stakeholder's relation is second to known as there are tendencies of divergence gap between and an organization management

and goal actualization thus, Heath (2005) identifies the importance of accommodation in stakeholder relations. According to Heath (2005), accommodation "involves working to lessen the gap between the organisation and stakeholders while still looking for concessions" (p. 810).

However, Nkwocha (2016) has argued that accommodation is associated with certain challenges. One of such challenges is difficulties in managing difficult stakeholder groups. The danger of distortion of job objectives has also been identified (Nkwocha, 2016). The importance of the identification of challenges associated with accommodation presupposes the understanding that effective stakeholder engagement through accommodation can be self-demanding if it is not handled with tact. Singh (2008) shares this view as he argues that accommodation can be dangerous because accommodating managers may become frustrated by the many demands of different stakeholders which are capable of distorting job objectives. The distresses associated with accommodation buttress the tugs or pulls that trail stakeholder relations as identified by Baxter and Montgomery (1996) in their articulation of the relational dialectics' theory.

Reactivity Strategy
Heath (2005) states that reactivity involves confronting the excesses of a stakeholder group. He adds that this confrontation can be done using civic institutions, such as Labour unions, Commissions, Civil societies, the parliament, etc. Singh (2008) shares the view of confronting the excesses of recalcitrant stakeholders as he argues that if nothing works among parties, a third-party can be invited for intervention. The importance of the third-party engagement approach is that it provides parties the opportunity to appreciate the personality, view-point and position of the other party or parties. Singh (2008) avers that this process emphasises collectivism, encourages contributions to super-ordinate goals and exposes parties to wider range of experiences to broaden their empathy and understanding of inter-party problems.

Strategic aspects of Stakeholders' Participation in Decision-making and Policy Implementation
The Corporate Communication Institute (2007) has identified strategic stakeholder groups which corporate organisations must functionally engage in order to function effectively. The engagement of such stakeholders is to the extent of ensuring their participation in decisions-making processes that should affect them in some way. It also involves the participation of concerned stakeholders in enhancing policy implementation with a view to avoiding frequent conflicts that not only strain relationships but also corrode reputations. The functional exploitation of stakeholders' participation can result in enduring relationships, greater stakeholders' cooperation, a reputable corporate image and reduction of conflicts hence goal actualization (Osunsanya, 1991; Walker and Man, 2001). Some strategic organistional or business stakeholders whose friendship can be explored to reduce conflicts and endear the reputation of an organisation are: employees, customers/consumers, investors, host communities, the mass media and government (Corporate Communication Institute, 2007).

Employees: The employees of an organisation are the workforce of the organisation whose actions, experience and loyalty are required for the organisation to commence and sustain operations (Reddi, 2009). What this means is that with other necessary operational requirements - land, buildings, machines, licences, etc in place, an organisation still requires individuals to man different work sections for efficient operation. It goes without saying that without employees, an organisation cannot function in the first place. Sachdeva (2009) argues that the success or failure of an organisation depends largely on its employees. This, he adds, is because it is the employees that produce the real wealth of the organisation.

The conceptualisation of the importance of an organisation's workforce to the success of its operations or activities raises some concerns. One of such concerns is that beyond the desire to staff different work sections or departments for efficient operation, it is important that an organisation engages the services of individuals with requisite skills and experience. Another important concern is that these individuals must be satisfied with conditions such as work condition, work environment, wages or remunerations, the attitude of management, among others in order to remain motivated to discharge their functions. These conditions exemplify the hierarchy of needs espoused by Maslow (1964) cited in Miller (2006).

However, Center and Jackson (2003) have argued that the provision of good work environments and remunerations may not translate into eliciting genuine cooperation of an organisation's workforce. According to Center and Jackson (2003), the attachment of employee satisfaction to provision of remunerations ironically breeds employee dissatisfaction. This is because participation is the underlying condition for mutual understanding and mutual understanding underlies the articulation of work conditions and other variables that enable productivity and efficiency to flourish (Balkundi and Harrison, 2006; Ferris, Liden, Munyon, Summers, Basik and Buckley, 2009; Colbert, Bono and Purvanova, 2016). Center and Jackson (2003) state that "an organisation is a human community that needs the contributions of everyone to function and be successful" (p. 36). Since employees are crucial in accomplishing job objectives, their participation in the articulation of such objectives becomes unavoidable. Sachdeva (2009) shares this view of the importance of employee participation in the articulation of job objectives as he argues that "employees' involvement and understanding are two key factors to the achievement of corporate goals" (p. 268). The importance of ensuring employee participation in planning and implementing job objectives is that participation leaves the employee with the consciousness of not only being a member of the organisation but also the need to accomplish particular tasks to keep the organisation and its people progressive.

