PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNICATION IN ETHIOPIA: A LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION IN FOCUS

by

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I declare that the above dissertation/thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to those people who live in the prison house of poverty in the developing countries, not because they are less fortunate, but they are marginalized and deprived of genuine participation in socio-economic development.
Acknowledgement

This research would not have been completed without the contributions of several people during each phase of the study. First and for most, my heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Stefan Sonderling for his guidance and constructive comments on the whole process of the research. His critical and frequent feedback and suggestions contribute a lot to the quality of the research and the smooth flow of the research process. My gratitude also goes to Bahir Dar University that granted me the study leave and some amount of research fund. I am also indebted to UNISA for the bursary awards which facilitates the research process. Besides, I am grateful to Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA) and its employees for their unreserved support in the process of data gathering. I am indebted to their open hearted reception that facilitated the research process. Without their friendly cooperation, it would have been impossible to gather data in the remote areas of the research sites and access important documents of the organisations. Moreover, I would like to thank all the research participants who share me their genuine experience, attitudes and spent their precious time. Not mentioning their names here does not minimise their great contributions. I am indebted to my colleagues and friends who encouraged and supported me in the process of the research. Especially, I owe to Pramod Bathnager (Dr), Titti Forssland (Dr.), Yenus Nurie, Lemma Kassaye (Asst. Prof), Abate Sheferaw (Dr.) and Mossa Hussen (Asst. Prof) who read the draft of the thesis and gave their constructive comments and suggestions. Above all, my sincere gratitude goes to Birhanu Simegn (Dr.) who gave considerable amount of time to edit the dissertation.

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Abstract

This research explores the perception and practice of participatory communication for development. To this end, the study focuses on a leading local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) named Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA), Ethiopia. This qualitative case study was based on the participatory development communication model which has been assumed to bring about sustainable socio-economic change of a country (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008). The data were collected using in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), document analysis and field observation. The collected data were organised and analysed in the form of content and thematic analysis. The results revealed economic oriented and top down approach to development communication as the dominant conceptions, and majority of the research participants perceived the concept 'participation' as mere contributions of labour and materials which are not real participation, but co-option. Only a few of the management members of ORDA conceptualized the idea of ‘participation’ as an empowerment process in which the organisation’s official document is also stated. Besides, the results showed no genuine participation of the local community in ORDA’s development process. Generally, these results could lead us to conclude that participatory communication was the missing link in the development process. That is, communication was perceived as a transmission of development information and an image building activity, not a process of empowerment. The major communications practices of ORDA were also best described as one-way top down which could reveal the legacy of modernisation and dependency theories of the development literature. The study further indicated pressing factors such
as individual, organisational and environmental related affecting the implementation of ORDA’s participatory development communication.

The results of study further indicated that participatory development communication was not used a means of liberation from the chain of poverty, dependency syndrome and other underdevelopment problems which deeply persist in the region. Based on the findings, the study commends the mainstreaming of participatory development communication both at the perceptual and practical level for achieving sustainable development in rural Amhara region, Ethiopia.

**Key Words**

Development communication, participation, participatory communication, development, top-down, bottom up, holistic development, human development, empowerment, poverty, development paradigms.
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Abbreviations and Acronyms
ANDM: Amhara National Democratic Movement
ANRS: Amhara National Regional State
BBC: British Broadcast Corporation
BoFED: Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
CBO: Community Base Organization
CC: Community Conversation
DEFAP: Development Food Aid Program
EBC: Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation
ENA: Ethiopian News Agency
EPRDF: Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO: Food and Agriculture organisation
FBC: Fana Broadcast Corporation
FGD: Focus Group Discussion
FH/E: Food for the Hungry/Ethiopia
FHI: Food for the Hungry International
GO: Governmental Organisations
GRAD: Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development
HTTP: Harmful Traditional Practices
IK: Indigenous Knowledge
NGO: Non- Governmental Organisations
ORDA: Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara
PR: Public Relations
PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSNP: Productive Safety Net Program
USA: United States of America
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Program
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
VESPA: Village Economic and Social Association
WW II: World War Second
CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

As one of the poorest countries in the world, the quest for development is one of the top items on the national agenda in Ethiopia. The desired development is not yet achieved and the failure could be attributed to the lack of participatory communication in the development process. In this dissertation, I argue that participatory communication is the missing link that could make success possible. The dissertation inquires about how participatory communication for development is perceived and practised by development practitioners in Ethiopia because it is my strong assumption that participatory communication could facilitate sustainable development. I hypothesise that while the development practitioners praise the idea of participation in theory and in their propaganda, participatory communication for development is ignored or misunderstood and this could adversely affect the development process.

This chapter introduces the background of the study, the problem statement, the research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and theoretical framework. In addition, the chapter includes the socio-cultural context of Ethiopia, background of ORDA, operational definitions of basic concepts and delimitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The quest for international development is one of the unfinished projects of the 21st century. Development has become a global agenda among academic, development and political arenas following the aftermath of World War II (WW II). The basic question in that early stage of development quest was how to narrow down the disparity
between the developed and underdeveloped countries. How to make for success in international development was the basic question that is still demanding research, academic dialogue and practice as well as policy formulation and implementation.

Since then, as part of striving to answer such critical question, there are three widely known and broadly categorised theoretical development paradigms that have directed development communication at the theoretical and practical levels. These are the modernisation, the dependency and the participatory paradigms (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008; Macphil, 2009). Their basic assumptions and theoretical implications are presented for clarifying the context of the study.

The emergence of the modernisation paradigm was associated with the global context of the aftermath of WWII. After WWII, the United States of America (USA) was in a position to assist Europe, which was seriously damaged by one of the most terrible wars in human modern history. To tackle the multidimensional crises in Europe and to strengthen its global position, the USA introduced the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan which was also known as the European Recovery Program consisted of humanitarian aid, reconstructing European markets for USA goods and services, and capacitating Europe to defy the communist Soviet threat that exerted significant influence on Eastern Europe. The success of the Marshall Plan opened the gate to similar projects in developing countries. To improve the deteriorated quality of life in developing countries, USA President Truman proposed in 1949 the “Point Four Program”, which was considered as the Developing version of the Marshall Plan. The USA president states:
More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people. (Truman cited in Mcphail, 2009:5; Melkote & Steeves, 2001:51)

In the above quotation, President Truman first directed attention to the presumed poverty and announced that the developed world had the means needed for modern development thereby bridging the disparity between the developed and the underdeveloped worlds; eliminating poverty and the misery of life in the underdeveloped countries, and to improving the dignity of humanity. This Program tried to imagine the future world differently i.e. a world free from the burden of poverty, inequality and injustice. This was very optimistic good news for humanity, and inspired continuous efforts in academic and political centres to search for solutions to such socio-economic development problems of the underdeveloped countries, thus beginning to transform them into developing countries. This change explains the use of the terms ‘under-developed’ and ‘developing’ countries in international development discourse. The name ‘underdeveloped countries’ was replaced with the concept ‘developing countries’ because of political pressure since describing a country as developing sounds more positive than the derogatory term ‘underdeveloped’ (Schramm, 1964). (See further explanation of the use of these terms in 1.8).

However, one should not forget the fact that Truman’s development proposal was not simply a philanthropically motivational project to help the poor of the world, both the Marshal Plan and the Four Point Program had political and economic, if not other, motives. The emerging Cold War between the two super powers motivated Americans
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to look into new territories for global allies so as to block the expansion of Russian Communism.

Kumar (1994:77) noted that during the post-war era the newly independent newly developing countries were in a position to acquire solutions for their critical under-development problems such as absolute poverty, high degree of illiteracy and unemployment. This tantalises the developing nations to adopt the then dominant modernisation approach or paradigm as a path to their development journey. As discussed in the literature review section (see chapter 2), the basic idea of the modernisation paradigm includes the transfer of technology and experts from the West to the developing countries. The main objective of the modernisation paradigm was to recreate the model of the West in terms of politics, economic, culture and technology in the underdeveloped and developing countries.

In this early modernisation school of thought, communication or mass media was associated with the dissemination of information and messages aiming at modernising the so called backward countries and their people. The dissemination of ideas and innovation targeting the developing people were believed to change deep-rooted attitudes and behavioural patterns. Since its inception, modernisation paradigm was also relied on mass media to modernise developing countries by dissemination of information because it was assumed that the mass media had great power to influence people’s behaviour (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Servaes, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008).
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However, after decades of efforts to develop the underdeveloped and developing countries, it was realised that the outcome was not as expected. Contrary to the assumed modernity, insignificant progress of development has been observed in the developing countries. More than this, poverty has been spreading, more people have become handicapped by underdevelopment, and life in general for many people has become more miserable than before with starvation, illiteracy and chronic disease on the increase (Mefalopulos, 2008: 64).

Even in some instances, development efforts have left the people’s life worse than before. For example, gender disparity, harmful traditional practices (HTP), corruption, lack of good governance, food insecurity, recurrent famine, drought, environmental degradation and weather change have become part of the daily phenomena in the underdeveloped world. More than 2.8 billion people of the developing countries have been imprisoned by poverty and its effects such as malnutrition, poor-health condition, and poor quality of life and rare opportunity of improvement (Narayan, Chambers, Shah & Petesch, 2000: 2; Sachs, 2005: 1-5; Kotler & Lee, 2009:1-14).

While such pro-media and top-down modernisation paradigm was unable to bring about the desired western style development, a serious challenge and criticism were made on the program by both scholars and practitioners of development. Strong resistance and distrust were observed mainly in the developing countries. Of course, one possible reason for the failure of the modernisation paradigm was because of the assumption that development was simply considered as a technical problem rather than complex
political, social, cultural and economic projects (see chapter two for further criticism of this theory).

The failure of the modernisation paradigm necessitates the emergency of the dependency paradigm as a solution of the under development problems. This alternative paradigm characterises underdevelopment as the result of past injustices such as slave trade, colonisation and the unbalanced capitalist world order that disadvantages the rest of the world. The proponents of this paradigm such as Frank (1969:72), Rodney (1973) and Wallerstein (1983) assumed that the root causes of underdevelopment are exogenous as opposed to endogenous to the third world or underdeveloped countries for the reason that Western countries become developed at the expense of developing countries. In other words, these countries became dependent on the west and so remained underdeveloped. They proposed “breaking the bondage of dependency” and new world order as a best solution for underdevelopment. The dependency theorists criticise mass media as pipeline for western cultures and establishments which enhances the capitalist led domination. For dependency paradigm mass media was needed to work for the elimination of the capitalist system and expected to play a significant role in advocating the proposed New World Order (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

However, once again the dependency paradigm failed to achieve the desired change and the basic question i.e. how to make success in development remained unanswered. This urges the need to search for an alternative approach to development and in 1970s the participatory paradigm has been evolved to answer the basic question mentioned above. This new paradigm argues that living without Western implements is not a sign of
underdevelopment (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008). The paradigm diagnoses the problems of developing countries differently in a sense that they search for local solutions rather than criticising the poor as being primitive and backward as well as criticising the capitalist world order.

The participatory paradigm assumes the participation of the local community in the development endeavours and promotes culture specific holistic development approaches. The main assumption of participatory paradigm is that the active involvement of the local community in all the development phases of development projects determines the success of achieving sustainable and effective development. In other words, development is better realised when the local community internalises the desired change and is empowered to decide on the development issues and objectives. Failure to do this is the reason for the failure of development projects across developing nations (Mefalopulos, 2008). The other assumption of participatory approach is that there is no universal path to development that every culture should imitate. This in turn gives chance to the local people to use their cultures, knowledge and potential for sustainable development. Specifically, development is understood as not something that is imported from outside or from the west, rather it is something that can be achieved through the active engagement of the development actors (Bordenave, 1994; Thomas, 1994; White, 1994; Servaes, 2008; Macphil, 2009).

With such lessons, today communications for development activities are expected to encompass communication processes that could reinforce active participation of the stakeholders. This active participation usually empowers people to be critical in understanding their problems and enables them to reflect on their situations that help
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them decide on their fate. Such communication processes are expected to help people to perform informed choices by giving appropriate and timely information or knowledge (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Freire, 2005; Servaes, 2008).

Considerable amount of development efforts have failed, for they were working without the involvement of the stakeholders as well as without giving appropriate position for communication in development process. Development agents do not question what they are doing, but keep on repeating their mistake again and again. In explaining the role of participatory communication in development, scholars (Bordenave, 1994; Thomas, 1994; White, 1994; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008; Macphil, 2009) argue that stakeholders’ participation is the best way to achieve equity by tackling injustices, and empowering the disadvantaged sections of the society through challenging the status quo. They also contend that participation enables the sustainability of development activities. Accordingly, without active participation of the stakeholders, it is very difficult to see the sustainability of development activities especially after the termination of project funds. Community participation further enables development agents to mobilise, and have access to resources that in turn create opportunity for the empowerment of the poor.

Similarly, to show how the role of communication is significantly important in the development process, Agunga (1997) notes that communication is a ‘missing link’ needed for driving the process of creating and inspiring understanding, and a foundation of effective development, not simply is information transmitting. This explanation emphasises that communication especially participatory communication
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should be at the hub of development endeavours if real social change is needed to be brought.

Using the above paradigms as a backdrop, this study was initiated by the researcher’s strong assumption that authentic participation is the missing link in making socioeconomic progress in Ethiopia. Since this assumption is grounded on facts and experiences of the researcher’s practical observations, this study could be more suitable to illustrate the gaps in the development work and to discuss on how the missing real participatory communication affects the development process. Therefore, based on the assumption that participatory communication is essential for the success of development, this study explores the experiences of participatory development communication efforts in ANRS, Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although concerted efforts have been put effecting sustainable change in underdeveloped countries, these outcomes have not been significant and a large number of development efforts have been inefficient and have not brought about quantifiable change. As such gaps have widened between the ‘have’ and the ‘have-nots’ development efforts have been made. That is, the living standards between the developed and developing countries have still remained large and the efforts made are inadequate in terms of alleviating development problems faced by such developing nations.

In particular, the lack of people’s genuine participation and communication in development processes could be among the major contributors to the failure of
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development projects in achieving their foreseen targets (Rogers, 1976; White, 1994; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008; Macphil, 2009). For example, a study by Fraser and Estrada (1998:39) concludes that communication and people's involvement in development process could be two central factors that determine the successes and failures of most development projects across the developing world. It is clear that academics and practitioners have an important role in learning from past mistakes. Therefore, understanding the place of participation and communication in development efforts in Ethiopia, ORDA could be extremely important for the making of successful development.

This research is motivated by the basic assumption that participatory communication is the missing link in the development processes that affect the success of development in Ethiopia. Considering the deep rooted development problems of the country, it is the researcher’s strong assumption that participatory communication could facilitate sustainable development. This research specifically sought to explore the perception and practice of participatory communication by development practitioners of ORDA. The study is meant to see underlying paradigms to development approaches and to query the application and awareness of the principles and foregrounding ethos of participatory communication for development.

Therefore, the rationale of the study is the need to understand the perception and application of participatory communication by development practitioners in Ethiopia so as to help the development efforts for achieving their targets. Moreover, the need to develop the academic literature on such issues is equally important to popularise
participatory communication for development. Even, the need to understand such practical and theoretical problems could make the research timely.

The absence of adequate studies in the area of participatory communication in Ethiopia could also another rationale for the study. As far as my knowledge is concerned, sufficient research works have not been conducted on development communication in general and participatory communication in particular in Ethiopia with local development organisations. The only study which deserves to be critically reviewed here is a research conducted by Bruke (2010), an MA thesis titled “Communication Strategies of the Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA) in Environmental Protection with Reference to Sustainable Community Forest Development in its Operational Areas: The Case of Woldia Akababi Woreda”. Burke’s study tried to investigate the general communication strategies of ORDA used in its community-based sustainable forest development efforts i.e. attention is not given for participatory communication practices. One of the main issues discussed by Burke relates to challenges of the organisation for sustainable community forest development. The challenges mentioned are institutional, technical and socio-cultural. Of the institutional challenges Burke identifies lack of funds and focus-less planning while the technical challenges, he pointed out problems of site selection for seedling nursery and transportation. The socio-cultural challenges also include dependency attitude, unregulated and limitless free grazing of communal hills, cutting trees and burning them on the farm fields for their ashes, destroying undesired extent while burning forest for farmland, unsustainable use of woods for fuel, unsystematic pruning of trees for fuel wood, and lack of awareness. However, in addressing the challenges of ORDA, Burke
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does not investigate how the challenges affect the communication strategies of the organisation, and its participatory approach. In other words, the study lacks to examine how the challenges affect the communication practices of the organisation. For example, crucial questions such as how the challenges affect the practices of participatory communication and how communication helps for alleviating the problems / challenges are not considered in his study. This is one of the research gaps that this study needs to address. To be specific, the current study focuses on how different challenges affect the practice of participatory communication.

The other issues discussed in Burke’s study include the communication strategies used by the target organisation and the compatibility of message contents with the indigenous cultures and contexts and the appropriateness of communication approaches. The study reported that communication strategies of ORDA with donors and partners were internet and brochures. The activity is more of public relations works of the organization which is different from development communication, although Burke’s study doesn’t seem to realise such a thing. Mass media specifically the regional government owned media is used in their communication with the target stakeholders. The research stated that mass media were not playing a key role in promoting forest development. It tells us that interpersonal communication is significant in the work of the organisation. However, there is no discussion about the role of dialogue in interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication could be conceived as person to person communication mainly used for exchange of information, not dialogical or participatory communication, which is central to participatory development. Dialogue is a form of interpersonal communication which is beyond mere exchange of information and call
for active participation of the local people by contributing ideas, articulating their desires and problems and holding their autonomy (Baofo, 2006). It should open a room for action and reflection, not for mere exchange of information between persons (Freire, 2005). In his study, there is no discussion about such kind of dialogical communication, and my study could fill this gap.

Although one of the objectives of Burke’s study intends to examine the extent of participatory communication in its study area, the study does not specifically investigate how much ORDA is participatory. May be as an MA thesis the scope is narrow and the analysis is not depth. Therefore, there is no discussion how participatory communication is practiced for community forest development operations. Thus, the research does not show whether ORDA applies pseudo participation or genuine participation. Even the study did not state the levels or types of participation mentioned in most of participatory communication literature for determining the extent of participatory development. The study also did not discuss the challenges of scaling up participatory communication for development, which is the focus of the current research. Above all, the main research gaps that the current study addresses are that of exploring the perception of participatory communication for development and determining the types of participation as well as reflection on the development. What’s more is that Bruk’s study is not specific to select the theoretical framework. It rather says:

"Development, participatory and social mobilization communication theories comprise the basis for the theoretical part of the paper. Mass, interpersonal and traditional modes of communication also provide the possible theoretical communication approaches of the project. (Bruk, 2010: Vii)"
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In general, Bruk’s study is not focusing on the participatory paradigm which reflects basic difference between the present study and his.

Furthermore, since the study is delimited to community forest development works, it could not examine the communication practices and approaches of ORDA for its overall development endeavours. Despite all these limitations, the research is still relevant as it discusses the issue of development communication in an organisation identical to the current research’s focus (see chapter 3 further review of other research works to look into the research gaps).

By addressing the above discussed research gaps, the current research is significant to reveal how a participatory communications approach to development projects could contribute towards concrete development goals and strategies of this particular NGO for the benefit of the broader Amhara region and constituent communities, in particular.

I argue that this research is timely and essential due to the broader dimension of poverty and degree of underdevelopment in the developing countries in general and in the region in particular; there is still a need to learn how to implement effective and sustainable development projects of different contexts that can transform the lives of the poor and marginalised people. Moreover, the relevance of this study for Africa as well as Ethiopia is related to what White (2008:11) stated; “a major criticism of research in this area is that it is scattered, superficial and with little significant capacity to explain the social, economic and political problems of Africa”. Thus, the study could shade light
on minimizing this gap by exploring the socio-economic problems of ANR’s people under participatory communication process.

To sum up, exploring the issues of participatory development communication in African context particularly on the Ethiopian experience could contribute new insights about the theoretical and practical issues to development communication.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

I. General Objective

The main objective of this research is to explore how participatory communication for development is perceived and practised by development practitioners and the local people in Ethiopia, ANRS of ORDA.

II. Specific objectives

The research has the following specific objectives

- To assess the perception of development by ORDA’s development practitioners
- To examine the approach of development by ORDA’s development practitioners
- To explore the perception of participatory communication by development practitioners of ORDA
- To see the practice of participatory communication by ORDA
- To examine the perception of the local community about participatory development communication practices of ORDA
- To find out factors that facilities or hinder the practice of participatory development communication in ORDA’s development
1.4 Research Questions

To address the above mentioned objectives the research questions are formulated as follows:

I. General research question

This study focused on the general question, how is participatory development communication perceived and practiced in ORDA? This basic question was based on the strong assumption that participation and participatory communication could facilitate development, and it was my desire to examine if genuine participation is used and best understood by the experts working in the development process.

II. Specific Research Questions

- How do ORDA’s development practitioners perceive development, i.e. is there any reference to participation?
- How do ORDA’s development practitioners approach development?
- How do the development practitioners of ORDA perceive participatory communication?
- How participatory communication is practiced by ORDA?
- How do the local communities perceive participatory development communication practices of ORDA?
- What are the factors that facilitating or hindering the practice of participatory development communication in ORDA’s development works?
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1.5 Significance of the Study

This study could be important in addressing basic concepts in the process of participatory communication for sustainable development especially in response to chronic poverty, food insecurity, social injustices and lack of basic infrastructures such as health, education and water in Ethiopia. More specifically, analysing and examining the perception and practice of participatory communication in ANRS (where people are economically, politically and socially underdeveloped) could have a paramount significance for those who are working on development issues such as ORDA, the regional government and other development organisations (local and international). This study could help us see the strengths and limitations of the development works that facilitates the development process.

In other words, the study would help our understanding about development communication perceptions, practices and their implications in development effort. As it has been stated by, for example, Mefalopulos (2003 & 2008) and Servaes (2000 & 2008), by understanding the perceptions of development project managers, decision makers, practitioners towards participatory communication and development, it is possible to reframe their conceptions and promote the adoption of genuine participatory approach. The results of the study could also promote the mainstreaming of participatory development communication in development efforts. Especially, the selected organisation and NGOs working in similar contexts will benefit a lot since the study could have data showing the importance of making development communication policies that shape not only our development agendas and perspectives but, our history and fate since our future is determined by the status of our development. The study
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could also contribute to the literature on participatory development communication issues in Ethiopia, which in turn might add something to the body of knowledge of the field.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

➢ The Participatory Theory

The failure of the modernisation and dependency paradigms to achieve the desired changes necessitates the emergency of an alternative approach to development. The participatory paradigm which claims development as a participatory process of social change has become an option development perspective. Based on the participatory paradigm, development has been perceived as not something that can be imported from western tradition but it is something that can be emerged out of the indigenous culture. Participatory paradigm rejects the assumptions of modernisation paradigm that advocates a universal model of development; and instead advocates culture specific and people-centred holistic development approaches. In other words, development has been understood as a participatory process of social change within a given society. This participatory process needs genuine participation of the local community and the contextualisation of development works into local cultures and settings (Rogers, 1976; Searveas, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008).

Contrary to the modernisation paradigm that considers the developing culture as a bottleneck for development and that the economic dimension of development is emphasised, this participatory approach acknowledges the role of culture for development and focuses the human dimension of development. Thus, participatory
paradigm widens the horizon of development concepts by including the non-material notions of development such as social equality, freedom and justice through which grassroots level of participation can be maintained in development process.

Different from the top down and one-way communication approach of the modernisation and dependency paradigms in the process of development, the participatory approaches acknowledge dialogical and horizontal nature of communication for achieving development. This alternative paradigm presumes the indispensible role of two-way communication for empowerment of the poor and marginalised sections of the developing nations and rejects the old assumption that mere transmission of information could not be enough for achieving development (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

Therefore, this research mainly used participatory communication as a theoretical framework (see the details in chapter 2 & 3), because for one thing the very nature of the research questions and the approaches of the study appears suitable for the theoretical foundation of participatory communication for development. The basic tenets of dialogical participatory communication such as empowerment, dialogical, problamitasation, endogenous, action and reflection, acquiring skills, increasing self confidence, control over oneself and one’s environment, achieving quality of life, freedom, understanding one’s ability and limitations are used as theoretical framework to analyse the data (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Freire, 2005).
That means the research seeks to study the perception and practice of participatory communication which is best appropriate for the participatory communication theory. However, this does not mean that the research is not confined with such a single theory in the analysing and synthesising the findings. That is, modernisation and dependency paradigms are also used wherever they are necessary to explain emerging research themes.

1.7 Socio-cultural Contexts of the Study and Background of ORDA

1.7.1 Socio-cultural Contexts

Tracing back into history, Ethiopia is the cradle of one of the ancient civilizations of Africa, the Aksumite civilisation. She was one of the oldest civilisations in North East Africa which had impact on African history and beyond. The Aksumite civilisation flourished during the first to the seventh century has a remarkable imprint in the minds of Ethiopians (Munro-Hay, 1991). It is a symbol of pride which depicts the place of their country in the old history.

Ethiopia is Africa’s oldest independent country, and has a prominent position in the modern political history of Africa. The Battle of Adwa that defeated the Italian colonisers in 1896 was a symbol of freedom for Africans and other freedom loving people of the world during that dark time of colonisation. For instance, Ethiopianism was the motto of the black freedom fighters inspired by the Adwa Victory, the first of its kind that showed the ill armed black people could defeat well armed white colonizers (Bahru, 2007). Ethiopians contribute a lot for the decolonisation of Africa. Training Nelson Mandela of South Africa and arming Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe in the fight
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against apartheid and colonization respectively could be mentioned only to show two prominent examples that mirror the county’s profile in African political history. Hosting the African Union head quarter in Addis Ababa is a living example that shows the country’s prominent positions in Africa.

Contrary to this illuminative ancient civilization and political history in Africa, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. It is placed at the bottom line of the consecutive ranks of United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) human development indexes. The country ranks 174th out of 187 countries in 2011, 173rd out of 186 countries in 2013 and 2014 UNDP’s Indexes (UNDP, 2011b, 2013, 2014). As one of the poorest countries in the world, the question of development is a big national agendum in Ethiopia.

In general, poverty and backwardness aggravated by other socio-cultural and politico-economic problems have been existed in generations after generations. Such multidimensional, deep-rooted and extremely complex socio-economic problems have been experienced in all over the country of Ethiopia including the ANRS. For example, 84 percent of the population are living in rural areas where the degree of poverty and backwardness are widely deep rooted (Ethiopia. Central Statistics Authority, 2011; UNDP, 2011a). Thus, infant democratic system, stagnant economic growth, food insecurity, poor and limited infrastructures, corruption, lack of good governance, recurrent famine, drought and environmental degradation are still common problems in the country.
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The ANRS is located in the north-western part of Ethiopia which covers around 170,000 square kilometres. The region shares borders with Tigray Region in the North, Oromiya in the South, Afar in the East, Benishangul-Gumiz in the Southwest and Sudan in the west. The regional state is divided into 10 administrative zones which include Wag Hemra, North Wollo, South Wollo, North Gondar, South Gondar, North Shewa, Oromia, East Gojjam, West Gojjam, Awi and Bahir Dar special zone (Ethiopia. ANRS Bureau of Finance & Economic Development, 2009, Ethiopian Government Portal, 2015).

Picture 1.1: map of the Amhara region
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The capital city of the region is Bahir Dar, the lake side city where Lake Tana, one of the largest lakes in East Africa is found. Lake Tana is the source of Blue Nile, the longest river in the world that divides the city into two, and runs across Khartoum (Sudan) and Cairo (Egypt). The presence of the Tana makes the city an attractive site for tourists. Amhara region is the source of the historic Blue Nile River that makes the region a centre of water politics among East African Nations and beyond. Specially hosting Blue Nile makes the region the source of political tension among Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia that attracts the attention of regional and international water politics. Besides, the Blue Nile water basin has its own imprint on the economic and cultural and historical life of the region’s people.

The region has a wide variety of natural and man-made attractions including Castle of Fasil in Gonder, The Lalibela Rock Hewn Church, The Blue Nile Falls and the Semien Mountains that have endemic animals such as waliya ibex, chilada babun, and red fox.

Topographically, the regional state covers high lands, semi-highlands and low lands. The highlands are found above 1500 meters above sea level and cover the wide area of Northern and Eastern parts of the region. Chain of mountains and plateaus are the characteristics of the highlands. For example, Ras Dashen, the highest peak in the country with 4620 m height and Guna Mountain with 4236 m and Choke Mountain with 4184 m are found in this part of the highlands. The semi-highland porition lies between 1,500 to 2,300 meters above sea level. The low land parts of the region are located in the wide area of Western and Eastern parts between 500-1500 meters above sea level. In other words, such topographic variations make the region to have three climatic zones.
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namely highland ‘Dega’, semi-highland ‘Woina Dega’ and low land ‘Kola’ each of which covers 20 per cent, 44 per cent and 28 per cent respectively (Central Statistics Authority, 2007).

The major economic activity in the region is agriculture in which 85 per cent of the people are engaged. *Teff*, the major stable food, is widely produced. Other crops such as wheat, maize, sorghum, peas, beans, barley, oats and oil seeds are produced across the major parts of the region. Besides, cash crops such as sesame, sugarcane and cotton are produced in the region (Ethiopian Government Portal, 2012).

Although agriculture is the backbone of the economic sector, such sector is neither strong nor healthy to feed the region’s people. Contrary to its dominance and time immemorial existence, the sector is characterised by subsistence production, small peasant holders, long lasting population settlement, primitive farming practices and high fragmentation of the farm lands. The situation is aggravated by persistent drought and other natural disasters. The agriculture depends on rainfall and primitive technology that reflects the overall underdevelopment of the region where agricultural productivity is low that makes the region not free from the vicious circle of poverty.

The sector remains dominated by a subsistence, low input low output rain fed farming system in which droughts periodically reverse performance gains with devastating effects on household food security and poverty levels. (Ethiopia. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development, 2010: i)

Historically, the Amhara region’s people are found in the broader nexus of North Ethiopian historical dynamism. In the eleventh century, when the Axumite dynasty was replaced by the Zaguye dynasty, they placed on the current area of Lasta and Yeju,
present day of Wollo. After the Zaguye gave power to Yekunuamalk (1270), a chieftain of the Amhara people in the current day of Wollo, the Amharas came to power under the name of Solomonic dynasty that ruled the country until 1974 revolution. This shows how the Amharas have a prominent position in the history of the country. They dominated the political history of the country especially till 1974 and beyond (Bahru, 2007).

Poverty, illiteracy, HTP and gender inequality are common problems in the region. Poor infrastructure such as health, education, road, water, hygiene, sanitation problems continue challenging the lives of the rural masses and those who work for development. Human development is low in the rural areas.

Measures of human development have improved but remain unacceptably low. Poverty and food insecurity are concentrated in rural areas, and the poorest sub-sector of rural households chronically rely on social safety net programmes and food aid. (Ethiopia. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development, 2010: i)

Although considerable efforts have been made by governmental and non-governmental organisations to tackle such deep rooted problems and achieved a few results, based on the researcher’s day-to-day observation, there are still several development endeavours to be implemented. Of course, the regional government and other development partners have been exerting efforts to combat poverty and other development problems. Of these development agents, ORDA which is the target of this study is the biggest local NGOs in the region. It has been fighting against problems related to underdevelopment and backwardness for the last three decades. The history of the establishment of this development organisation is associated with Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) which is one of the main factions of the current ruling party of the country,
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Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). This condition itself could create unique context for the organisation and for the study.

Hence such socio-economic and political contexts situated my areas of focus, participatory communication in a local development organisation. For instance, how ORDA does approach development in general and local community participation in particular was among the central issues of the research.

The aforementioned underdeveloped and impoverished socio-economic contexts basically need appropriate and effectively implemented participatory communication in any development agents of the country. More specifically, participatory communication firstly promotes change at the grassroots level (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008; Thomas, 2008; Macphil, 2009). This means, as traditional societies are the owner of their own change and become involved in the development process, there would be more commitment and determination on the part of the society for taking the desired action. Secondly, participatory communication enables the local people to become aware of their situation. Dialogical communication gives them a chance to reflect and critically understand their situation and makes them move for change based on consensus. That is, dialogical communication can free them off traditional attitudes and practices by opening the door to reflection and action (consciensiation & praxis) (Freire, 2005). Participatory communication stimulates social change by dialogue, consensus, not by imposition and it has the potential to solve underdevelopment problems. Participatory communication also presumes in long term changes, and gives more time to change the long established traditional practices rather
than to launch short term mass media campaign akin to the modernisation paradigm. Thirdly, participatory communication considers the socio-cultural contexts, and enables planners to design appropriate communication approach accordingly rather than applying western centric communication models that reinforce to be used everywhere. Especially, participatory communication uses traditional knowledge and means of communication to facilitate the desired social change process. In other words, participatory communication enables us to fight underdevelopment problems by using indigenous knowledge and people centred communication systems. Lastly, participatory communication could solve, if not, minimise the overall communication barriers or difficulties of the country. In other words, the country’s high level illiteracy, in accessible and poor media coverage (85% of the population live in rural area), inability to afford radio sets, almost no private media broadcast, infantry community radio, state dominating media (Jemal, 2011; Jemal, 2013), the oral and communal nature of the rural society are factors that could substantiate the potential value of participatory communication for development.

Generally, in light of all the development related contexts and the arguments discussed so far, and of considering the potential roles of participatory communication to achieve development, this study explores the perception and practice of participatory communication in Ethiopia, ORDA.

1.7.2 Background of ORDA

ORDA as a non-governmental and local development organisation was founded in February 1984. It was originally established as Ethiopian Relief Organization (ERO).
Combinations of economic, social and political crises that severely affected the region’s people were pushing factors for the establishment of this indigenous organisation. In other words, the establishment of the organisation was a response to the socio-economic problems facing the people in Amhara region at that time. ORDA’s document narrates the situation as follows:

In response to the severe rural poverty aggravated by the 1984 persistent drought, civil war, economic mismanagement and above all the political contention of the “Derg” regime, Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA) was founded in February 1984 as Ethiopian Relief Organization (ERO). ORDA legally registered as local NGO in Ethiopian relief and rehabilitation commission 1991 and in 1999 by the Federal Ministry of Justice (MOJ).... Since 1993, it embarked on development interventions and implemented integrated food security and rural development projects. (ORDA, 2014)

ORDA has been working in Amhara region for three decades, first as aid agent to rehabilitate drought prone and civil war struck districts. It first met the community as aid origination to distribute liquid money and food aid in 1984, and it started its work as development organisation in 1991. Since then the organisation has carried out different development projects, and has been a long time partner of the people. That is, ORDA was with the people in those hard and difficult times in their fight against starvation and famine through its aid work. The 1991 political change of the country is a turning point for ORDA to change itself into a local development organisation. Then it was organised as a means for fighting against poverty via the development works. Of course, ORDA has been doing these two activities i.e. aid and development works side by side.

The selection of the organisation for a case study for this research was made purposely by considering the following points. First, ORDA has been working in the region for a long time since 1984. Almost for three decades, the organisation is working across the
region by designing different development initiatives as a long period development partner of the people, and has been one of the visible development actors in the regional state. Secondly, the organisation has also targeted large number of stakeholders in the area; and has claimed that millions of people have ‘benefited’ out of different projects. The organisation is the biggest of all local NGOs in the region in terms of local area coverage, huge number of stakeholders and diversity of programs / projects. Thirdly, ORDA’s official strategic documents place community participation as a key implementation strategy for sustainable development (ORDA third strategic plan, 2009 and ORDA fourth strategic plan, 2014). Last not least, the organisation claims its position as participatory development agent in the fight against poverty and other underdevelopment problems (MMT interview 4, 24 December 2014). Therefore, it could be sound to study how participation is perceived and practiced by an organization that has been working for such three decades (see more discussion about ORDA in chapter 4, 4.4).

1.8 Operational Definitions of Concepts

The operational definitions of some important concepts are provided here after:

**Developing countries:** different terms are used to refer to developing countries such as third world, underdeveloped, South World’ or ‘Southern hemisphere’ in the academic literature. The concept ‘third world’ used in the context of the Cold War period to refer to the neutral countries where both the capitalist and socialist worlds hunted them as global allies. During that time in the professional literature the ‘politically correct’ concept of developing nation/sates was often used. Today ‘third world’ is still used to a limited extent but it has been surpassed by the concept ‘South World’ or underdeveloped
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‘Southern hemisphere’ vs. developed or over-developed north. This dissertation prefers to use the term developing countries/world to refer to countries found in Africa, Asia and Latin America and characterised by widespread poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, hunger, disease, sanitation problem, and refugee displacement. However, sometimes it might be referred as underdeveloped countries / world as alternative use (Melkote & Steeves, 2001:21-29).

**Development:** while there are various definitions of development in the literature, the concept of development in this study is defined as a participatory process of social change reflected in the form of social equality, freedom, justice and other manifestations of qualities of life for the majority of people having greater control over their environment (Rogers, 1976; Searveas, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008). This type of development could be referred as holistic development or participatory development. In addition, it is important to note that, participatory development is an act of development that reinforces the active involvement of the local community in the design, implementation, evaluation and management of development projects. It is a process of empowering of the local community in making decisions and managing resources that affect their life.

**Hard development issues:** these refer to the major development activities that focus on the tangible development experiences and economic growth including construction of rural roads, development of springs, and construction of hand dug wells, small scale irrigations and works in environmental protection and livelihoods.
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**Soft development issues**: these refer to the major development activities that focus on the human dimension of development such as freedom, justice, equity, participation, empowerment, and democracy as well as education, learning and literature.

**Sustainable development**: it refers to contemporary perspectives of long lasting human development incorporating concepts such as “quality of life, the upward movement of the entire social order, eradication of poverty, reduction of inequalities, removal of regional imbalances and above all environmental concerns.” (Hasan, 2006). That is, sustainable development is a process of achieving long run/intergenerational balanced advancement of humanity including economy, environmental protection and social change with equity and control of one’s environment.

**Poverty**: it is defined as capability or deprivation which encompasses multidimensional aspects of life including income, health, education, empowerment and human right (Sen, 1999).

**Development communication**: it is defined as a “social process based on dialog using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels, including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating, and learning for sustained and meaningful change” (Mefalopulos, 2008:8). This definition holds basic principles of participatory communication such as dialogue, empowerment, and voice and sustainable change. Participation, which refers to the involvement of the grass root level of the community in the development process, is considered is a central constituent of development.
Participatory communication: it refers to an “approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment, especially for those who are most vulnerable and marginalized” (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009: 9). In other words, participatory communication describes the active engagement of the local communities in the processes of development. The tenets of participatory communication such as empowerment, dialogical, problamitasation, endogenous, action and reflection, acquiring skills, increasing self confidence, control over oneself and one’s environment, achieving quality of life, freedom, understanding one’s ability and limitations (Freire, 2005; Moemeka, 1994; Mefalopulos, 2008) are used as references to determine the presence or absence of participatory communication in ORDA.

Genuine participation: it refers to people’s ‘real’ input, initiation of development and wholehearted participation as against the idea of co-option of people and participation as a deception for the fact that there is no real input from the people. Genuine participation connotes participation as empowerment while fraud participation refers as pseudo participation.

Empowerment: it is conceptualised as “the process by which individuals, organizations, and communities gain control and mastery over social and economic conditions, over democratic participation in their communities and over their stories” (Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 36). In the context of development communication, empowerment is a dialogical communication process that people are able to control and access to knowledge, decision making process and recourses such as financial, social and natural in development endeavours (Rogers & Singhal, 2003).
Stakeholders and related terms: in development communication literature different terms are used to refer to individuals, groups, people or community whom development efforts are directed. The common terms are “target group”, “target audience”, “beneficiaries”, and “stakeholders”. The first two terms denote the dominant structure; signal less participation and targeted for something since the terms have history of military origin (Bessette, 2004). Such terms are commonly used in mass communication activities. The term “beneficiaries” denotes a strong passive connotation that recipients of something from the top. Both terms (target group/audience & beneficiaries) call vertical relationships between development agents and people which in turn associate with the dominant paradigm. The term stakeholders refers to people who are supposed to actively involved in development process that is consistent with the philosophy of the emerging participatory paradigm. Therefore, in this study, I prefer to use the term stakeholders to refer to groups or people or local communities whom the development agents are working with to change their life. These are people who are ultimately affected by the development intervention or they are the primary ‘beneficiaries’ or end users of development projects (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2003). However, we should not forget that the terms are used interchangeably in development communication literature as well as in this study. It is not uncommon also to refer stakeholders to various groups such as local administrative, government technical groups and policy makers, NGOs that are working with the communities in a given development projects (Bessette, 2004).

Change agents or development practitioners: these are development professionals, managers, workers who work in ORDA. Development agents or practitioners are used in this study interchangeably. ORDA is also described as a local change agent.
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**Indigenous knowledge:** it is an existed experience of a society which has been used for solving problems and could be challenging for a long period of time.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

Although there are a number of local development organisations striving for sustainable development and social change in ANRS, this study delimited itself to study the development experiences of ORDA. This is so because it allows depth understanding and analysis of the research problems. Besides, the nature of the study, qualitative case study, forced me to focus on a single organisation.