Customers/Consumers: The groups identified as the customers/consumers of a company are individuals and groups that purchase or consume the products or services of the company (Sachdeva, 2009; Reddi, 2009). In management and corporate communications literature, the terms - customer and consumer are often used interchangeably, even though they do not mean exactly the same. For the purpose of consistency, we shall restrict ourselves to using consumer relations. Consumers are individuals or groups that use the products or services of a company. They are people who buy or consume the products or services of a firm (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty, 2000). Consumers are crucial to the success and continued existence of firms, especially profit-oriented organisations. The importance of consumers lies in the condition that once an organisation loses patronage of its products or services, it goes out of business. Center and Jackson (2003) share this view as they argue that if an organisation fails to attract or keep its consumers, it quickly goes out of business and nothing else will matter to it. It is this condition that constrains the effort towards consumer relations. Consumer relations involves the effort to establish and lead a favourable relationship with potential and existing consumers of an organisation's products or services (Center and Jackson, 2003; Lattimore et al, 2007; Sachdeva, 2009). It involves the effort to understand and relate effectively with the market of a business organisation.

Empirical Review

Guuru, T. W and Adede, O.A (2022) conducted a study on the effect of communication strategies on the successful implementation of programmes at ILRI, Kenya. The study was anchored on participatory communication theory, goal-oriented communication theory, uses and gratification theory and implementation theory. Descriptive and inferential analyses were undertaken based on data gathered from 194 employees involved in the various programmes

implemented by the organization. The results obtained suggested that participatory communication strategy, results-driven communication strategy and multi-channeled communication strategy had positive significant effect on the successful implementation of programmes at ILRI, Kenya. The study concluded that communication strategies were a key determinant of successful programme implementation at ILRI and hence, it was necessary for the organization to adopt a blend of communication strategies that enhanced efficient communication in all its operations

Also, Nwala Godwin Anayo (2017) on Awareness and perception of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report among Ogoni people" Implications for sustainable development. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design using questionnaire and interview guide to generate data from respondents with a multistage sampling technique. The specific objectives of this study were to: Examine the extent to which Ogoni people are aware of findings and recommendations of the UNEP report; Identify the dereference in the levels of awareness among Ogoni people, find out Ogoni people's perception of the UNEP report in Ogoni; Investigate people's perception whether the implementation of the UNEP report would be able to bring to an end the Ogoni struggle as enshrined in the Ogoni Bill of Right (OBR); and Identify the implications of Ogoni people's perception of the UNEP report for sustainable development of Ogoni. The study population consisted of male and female inhabitants, aged eighteen years and above in the four local government areas that make up Ogoni, namely: Gokana, Tai, Eleme and Khana. Findings of the study revealed that there is a very high level of awareness about the report among the Ogoni people. The illegal refining of oil in Ogoni may not stop until stiffer sanctions are introduced. Most Ogoni people see the implementation of the report as kind of reparation where money may be shared and since there is no financial benefit, to them, the implementation of the clean-up is a political hoax perpetrated by the Federal Government to silence agitations and demands of Ogoni as contained in the Ogoni bill of rights among other findings. It was therefore recommended that more awareness be created especially among Ogoni people about the harmful effects of artisanal refining of oil and so create awareness that the report is not about sharing money and finally that the clean-up of Ogoni should commence immediately to allay the fears of the Ogoni people that the implementation is a political hoax.

Methodology
The study adopted the survey research design with a multi-stage sampling technique. With a sample size of 384 the said sample was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. The research instrument used for data collection was a set of questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage with weighted mean score (WMS, four-point likert scale). a score of 2.5 was used as the criterion for discussion. A response which is equal to or more than 2.5 is positive, I.e the respondents agree with the item while any mean response less than 2.5 was negative.

Table 1: Response on the level of stakeholder's awareness and understanding of the HYPREP clean-up project through their communication efforts.