This research also used qualitative research method that emphasises an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in question (e.g. participatory communication for development practices, perceptions and implications in ORDA, ANRS/Ethiopia). With the intention of understanding a societal problems like poverty and underdevelopment and indicating solutions for such crisis based on the perspective of communication for development, the study used different qualitative data gathering instruments such as interview, focus group discussion, document analysis and field observation. Such triangulation of sources would enable the researcher increase the trust worthiness and the overall quality of the research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:275). The findings could also highlight us more on how participatory development communication is perceived and practiced in the context of Amhara region/Ethiopia, ORDA.

1.10 Thesis Outline

The thesis is composed of six chapters. The first chapter introduces the research contexts, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions and significance of
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the study. It also states participatory communication as the theoretical framework of the study. Besides, this chapter includes operational definitions for basic concepts such as development, participatory communication, sustainable development and others related.

Chapter two reviews the theoretical framework of the study. It discusses the historical and conceptual evolution of development communication in general and participatory communication in particular. The basic components of participatory communication such as dialogue, empowerment, endogenous, action and reflection are discussed based on the research perspective. The typology of participation and the basic models of participatory communication are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three presents review of related research works. This part specifically reviews nine research works on participatory communication and development. The review on the first three works demonstrates participatory communication experiences in Asia and Latin America while the other two discloses experiences of participatory development communication from African countries. The remaining four research works are focusing on development communication and participation in Ethiopia. All of the research works are critically reviewed and evaluated for showing the research gap of the study. Generally, this review is an attempt to situate this study as part of global trends of participatory paradigm.

Chapter four discusses the methodological perspective of the study. It presents the qualitative case study research design and the data gathering tools such as in depth
interview, FGD, filed observation and document analysis. Besides, the data analysis techniques, procedures and ethical considerations are presented.

Chapter five has data presentation and analysis. That is, in this section the findings of the study are discussed using the research questions as organising guideline for the narration of the research report.

Chapter six is the summing up chapter which contains the synthesis of the research findings, the conclusions and recommendations of the study. This part also presents the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research issues.
CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

The main purpose of the research is to explore how participatory communication is perceived and practised in Ethiopian context. The research was motivated by the assumption that genuine participation is the missing link in the development process of the target organisation of the study, ORDA. Therefore, this chapter focuses on reviewing related theories that can serve for a guiding framework of the study. This section specifically, reviews the literature that helps the researcher address the research questions, the perception and practices of participatory communication and frames the data analysis. The review begins with the historical and conceptual evolution of development communication. Then, it moves on the theoretical foundations of participatory communication paradigm that is used for developing the theoretical framework of the study. The review also presents major factors that affect participatory communication for development. This chapter ends up with the summary of the main issues provided. In the next chapter, the application of the participatory model of development is discussed using different research works.

2.2 Historical and Conceptual Overview of Development Communication

The birth of international development dates back to the post-World War II. In the aftermath of the war, the need for global development was fuelled by the decolonization of most of developing countries and the Cold War capitalist and socialist camps. At that early call for social change, development was envisioned as abandonment of long standing traditions of the developing countries and opening up for modernisation. Such
Chapter Two: Review of Theoretical Framework of the Study

vision of global development was officially propagated following the 1949 inaugural speech made by President Truman. In his historical speech, Truman stated, “We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas” (cited in Esteva, 2010:1; Mefalopulos, 2008:43; Mcphail, 2009:4). It seems that the President promised narrowing down the socio-economic disparity between the developed and the underdeveloped countries through scientific development and industrial growth. He emphasised the urgent need of the development of the developing countries through financial aids and technological support.

However, scholars like Sachs (2010: xvi-xviii) argue that Truman’s idea is not a simple altruistic, but this idea of development has also influenced the needs of the emerging Cold War agenda. Besides, Truman’s idea of development was inspired by the success of the post world war Marshall Plan that restored the ruined European economy (Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 51).

Scholars developed theories or models that were inspired and driven by Truman’s policy. That is, Truman set up policies that advocate his ideas, and lots of money was made available to do studies. This enabled the issues of global development to become one of the primary issues in the academic, political and development arenas. In short, development has become the language of the day, and it was made to define the relationship between the West and the developing countries.
Chapter Two: Review of Theoretical Framework of the Study

Motivated by the renowned “magic bullet” or “hypodermic needle theory” of mass communication, the scholars were sympathetic about the power of media in leading the intended development process in the 1950s and 1960s (Melkote & Steeves, 2001:105-108). In the past six decades, international development in general and development communication in particular has been given different meanings and goals for different scholars, politicians, practitioners and organisations. Accordingly, three broad perspectives have shaped the scholarship and practice of development in general and development communication in particular. That is, most of the discussions about the theoretical and practical foundations of the field of development and development communication have been built on three paradigms that are widely known as the modernization, the dependency, and the participatory paradigms (Rogers, 1976; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008; Mcphail, 2009).

The first or original perspective is known as the modernization paradigm that was originated in response to Truman’s post-war policy and rooted in the neo-classical economic theory. This paradigm promoted capitalist economic policy that focuses on the economic aspect of development. This model was developed only after scholars reviewed or studied the historical development of the west. The modernization paradigm conceives that the Western model of economic growth is the right way to development which others should imitate. The dissemination of western modern technology, suggested by President Truman, was regarded as a solution for underdevelopment problems. Melkote and Steeves (2001:73) explain such issue that “developing countries were encouraged to invest in a program of industrialisation such as hydroelectric projects, steel industries and a diversity of manufacturing units”.

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Chapter Two: Review of Theoretical Framework of the Study

The second perspective, the dependency paradigm is based on the Marxist thought that strongly criticises the modernization approach as incapable of solving the problems of the developing countries. Development using the modernisation theory did not bring about the expected results, and the criticisms revealed some kind of truth. The opponents considered the modernization theory as a way of western economic and cultural imperialism. They argued for a new world order that could reinforce restructuring of political and economic power to create equity among the world society. Contrary to the modernization paradigm, this perspective criticised the capitalist system for problems of underdevelopment and backwardness.

The third perspective is the emerging alternative paradigm that rooted mainly from the liberation theology, and preached liberation and freedom of humanity from operation and domination as way to development. The supporters of the paradigm considered the emancipation of the poor as the basic solution for development since emancipation is as a way to empowerment and self reliance. This paradigm change was prompted by the failure of designing effective approach that could bring about meaningful development. As a result, there have been proliferations of new concepts about development like another development, ‘post conflict’ development, feminism, alternative development, post development, empowerment and multiplicity paradigm. Following detailed discussions of the historical development of the three paradigms is given.

It is important to mention that the above mentioned three major theories of development communication guide the conceptual bases of developed journalism. That is, for modernisation theory the main role of mass media is creating awareness and motivating the interest of audience to adopt innovations presented by external change agents. In this old journalism model mass media was considered as magic multiplier of western base
development ideas and practices (Schramm, 1964). While for the dependency theory the role of the media would be building national unity, stimulating economic development and used as social education apparatus. Constructive criticism of governments and other development agents’ was motivated as media roles in development. Development journalism was expected to play a revolutionary role against the domination of the capitalist system. On the other hand, under participatory theory the main task of development journalism is critically examining the aims of national development, strategies and practices. Moreover, development journalism has the role of motivating the active participation of the audience into their own development and to defend their interest against mal-practices and abusive power holders. Mass media has a role in the process of democratisation and citizen participation at all levels and promotes inclusion development (Banda, 2006).

2.2.1 The Modernization Paradigm

The inception of international development issues following Truman’s inaugural speech in 1949 led to implementation of practical development projects in the developing countries and the birth of the development theory known as modernization paradigm. The modernization paradigm also refereed as the dominant paradigm, “guided intellectual thinking and practice from the 1940s through the 1960s, and was influential in development communication theory and practice” (Melkote & Steeves, 2001:72). The paradigm measured the level of development using observable and quantitative economic parameters that could show discrepancy between the poor and the rich countries or the traditional and modern societies. In other words, economic growth was the main, if not, the only parameter for development. Up to 1965, scholars were
optimistic about the achievement of the desired change to advocate the transfer of western material and culture or values to the peripheral underdeveloped societies. The approach envisioned development as a form of westernization that underdeveloped countries should attain. The paradigm also promotes economic growth as a solution for underdevelopment problems (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008; Mcphail, 2009). The assumption underling the quantification of economic terms in development implies that qualitative dimensions of development such as justice, equity, freedom and quality of life were not considered. Such marginalisation of the human dimension of development led to the dead end of the development paradigm.

In the historical moment of striving for development, the role of communication for development has caught the attention of scholars. Specifically, at the beginning of 1960s the place of communication in the development process was well pronounced when the pioneer scholars such as Lerner (1958) and Schramm (1964) wrote on the role of mass media for the development of the developing Countries. The interest in the mass media effect on development was arisen during the war mainly when scholars studied propaganda. Motivated by the then renowned “magic bullet” or “hypodermic needle theory” of mass communication, the scholars were sympathetic about the power of media in leading the intended development process. The assumption of the theory was that mass media had powerful effect on people’s thinking and attitude. That is, mass media were used as a powerful tool for changing attitudes and behaviours and stimulating the desired change. Even, mass media were considered as a powerful means for the transmission of western values, cultures and development concepts. For instance, Lerner in his classic writing entitled “the Passing of the Traditional Society” (1958)
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boldly explained the role of mass media for modernization as a powerful agent of urbanization, literacy, and political participation. By capitalising the role of mass media for modernisation, the author explicitly argues that there is a strong link between modern mass media and modern society (Lerner, 1958: 55). Schramm (1964) further developed Lerner’s idea when publishing one of the pioneer works of the field of development communication entitled “Mass Media and National Development”. The writer briefly discussed the key role of mass media for economic development by considering mass media as a mover for modernization or as a “magic multiplier” of development messages.

Generally, from a communication perspective, lack of information was considered as the major problem of underdeveloped countries. As a solution, persuasive model of information transmission was applied. This persuasive model of information transmission considered communication as a one-way process in which information flows from rich elites to the poor mass. This communication model is characterised by dissemination of information to persuade audiences for attitudinal and behavioural changes. Such model of reference is one-way or unilinear which is often referred as top down approach. The timing of this communication intervention is frequently conducted at the implementation stage though development objectives have already been decided by the elite. Here, the main mission of development communication was the promotion of new technologies in ways that propagate the western style of modernization. As discussed by Melkote and Steeves (2001:104), four broad communication approaches were used to promote the desired development goals: These are the communication
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effects approach, the mass media and modernization approach, the diffusion of innovation approach and the social marketing approach to social change.

While the influence of the dominant development conception of the 1960s that advocated industrial growth and increased Gross National Product (GNP) as the end goals of development, development communication researchers perceived economic growth as the final goal of development. This conception reinforces efforts in using communication for the success of socio-economic development. However, such efforts of recreating developing counties in the Western model were not effective and a series of criticisms were forwarded against such modernisation theory.

- Criticisms of the Modernisation Theory

After decades of efforts made in the modernization paradigm (1950 - 1970), the expected goals i.e. industrial growth and increased GNP have not been achieved. Life in the developing countries continues with all sorts of problems. Paradoxically, some problems were aggravated. Mefalopulos (2008: 64) stated this as: “Things got even worse as large numbers of people in many developing countries experienced a significant decline in their living standards”. This ineffectiveness and aggravated poverty gave a way to serious criticisms of the paradigm as ethnocentric, theoretically defective and methodologically incapable (Rogers, 1976: 217). In other words, one of the criticisms focused on its economic conception of development that ignores the social dimensions of human development. Similarly, the paradigm was further criticised for its failure to consider the impact of historical and broader socio-political issues of development. As stated by Chu (1994), until mid-1970s the structural perspectives of
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underdevelopment problems had no place in the thinking of the pioneers. Even, the ethnocentric view of the paradigm contributed to its failure since ethnocentrism disrespects others’ cultural identities and humiliates humanity and discourages progress. In other words, the paradigm is criticised for its insensitivity to cultural diversity which is inconsistent with the nature of the human world.

The other significant factor for the failure of modernization paradigm is related to its overestimation of the power of mass media in development. Motivated by the then dominant theoretical assumption of the “hypodermic needle theory” or “the bullet theory”, the proponents assumed that mass media could change the attitudes and behaviours of its audiences. However, this overestimation of mass media power alone did not change the mindset of the ‘traditional’ and ‘backward’ societies as had been desired. Wrong conceptions about communication as information dissemination using mass media also contributed to the modernization paradigm’s ineffectiveness. Such top down information dissemination could not address the communication needs of the development issues, and nor reinforces active participation of the local communities (Mefalopulos, 2008:14). Scholars like Moemeka (1994:5) criticised the approach for its insensitivity to considering socio-cultural contexts in which the mass media were supposed to function.

Moreover, Sachs (2010: xvi-xviii), one of the prominent critics of the Truman’s ‘altruistic/ or philanthropic’ model of development, strongly challenges the model by pointing out four defects as follows:
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First, Truman’s ‘altruistic model could not lead the global society to the comfortable zone of life. As Sachs (2010: xvi-xviii) argues the model is ineffective and hence it is an “aberration in the course of history”. He strongly contests that such model of development broke down the arrow of progress and darken the brightness of the future by seeding more threats of development than promises.

Second, Sachs critique relies on the premises that Truman’s project of global development is bound to lose its ideological steam and political fuel because of the polycentric move of the world in a way that ruin the category of developing countries. The proposed global development lost its ideological bases primarily because of the weakening of the socialist-capitalist competition.

The third argument relies on a strong view that the western model of development malformed the world in ways that unintended by the proponents. That is, the model leads the developed countries more developed and the underdeveloped countries more impoverished. Sachs (2010: xvii) states “in 1960, the Northern countries were twenty times richer than the Southern, in 1980 forty-six times’ richer”.

The last argument focuses on the misconception of development itself. The proponents of the model conceived development as westernisation which obliged all people in the world to move in a single track drawn by the west. This single track journey erodes the diversity of the world.
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Generally because of such criticisms and the failures of modernization paradigm caused the emergence of new theoretical assumptions in the field of development in general and development communication in particular. This new paradigm is known as the dependency paradigm.

2.2.2 The Dependency Paradigm

The second dominant paradigm in the international development discourse is the dependency paradigm which is a Marxist inspired theory that reflects the reality of the cold war. The paradigm is one of the most powerful critiques of the modernization school of thought which was evolved in Latin America during the mid-1970s. The unsuccessful attempts of the modernization approach urged scholars to examine critically the development path designed by modernization scholars. For the proponents of this theory, contrary to the modernization concept, the root causes of underdevelopment are not internal to the developing countries; rather they are external from western countries. The proponents such as Frank (1969: 72), Rodney (1973) and Wallerstein (1983) went further blaming the west as the cause of underdevelopment. Their assumption was that Western countries developed at the expense of African, Asian and Latin American countries since the modernization path led to exploitation of poor countries by the powerful Western countries. Especially past injustices such as colonization created huge gaps by developing the West and impoverishing the developing countries. The consequences of such exploitation and domination did not create fair competition for development.
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The dependency paradigm was then motivated by Marxist and critical theorists who were able to analyze the problems of the developing countries and the general nature of Western capitalism and its positions in today’s world order. They explain that the global expansion of Western capitalism created an unequal distribution of resources and hence increased the disparity between the haves and the have-nots (Frank, 1969; Rodney, 1973; Wallerstein, 1983). The proponents underlined that the underdevelopment of the developing countries is resulted from repercussion of the development of the West (Frank, 1969:72; Rodney, 1973; Wallerstein, 1983; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008; Mcphail, 2009).

One of the leading figures in this paradigm, Frank (1969) rejected the thesis of modernization that blames the developing countries for their underdevelopment, and the author critically challenged the reasons given for underdevelopment. Based on his structural analysis of the global capitalist system (inspired by Marx and Marxist theories of imperialism), he believed that underdevelopment is the flipside of development shaped by specific historical, economic and political factors. Therefore, he strongly argued that searching the cause and solutions of underdevelopment solely or even mostly in underdeveloped countries could not lead to the right solutions. He associated the situation as diagnosing a disease with a medicine prepared for other diseases. The maltreatment of patients might aggravate the illness and lead to unexpected deaths or highly complicated health problems including the incurable cancer disease. Wrong diagnosis leads to wrong treatment and in turn aggravates the health crisis. The right way to treat the infection needs understanding the root cause of the disease, examining the traits and considering its full history and current status. All these careful steps and
activities may lead to prescribe the right medicine to overcome the disease. Similarly, addressing the causes of underdevelopment, Frank (1972) argues to have the need for diagnosing and treating the root causes of the problem. In his critical explanation stating “the development of underdevelopment” that held the unbalanced global relationship which is the worst cause of underdevelopment. Thus, to solve problems of underdevelopment, it is essential to, understand the history, current status and nature of the problem, underdevelopment. That is, searching the root causes and their possible solutions was thought to be effective way of treating the underdevelopment problems.

The modernization theory as he states was focusing on wrong treatment of problems of developing countries. It did not address the root causes the history, nature and complexity of underdevelopment. That is, it oversimplifies the issue and focuses on blaming ‘the patient’ for his/her health crisis. The failure of the paradigm was thought to mark the end result of wrong diagnostic and treatment. Therefore, for Frank (1972) “breaking the bondage of dependency” was the right treatment for underdevelopment.

At the centre of the dependency theory, one of the top issues loudly heard in the international development agenda in the 1970s and 1980s was the need for a new international economic order advocated by the developing nations. Backed by this strong demand, the role of communication and information has been well pronounced internationally. Accordingly, 77 developing countries formed a group called “non-aligned movement” as a main actor in claiming New World Information and Communication Order often referred as NWICO. It advocated balanced flow of information at the global level. The claim reached its climax when the issue was
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debated at UNESCO and in turn was followed by a popular report known as “Many Voices, One World” published in 1980 (Mefalopulos, 2008:49).

By pointing their fingers again on the flaws of modernisation theory, the dependency theorists criticise the top down information dissemination role of mass media as a pipeline for western cultures and ideologies in a way that facilitates the capitalist led domination. Mass media were also criticised for widening the gap between the haves and have-nots. The majority of the people in the developing nations have become information poor as a result of media access ability problem. As it is contended by Narula (1994:63), the majority of citizens in urban and rural areas are detached from the communication systems of the country and of the market system. This exclusion is one of the reasons for the failure of mass media in stimulating the expected attitudinal and behavioural change as aspired by the modernization theory.

As the root cause of underdevelopment was considered as an exogenous, a political solution was advocated as the top priority. Mass media was needed to work for the elimination of the capitalist system and expected to play a significant role in changing the “corrupted world order”. Despite the fact that dependency theory is an ardent opponent of the modernization theory, there was no significant difference in the conception of communication. Similar to modernization, the very concept of communication was media centric that again led to misconception about the potential role of mass media in development. Especially horizontal dimension of communication was ignored (Mefalopulos, 2008:50; Melkote & Steeves, 2008; Servaes, 2008).
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Mefalopulos (2008:48-49) further discusses the impact of dependency theory in the development policies of most of the developing countries. For example, the import substitution policy which was the offspring of the dependency theory was implemented in many countries aiming to protect the national industries from external contest. Applying high tariffs on imported products and subsidisation were among the strategies to support domestic growth and to simplify the detachment from developed countries (McMichael, 1996). However, it was noticeable that the import substitution policy failed in many countries to achieve the expected outcomes. The failure is a marking of the unsuccessful attempts of the dependency paradigm in real world development contexts.

Generally, although dependency theory was not effective as desired by its proponents, it has contributed a lot to understanding the problem of the developing countries from a different perspective and providing new insights about the problem of humanity. However, despite its advocacy of a paradigm shift to overcome underdevelopment problems, the theory has theoretical and practical flaws open for criticism. One of the major critics focused on its Marxist doctrine which has failed in reality as a solution for underdevelopment. Especially, at the end of the cold war, and the resultant decline of Marxism, the dependency paradigm has lost its ideological base (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Waisbord, 2002; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008; Mcphail, 2009). As Chu (1994:41) states the second major critic is the base of their argument fetched from failed experiences largely from Latin America that did not reflect others' experiences, and it is because of the downfall of Marxism that was primarily reinforcing the ideological pressure.
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2.2.3 The Participatory Paradigm

2.2.3.1 Conceptual Origins of Participation

According to Mansuri and Rao (2013), concept of ‘participation’ existed in different cultures and civilisations dating back to human history. Participation had an important place in ancient Athens democracy in which policy decisions were performed by the participation of male citizens. The existence of participation as an important component of public life has long been traced to about fifth century B.C., among Hindu and Buddhist followers in South Asia. In Islam participation has had significant place in the community life since the Quran requires the decision of community affairs with mutual consultation ‘shura’ of the community. In pre-European slavery and colonization Africa, the idea of participation was acknowledged in the Zulu community of South Africa and Akan people in West Africa; the power of the chief was restricted by the council’s decisions that represent the community (Mansuri & Rao, 2013:20).

Mansuri and Rao (2013:21) further state that the modern theory of participation was first meticulously communicated in the 18th century by the French enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Participation was conceived as citizens’ involvement to make decisions in a mutually dependent and deliberative ways. It was considered as a method of decision making and process of developing compassion for others’ outlook and learning accountability for public interest. Thus, participation has a vital educative role both at the individual and community levels. At the individual level, participation enables individuals to become public citizens and at the community level, it helps members develop a sense of belongingness. In such away the early conception
related to participation evolved within civic life development, which in turn has had a significant impact on development thoughts of the present time.

Even though, there are different concepts about the constituencies and objectives of participation in development discourse and writings (see section 2.2.3.2), it is generally accepted that the theory, tools, and practices of participatory development are continued to evolve, and become multi-disciplinary. Jacobson and Servaes (1999:13) contend that participatory development has been practiced for many decades in varieties of fields such as adult education, community development and sociology. Melkote and Steeves (2001) also identify education, political science, psychology, social work, sociology, and women’s studies as the “disciplinary origins” of participatory development. Ben-Meir (2009:258) presents 77 roots of participatory development with the following lists while explaining roots of participatory development in academic schools and disciplines: anthropology, business management, development communication, development studies, economics, education, engineering and biology, natural sciences, social sciences, and feminisms.

As Mansuri and Rao (2013:26) further argue in the context of international development, the place of participation in development was influenced by radical thinkers such as Freire. In his influential book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), Freire, has become one of the influential figures in shaping the participatory thinking in the development discourse. He advocates the need to develop dialogic approach, which is essential to community development since it is rooted in their experiences, values and
local knowledge. This kind of dialogical approach is a means of *conscientisation* and hence would empower the powerless.

In 1980s, critics of the modernization approaches boldly claimed the ineffectiveness of many large scale, centralized, government initiated development programs. They showed the poor performance of different development projects including schooling, health, credit and irrigation. The worst comes when the poor performance of development projects have brought about considerable negative environmental and poverty impacts (Mansuri & Rao, 2013:28). Such observable failures demanded the search for new approach for development. As a result, the participatory notion of development got strong support from academia. Particularly in the participatory communication academic discourse, lots of scholars (White, 1994; Jacobsen & Servaes, 1999; Deetz, 1999; Melkote & Steves, 2001; Jacobson, 2003; Bessette, 2004; Huesca, 2008, Servaes, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009) have pronounced the significance of this paradigm for development and social change.

The next section discusses how participation has become an alternative development paradigm in the efforts of international development.

**2.2.3.2 Participation as an Alternative Paradigm**

As discussed in the aforementioned sections, the failure of the two dominant paradigms to achieve the desired changes led to the emergence of alternative path to development. That is, since 1970s, this participatory paradigm has evolved as an important alternative approach for development. This approach has been emerged in contrast to models and
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Theories of the dominant development paradigm (Huesca, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008; Serveas, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). This new paradigm is more focused on the cultural contexts of development rather than on its political-economic dimensions. Modernisation paradigm was criticised for following ethnocentric approach. Moreover, by rejecting the one dimensional approach that promoted economic growth as the sole path to development, this new approach promotes a multidimensional approach that includes equity, social justice, and economic growth. There was a major shift in conceptualising development from economic growth towards human development. As defined by Rogres (1976:225), development is a participatory process of social change which comprises social and economic progress as well as equity and freedom of the peoples and controlling one’s own environment. Moreover, contrary to the assumption of modernization theory that advocates westernization as the sole route to development, this new paradigm advocated multiple paths of development that considers the socio-cultural contexts of the development. Servaes and Malikhao (2008: 163) contend this diverging view of the new paradigm boldly saying that “there is no universal path to development”; rather it should be conceived differently based on the multidimensional local contexts.

Moemeka (1994) explains how the need of the new approach was advocated by influential organisations including the World Bank and the UN in the 1970s. Of course, these organisations also respond to demands from other organisations and governments and the intellectual fashion of the age. The UN and the World Bank were providing funds which enable the academic to engage in research and academic discourses. With joint efforts they advocate basic needs for development that include at least food,
education, health and safety in ways that acknowledge the failure of the modernisation approach to tackle problems of third world. This is part of the quest for alternative approach for development. The failure of the modernisation project to develop developing nations urged many to quest its legitimacy.

Following the deconstruction of the dominant paradigm by Latin American scholars in the 1970s, there was a major epistemological and ontological shift in the thinking of social sciences. Intellectual movements such as social constructivism and interpretivism school of thoughts challenged the positivist thought by rejecting the conception of one objective reality, which was the dominant assumption in the modernization paradigm (Rogers, 1976). Instead, they recognised the existence of multiple realities with variety of experiences and cultures. Thus, one major outcome of such intellectual movement has impacted the conception of research in participatory approach. In the modernization paradigm, research was conducted by outside experts from value free positivist perspective. Objective findings were advocated even at the expense of social change. In the new participatory paradigm, research can be conducted by local individuals and groups by considering the local contexts. This led to the acknowledgement of local cultures, values and knowledge for development devalued in the dominant paradigm (Rogeres, 1976; Huesca, 2008).

The increasing acceptance of the participatory development paradigm both at theoretical and practical levels are mentioned in literatures of development communication (White, Nair, and Ascroft, 1994; Moemeka, 1994; Jacobson & Servaes, 1999; Melkote and Steeves, 2001; Waisbord, 2002; Mefalopulos, 2008; Mcphail, 2009; Servaes, 2008). For
example, Mefalopulos (2008) argues participation has been getting recognition, and enjoying prestige in the development discourse. Similarly, Jacobson (2003: 92) contends that participatory communication is the major subject of development communication debates and areas of research in the present day. In this new paradigm, participation has been considered as a blood cell for sustainable development.

However, different conceptions of the participatory paradigm could not enable reaching a single agreed upon understanding of participation. Conceptions and approaches of participation are diversified. Mostly these are classified as participation as co-option which is another way of extending the modernisation paradigm, and participation as involvement and empowerment which is a more genuine idea. As a result of this divergence, different names are given for this emerging paradigm such as “another development,” “empowerment,” “participation,” and “multiplicity paradigm” (Mefalopulos, 2003 & 2008). The terms show that the concepts and approaches of development are changed from the old paradigm to the new one.

Servaes and Malikhao (2008:164) summarized the basic principles of this new development paradigm as follows:

1. Basic needs: they refer to the fulfilling of both human and materials needs such as food, shelter, education, health, etc.
2. Endogenous: This is to mean conceiving development path as local and context embedded. Development activities are expected to evolve in a way that includes values and visions of the society, not imposed from outside.
3. Self-reliance: it refers to the state of a self sufficient society that depends on its own natural as well as cultural resources for its development.
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4. Ecology: it utilizes the ecosystem in a manner that considers the benefits of the present and future generations with a friendly approach towards the environment. Sustainable development is primarily associated with such environmental concerns of development approach.

5. Participatory democracy: it refers to the practice of genuine democracy at all levels of a society to facilitate development and social change with true involvement of people in the affairs that affect their life and determine their fate.

6. Structural changes: they are restructuring social, economic as well as political relations in a society or balancing socio-cultural and politico economic relations to empower the society for self management and actively engage in participation of decision making.

At the centre of the participatory paradigm, the new view of communication is apparent, no more top-down command model but a bottom-up communication and more dialogue based. As a result, the concept of participatory communication evolved as an alternative approach to modernization, media imperialism theories, and got wider acceptance in the decades following 1970s (Servaes, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008). The new thinking of approaching development as multiplicity also changed the way communication has been conceived and applied. In the previous paradigms communication was conceived as a one-way process flowing from the top elites to the mass at the grassroots. Its focus was persuasion for individuals’ attitude and behaviour. However, in this new conception, communication is a two-way process that needs active engagement of the communicators. It is a horizontal activity which enables the participation of stakeholders in the development process. This horizontal approach of communication
enables the development stakeholders to engage in a form of dialogue (Mefalopulos, 2008:7). With dialogical communication, the stakeholders could investigate development issues, discover solutions for problems and reach consensus for development actions. As a result of these prominent functions, communication is considered as a key factor for the success and sustainability of development endeavours (Mefalopulos, 2008:7).

Moemeka (1994) also describes this alternative paradigm for development as a way of exploring new knowledge (it may be “modern” or indigenous knowledge), acquiring skills, and controlling one’s environment. Attaining quality of life, freedom, understanding one’s ability and limitations are also central issues in the alternative paradigm. This concept of communication shows a major shift from the previous paradigms, and reflects the changed concept of development. In this critical perspective, the role of communication is not to spread and diffuse western technologies and economic and political values like the marketing models. The proponents such as Mowlana and Wilson (1987), and White (1994) see the persuasive campaigns of modernization approach as manipulative and potentially destructive since the paradigms give inadequate attention to the larger social and cultural contexts. This top down persuasion approach blamed individuals, not systems for the prevalence of poverty and backwardness across the third world. Thus, the deconstruction of the dominant paradigm was considered as an objection against the continuation of the historical inequalities and injustices and a call to human centred, egalitarian and open communication environment both at the theoretical and practical levels (Rogers, 1993:37).
In general, the emerging alternative paradigm advocates changes that lead communication scholars to emphasise on a dialogical participatory communication for social change. This participatory communication can be applied using modern and traditional communication channels. Communication is viewed as a process of shared meanings that embedded with the cultural and political contexts of local people since the concept of development has changed in a way that acknowledges local cultures and knowledge for development. Concepts such as dialogue, empowerment, endogenous, involvement, cultural renewal, action and reflection and liberation have encircled the new perspective of development (detail discussion will be given in the next section as part of the theoretical approaches to participatory communication).

2.3 Theoretical Approaches to Participatory Communication

Participatory communication for development is a basic constituent of contemporary development theory and practice. There was optimism that this approach will be more successful though some criticisms of the approach have already noted. For example, Waisbord (2002:21) discusses some of the criticisms: one difficulty in this approach is that it is not effective to employ in a crisis situation which needs an urgent and a top-down intervention. That is, it may not be effective for short term and urgent issues. Another critic is that participatory approach downplays the potential of mass media for participatory development and it over emphasises the potential of interpersonal communication. Especially Freire’s theory of dialogical communication is focusing on group level interaction that downplayed mass media. In addition, practising participatory communication in nondemocratic societies might produce repression and the local people might not be interested in participating in the development process as
there would be of fear of retaliation. Even local community might be manipulated to participate without their intention or willingness.

This section of the dissertation presents a brief review of the literature on the theory and practice of participatory communication for development. As the study of participatory communication has produced a large number of research projects and academic discourse with varied sizes, levels and depths, it would be impossible to review all in this kind of study. Therefore, this section focuses on a summary of key ideas on the mainstream literature about the contemporary study of participatory communication and it begins with the definitions of participatory communication.

2.3.1 Definitions of Participatory Communication

Following the ineffectiveness of the two old paradigms of development i.e. modernization and dependency, participatory development has attracted a growing attention and enthusiasm since its emergence in the 1970s. Especially in the 1990s, participation became a buzzword (White 1994), “cutting edge” of development practice (Guijt & Shah cited in Ben-Meir, 2009: 178), on the speedy roadway to becoming the “dominant trend” (Rahman, 1995:26; Ben-Meir, 2009: 178). The reason is that it was promoted by the major development sponsors holding the funding such as World Bank and UNESCO. Since then, it has become familiar with international development arenas both at theoretical and practical levels (White, 1994; Serveas, 2008; Mefaluups, 2008). However, such emerging paradigm has different meanings for different people in different contexts. Definitions are diverse based on the different perspectives and contexts used. Participation might be conceived as the mobilization of people to
eradicate unjust hierarchies in social, economic and political systems or it is the addition of stakeholders’ contributions in the design and implementation of development initiatives (Tufte & Mefalopulos; 2009:4). White (1994), one of the prominent proponents of this emerging participatory paradigm, expresses the fluid nature of the concept by creating analogy with ‘kaleidoscopic’: Participation “changes its colour and shape at the will of the hands in which it is held; just like the momentary image in the kaleidoscope, it can be very fragile and elusive changing from one moment to the other” (1994:16). Because it is contextual and perspective specific, participation differs in type, degree of intensity, extent and frequency. This shows how participation is a complex and dynamic phenomenon with different approaches, objectives and conceptions (Bordenave, 1994). The following definitions reflect the varied conceptions of participation in the mainstream literature of participation and participatory development communication.

The World Bank learning group conceptualised participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them” (World Bank, 1996: 3). For Bordenave (1994:36) “participation is not simply a fringe benefit that authorities may grant as a concession, but a human being’s birthright that no authority can deny”. Bessette (2004:17) says:

A good indicator of participation is when people take responsibility for carrying out a development initiative. This means that people are not only taking part in different activities, but also in the decision-making process and the planning of the development initiative.
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In this sense participation is beyond community mobilization and consultation. It is about sharing of political as well as economic power equitably. This equitable sharing of power will change the status quo in a way that limits the greater advantage of some groups (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008:99).

Irrespective of differences in conceptions and emphasis, all the above definitions of participation can be summarised as a social change process that involves people in identifying problems, designing plans and implementing decisions and evaluating results that affect their lives and determine their destiny. It is a development activity involving marginalised groups, once blamed for their low status, in development. Participation is a process of empowering them to decide on their lives and destiny. The definitions tell us that participation is reconceptualising humanity in development that respects the culture, views, and values of the poor, recognising their potentials, and above all accepting their capacity and their humanity. It is a call for genuine involvement of the poor in their development process which targets both materials and spiritual advancement of the society with their own decisions and collaborative actions. Participation is a process of social transformation with full involvement of the poor across all stages of development including decision making process.

Despite the fact that participation is a fluid concept that changes its shape, extent and intensity based on the contexts, as the ‘kaleidoscopic’, there is a wide consensus among scholars and practitioners that participation is central to sustainable development (White, 1994; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Servaes & Malikhao, 2008; Huesca, 2008). Similarly, scholars agreed on the idea that
communication is at the heart of participation and development. Communication is the glue that connects people’s participation and development activities. As stated by Mefalopulos (2008:7), it is difficult to imagine participation without communication.

However, like the elusive term of participation, it is not easy to provide a widely acceptable definition of participatory communication. Some of the definitions of participatory communication reflect the current state of thinking in the field. For the sake of understanding the development of the field, its scope and essence, the next discussion will present the main definitions given by prominent scholars of the field.

Bessette (2004: 10) defines participatory development communication as:

A planned activity based on the one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on media and interpersonal communication, which facilitates a dialogue among different stakeholders, around a common development problem or goal.

Bessette notes that participatory communication is conceived as a process and dialogue. Most importantly, this definition focuses the role of media i.e. both mass and community for dialogue similar to interpersonal communication. This is different from the Freiren (2005) perspective of participatory dialogue in which the role of media is downplayed. In such perspective emphasis was given for interpersonal communication only. Tufte & Mefalopulos (2009: 9) state:

Participatory communication is an approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment, especially for those who are most vulnerable and marginalized.

Once again in this perspective of participatory communication, the issue of dialogue, empowerment, respecting the poor and the marginalised voices and promoting their
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active involvement in development activities that shape their future and affect their
destiny, are identified as missions of this approach. Participatory communication is not
releasing of information from the elite to the poor; rather it is a dialogical process of
exploring and producing new knowledge that address local needs.

Although the above definitions show varieties of emphasis in conceiving participatory
communication, the common issues in the field such as dialogue, empowerment,
reflection and action, involvement, social transformation continue dominating the
literature. The definitions imply that participatory communication is about social change
via dialogue, empowerment and self reliance. It is about sustainable development that
strives to see equitable and just social structure. Participatory communication is a
process of creating a just world by mobilising the local people. It is respecting
humanity; genuinely considering their needs, perceptions and aspirations. It is an
activity that challenges the status quo by empowering the poor, usually the banded
section of the society.

2.3.2 Major Approaches to Participatory Communication

Among different conceptions about participation and participatory development, two
approaches are widely accepted by development practitioners and scholars. These are
Freire’s dialogical pedagogy and the UNESCO’s ideas of access, participation, and self-
management. A development project calling itself participatory, accepts these core
principles of democratic communication process in development endeavours (Servaes &
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Freire’s concept of dialogue is central to the notion of participatory communication, empowerment and development / social change. The oppressed people must be engaged in dialogue to free themselves from subjugation, discrimination, alienation and disempowerment or dehumanization (Freire, 2005). This makes participation a political process that needs changing the status quo to redistribute power (White, 1994; Bordenave, 1994; Thomas, 1994). Freire (2005) argues that with dialogue the poor could critically aware of their situation in the community and reflect on their status that in turn inspire them to liberate from cultural, social, economic and political injustices. Dialogue is the central feature of participatory communication necessary for true participation. Freire’s insistence on dialogue as the heart of social change for a group based communication underplays the role of mass media and information communication technology in facilitating dialogical communication (Waisbord, 2002:20).

The UNESCO approach (1977) about participatory communication emphasizes access, participation and self-management in development endeavours. According to Servaes and Malikhao (2008:171) access refers to the use of media for public service which includes opportunities available to the public to choose relevant programs and to have mechanisms of feedback. Participation is the involvement of the public in the communication process including the production process, planning and management of communication activities. Such involvement goes beyond consultation of the public in decision making process. The third concept, self-management, refers to the most advanced levels of participation which includes the exercise of power by the beneficiaries in decision making process engaged in designing of communication
policies and plans. These important notions are broadly known as normative theory of alternative communication that would lead to sustainable development (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008:171).

2.3.2.1 Participatory Communication on the Means and End Continuum

The need for participatory approaches to development communication urged the emergency of polarised conceptions about participatory communication for development. Two polarised positions are widely mentioned in the participatory communication literature (Melkote & Steeves, 2001:337; Huesca, 2008:185). These are conceptualising participatory communication as a means to an end and as an end in and of itself. The conceptions show the end points in a continuum.

2.3.2.1.1 Participation as a Means to an End

One end of the continuum, viewing participation as a means to an end, refers to the instrumental function of participation such as to achieve project objectives and sustain development projects. In this perspective, participation is, for instance, mobilising the local community for the implementation of development projects primarily to increase projects acceptance and feelings of ownership (Guimaraes, 2009:8). In understanding the overall significance of people’s involvement in development, the role of communication in general and mass media in particular was redefined. Mass media is considered as an important tool to open local cultural boundaries and stimulate potentials of the indigenous people for development. In a similar view, the role of interpersonal communication in development endeavours is also acknowledged. However, the critics of this instrumental conception of participation blame this approach
by considering it as simply a reform of the dominant paradigm to become more liberal, dynamic, and human-centred. Such reform is criticised for its role in protecting the dominant paradigm from fierce criticism. The approach was also strongly criticised for giving deaf ear for the role of grassroots communication, indigenous knowledge and other cultural values vitally important for development (Huesca, 2008:186). Such conception of participation has been considered as passive collaboration which leads to manipulative consultation performed to achieve predetermined objectives. It is simply a form of pseudo participation like just putting the old wine into a new bottle. Here, participation is a technical means to achieve predetermined objectives and is thus considered as the re-embodiment of the dominant paradigm.

2.3.2.1.2 Participation as an End in Itself

On the other end of the continuum, participation is perceived as an end in and of itself. This utopian vision of participation emphasises full involvements of local people in their own development. It is believed that local people have the wisdom and ability and cultural values essential for development. Participatory processes are naturally human-centred; it is an act of liberation and transformation. It is a process of empowering the poor, strengthening their capacity and building their confidence in managing the resources in the community (Cadiz, 2005; Huesca, 2008; Servaes & Malikhao, 2008; Guimaraes, 2009). Grounded on these premises, proponents have advocated participatory communication that allows freedom and equal access to sharing feelings and experiences which push towards collective decisions and actions. In this approach, the people at the grassroots are expected to control the communication practices in a way that shows their empowerment. Melkote and Steeves (2001:337) hold this kind of
genuine participation as a process of empowerment. This view of communication for development has been considered as genuine participation which is opposite to manipulative or pseudo participation. As explained by Huesca (2008:187) the continuum shows normative theories of participation which is opposite to functional or administrative perspectives.

The end vs. means classification show different conceptions, functions, objectives and approaches to participatory development. In this regard, Chu (1994) states the ‘means-end’ classification of participation as ways of guiding communication works in development initiatives. He mentions the ‘means approach’ might be fruitful for teaching skills, performing prescribed objectives, and producing highly sophisticated media outputs. In this approach goals are short term, communication is formal and social impacts are perceived as temporary. On the other hand, the participation ‘as an end approach’ can be used effectively in initiatives that target organising social movements, transforming social relations, and empowering group members. In this approach, goals are long run, communication is formal and social impacts are perceived as long-lasting.