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCIES				Total	WMS	Decision
	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1			
HYPREP ensures that stakeholders learn the relationship that exist between the institutions and use them to amplify the institutions issues.	112 x 4	121 x 3	73 x 2	64 x 1		2.7	Agreed
Before every step in the Cleanup implementation, HYPREP always intimate stakeholders with set objectives	86 x 4	174 x 3	48 x 2	62x1		2.7	Agreed
Before implementation, HYPREP only meet with some few allies and not the general stakeholders	140x4	166x3	40x2	24x1		3.1	Agreed
HYPREP consistently communicates the institution's activities by way of town hall meetings	31x4	40x3	195x2	104x1		1.99	Disagreed

Results in the table above shows that HYPREP as an agency over the years engages her stakeholders through farce to face communication approach, as respondents agreed to the existence of communication channels such as: SMS, social media tools like (Instagram, WhatsApp, twitter, etc.) as well as newsletters, webcast/podcast. On the other hand, respondents disagreed with the idea that websites such as blogs, corporate page handle, video, and YouTube does not serve as channels through which stakeholders in Ogoniland are engaged by HYPREP.

Response on the level of stakeholder's awareness and understanding of the HYPREP clean-up project through their communication efforts.

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCIES				Total	WMS	Decision
	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1			
HYPREP ensures that stakeholders learn the relationship that exist between the institutions and use them to amplify the institutions issues.	112 x 4	121 x 3	73 x 2	64 x 1		2.7	Agreed
Before every step in the cleanup implementation, HYPREP always intimate stakeholders with set objectives	86 x 4	174 x 3	48 x 2	62x1		2.7	Agreed
Before implementation, HYPREP only meet with some few allies and not the general stakeholders	140x4	166x3	40x2	24x1		3.1	Agreed
HYPREP consistently communicates the institution's activities by way of town hall meetings	31x4	40x3	195x2	104x1		1.99	Disagreed

Response above reveals that HYPREP ensures stakeholders learn the relationship that exist between the institutions and use them to amplify the institutions issues, they also organize meetings with few allies and not general stakeholders as well acquaint them with every step in the cleanup implementation process, sequel with, respondents rejected claims that HYPREP consistently communicates the institution's activities by way of town hall meetings.

Response on the perceptions, expectations, and concerns of the different stakeholder groups regarding HYPREP's communication practices towards implementing Ogoni clean-up project

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCIES						
	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	WMS	Decision
Ogoni clean-up is a trick to silence Ogoni people from further agitation	112 x 4	121 x 3	73 x 2	64 x 1		2.7	Agreed
The cleanup is targeted at oil resumption in Ogoni land	86 x 4	174 x 3	48 x 2	62x1		2.7	Agreed
HYPREP is trustworthy in the Ogoni cleanup exercise	20x4	30x3	174x2	146x1	664	1.7	Disagreed
You trust HYPREP and feels the cleanup is ideally aimed at restoring the Ogoni environment	31x4	40x3	195x2	104x1		1.99	Disagreed

The results above indicate that respondents have build-up views and perceptions against the HYPREP programmes in Ogoniland. In their responses, they strongly affirmed that Ogoni clean-up is a trick to silence Ogoni people from further agitation and that the cleanup is targeted at oil resumption in Ogoni land these amongst others are responsible for reasons some of the respondents opined that HYPREP is not trustworthy in the Ogoni cleanup exercise as they feel the exercise is never geared towards restoring the Ogoni environment rather an avenue to syphoned public funds.

Discussion of Finding
Research Question One: What are the existing communication strategies and channels used by HYPREP in engaging the diverse of stakeholders in Ogoni land?
findings to the above reveals that HYPREP as an agency over the years engages her stakeholders through farce to face communication approach, as respondents agreed to the existence of communication channels such as: SMS, social media tools like (Instagram, WhatsApp, twitter, etc.) as well as newsletters, webcast/podcast. On the other hand, respondents disagreed with the idea that websites such as blogs, corporate page handle, video, and YouTube does not serve as channels through which stakeholders in Ogoniland are engaged by HYPREP.
This is in tandem with the opinion of Parvecn, 2012; in King and He, 2014 who explained communication channels as the various medium/outlets used for the purpose of disseminating information for audience consumption. They identify such communication channels to include: radio, television, newspaper, magazine, billboard, newsletter etc. affirming the significance of the medium/channel used for message consumption. Lattinore et al (2007) identify communication channels for community relations to include: interpersonal channels (meetings, dialogues, negotiations, etc), written channels (letters, bulletins, etc), community-

based groups (women, youths, traditional rulers, etc), sponsorship, opinion leaders, etc sequel with, marshal, McLuhan states that the medium is the message. Hence, Okon (2015) adds that:

> *Within the conspectus of the new media, an organization that intends to thrive must acknowledge the relevance of social media platforms as it however doubles as the biggest game changer. Through the social media, friends, families, colleagues and people of convergent ideologies build networks of interactivity and social exchange with a view to transforming and sharing events on the go. The beauty in it all is that social media platforms allow the voiceless to be heard and seemingly uneducated to contribute to rational discourse because the rules for structural language appear a bit flexible (p.132).*

Research Question Two: What is the level of stakeholder awareness and understanding of the HYPREP clean-up project through its communication efforts?
Response to the above reveals that HYPREP ensures stakeholders learn the relationship that exist between the institutions and use them to amplify the institutions issues, they also organize meetings with few allies and not general stakeholders as well acquaint them with every step in the Cleanup implementation process, sequel with, respondents rejected claims that HYPREP consistently communicates the institution's activities by way of town hall meetings.

Research question three: What are the perceptions, expectations, and concerns of the different stakeholder groups regarding HYPREP's communication practices towards implementing Ogoni clean-up project?
Findings to the above indicates that respondents have build-up views and perceptions against the HYPREP programmes in Ogoniland. In their responses, they strongly affirmed that Ogoni clean-up is merely a tactic to pacify the Ogoni people and quell their protest, with the ultimate goal of resuming oil extraction in Ogoni land rather than a genuine efforts to address environmental concerns these amongst others are responsible for reasons some of the respondents opined that HYPREP is not trustworthy in the Ogoni cleanup exercise as they feel the exercise is never geared towards restoring the Ogoni environment rather an avenue to syphoned public funds.
This aligns with the position of Bridoux & Stoelhorst (2016) who posit that by fostering a sense of communal sharing, individual actors are more likely to adopt altruistic relational representations, mitigating problems of coordination and cooperation. Mental representations comprise cognitive schemata, needs, motives, evaluative attitudes, judgments and emotions which are used "to plan and to generate their own action, to understand, remember, and anticipate others' action, to coordinate the joint production of collective action and institutions, and to evaluate their own and others' actions" hence there is need establish and maintain mutuality, understanding and cordiality between and amongst various stakeholders and potential institution.

Conclusion
Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore established that audience of Ogoniland have a high level of awareness of the HYPREP'S clean-up/remediation programmme again, the preponderance of the Ogoni audience-members and stakeholders have a negative attitude towards the HYPREP communication practices and the clean-up exercise/ programme. The communication practices have never been all-inclusive neither has the programme on the other hand motivated the people of Ogoniland that the federal government have plans to cushion the effects of the environment degradation on the residence of Ogoniland but has

successfully created information on what is considered purported government concern about the livelihood of the ogoni people as well as yielding to the recommendation of the United Nations, the audience of the affected communities in Ogoniland have a negative perception of the Hyprep clean-up exercise and possible doubt in their communication practices towards the remediation implementation. As it is perceived as a government propaganda tool and an appendage of Shell and federal government to weaken MOSSOP agitations, a deliberate plot resume oil exploration in Ogoni.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made that:

1. The communication practice should be all inclusive and more of face-to-face (interpersonal communication) as well as regular town hall meetings in other words, there should be media integration approach to audience engagement SMS, social media, podcast, Radio alone cannot be successful in bring audience to participate in a particular development programme.

2. The people react negatively towards HYPREP since perception is based on our understanding and experience, HYPREP should make its activities more open and people's oriented so as to change the negative perception of the audience.

3. HYPREP should increase their activities in Ogoni land, so as to discourage the youth from indulging in indecent behaviours and train the youths on how to diversify/channel their energies restore the deplorable environment.

REFERENCES

Aminah, S. (2016). The application of participatory communication in the implementation of small farmers' empowerment program. *Jurnal Bina Praja: Journal of Home Affairs Governance*, *8*(1), 135-148.

Asadu, C. A. (2012). *Anatomy of communication for development.* Port Harcourt: Uniport press.

Federal Ministry of Education (2000). Organisation of tertiary education. *Retrieved from www. education. gov. ng*

Ferris, G. R., Liden, R. C., Munyon, T. J., Summers, J. K., Basik, K. J. & Buckley, M. R. (2009), Relationship at work: Towards a multidimensional conceptualization of dyadic work relationships. *Journal of Management*, 39, 1379-1403.