However, this ‘means-end’ classification is not free from criticism for the reason that the classification is neither clear cut nor mutually exclusive. Huesca (2008: 188) states the presence of lots of cases in participatory development that are neither means nor end, neither teaching nor organising, neither genuine nor pseudo but can be placed at the middle level, i.e. between the end points. In addition to the two main approaches
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discussed above, there are other approaches linking with the two main understanding of participation, i.e. means to an end and means by itself.

One way of understanding the variety and extent of participation in development endeavours is dividing them in typologies. World Bank (1995) and Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009:6-7) identified four levels of participation in development projects. These are information sharing or passive participation, participation by consultation, participation by collaboration, and empowerment participation. The first two levels are categorized as low levels of participation while the second are levelled as high levels of participation.

The first level of participation is refereed as information sharing which is the least form of participation. It simply addresses the stakeholders by information dissemination and it is levelled as pseudo-participation. It is characterised by one way, top-down communication. The local community is participated for sharing information about development projects designed outside development agents.

The second level, consultation, is also primarily one-way communication between change agents and the local community with strong focus on feedback. The feedback opens room for the local community to air their opinions and views. However, decision making power remains in the hands of change agents or outsiders.
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The third level is collaboration which is different from the above two levels of participation. Unlike to the others mentioned above, it is a two-way communication that facilitates free interaction and participation of stakeholders in decision making process.

The fourth level is empowerment which refers to the transfer of power from change agents to the local community. Especially decision making power on resources and other development activities should be given to the local community. This phase of participation is known as genuine or ideal participation or grassroots participation.

The high levels of participation have paramount contribution to attain sustainable development. These classifications coincide with White’s (1994:17) explanations of two levels of participation i.e. pseudo and genuine participation. He calls pseudo participation as non-participatory for the reason that such level of participation restricts the local people as listeners of decisions made by outsiders or local elites. On the other hand, he explains genuine participation as a cooperation between stakeholders and benefactors throughout the decision making process in a way that empower the stakeholders to control every development action.

In explaining the existence of different levels of participation in development projects, Uphoff (1985) has identified four ways of observing participation in most development projects, namely participation in implementation, evaluation, benefit and in decision-making. His classification considers the participation of the local community in the different phases of development projects. Yoon (2004) explains the presence of participation in implementation when people are actively encouraged and mobilised to
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take part in the realization of projects whereby they are given certain responsibilities and perform certain tasks, whereas participation in evaluation refers to the participation of people in a review of either the success or the failure of projects. Yoon (2004) describes the third type of participation, *participation in benefit*, as the process of people enjoying the fruit of a project. Finally, he describes the last approach, participation in decision-making, in terms of which people commence, discuss, conceptualise and plan activities in development projects. Yoon (2004) claims that participation in decision-making is the most important form to utilise in the development works because it allows the members of a community the power over their own lives and their environment. The above discussion shows different ways of categorising participation in development initiatives though the concept in each category remains considerably the same.

2.3.3 Participatory Communication for Empowerment

Empowerment of the local people is one of the main objectives of communication for participatory approach to development or social change. To change the life of the poor, development initiatives should take communication as a practice of empowerment which stresses “a process of consensus building and resistance. It should be based on dialogue and which must be historically grounded, culturally sensitive, and multi-faceted, with attention to all the political, economic, and ideological structures and processes that comprise society” (Melkote & Stevees, 2001: 38). Such holistic approach to social change needs structural change in a society. According to Servaes (1999) and Melkote and Stevees (2001:351) participation holds more equitable sharing of political as well as economic power, and genuine participation should address power in
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equalities. Any structural change should begin with redistribution of power that enables the establishment of participatory communication policies. Such kind of genuine participatory communication has an indispensable role to facilitate the process of empowering the disadvantaged groups such as women, poor minorities, and other marginalised sections of society (Melkote & Stevees, 2001:351). In order to attain such emancipatory participatory communication policies and practices, the need for holistic structural change is advocated by Mowlana and Wilson (1987:143) as follows:

Communications policies are basically derivatives of the political, cultural and economic conditions and institutions under which they operate. They tend to legitimize the existing power relations in society and therefore, they cannot be substantially changed unless there are fundamental structural changes in society that can alter these power relationships themselves.

The construction of a participatory communication for social change model needs considering the general emancipation process in a society at different levels. In general, basic components of such participatory communication model are summarised by Servaes and Malikhao (2005:98) based on Somavia’s (1981) ideas:

1. Treating communication as part of other human needs: For the empowerment of a community, addressing communication need is essential like other human needs such as health, nutrition, housing, education and employment. Together with these needs, it must enable societies to emancipate themselves from operation, marginalization and poverty. The right to communicate is a basic human right like the right to inform and to be informed.

2. Communication is a delegated human right: The social communication process should be based on the social, cultural, political and economic contexts of the society. In this frame work, participatory communication plays a key role in organising the society.
3. Communication is at the centre of conscientisation, and emancipation process: Dialogical participatory communication is a nucleus of reflection and action on societal problems that lead to emancipation and liberation of the oppressed. Media have a huge social responsibility in this process of social change by become educational and socialization agent. They are instruments for informing, misinforming, concealing and interpreting events and so on.

Participatory communication performed specially by mass media should work in the framework of social and legal responsibilities to get the consensus of the society. They should work with obligations as they have rights. However, care should be taken to minimise, if not, to avoid the influence of the power holders unlike to the old development journalism model. Care should be also given to respect the mass at grassroots level, not to prioritise the interest of power holders.

To achieve the empowerment role of communication, Cadiz (2005:150-151) presents the following major points as important ingredients of a communication process.

1. Providing training: Communication training that aims to equip the development stakeholders with better communication skills is required for those involved in the development process. In participatory approach, the role of development communicator is of a facilitator, negotiator and consensus builder; all these need equal participation of both sides. To be effective in this process, the participation should be backed with the necessary communication skills. As a result, development communicator should give communication training to stakeholders as per their levels and backgrounds. However, the training needs to give
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priority for the poor to empower them while the rich already have an advantage as they can communicate. The inherent nature of communication in all human and social change activities also necessitates training that targets empowerment. Cadiz specifically advises the infusion of communication competence with apparent objectives of development.

2. Communication planning: Communication planning is necessary for achieving the desired objectives of development. Communication planning includes careful examination of development contexts. It is also considering the capacity and nature of the stakeholders who participate in the development project. Besides, it includes the expected objectives of the communication works, the types of communication approaches and channels used in the development project. Even the necessary materials and costs should be stated clearly. The planning should visibly state the role of indigenous communication systems since these systems are near to the local situation and can be used as a good means of empowerment. In a participatory approach, it is expected that the stakeholders especially the local people should be part of the communication planning process.

3. Designing and producing communication outlets: In participatory development environment, communication works should go beyond the design and production of communication outlets provided by communication experts. The communication design and production should be done with the active participation of the local people based on the overall communication plan discussed above. Thus, communication media design and production are activities that need working together with equal spirit of mutual benefit to
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achieve the desired social change. The local people are not only recipients of the media product; rather they are part of the production process.

4. Communication technology: To design and produce appropriate communication outlets, using appropriate communication technology is important. The application or innovation of suitable communication technology has its own impact on the use of communication for empowerment. The use of proper media such as low-powered radio transmitters is an example of communication technology suitable for rural communities. The use of bulletin board news, audiocassettes, puppetry, and youth theatre are good examples to use them in a participatory environment.

5. Communication centre: Access and variety of information are essential elements of empowerment. Organisations which strive for social change need the building of communication centres as part of their capacity building work. A well-equipped and well managed communication centre could be used as an empowerment centre besides its role as recorder of history and documentation of the development process. The communication centre will have multi purposes such as enabling information access for those who need, record the profile of the development works and the local people and document the procedure of the social change process.

6. Archiving communication / data banking: In this information age, information management is an important concern which enables using and banking the information from different directions. Because of the advancement of ICT, information overload has become one great concern that affects the potential of information for empowerment. Mismanagement of information could lead to
misinformation and communication breakdown between the development partners. Thus, the communication centre should have a department for information archiving or data banking to manage the flow of information. Information management has become an important concern in development communication because of the proliferation of ICT and its outcomes, multidimensional information production and flows.

7. Evaluation of communication: Development communication is a process of implementing series of actions in the social change process that needs step by step performance evaluation. The evaluation component of participatory communication enables to know past shortcomings and be armed for tomorrow’s better performances. In this way, it can be used as an axis of learning from within. The evaluation should be made with active involvement of all the stakeholders focused on the local people.

To sum up this sub-section, people are blood cells in the social change process with the perspectives of participatory communication. In other words, as blood cells are the forces of our body and mind, people are the driving forces of change. As the perspective advocates development refers to elevating the courage of the local community to be proud of its own identity, knowledge, and environment as a process of empowerment and self-reliance. Thus, participatory development activities are expected to educate and inspire people to be actively involved in individual and community progress while conserving the ecology. Participatory communication is at the hub of this empowerment process which in turn is vital for sustainable development (Melkote & Stevees,
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2001:351). The next section discusses the role of participatory communication for sustainable development.

2.3.4 Participatory Communication for Sustainable Development

When development is understood as a social change process that requires active participation of members of a society, this type of communication is essential for sustainable development. In this sense, development communication does not mean only delivering information to those who do not have, usually the poor. It is about enabling them to actively participate in their development via particular communication processes. These communication processes include articulating their points of view, participating in decision-making, receiving and giving information, speaking and getting a response (Panos, 2007:23).

Scholars (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Huesca, 2008; White, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes, 2008) argue that the way communication is conceptualised and applied in development affects the overall effectiveness of the development initiatives. As discussed so far, the different conceptions and practices of communication in development have been given different paradigms and approaches of development communication. Thus, this sub-section, discusses the interface between participatory communication and sustainable development in ways that reflect how communication could be conceived and applied in the context of sustainable development.

Hasan (2006) argues that sustainable development includes a balanced development across generations in economic, social and environmental dimensions of life. As noted
by Mefalopulos (2005:247), the basic dimensions of sustainable development are the environment and the rural development which is being highly articulated in the current international development agenda. This conception of sustainable development is a call for including a wide range of development issues and designing projects on health, education, poverty alleviation, and environmental protection of focusing on the poor and the marginalised section of the society. According to one of the significant advocates of communication for sustainable development, the UNDP (2001) the widely cited millennium development goals are mentioned as key indicators of sustainable development. The eight millennium development goals are: 1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger 2. Achieving universal primary education 3. Promoting gender equality and empowering women 4. Reducing child mortality 5. Improving maternal health 6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases 7. Ensuring environmental sustainability 8. Developing a global partnership for development.

As Mefalopulos (2005:253) argued, sustainability of development in general and rural development in particular depends not only on the perceptions of stakeholders towards the planned change but also the way they participate in identifying problems, prioritise issues and decide paths for solutions. Therefore, in the perspective of participatory communication, one of the major missions of communication in development context is to facilitate people’s participation and this in turn ensures the sustainability of development. Again the author emphasised this issue by stating: “any intervention, be it in the social, rural or environmental dimension, needs to be based on a participatory model in order to be sustainable” (Mefalopulos, 2005: 248). Currently there is a universal agreement among scholars and development partners that participation is a
pre-requisite for sustainable development. If we are convinced with this universal motto of participation for sustainable development, it is clear that communication is a bridge between people’s involvement and sustainable development. Genuine participation and empowerment are the two basic ingredients of communication for sustainable development (Mefalopulos, 2005: 249; Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 351).

One of the prominent sponsors and promoters of development communication, UN also emphasises on the role of participatory communication for sustainable development. For instance, one of the top issues loudly pronounced in the 9th UN round table on communication for development is that the achievement and sustainability of development projects depend mainly on participatory communication approaches. That is, one of the important issues highly pronounced in the roundtable is the use of participatory communication for facilitating dialogue and identifying development issues (FAO, 2007).

As envisaged in the previous section, the basic roles of communication in sustainable development include exchanging information with relevant stakeholders, building consensus with them, identifying and defining projects’ objectives, and supporting the success of projects. In this sense, communication is not about transmitting information rather it is about sharing knowledge and experiences. Such is a participatory perspective of communication which enables development projects to succeed and sustain (Mefalopulos, 2005: 252). In his discussion about the interface between communication and sustainable development, Mefalopulos argues that the level of participation by all the stakeholders mainly determines the sustainability of development projects. The
author further states that communication is the indispensable component in attaining meaningful participation that enables active engagement of the participants in sharing perceptions and knowledge necessary to identify problems and plan solutions (Mefalopulos, 2005: 248). Similarly, Ramirez and Quarry (2004: 23) suggest that "communication and participation are two sides of the same coin". In other words, there can never be participation without some form of communication. Such participatory communication enables the development actors to understand, contrast, and share the realities of different stakeholders ahead of preparing and communicating messages. This acknowledgment of the knowledge and capacity of the poor i.e. multiplicity of realities is a sign of departure from the previous top down approach of development communication. Such new approach uses dialogue for understanding different realities. In this way, dialogical communication is crucial in reaching consensus, building trust, analysing problems and searching solutions.

Based on the Freire’s dialogical pedagogy, dialogue is at the centre or heart of participatory communication. As Freire (2005) argues, one’s capacity to “name the world” enables the emergence of true humanisation, and dialogue makes possible to understand one’s reality and the world. Freire’s reference to “name the world” is accepting the presence of multiple realities. Subject-object distinctions could not enable people to make genuine dialogue since one’s perception of the self and the world is articulated during communicating with each other freely. He expressed the main essence of dialogue: “being dialogue is not invading, not manipulating, not imposing orders. Being dialogue is pledging oneself to the constant transformation of reality” (Freire, 2005). Such advanced notion of dialogue enables participants / stakeholders to
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engage actively in self-reflection and critically examine their status and problems. Such active engagement in free and open dialogue would lead to action-reflection/consicetization-praxis. This horizontal communication gives empowerment to the poor and enables them to articulate the problem and activate to march for the solutions. For any communication intervention to be called participatory, it should be based on such notion of dialogue. And such dialogue starts with problem identifications; then action to tackle the root causes of poverty, marginalization and abandonment. In this sense dialogue means a call for genuine participation; as discussed in the previous section, dialogue is for the betterment of tomorrow through challenging existing status quo of power imbalance, injustice and domination. By narrowing down the social distance between change agents and stakeholders, dialogue enables a more equitable sharing of ideas, knowledge and above all, power.

Sharing Cadiz (2005:147-149) interpretation of Freire’s dialogical communication model, the following section discusses fundamental qualities of dialogical communication which are important to practice participation in development:

1. **Being equal is important for communication:** The first quality of Freire’s dialogical model accentuates equality between change agents and development partners. Cadiz (2005: 147) contends that “teacher” and “student”, “extensionist” and “farmer”, “expert” and “user”, “communicator” and “audience”, and “sender” and “receiver” interchange roles in mutually beneficial two-way interaction.” Similarly, Servaes (1996) noted, a development agent can act as a teacher and a student at the same time in a mutually beneficial manner. Thus, there is no room for top down approach which enables one party
to have superior position by subordinating the other party in an interaction. This is a major shift of understanding communication, development and the participants from the old development paradigms to the new one.

2. **Posing problem:** the second quality of Freire’s dialogical model is the ability to pose a problem in a way that discovers ample experiences of development participants i.e. the target communities. Once again this is a total departure from the previous teacher dominated “banking pedagogy” approach in which teachers, trainers or development communicators were struggling to deposit knowledge without considering the background of the development participants as well as the development contexts. This approach is striving to get the learners’ or development participants’ lifelong experiences and insights about development issues and problems. This is done by posing challenging questions, not by lecturing prescriptive solutions to problems designed mostly without considering the local contexts. The main objective of such liberating pedagogy is enlightening the marginalized part of the society. Such conception of education is dialogical which gives a wide chance of critical thinking, reflection and action for the poor. This concept of education is a direct contrast with the “banking pedagogy” i.e. top down approach that refers to depositing information in the minds of people. In a liberating pedagogy there should be mutual trust between teachers and students, in this sense, development agents and stakeholders. Dialogue is at the heart of liberating pedagogy that diminishes the social distance between teachers and learners, between leaders and followers, development agents and the local people. It helps to facilitate a more balanced exchange of ideas, experience and knowledge that emancipate the poor from the
dark prison of domination and marginalization or in Freire’s term “dehumanization”.

3. **Praxis:** The third quality, praxis refers to a cycle of action and reflections in a social change process. The above discussed changed role of development communication experts as facilitators not transmitters is backed by this quality of the dialogical communication, praxis. Praxis is a never-ending cycle of action and reflection on development problems primarily based on people’s experiences, thoughts and assumptions. For Freire, action is the use of knowledge in practice while reflection is abstraction and theorising of knowledge. To get a complete knowledge both action and reflection should be integrated in a balanced way. Therefore, fruitful development projects need engaging in action and reflection in a way that enables learning from experiences, modifying or changing activities and evaluating development initiatives for their better performance. This shows participatory communication is best understood through a cycle of action and reflection in a development process.

4. **Conscientising:** The fourth quality of Freire’s dialogical communication model is *conscientisation* which refers to a process of developing critical consciousness to understand one’s situation (past, present, and future). Dialogue enables development partners to understand their socio-cultural and politico-economic conditions. This process pushes participants to become actively engaged in social change efforts based on conscious decisions in a way that determine their destiny. This engagement i.e. praxis enables people to achieve *conscientisation*. Thus, one main effort of development communication experts should be
achieving *conscientisation* of the local people. Besides, Cadiz (2005) advocates the need of *conscientisation* not only for the local people but also for change agents and development sponsors coming from government and non-government organisations, and the academic world for attaining overall social change. This is a holistic approach to human development.

5. **Values:** In qualifying his dialogical model, Freire explains five values that surround true dialogue as his fifth quality of dialogical communication. These values are listed as love, humility, hope, faith (in development partners’ capability), and critical thinking. These values need respecting the poor, acknowledging their culture and traditional knowledge system, establishing good rapport with them, appreciating their capacity and striving to filling their gaps, and building their critical thinking. For instance, in practical terms, these values could be changed into action during interpersonal communication contexts by giving priorities to authentic listening to the problems and concerns of the local people, understanding their desires and respecting their attitudes and behaviours. In pronouncing this value of authentic listening in development, Serveas and Malikahio (2005: 91) explain: “people are ‘voiceless’ not because they have nothing to say, but because nobody cares to listen to them. Authentic listening fosters trust much more than incessant talking”. That is, authentic listing is a component of dialogical communication.

6. **Voice:** The other principle central to participatory communication is voice for the voiceless. Participation means a call to speaking, listening, and arguing about problems of the poor with the active involvement of the poor themselves, not by outsiders alone. This involvement enables the previously abandoned, isolated,
marginalized sections of the society to articulate their concerns, to find out problems, to devise solutions and to take collective action. Dialogical communication gives chance for the poor to speak about themselves and be listened by power holders or change agents. Thus, dialogical participatory communication enables the previously ignored voices to be heard. For this end, active participation of the local community in the development process is important. This makes genuine participation as a means of empowerment and sustainable development. In other words, dialogical communication is about genuine participation which is pertinent to participatory development.

Generally, the participatory communication model reinforces change on the role of development communicators from being transmitters or disseminators of information to facilitators of the social change process. This is a paradigm shift in approaching development and communication in a way that enables the development specialists to work closely with the local community since development is conceived as self-determined process addressed by joint efforts, not by filling information gaps only. In concluding this sub-section, I share Mefalopulos’ idea that communication for sustainable development is primarily about dialogue, participation and empowerment. These are core ingredients in the current thinking of development communication in general and participatory communication in particular.

2.4 Factors Affecting Participatory Communication

Theoretically, the potential of participatory communication for sustainable development has been acknowledged. Participation is a buzzword in the development discourse and
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is preached as the hopeful and legitimate path for sustainable development. However, when it comes to practical level, its potential is challenged by a number of factors. This section discusses different challenges that limit the adoption of participatory communication for development. Waisbord’s (2008) institutional perspective on challenges of participatory communication enlightens us the bureaucratic factors that hinder the application of participatory communication. The institutional dynamics denigrate the potential of participatory communication in three ways. These are bureaucratic requirements for messaging, making communication as a subsidiary discipline, and seeking technical solutions to political problems; how each factor affects the practice of participation in development is presented as follows:

1. The bureaucratic obstacles

One of the factors that affect the implementation of participatory approach to development is related to the bureaucratic obstacles. The bureaucratic set up of development organisations might not be suitable for participatory development approaches. The standard organisational procedures maintain understandings and applications of communication as technical skills to circulate development messages. Besides, participation is considered as a time-consuming approach that requires ample human resources; hence, officials incline in favour of the informational communication approaches. Servaes and Arnst (1999:115) explain that highly structured and deeply institutionalised projects are not suitable for participatory development. Waisbord (2008: 512) further contends that participatory communication does not go with a mentality that prioritizes gaining results within a short period of funding time. For participatory approach, social change is a process that needs relatively long period that
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does not match with timeline of budget allocation. Involving the community might delay smooth approval of projects and funds if community needs negate with organisations’ predetermined objectives. Therefore, all these bureaucratic factors favour the use of informational model of communication where the use of participatory communication becomes minimal. In a similar vein, Servaes and Arnst (1999:114) state the presence of administrative obstacles in applying participatory approach; instead, centralised administrative systems closes the room for genuine participation.

2. The Subordinate Status of Communication

The second obstacle that hinders the application of participatory approach is the status of communication given by development organisations. As explained by Waisbord (2008) the status of communication in development organisation is found to be subordinative. Usually communication is housed in health, financial or agricultural programs in a way that obliges it to play only a role of subsidiary discipline. Such dependence takes away its autonomy and hence it fails to determine its objectives and approaches. Professionals from other disciplines thus assume the authority to determine its status. For example, individuals from program managers, other fields, sometimes determine goals and approaches to communication. Based on the conceptions of the technical staff, communication is shaped to use approaches that fit their thinking in ways that meet program goals. In such organisations, the role of communication for enabling participation gets less attention. Communication is needed for its technical use, not for enhancing dialogue and mobilisation of the community for social change.
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When other disciplines far from communication determine its status, professionalism will suffer a lot. Other privileged professions in development such as medicine and economics may need communication to disseminate information in order to achieve their predetermined objectives. As a result, community participation, dialogue, decision-making, local knowledge and empowerment and other notions of participatory approach will have no room in the development process or they might be manipulated. This will result in prevalence of information model of communication that favours dissemination of experts’ information commonly done in a top down fashion. The technical mentality of these professionals will pave a way for the continuity of the top down approach where participatory communication becomes impossible (Waisbord, 2008).

3. Distancing political issues

The third major factor that hinders adoption of participatory communication in development works is orientation towards politics. Waisbord (2008) contends that the dominance of technical outlook that neglects a political viewpoint is a serious problem that hampers the use of participation. Development programs are distancing themselves from politics as if development is not affected or influenced by politics. Nevertheless, reality tells us that development goals are affected by many political issues such as international as well as local political movements, domestic politics of donor countries, charity and paternalistic views. By ignoring the impact of such kind of political issues, development agents present themselves as technical agents that support humanitarian goals beyond the framework of policies.
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One can raise similar questions for other development issues such as education, agriculture, and gender equality in a way that shows politics is at the centre of participatory development process. Considering such complexities, it can be argued that politics is the flipside of participation. If there is a well-established democratic political culture, the chance of authentic participation in the development process has a strong probability. Expecting genuine participation in authoritarian political culture is like expecting rain without cloud. Avoiding such problems without political action is difficult for the reason that marginalized groups, women, and the poor have subordinate position in the socio-economic, political and cultural systems of developing countries. Using technical solutions are deficient to deal with such kind of development problems ingrained in political inequalities (Waisbord 2008: 517). In a similar vein, Servaes and Arnst (1999:114) noted that participation may not be accepted by those who prefer the status quo since participation needs sharing of power.

Bessette (2004) also discussed the main challenges that affect the use of participatory communication for social change. His point of discussion focused on the need for a favourable environment to use the participatory approach. The favourable environment mainly refers to democracy and the right to express divergent views. He argues that it is impossible if not, difficult, to use participatory communication for social change in the absence of democracy and human rights, freedom of expression (Bessette, 2004: 18). When decision-making power is in the sole hands of community elders, chiefs or local leaders, entertaining others’ points of view such as of women, the youth and the poor will be very difficult. In other words, cultures that do not accommodate divergent points of view could not promote the use of participatory approach. Moreover, past negative
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experiences of a given community such as political repression because of free speech might hinder the use of participatory communication. People might hide themselves in the shell of silence and distance themselves from participation to avoid similar retaliation because of their speech. Generally, Bessette's discussion shows how participatory communication is linked with the political system and commitment of a given country or locality. Without a good political culture, the issues of democracy and the right to express opinions could be not practised.

Heck (2003:12) also echoed that the political culture of a country and the legislative environment hindering freedom of association would disdain genuine participation. He also states socio-cultural obstacles such as prevalence of dependence mentality, sense of frustration and suspicion of officials among local poor as of participatory communication. Besides, Heck mentions other factors including the scattered geographical settlement of the poor, their low living standard usually chained by heavy workloads, ill health status, illiteracy, absence of exposure to non-local information, ignorance of their right to determine their future with full involvement of the development activities. However, one may argue that although most of Heck’s lists are important to consider in the application of participatory development, people’s low level of education or illiteracy and absence of local information channels should not be considered as obstacles by themselves. This is because participatory approach using indigenous knowledge and indigenous communication systems like dialogue can overcome these problems. Even in this regard, participatory approach is friendlier with the illiterate and the poor people than with the other one-way top-down communication systems.
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2.5 Summary

To sum up, the experience of the past six decades has shown the central place of communication in the field of development and the importance of participation for sustainable development. The discussion makes clear that the history and concept of development communication has been dominated by the three theoretical approaches: modernisation, dependency and participatory. Modernisation and dependency theories use a top-down model of communication while participatory theory employs a horizontal model. These two models of communication have contrasting areas of focus. Top down communication is a model that relies on the mass media in a top down fashion, and a horizontal communication is a model that promotes grassroots communication in a bottom up or horizontal fashion. These models are also referred as the monologic modernization model and dialogic participatory model respectively. Mefalopulos (2008: 59) summarised the scope, models of reference, theoretical orientation, basic conception, and timing of the communication intervention of the two dominant camps of the field of development communication in the following table, Table 2.1.
### Table 2.1: Basic Differences between Monologic and Dialogic Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Modernization/ Monologic</th>
<th>Participatory/ Dialogic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main objectives</strong></td>
<td>Information transmission and persuasion for attitude and behaviour change</td>
<td>Dialogical communication to share knowledge and mutual understanding for social change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reference model</strong></td>
<td>Communication is one way and linear with a top down approach</td>
<td>Communication is two way and horizontal with circular fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation model</strong></td>
<td>Out-put oriented in which it is determined at the beginning</td>
<td>process oriented in which the results identified and guided in the course of the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic notion of communication for development</strong></td>
<td>Mass media are dominantly used in the development process</td>
<td>Dialogical communication methods are used to in ways that enable the active participation of stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main role of the Communication expert</strong></td>
<td>The designer, decision maker and user of media outlets for persuasion, attitude and behaviour change.</td>
<td>Facilitator of dialogue and analyzer of the local situation and propose suitable strategy for social change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication intervention time</strong></td>
<td>In the implementation stage (after objectives are determined)</td>
<td>Starting from the commencement of the projects (before objectives are defined)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Mefalopulos (2008: 59)

Although participatory communication has become a buzzword in the current development thinking, it lacks a single widely accepted conception. As we have seen in the aforementioned discussion, participatory communication has a variety of definitions,
conceptions and applications. Without gaining a single accepted definition, participation is a widely pronounced term that everyone needs to use it in development arena.

As the literature review shows authentic participation in development works would provide community members a room to participate with problem identification, planning process, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such participation would lead to empowerment and sustainable development. This research argues that putting participation into practice will improve development projects. Moreover, it is assumed that participatory development is essential for achieving appropriate and comprehensive development in Ethiopia; however, the study hypothesises that while the developing practitioners praise the idea of participation in theory and in their propaganda, participation and participatory communication will be ignored or unknown, or they would use the alternative idea of participation which could not help the projects benefit the community. Therefore, the main purpose of the research is first to explore the knowledge or awareness of participation existing on the research participants in Ethiopia and examine their practical experience.

2.6 Conclusion
The literature reviewed sets out the status of the research on perceptions of development practitioners and the local community (stakeholders) towards participatory communication and its practices. The study intends to address research gaps and contribute something to better application of the new approach in the current thinking of development communication discourse through studying the perception and practice of participatory communication in Ethiopian context.
Chapter Two: Review of Theoretical Framework of the Study

As discussed in the preceding sections, the participatory paradigm has been widely promoted and commended by critics and writers as an alternative corridor for development; it is also considered as a means of empowerment for the disadvantaged groups of people in the developing countries. However, there is a clear gap between the theoretical and practical levels of participation. For instance, Mefalopulos (2005: 249) states the presence of contradiction between the theoretical and practical aspects of participation. Theoretically it is one of the importantly commended concepts which is in contradiction with its manipulated and distorted practices. The manipulation caused the presence of uneven understanding and practices of participation even within similar project/s.

Furthermore, the literature review indicates that the mainstream literature in development communication in general and participatory communication in particular rarely address the perceptions of development practitioners as well as beneficiaries towards participation and participatory communication. Especially this is one of the forgotten research issues in Ethiopia. Therefore, by studying the local development organisation in Ethiopia, the study could address the gap, the perceptions of the development partners i.e. development practitioners and participants (beneficiaries) about participatory communication and its practices. This is in line with ideas of Maedel (2011:25) who emphasises the importance of studying development professionals primarily from their own perspectives which was downplayed in the academic discourse.
Chapter Two: Review of Theoretical Framework of the Study

As illustrated by Maedel (2011:25), the main focus of the literature on international development is either on the field as a whole or case studies that focused on limitations of beneficiaries. It hardly discusses about the development experts from their own perspectives. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the voices and experiences of the development practitioners and stakeholders (the local community). That is, the research examines their perspectives that reveal the conceptions and practices of participatory communication for development in Ethiopian context.

To conclude about the literature, development communication in general and participatory communication in particular is used for developing the theoretical framework of the study. The three major theories of development communication namely modernisation, dependency and participatory informed the theoretical framework of the study. However, it is important to note that the dominant theoretical framework is built on participatory communication. The theories provide a theoretical framework for analysis and methods of field observation. They help to describe and explain the research phenomena specifically the perception and practice of participatory communication for development.

Therefore, the framework enables the study to gather the data, determine the data gathering methods and to analyse and interpret the data as well as to compare and contrast findings with other similar works in ways that draw wider conclusions and implications for the field of study both at the theoretical and practical levels.

Although, gender and development is not central issue in this research, it is imperative to note that gender and development is one of the central issues in the development
Chapter Two: Review of Theoretical Framework of the Study

discourse. The assumption that sees gender as socially constructed and culturally situated phenomenon guided gender and development efforts at the theoretical and practical levels (Sengupta, 2007). Since the 1980s Gender and Development (GAD) approach is influenced by the rhetoric of participatory paradigm which perceives “women as agents of change rather than as passive recipients of development assistance” (Rathgeber, 1990: 494). As Riano (1994a) further states that participatory approach could transform women to become active agents of their own change. Thus, it is possible to argue that participatory communication has a role to empower women in the development process. The argument is situated on the fact that because of patriarchy and tradition, women are marginalised in the development process generally in Ethiopia and specifically in the Amhara region. Especially, the uses of dialogical participatory communication could reverse such marginalization by giving equal chances for both stakeholders of the development initiatives to engage in critical thinking, actions and reflections on gender and development issues. The need for such approach is also reinforced by Steeve (2001) who argues that gender issues are not sufficiently addressed in communication for development efforts.

The next chapter discusses the review of the related research works on participatory development and communication in developing countries focusing on the Ethiopian experience. This could enable us to see the application of the theoretical model developed for the research.
CHAPTER THREE

3. REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH WORKS ON PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction
The preceding chapter presented review of the theories used to develop the theoretical framework of the study and it is the participatory model of development selected as a theoretical framework. This chapter then sets out the review of related research works that analyse the implementation of the participatory model of development in development projects in Ethiopia and other developing countries. The review attempts to disclose the research gap of the study and situates the research into the global trends of participatory communication research. This review section in general has eight related research works on participation, participatory communication and development and is aimed at establishing and showing the research gap and the applicability of the theoretical model of participatory development in the actual development context. The first three research reports show the trends of participatory communication research paradigm in Asia and Latin America, while the next two focus on participatory development communication in Africa. The remaining three are research works on development (communication) and participation in Ethiopia.

3.2 Participatory Communication Research in Developing Countries
Thomas (2008:31) in his study entitled, “Communication and the persistence of poverty: The need for a return to basics” analyses the reasons for the persistence of poverty in the contemporary developing countries vis-a-vis tremendous development efforts. Exploring why poverty across the world is increasing despite lots of
development efforts for alleviating, he comes up with four conceptions about poverty and its solutions.

The first conception of poverty is related to considering poverty as a mindset. This approach mainly blames the ‘have-nots’ for their low status. That is, rather than examining the effectiveness of development models, tools and technologies, this conception blames only the poor for their poverty. This approach is also associated with the modernisation school of thought that focuses dissemination of information from the ‘civilised’ West to the rest of the ‘uncivilised’ developing parts of the globe. For such over ambitious purpose, mass media were considered as magic multipliers. The second conception looks at poverty as lack of resources such as basic health services, education, shelter, land and unemployment. This is the most widespread belief normally associated with economic or material shortages. Scarcity in communication was also defined as lack of radio sets and lack of access to newspapers. Although it is criticised, this conception is among the most common and vivid approaches implemented by governmental and non-governmental organisations. Thus, the solution to poverty in this model is to providing necessary material and infrastructure such as food supplies, shelter, health-care centres, schools and job opportunities and communication tools. Rather than addressing the root causes of poverty, this approach focuses on the symptoms of poverty. In other words, addressing the root causes requires empowering the poor in political, economic and cultural arenas. Contrary to tackling the root causes of the modernisation paradigm, the knowledge, ability and cultural identity of the poor are taken as invalid and backward. Traditional knowledge system was considered as backward, unscientific and irrelevant. Such assumption leads to the marginalisation of the indigenous knowledge from the development process. As Escobar (1995: 13) argues
that “[d]evelopment has relied exclusively on one knowledge system, namely, the modern Western one. The dominance of this knowledge system has dictated the marginalisation and disqualification of non-Western knowledge systems”. The end result of this marginalisation of traditional knowledge system is a failure of development projects across developing countries.

The third conception approaches poverty as lack of access. This notion refers to enabling the poor to become aware of their rights in gaining essential services such as education, water, health, and employment opportunities (Thomas, 2008). Access is frequently related with empowerment, which enables the poor to deal with the root causes of poverty. As opposed to seeing poverty as lack of resources, the model considers the poor as beneficiaries of government donations, but they are denied opportunities to use these resources in a manner that leads to sustainable change. The foundation to the access model is that considering poverty as lack of awareness on the part of member of a community about their roles in fighting against poverty.

The fourth conception defines poverty as lack of human rights. Different from other models, this model is acquainted with the politics of ‘entitlement’ - the legal, political and administrative engagements that enable ordinary citizens to achieve their urgent, short and long term needs. In the modernisation school of thought access to these services favour the urban based elites, not the majority poor. Therefore, entitlement means re-ordering resources from those favoured in the modernisation paradigm to the great majority of the poor, who actually need empowerment.

Thomas (2008) associates the models of access and the human rights with participatory communication for development. Participatory communication for development
approach capitalises people’s participation for the success of development projects. The approach is based on conscious endeavour to involve people in their change. It has been successful in many popular projects in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Thomas (2008:38), however, cautions that the success of the participatory approach depends on the extent of participatory practices. Furthermore, the notion of this approach has changed from its original meaning rooted in genuine participation to pseudo participation. Lack of political commitment to the alteration of structures and practices is largely responsible for the persistence of poverty. This is usually the feature of the ‘people-led’ change that is not a genuine notion of participatory approach. However, contrary to this controlled view of participation or pseudo participation, it has been found that projects used genuine participation as a means to sustainable social change were associated with the attainment of justice, human rights and equitable development.

Thomas’s discussion discloses the place of participatory model of development in the process of empowerment and poverty alleviation. That means he indicates the potentials of participatory communication to alleviate poverty. Thomas’s study could enable us to understand ORDA’s approach to participation in the process of poverty alleviation and sustainable development. This research explores the types of participation in the selected development organisation in a way that sheds light on the interface among the approaches to poverty, the conception and practice of participatory approaches and development achievements.

As Thomas argues, there have been many empirical research works and theoretical arguments that prove the potential of participatory paradigm for social change (White, Nair & Ascroft, 1994; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Bessette, 2006; Mefalopulos, 2008;
Chapter Three: Review of Related Research Works on Participatory Development Model

Searveas, 2008; Macphil, 2009). Comprehensive deliberations in these literatures were provided in the previous chapter. However, to illustrate how participatory approach is effective, brief presentation of two empirical studies that document the effectiveness of participatory communication approach for social change in developing countries is given. Both are PhD dissertations conducted in Asia (India) and Latin America (Peru).

One of the PhD research works was conducted by Chitnis (2005) entitled “Communication for Empowerment and Participatory Development: A Social Model Health in Jamkhed, India”. The study explores the application of participatory communication in the Indian context. It documents the experiences of successful participatory development practices affecting health related issues in India. The study evaluates the success of social change using participation and dialogue.

The study found out that long time application of Freirean (2005) dialogical communication principles could empower the poor. It also enlightens us that the success of participatory communication and collective action is determined by the change agents’ level of intervention as facilitators and their sensitivity of local concerns in the development process. The study further demonstrates how the target organisation has changed the structured and culturally divided Indian society through participatory approaches. That is, with the involvement of the stakeholders, it becomes possible to empower the powerless, and improve the health conditions of the poor. The study documented three decades of intervention of the health project in India with appreciable social changes.

However, the study notes that genuine participation and social change are slow processes and need commitment of both change agents and stakeholders. Although the
study seeks to understand how development takes place based on the principles of empowerment and participation, exploring perceptions is not its area of focus. This becomes one of the basic differences with the present research project. This difference further results into the dissimilarities with other research questions and specific objectives. For instance, how does perception affect social change programs and what are the challenges of scaling up participatory communication and development for social change? Exploring development specifically on health issues with a health research model, and investigating the holistic development matters also make variations on the framing of research questions and theoretical frame works as well as research discussion and findings. Such differences are pronounced by the contextual differences of Asia and Africa in general, India and Ethiopia in particular.

The other research work is by Sengupta (2007) for a PhD dissertation “Enacting an Alternative Vision of Communication for Social Change in the Peruvian Amazon”. The research documents the successful experience of participatory development paradigm. The study attempts to understand how issues of gender, health and human rights can be communicated effectively. This interpretative study builds up on feminist and participatory research paradigm and reveals how participatory social change can effectively reduce gender based discrimination and disempowerment.

The study points out the requirement of community centred approaches for achieving social change. It discloses that social change initiatives need to be contextualised and considered the lived realities of the local people if they want to be successful. It specifically shows that narrowing gender disparity requires a holistic understanding of gender that embraces men and social structures.
Specifically, the research outlines the effectiveness of entertainment education using community radio in empowering women in the Peruvian Amazon. Since this is a feminist study, basic differences with the present study could be this one. That is, the theoretical framework guides the present research process, and the study is not a feminist study. The present research mainly focuses on perception and practice of participation, which is not the focus of the stated research in Peru. The main focus of the Peru study is exploring edutainment approach using radio as a participatory communication tool via a feminist approach. While, the present study is not about exploring the use of radio and entertainment education approach for social change. Besides, such kind of participatory research is basically context specific, this difference can be observed with the contextual differences of Latin America and Africa in general and Amazon and the Horn in particular.

Despite the differences and similarities, both dissertations use qualitative research design to explore and document the success and the failure of participatory paradigm in the course of social change. Following the same approach, the present research can be one of the global efforts of exploring the practice of participatory paradigm for development.

### 3.3 Participatory Communication Research in African Context

Let us now move from Asia via Latin America to West Africa. The work is Diallo’s PhD dissertation (2007): “Genuine Participation in Social Change Programs: the Experiences of Benefactors and Beneficiaries in Guinea”. The study investigates the interface between genuine participation and social change in African context. The dissertation is primarily aiming at studying potential differences of opinions among beneficiaries and
benefactors of participatory development projects in Guinea. The research is specifically planned to discover and scrutinize indicators of beneficiaries’ genuine participation in development programs. Four variables are included in the investigation namely beneficiaries’ involvement, sense of ownership, power and the participatory character of communication systems. The findings point out that there is a considerable difference between the attitudes of beneficiaries and benefactors about genuine participation for social change. His reference to participation is in line with the empowerment paradigm, discussed in chapter three of this dissertation. Similarly, the findings conclude that there is lack of genuine participation in social change process. Thus, he argues that this will affect the success of social change programs in Guinea. However, Diallo’s study does not specifically show whether development projects has improved or not through the contribution of genuine participation.