Freeman, R. E. (1984). Strategic management: *A stakeholder approach.* Massachusetts: Pitman Publishing.

Goldreich, O., Juba, B., & Sudan, M. (2012). A theory of goal-oriented communication. *Journal of the ACM (JACM)*, *59*(2), 1-65.

Greenberg, S. & Gutwin, C., et. al. (1996). "*Awareness through fish age views in relaxed WYSIWIS Groupware*". Proceedings of the conference on graphics interface 196: 28-38.

Grunig, J. B. & Repper, F. C. (1992). *Strategic management: Publics and issues in excellence in public relations and communication management.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gutwin, C. & Greed, B. (1999). *A framework of awareness for small groups in shared workspace groupware* (Technical Report 99-1ed.). uni-press Saskatchewan Canada.

HYPREP (2013). Http://hyprep.org/content?id=49.

Ihejirika, W. C. & Omego C. U. (2013). Research methods in linguistics and communication studies. Uniport press: Port Harcourt.

Karl, M. (2002). Participatory Policy Reform from a Sustainable Livelihoods Perspective. *Review of concepts and practical experiences: Livelihood Support Programme*.

Kenechukwu, S.A (2014). Mass communication: an introduction to sociology of mass media. CathCom press: Nnewi

Kotler, P., Maon, F. & Lindgreen, A. (2012). *A stake holder approach to corporate social responsibility: Pressures, conflicts and reconciliation*. London: Routledge.

Ochonogor, C. I. & Cookey, I. T. (2016). *Mitigating the effects oil pollution in the Niger Delta through communication campaign:* In Soola, E. O, Udoudo, A. J. & Ochonogor, C. I. (Eds.) issues and trend in environmental communication. Kraft publishers: Ibadan.

Ochonogor, C. I. (2016). *Multimedia communication approach to managing flooding in the Rivers Niger plains of Nigeria*. In Soola, E. O, Udoudo, A. J. & Ochonogor, C. I. (Eds.) issues and trend in environmental communication. Kraft publishers: Ibadan.

Omoshua, J. O. & Asadu C. A. (2016). *Maintaining healthy and sustainable environment through communication campaign.* In Soola, E. O, Udoudo, A. J. & Ochonogor, C. I. (Eds.) issues and trend in environmental communication. Kraft publishers: Ibadan.

Udoudo, A. (2009). Managing conflicts in the Niger Delta through functional dialogue. In D. Wilson (Ed). *Communication approaches to peace building in Nigeria (pp. 165-1 79).* Uyo: African Council for Communication Education.

Ulmer, R. R., Seeger, M. W. & Seilnow, I. L. (2005). Stakeholder theory. In R. Heath (Ed). *Encyclopaedia ofpublic relations (pp. 808-811).* London: Sage Publications.

UNESCO (1980). *Many voices one world: Communication and society today and tomorrow,* Paris: Kogan Page Limited.

Unique Uniport (2012). *University of Port Harcourt.* Port Harcourt: Panam Nigeria Ltd.

Usua, N. (2008). *Introduction to broadcast formats.* Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.

Usua, N. J. & Asadu, C. A. (2011). *Fundamentals of international communication.* Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.

Venables, J. (1997). *Handling publicity the right way.* Surrey: Elliot Right Way Books.

Walker, S. F. & Marr, J. W. (2001). Stake holder power: *A winning plan for building stake holder commitment and driving growth.* Massachusetts: Perseus Publishing.

Wallemstein, E. (2011). The modern world system 1: *Capitalist agriculture and the origins of European world-economy in the sixteenth century.* California: University of California Press.

Wells, W,, Burnett, 3. & Moriarty. S. (2000). *Advertising: Principles and practice (4thed).* New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.

Wheeler, D. & Sillanpaa, M. (1997). *The stakeholder corporation: A blueprint for maximising stake holder value.* London: Pitman Publishing.

White, S. A. (1994). The concept of participation: Transforming rhetoric to reality. In S. A. White, K. S. Nair & J. Ascroft (Eds). Participatory communication: *Working for change and development (pp. 16-31).* New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Wilcox, D. L., Ault, P. H., Agee, W. K. & Cameron, G. T. (2000). *Public relations: Strategies and tactics (6thed).* New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.