Diallo’s study is unique in its research paradigm and methodology that while most of the existing research in the field of participation and participatory communication is qualitative, it addresses the research problems with quantitative approach which is rooted in the positivist tradition. His argument is based on the usual barriers with qualitative research such as reliability, objectivity and generalisation. Following an unusual way is not uncommon in science, and approaching issues quantitatively by itself is not an odd matter. As Diallo himself says, though his approach is not matured in the participatory paradigm, there are some scholars Jacobson (2007), and Figueroa et al(2002) who have attempted to measure participation in terms of quantity and outcomes. However, the argument put forward in my dissertation is that because of the very qualitative nature of participatory programs and social change initiatives, grasping the essence of participation for social change is difficult by using only quantitative
research. That is, by using quantitative approach only it is hardly possible to grasp the
dynamic nature of the development and communication context as well as the holistic
nature of human development that emphasis on quality of life. After the failure of
modernisation paradigm and the follow up emergence of the participatory paradigm, the
very concept of development and social change has been changed. Now it is widely
agreed among scholars that development is not simply conceived as economic growth
which is simple to quantify things. This conception has been reflected in the “passing of
the dominant paradigm” (Rogers, 1976). Currently, the shift is towards understanding
social change related with good quality of life which is one of the main purposes of
participatory development. Thus, abstract concepts such as freedom, justice, equity and
empowerment are considered as indicators of social change or they are central issues in
the participatory paradigm. Therefore, it is very difficult to get a full picture of the
interface between participation and development/social change by applying only
quantitative approach. Had there been use of a mixed approach, Diallo’s study would
have been shed better light on the participation and social change interfaces.

By approaching the interface between participation and development qualitatively, the
present study is different from this research ontologically and epistemologically. That
is, quantitative study attempts to capture a single reality by an objective
observer/researcher while the qualitative study attempts to capture multiple realities
from different directions including the research participants’ subjective realities and the
researcher subjective interpretations of their experiences. Qualitative study also
acknowledges the role of context in the research while quantitative study attempts to
study phenomena objectively, detaching it out of its natural context. Such ontological
and epistemological differences shape the two research works to fall on different directions.

Exploring the practice and perception of participatory approach by development practitioners is also the major difference between the present dissertation/thesis and Diallo’s study. This is so because in Diallo’s research no distinction is made between government and nongovernmental organisations, and it is not possible to grasp potential differences between such organisations. In my dissertation, it is argued that social, economic and political factors and legal issues might not shape or affect these two categories of development agents identically, and thus they might have different experiences, agendas, and perceptions about participation and development. Considering this situation, the present dissertation is more focused and thus only a local NGO experiences are explored qualitatively. The present study could also contribute something to the literature, mainly bridging some of the discrepancies discussed above.

To sum up, despite disparities discussed so far, the present research is important in the contribution to the knowledge about participatory paradigm. Especially, by investigating the main factors that prevent genuine participation in the cultural, economic and political contexts, the study contributes a lot to participatory development research and practices in the African continent.

By way of reviewing and analysing the approaches of the research works, we can examine another important research work conducted on participatory communication in Zimbabwe, South Africa. The research is conducted by Mefalopulos (2003) for his PhD dissertation entitled “Theory and Practice of Participatory Communication: The Case of the FAO Project ‘Communication for Development in Southern Africa’”. The main
objective of the study is to investigate how participatory communication is conceived and applied (which is also my research question) in a project where specifically dedicated to promote and apply such approach to the development field. With thorough investigation and discussion, Mefalopulos concludes that there are variety of conceptions and applications of participatory communication in the various phases, with the actors involved in the project. The study reveals discrepancies between the theory and the practical applications of participatory communication. It explains how FAO is doing hard to the contribution of participatory communication with the belief that participation can help development to be successful.

The research findings demonstrate the potentials of participatory communication to support “another development”, to address specific community needs and priorities and to facilitate empowerment. It further reinforces the capacity of the participatory communication to involve the local community in the decision making processes of development. The study concludes that participatory communication could maintain belongingness of the communities to development projects and ensures their sustainability.

Mefalopulos’s study is significant to the present research since both studies address the interface between conceptions/ perceptions and applications /practices of participatory communication in development contexts with a strong assumption that specific or genuine participation improves development. Besides, by applying constructivist approach as research paradigm, both studies share methodological similarity in exploring participatory communication issues in Africa.
Chapter Three: Review of Related Research Works on Participatory Development Model

The main differences between the two studies are the following three important points. The first is, in studying conceptions and practices about participatory communication, the previous research focuses only on change agents excluding the main stakeholders, namely the people at the grassroots level. However, the present study includes both the change agents and stakeholders’ perspectives to get the full picture about the perception and practice of participatory communication. In other words, I argue that studying only one of the development actors, excluding others, might not give the full picture of the spectrum, or at least including both of parties could add new insight to the endeavour.

The second main difference between Mefalopulos’ (2003) research and the current dissertation derives from the nature of the target projects. His study is concerned with a project that is basically designed to promote participatory development communication. That is, it is a communication project, not directly a development project which targets the poor. While this dissertation thesis is focusing on the social change on projects working on different development issues such as health, sanitation, nutrition, water supply and irrigation, agriculture, environment protection and rural development that target the poor directly. Such difference could reveal the presence of different experiences of approaching participatory communication for different purposes i.e. to promote communication and to facilitate development. The third difference is related to the nature and scope of the target organisations. Studying international NGO such as FAO, and the local development organisation, ORDA that has different experiences, resources, capacity and skills may shade a new light on participatory communication issues.
Chapter Three: Review of Related Research Works on Participatory Development Model

Taking the major similarities and differences mentioned above into account, and considering a decade gap between the two studies in this very dynamic world, the current study seems to be an extension of this research. This continuation is broadened its scope and changed its focus by including the local community (stakeholders) at the grassroots level, who were not considered the previous works. The present study is also directly focusing on local development projects, not communication project.

3.4 Participatory Development Communication Research in Ethiopia

In addition to other international contexts, reviewing three related research works conducted in the horn of Africa on participation, development and development communication is relevant. Thus, one of the research works is conducted by Abraham (2002): “NGO’s Experience with the Practice of Participatory Development the Case of Care-Ethiopia’s Borana Pastoral Water Development Initiatives”. The aim of the thesis was investigating the experience of Care-Ethiopia, one of the leading international NGOs working in Ethiopia, related to the practice of participatory development approach and to assess the ability of the development agent in delivering sustainable change on the livelihood of the pastoral societies. The study was conducted at CARE Ethiopia Borana Zone, Dire Woreda pastoral water supplies development initiatives. The research focused on exploring the institutional set up employed by the CARE-Ethiopia, the scope and characteristics of the organisation’s pastoral water supply development initiatives, the interpretation of the concept of participatory development, the methods for the operation of the participatory approach to pastoral water supply development, and the opportunities and constraints facilitating or impairing the NGOs’ work as main issues.
The findings of the study showed that among Care-Ethiopia workers across different levels, the very concept of participatory development was interpreted and understood differently. Besides, the study revealed that various projects were planned and implemented without the participation of the stakeholders. In addition, the study concluded that the institutional setup of the organisation did not enable it to exercise demand responsive administration. As the paper discussed, the reason for this problem was that there is confusion in catering to both relief and development objectives at a time without considering the institutional capacity of the organisation. The study was conducted for fulfilling MA in development studies, and was not concerned with the communication aspect of participatory development. In other words, the communication aspects of participatory development are missing in this study. Good participatory projects necessitate good participatory communication practices. Without explicitly exploring the communication process of participatory projects, it is difficult to get holistic view how participatory development is going on. This is the research gap of the current study, and it is the main difference between the current research project and the study stated. Of course, there are other differences in research questions as well. To fill this gap the current study examines first whether participatory communication is used, and known in the area; then the other research questions follow. Targeting on international and local NGOs is also another difference that might throw light on the experiences about understanding and practicing participatory development in different organisations (local vs. international). Objectives of the organisations and nature of their beneficiaries are also another difference between the two.

Another significant research article about Ethiopian development is provided by Clapham (2006) entitled “Ethiopian Development: The Politics of Emulation”. Clapham
presents a critical overview of the country’s 140-year quest for a viable development model. Clapham’s brief analysis of Ethiopian models of development evaluates how Ethiopian rulers since the mid-nineteenth century emulated models from other developed countries. The first model was imitated from imperial Russia followed from Japan and after the World War II, from the United Kingdom and from other Western countries. The 1974 revolution in Ethiopia enabled the new military regime to look to the then dominant country, the Soviet Union. Socialism became the state ideology that framed development models and activities. The overthrow of the military in 1991 by a bloody civil war did not end up the strategy by straightway going back to the Western models of development. However, it did result in the application of a revised Marxism and dependency theory as an approach to manage the problems of the country’s ethnic diversity. To validate this explanation, the writer mentioned that the current ruling party, EPRDF, has re-structured the country into regions marked by ethno-linguistic lines of federalism, each of them holding a right to self-determination including secession.

Clapham’s (2006) account deduces that all the development models the country emulated for a century and a half did not work as anticipated. As a result, he noted that Ethiopia continues as one of the poorest countries in the world. Different reasons have been presented in support of Clapham’s argument for the unsuccessful emulation. Some of these include misunderstanding about the nature of the emulated models; application of the models was not contextual and there were basic differences between the source and the receiver countries. The article also blamed rulers for blindly copying and applying numerous models while they were already on decline in their countries of origin. Clapham (2006: 137) concludes that the search for an “Ethiopian road to development remains unfulfilled”.
Although Clapham’s (2006) discussion did not mention participatory development clearly, it uncovers the country’s experiences of using different models of development in Ethiopia. What is more is that his critical reflection ends without a suggestion for better model or concept of development that the country can use in its quest for development or even some alternative path of development for Ethiopia. Cognisant of this unfinished project of the quest for effective development model, the present study explores the potential of participatory paradigm for development, and tries to shed light on searching appropriate development models for Ethiopia.

Still another important research about participatory development in Ethiopian context is written by Henry (2004) titled “Morality, Citizenship and Participatory Development in an Indigenous Development Association: the Case of GPSDO and the Sebat Bet Gurage of Ethiopia”. The research explored practice of participatory development in the context of ethnic base indigenous development association- Gurage Peoples Self Help and Development Organization (GPSDO). It showed how participation in development projects was seen as an important component of citizenship which in turn shaped the perception of participation in the social, political, economic and cultural affairs of the local community i.e. the Gurage. The study revealed that the type of participation practiced by the GPSDO, and the Gurage communities was passive and hierarchical which lacks empowerment of the community at the grassroots. Despite this fact, the researcher argued that although participation in the development process is instrumental, and non-empowering, it has significant contributions for the local community. In Gurage, participation in local development has rights and obligations attached with the dominant Gurage civic virtue. The study analysed the contribution of such form of participation to development. Three types of significances of this
instrumental participation were mentioned. The first significance is the augmentation of the success of development projects by minimizing expenses and gaining leadership. The second is about the financial contribution of the local communities in supporting development projects which in turn creates a sense of ownership and security of sustainability. The third or the last one is about resource mobilization from urban people to the rural poor in a way that demonstrates loyalty to the development projects and the Gurage notion of citizenship. The study highlights that such forms of participation is essential to the building of the Gurage identity. However, the study did not show whether this resource mobilization from urban to rural area created a sense of dependency or not among the rural communities.

For Gurage Peoples Self Help and Development Organization (GPSDO) and the Gurage community participation in the development process is principally about mounting the success of development projects. This instrumental notion of development is also reflected in the conception of participation as a means, and challenges the notions that participation is an end in itself i.e. empowerment. Participation in the prevailing Gurage development discourses means contribution of resources to projects for self-help initiatives. And this participation is considered as a central part of a wider obligation as member of the Gurage community. This implies that participation in development process may not be motivated by aspiring empowerment and it is a burden imposed by the culture as obligation to scarify for their community. Generally, the study shades light on the interface among ethnicity, participation and development in the Gurage community. However, in doing this, the study did not discuss the role and approaches of communication as well as perception towards participatory communication in the
development process. In other words, the place of communication in the development process is missing in the study.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, several related research works in developing countries and in Ethiopia are reviewed and analysed in ways that disclosed the application of participatory development model for better and sustainable development. The review and analysis also show the research gaps of the study, and attempt to situate the research in the global trends of participatory communication research trends. More specifically, research that reveal the application of participatory development model in development projects in Latin America, Asia, and Africa and Ethiopia are discussed. The review of the related literature also illustrates that there are gaps in understanding the perception and practice of participatory development communication in Ethiopia. Especially the analysis makes clear that participatory communication is not studied exhaustively both at the perceptual and practical levels in Ethiopia. The extent of use or non use of participatory communication in development works is not deeply explored in Ethiopia. It is not clear whether participatory communication is best known by development experts. Factors affecting the practice of participatory communication are not yet identified. Thus, the review reinforces a timely need for new research to understand the perception and practice of participatory development model in one of the least developed regions of the globe, Horn of Africa particularly Ethiopia.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology that contains the approaches and strategies used for data collection and analysis.
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodological issues of the study are thoroughly discussed. The methodological approach of the study is explained and justified before description and illustration of the major data collection tools. Then the data gathering and analysis procedures as well as techniques are presented. Finally, the ethical consideration of the research is illustrated in this chapter.

Before presenting the discussion of specific elements of the research methodology of this dissertation, we can review the general characteristics of the quantitative and qualitative research methods that usually dominate the social and human sciences so as to give some highlights to the reader about the research methodology.

The quantitative methodology is originated in positivist research paradigm with the assumption that the existence of single social reality is relatively independent from the socio-cultural context and is best studied using objective techniques like standardised measures. Thus, quantitative researchers usually look for objectivity in measurement and employ numerical forms of measurement to understand the social and human worlds. In short, the governing objective of quantitative method is to test hypotheses that lead to establish universal laws of behaviour.

On the other hand, qualitative research method emphasizes the importance of understanding the subjective meaning of social reality. The assumption that governs this
research tradition is the existence of multiple realities and experiences in the social and human world. This perspective enabled the researcher to explore the problems in a variety of ways. More importantly, the best way to understand the social reality is studying within its socio-cultural contexts. Thus, the main objective of qualitative research is exploring social reality through subjective interpretations of various participants with more socially shared interpretation, known as ‘intersubjectivity’, which implies that even subjective interpretation can be semi-objectivised by being agreed upon and shared among members of a single community or groups of experts sharing a paradigm or theory.

Generally, quantitative research favours data control and generalisablity of findings, whereas qualitative research needs contextual detail and deeper understanding of the social phenomena (Gunter, 2000; Creswell, 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Bhattacherjee, 2012). Cognisant of its flexibility and context sensibility, this study used the qualitative research method. Detailed discussions and explanation of the approach is given.

4.2 The Research Approach
As stated above, qualitative research method focuses on exploring issues, understanding phenomena, and answering questions to gain deeper insights about social phenomena or people’s reality i.e. how people interpret or understand their reality (Creswell, 2002; Jensen, 2002; Newman, 2007). As defined by Shank (2002: 5) qualitative research is a “form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning”. It is a planned way of inquiry
grounded in the social world experience. In such inquiry the main purpose of the researcher is to try to unveil how others see the world and experience it.

Thus, this study used qualitative research method to understand how development workers and the local community perceive and experience participation and participatory communication. Qualitative (also known as interpretative or hermeneutical perspective) research seeks to understand people’s interpretations of reality or world as the research method stresses the need to see through the eyes of one subject and understand social behaviour in its social context. Thus, in qualitative research, data are perceptions of the people about the environment.

In the present study, the experiences and perceptions of change agents and the local community towards development communication works explored based on the qualitative research perspectives. Using the qualitative approach indeed enabled the study to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in question i.e. perceptions and practices of participatory communication for development in Ethiopia. Ang (1996:71) stated such role of qualitative research as:

The understanding emerging from this kind of qualitative inquiry favours interpretative particularization over explanatory generalization, historical and local correctness rather than formal abstraction, ‘thick’ description of details rather than extensive but ‘thin’ survey.

As noted by Ritchie and Lewis (2003:268), thick descriptions allow the researcher to provide sufficient details on the issues of interest which in turn enables the readers to understand the meanings embedded in the issues. Therefore, using qualitative approach gives always in-depth analysis of perceptions and practices of the local development
organisations and the local community on the issues of participatory development communication.

Similarly, Berg (2001) argues that qualitative method enables researchers to get the understandings and perceptions of respondents and to investigate how people construct and give meaning to their daily lives. By using qualitative research approach, researchers can examine how people learn and make sense of themselves and others. Accordingly, this method could help the researcher explore the practices and perceptions of development agents and stakeholders on participatory development communication.

Based on the aforementioned explanations, I contend that to explore how development agents and stakeholders experience and perceive development efforts and the living conditions, in line with the perspectives of participatory development communication, qualitative approach could be appropriate. In other words, qualitative approach enabled the researcher to explore the experience and perceptions of the development agents’ and local communities’ on a participatory development communication work.

Generally, this research employed qualitative research that gives a way for getting an in-depth understanding of the human world through studying people’s experiences, world views, social as well as material life (Snape & Spencer, 2003). That is, the method made possible to establish what types of development being practiced in Amhara region and to explain why such development practice is undertaken and why other methods such as participatory communication and participatory development have
been neglected. It also provided us insights how to introduce new methods (e.g. participatory and holistic) to development.

As a qualitative research, this study is framed by social constructivism paradigm, not positivism. According to Gunter (2000: 6), these two paradigms are different in terms of perceiving reality and approaching the research participants:

Positivists assume that everyone shares the same meaning system; they take it as a given that we all experience the world in the same way. The interpretive approach says that people may or may not experience social reality in the same way. An interpretive approach assumes that multiple interpretations of human experience, or realities, are possible.

In other words, unlike positivists’ perspective, ontologically, this research employing a qualitative paradigm that does not recognise the existence of a single reality believed to be captured objectively by the so called ‘objective’ researcher. Such perspective gives the researcher chances to embed the social context of the study and to capture the research participants’ “personal insights, knowledge and experiences” related to the research concern (Bhattacherjee, 2012: 106).

It is not arguable that reality exists, but the point is that while there is one reality/world, it is interpreted and experienced differently by different people with different perspectives and experiences. Therefore, this dissertation argues that there are multiple “realities” constructed by exchanging and sharing of experiences by members of a community. Snape and Spencer (2003:19) also argue that “the social world does exist independently of individual subjective understanding, but that is only accessible to us via the respondents' interpretations”. This outlook supports the epistemological position
of the present research that the separation between the researcher and the subjects of the study is meaningless as reality is holistic via the intermingle attachment between the researcher and the researched. Trying to detach the research from the context as far as the social world is concerned is like grasping only some form of reality. Thus, to investigate and interpret multiple realities holistically, this study acknowledged and considered the role of the research context, and the subjective interpretations of the study participants as well as the researcher. This approach is also supported as: “personal interpretations are important both in terms of study participants' perspectives of reality, and in terms of researchers' understanding and portrayal of study participants' views” (Snape & Spencer, 2003:20).

Moreover, the present study's basic themes, namely participation, communication and development are elusive and dynamic in nature and their interactions are complex that require using such qualitative research approach. Understanding and researching such fluid concepts may not emerge through fixed and standardised quantitative procedures. The suitability of qualitative approach in such situations is also strongly echoed as follows:

Hard data cannot truly capture the complexity of the human dimension and social processes. The development context is dynamic and unpredictable, with unanticipated events and variables that are difficult to quantify. Human behaviour change may not always follow a logical progression from knowledge to an issue, through a change of attitude to a resulting change in behaviour. (World Bank & DFID publication, 2006:17)

Mufalopulos (2005) further argues that communication is vitally important in defining and understanding multiplicity of realities in the development context where conception is being changed from the traditional top-down to the people centred participatory
Chapter Four: Research Methodology

approach. Therefore, it seems clear that the aforementioned ontological and epistemological positions reinforced this study to employ qualitative approach. More specifically, this dissertation study used a qualitative case study design with data collection tools such as interviews, focus group discussions, field observation and document analysis. The principal aim of the study is to present “thick description” by “sense making” about the interface among the daily lives, communication activities and development endeavours of the ANRS society and the change agents respectively. As a qualitative inquiry or an interpretative study, more attention is given to the socio-cultural and politico-economy contexts in which human behaviour takes place (Creswell, 2002).

4.3 The Research Design

As mentioned in the preceding sections, the main objective of this research is to explore the perception and practice of participatory communication for sustainable development in Ethiopia, Amhara Region. For this end, a case study research design is employed. Investigating how participatory communication is perceived and practiced in a development project is consistent with Yin’s (2003: 1):

When, how or why questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context, case study is the best design.

The author argues that the method allows researchers to grasp social phenomena holistically in their natural environment. Yin further defines case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003: 13).
In a similar line of thought, Gerring’s (2007:65) definition gives an important insight about case study. He defines case study as an “intensive study of a single case (or a small set of cases) with an aim to generalize across a larger set of cases of the same general type”. The author further notes the role of case study for in-depth understanding of the whole by focussing on particular parts. Indeed, using case study as a research design leaves a room for readers to engage in their own meaning construction. As contended by Hays (2004:219), case study enables readers of the research paper to determine their own meaning and construct their own generalisation.

In light of all these arguments, this research considers the method, the case study as an important path to an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in a given context. That is, it is an effective way to explore, describe and explain a social phenomenon focusing on particular case(s). Accordingly, the cases of this study are perception and practice of participation and communication in the context of a development organisation, ORDA.

Generally, Yin (2003), Hays (2004), Gerring (2007), and Woodside (2010) discuss designs of case study. The most widely mentioned designs are single case study design and multi-cases study design. The focus of single case design is to study a single case or a phenomenon to understand a broader social phenomenon. The single case might be an individual, organisation, or a country. On the other hand, the main focus of multi-case study is to study a phenomenon using two or more cases such as individuals, originations or countries. Yin (2003:40) further divides case study designs into four categories. These are single case (holistic) design, single case embedded design, multiple case (holistic) designs and multiple case study design. The main distinction
between the holistic and embedded case design relies on the unit of analysis in which holistic design focuses on single unit of analysis such as single person or organisation while embedded design focuses on more than one unit of analysis such as two or more persons or units of organisation in a case. In this way, the single embedded case design enables to study a single organisation focusing on its sub units.

Thus, this study used single case embedded design that addresses ORDA by dividing it into different sub-units of the organization such as the top management, the development experts and the stakeholders of the organization (the local people).

4.4 ORDA as a Case of the Study

It is important to mention that ORDA is the biggest local NGOs and one of the leading local development actors in the region in which researching it becomes worthwhile. As it is stated in its document, the mission of the organisation is “to empower people in rural Amhara, Ethiopia to overcome poverty and live productive, fulfilling lives” (ORDA, 2014). ORDA also notes performing such things is the very reason for the existence of the organisation. The organisation in general, envisions seeing all the people in ANRS free themselves from chain of long lived poverty and hunger in the region. Having such mission implies that ORDA recognises the role of community participation and empowerment in effectively fighting against poverty and backwardness.

Well aware of the deep rooted underdevelopment and backwardness in the region, the organisation has also been reshaping itself and jointly working with other international organisations such as United States Agency for International development (USAID),
Food for The Hungry International (FHI) and the local government to fight starvation with food aid and poverty through development works. ORDA has been working with the two big forces i.e. the international organisations / donors and the regional government.

ORDA’s intervention in the region’s development efforts grows rapidly from eight districts in 2004 to 64 in 2012. In 2012 the organisation’s development projects were targeting to benefit 1.6 million people. The same magnitude of growth has been observed in the number of funding organisations. For example, in 2004 the number of funding organisations supporting ORDA was seven. This number reached 30 in 2012. From 1992 to 2012, ORDA was collaborating with a total of 44 funding partners to perform different development activities. It has also seven Zonal and 22 project offices at the district level that coordinate and implement development projects (ORDA, 2013).

Generally, ORDA implements various projects and programs to achieve its vision: “to see poverty free people of Amhara, Ethiopia” (ORDA, 2014). It has four major development programs namely food security and agricultural development program, water resources development program, natural resource development program and cross cutting issues mainly HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming programs. An overview is given to each of the program as stated by ORDA (2014).

1. ORDA’s food security and agricultural development program

Despite a steady growth in agriculture in the past few years, food insecurity remains one of the foremost manifestations of poverty in the ANRS. Several households in ORDA’s intervention areas could not feed their families. Considering this big economic problem and discouraging for development, ORDA has begun working for food security and
agricultural development as one major objective of its program. For example, ORDA lists down the specific sectors under this program including horticulture development, crop production and protection, livestock development, promotion of off farm income generating activities and cooperative development (ORDA, 2014).

2. ORDA’s water resources development program

Despite the fact that the country is the water–tower of Africa, and the region is a source of several rivers including the longest river in the world, Blue Nile, water resource management is in its traditional status. Most of the rural people are suffering from unsafe water supply, poor hygiene and sanitation services causing several health problems. There are also capacity problems in the area of small and large scale irrigation development. To address such tough problems severely affecting quality of life in the region, ORDA has prioritised water resource development as one of its major programs. The organisation has started working to improve hygiene and sanitation problems and livelihoods. More specifically, under such program, the organisation has been working on integrated intervention of safe water supply, hygiene and sanitation, irrigation development and capacity building of community organisations. Even, one of the stated objectives is the rehabilitation and protection of the environment (ORDA 2014).

3. ORDA’s natural resource development program

Since the ANRS is gifted with varied natural resources, utilising them appropriately and effectively could change the status of the region’s socio-economic development. The region has land with varied agro-ecology and water resources that has immense
potential for development. There is, however, severe deforestation and land degradation due to inappropriate utilisation and mismanagement of land resource. These problems are contributing to low agricultural productivity in the region. In response to such problems, ORDA has set out natural resource development program as one of its top agenda. The main objective of the program is to improve the livelihood and environmental security of the region. To achieve such objectives, the organisation is specifically targeting on large scale aforestation and reforestation development, community and individual woodlots development integrated watershed development, fuel saving and alternative energy technologies promotion and adoption (ORDA, 2014).

4. ORDA’s cross cutting issues

Amhara region is vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and known with gender disparity. The two problems add fuel to aggravate the misery of life chained by rampant poverty. To tackle this threat, ORDA has special unit called cross cutting issues. The main objective of the unit is to tackle the spread of the virus and to improve the participation of women in the political, economic and social life in the region (ORDA, 2014).

Generally, the organisation notes that to achieve the above mentioned visions, missions and objectives it has been working, nearly for three decades, with communities, Community Base Organisations (CBOs) and grassroots public institutions as well as with multilateral and bilateral international organisations (ORDA 2012). Nowadays, ORDA has become a huge organisation administering more than 800 full-time employees for the successful implementation of its various programs, and investing millions of dollars annually in its development works (ORDA, 2013). There are several
projects run by ORDA in the region. For example, Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), DEFAP: Development Food Aid Program (DEFAP) and GRAD: Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development (GRAD) projects are the three grand development projects currently implemented by ORDA in the selected research sites.

4.5 The Research Setting

Being the second largest population in Africa, Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. As indicated in chapter one, the country has one of the least human development indexes. There has been persistence of famine and drought for the last four decades in the country. Food shortages and hunger are recurrent problems for millions of people. The problem has aggravated in recent years due to the increase in food prices of the global market (Andersson, Mekonnen & Stage, 2009). Such low socio-economic profile of the country is stated as follows:

Infant and maternal mortality and child malnutrition rates are among the highest in the world. While access to education has increased in recent years, the overall adult literacy rate, at 36 per cent is low even by sub-Saharan African standards. Only about 58 per cent of the population have access to clean drinking water and about 80 per cent have no access to improved sanitation. About 38 per cent of children under the age of five are underweight and over 12 million people currently suffer from chronically or transitory or acute food insecurity. (Ethiopia. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2010: i)

World Bank (2004: i), one of the influential organisations in international development, also states that:

Ethiopia’s growth is constrained by a subsistence oriented economy, based on rain fed agriculture and extremely vulnerable to an erratic rain fall regime, the impact of severe and protracted environmental degradation and shortage of arable land in the highlands where the population is
Recurrent drought, famine and starvation are part of the history of the country’s people. Currently when this report is being written, drought has affected more than eight million Ethiopians because of the failed Spring rain and El Nino impacts and the government has called for international help to avert the problem. International organisations including the UN warn the potential human crisis and calls donors and other organisations to avert the crisis in the country. Watching starved Ethiopians and their dead animals on international media screens such as Al Jazeera, BBC and ESAT as well as the government’s official calls for help reflect the status of the country. The UN warns that 15 million Ethiopians might be affected by the drought till the first quarter of 2016 (UN, 2015; Al Jazeera, 2015; BBC, 2015; China, 2015; ECADF, 2015). The Amhara region, where the research was conducted, is one of the regional states affected by the current drought. Especially the Waghemra Zone, one of the research sites, is one of the worst affected areas in the region. It is disheartening to mention that those research areas are vulnerable for the current drought crisis.

Following the three research sites (ORDA’s intervention areas) are described. These are Wag Hemra Zone (Sekota District), North Wollo Zone (Wadela District) and South Gonder Zone (Lay Gayint District).

a. **Wag Hemra/Sekota/ District**

Wag Hemra district (zone) is located in North Amhara Region. The administrative district is known as home of the Wagi people, one of the ethnic groups in Amhara
region. Its capital, Sekota is distanced 425 km from Bahir Dar via Lalibela and 720 km far-off from Adiss Abeba. Sekota is bordered with Tigray Region to the East and North, Ziquala Woreda to the West and Dahana to the South-West and Gazgibla Woreda to the South. A document prepared by ORDA’s Sekota project office describes the state of the district as follows:

Sekota woreda is drought prone, food insecure and economically disadvantaged woreda of the region [...] Together with backward farming tradition, drought, shortage of farmland and draft oxen, pest occurrence, low input use, poor extension support, and occurrence of HTPs are major production constraints that aggravate food insecurity of the woreda. (Mulukan, 2014)

Similarly, the chronic problems of the area and the low quality of life in the zone are illustrated by Andnet (2010: 33).

Based on my personal observation, I observed that the district is covered with chain of dry mountains and its soil lacks fertility. Most of the water drains are empty, and the small basins are dry. There are rural villages here and there across the rugged topography. Quite a few challenging questions hit my mind when I crossed this difficult topography. How has life been sustained in this remote, dry and rugged topography? Why and when do these mountains become dry and the rivers run out of water? Is it possible to achieve sustainable development with all these challenges? How does ORDA struggle to change the life of these people in this harsh environment? Can participatory development reverse the grave problems such as the soil fertility, the rivers flows, covering the mountains with forests? How are participation, empowerment, poverty, and sustainable development perceived in this remote area? Many more
questions hit my mind while I was in Sekota, the zone town, which is encircled with dry mountains.

Picture 4.1: a rural house in Sekota Woreda, Wag Hemra Zone. The picture is taken during the field work

b. **North Wollo /Wadela/ District**

North Wollo is one of the zones in the region boarded with South Wollo to the South, Wag Hemra to North, South Gonder to the West, Tigray to North-east and Afar to the East. Sharp, Kay and Stephen Devereux (2004) portray the life situation of the zone as follows: In Wollo the economy is characterised by small holder and rain-fed agriculture as well as reduced livestock and per-capital land resources. The livelihood is not diversified and the area is affected by recurrent drought and low quality of soil fertility. Similarly, Seid (2002: 35) states the situation of the zone as mountainous and steep slopes that make the area unsuitable for agriculture. He stresses that the eight rural words of the zone including Wadela, one of the research sites, are in the list labelled as “most drought prone and food insecure in the Amhara region”.

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The above traditional huts are typical in rural area of the study sites; it demonstrates how life is still traditional in the region. The Ethiopian peasants have lived such kind of life since time immemorial. Recently, economically better farmers build steel houses that are manifestations of wealth by the rural people (Personal interview with members of the local people).

c. South Gonder /Lay Gayint/ District

South Gonder Zone is bordered with East Gojjam to the South, West Gojjam to the Southwest, North Gonder to the North, Wag Hemra to North-west and North Wollo to the East and South Wollo to the Souh-east. The historic Abbay (Blue Nile) River separates the zone from East and West Gojjam zones.
Picture 4.3: a traditional house hold pit latrine at Lay Gayint rural Kebel, South Gonder Zone, picture taken during the field work

The latrine hut is a recent phenomenon for the rural dwellers. For long time, the Ethiopian peasants were not familiar with such expression. Using open fields for latrine as open defecation has been common in the region. Thus, it is easy to understand how the open defecation affects the health of the rural people. Governmental and non-governmental organizations including ORDA are striving to change this tradition by teaching and mobilising the society to build and use such kind of latrine hunt. During field visit in Sekota, Wadela, and Lay Gayint rural villages, I saw traditional latrines that indicate efforts in the direction of open defecation, free village.

Generally, the overview highlighted above reveals that all the selected districts of the research are drought prone, food insecure and economically disadvantaged. The areas are also low in agricultural production and have unsafe water supply. Besides, poor
hygiene and sanitation services, deforestation as well as land degradation are major problems that affect quality of life in the areas.

4.6 Research Participants and Sampling
The selection of the research samples is criterion based or purposive. The sample units were chosen as a result of their particular features that facilitate in-depth exploration and understanding of the central issues of the research. The study samples were categorised into four types. These are professionals working in ORDA, the local people, the organisation’s documents and actual development works of ORDA and communication activities. The interviewees range from bottom line development workers living with the community up to project coordinators and organisation’s top management members. The table below summarises the total number of participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Research participants</th>
<th>Total participants interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Development workers</td>
<td>12 (5 from Sekota, 4 from Wadela and 3 from Nefas Mewcah) Their work experience ranges from 2–9 years in ORDA. 11 are males and 1 is female because of the absence of females adding other number was not possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication officers</td>
<td>3 (they are working in the communication unit of ORDA). All are males. Their experiences range 2–five years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Management members</td>
<td>5(3 high level management and 2 middle level managers). All are males. Their experience ranges from 10-years to 30 i.e. the interview includes members who establish ORDA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Local community members</td>
<td>42 (6 FGDs, 2 are females and 3 male adults and 1 male youths from Sekota, Wadela and Nefas Mewcha) discussants were participated. From these 14 participants were females. 6 individual interviews (2 from each of the above research sites and four of them are females and two are males.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Total participants</td>
<td>68 (26 individual interviewees and 40 focus group discussants)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1, Research participants of the Study (samples)
Chapter Four: Research Methodology

As the above table shows six individual interviews and six FGDs were conducted with the local community living in the three research sites namely Sekota, Wadela and Nefas Mewcha. Two individual interviews and two FGDs were conducted in each of the three sites. Forty two local community members were participated in the FGDs. Homogenous groups were purposely arranged in order to minimise the influence power relations between men and women and young and aged research participants. From the FGDs, two groups were females, one male youth and two groups were men adults. Twelve individual interviewees were interviewed from development workers working in the above mentioned project research sites as development experts and designers and coordinators. The development workers represented the four development programs of the organisation such as food security and agricultural development program, water resources development program, natural resource development program and cross cutting issues mainly HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming. Three interviewees were interviewed with communication officers who are working in the head quarter of the organisation where the only communication unit is found. One of the communication officers were former employees of the organisation. Another category of the interview includes five members of the management of ORDA who are working on the head quarters. The managers include the top level and middle level managers.

Research participants of the local people were selected from development project sites. To do this, first project sites initiated by the organisation in particular communities were selected based on duration of ORDA in the area and the presence of active large scale projects. Then participants were selected purposely from the projects beneficiaries list based on their level of involvement in the development project. Especially those
members of communities who are actively involved in the activities of the organisations were identified from the project files as per suggestion by development practitioners. However, care was given not to exclude women because of their socio-cultural status and individuals who have different political orientations other than the ruling party for the reason that the organization is affiliated with the ruling party. Besides, access and proximity to the central towns of the region were considered as additional parameter to select the study sites and communities. Accordingly, data under such categories were collected from Wag Hemra, North Wollo and South Gonder Zones, where big development projects such as PSNP, DFAP and GRAD are found.

Since the goal of qualitative study is not making a statistical generalisation based on the given sample, the study samples were not large, but and focused on the phenomena under study. This is one of the characteristics of a qualitative study. In line with this, Bhattacherjee (2012:104) argues:

> Given the complex and embedded nature of the social reality it aspires to study, qualitative research usually employs small, focused samples that fit the phenomenon of interest, rather than large, random samples.

However, this could not limit the study to have theoretical generalisation. In other words, unlike survey design, this research is not focused on generalization. However, it strives for analytic or theoretical generalisation expected from qualitative case study (Yin, 2003:32). Thus, the study tries to generalize the case study results with the broader participatory communication theory.

To understand the social reality embedded with ORDA’s development communication works, the data were collected from the individuals working in the organizations and
members of the local people. As contended by Ritchie and Lewis (2003:276), using a variety of sites, and cases, individuals enable researchers to ensure the validity of the data analysis often known as internal validity.

4.7 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

4.7.1 Data Collection Tools

Based on the theoretical orientation of participatory communication for development, using qualitative instruments (such as interviews, FGDs and field observation) could help researchers understand deep rooted problems and suggests some sort of solutions. More specifically, this research employed qualitative instruments in order to understand the use of participatory communication mainly in tackling underdevelopment problems; to know how participatory development communication is perceived by change agents and stakeholders and to explain the factors that shaping the communication practices and implications on development. As stated by scholars such as Berg (2001) triangulation is the use of more than one data collection tools in a single study in order to enhance trustworthy of the findings. In this study, triangulation refers to the use of individual interview, focus group discussion, and document analysis and field observation as data gathering tools. Such triangulation of sources has double purpose. On the one hand it enables to check the validity of the data using different sources, on the other such mechanism widens or deepens the understanding of the subject under study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:275).

The focus of the individual and group interviews was to know more on the perceptions and attitudes of change agents and the local communities about participation and
participatory communication, to explore the life experiences of stakeholders and vis-a-vis development efforts, as well as to describe the practices of participatory communication. Ritchie and Lewis argue that “very complex systems, processes or experiences are generally best addressed in in-depth interviews because of the depth of focus and the opportunity for clarification and detailed understanding” (2003:59).

In addition, focus group discussion was employed with the local community who are the stakeholders of the organization in order to know their experiences and perceptions about the development efforts. The significance of group discussion in African context is stated by Obeng-Quaidoo (1986) who is saying group discussion enables to approach the non-individuality of the African culture in their natural context. Similarly, Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 58) contend:

"Focus groups also provide a social context within which the phenomenon is experienced, and they display the way in which context can shape people's views, showing how data are generated through conversation with others."

The authors further argue that focus group discussion is suitable for understanding abstract, intangible and conceptual topics such as poverty, development and participation in this research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003: 59).

The focus of using document analysis was getting organisation’s documents including actual communication works, strategic and annual plans and project proposals, and annual reports. These documents were collected from the organization based on their relevance for the research. Analysing such documents could enable the researcher understand the communication and development process implemented by ORDA. For example, the documents could tell us if and how participatory development is
considered by this organisation. Analysing the content of varieties of documents could also help identify key strategies used to organise community members as well as communication activities of the organization. This document analysis, thus, enables me as a researcher, to understand the general trends of their development communication practices. Besides, this instrument is used to validate the research findings gained by other data gathering tools mentioned. Generally, the document analysis could help the researcher to identify practices and process that may not be addressed using other instruments like interviews or observation.

The focus of the field observation was to see the communication process between change agents and the local people, and to understand the overall social change process and development contexts. Observing the communication interaction between change agents and the local community could enable the researcher to understand how the communication process was going on. The field observation specifically helped the research identify and analyse the nature of participatory communication practices. In addition to understanding the communication phenomena, conducting observation could provide opportunity to judge the overall development contexts and processes in the project sites. For example, using the field observation for data collection, enabled the researcher verify the claims and actual practices of participatory development communication going on in the research sites. That is, an opportunity was created to understand and grasp the physical development works and life situation of the rural community.

Generally, the purpose of combining these different instruments of data collection was for cross checking the data on that the research participants’ opinions, perceptions,
attitudes and experiences towards participatory communication in development efforts. As Hays (2004:228) contends, the use of multiple methods and sources makes the case study more comprehensive and understandable as there are multiple perspectives used. Using Yin’s (2003: 35) expression, this is about ensuring “construct validity” i.e., a means of way of checking the quality of case study research.

4.7.2 Data Collection Procedures

As it is one of the major development actors in the region for three decades and hosting its headquarters in the capital city of the region with a visible building and transmitting different programs via the regional and national government mass media, ORDA is noticeable to all who work and live in the region specifically in Bahir Dar. Its visibility is also pronounced by its name, ORDA that indicates the dominant ethnic group, Amhara in the region (91.48 per cent) and the second in the country (Ethiopia. Central Statistics Authority, 2007). The naming is associated with the political establishment of the current ruling party of the region, ANDM. As mentioned in the preceding sections, ORDA was first established by ANDM’s important figures or officials who were guerrilla fighters during the civil war against the socialist Derg regime in the 1980s. The current ethnic politics of the country also influenced its name and its establishment as affiliated with the ruling party. Because of these, ORDA is well known to those who are aware of what happened in the region during the civil war between the Derg and ANDM and after the political change of the country since1991.

As a result of the opportunities mentioned above, I knew ORDA for more than 10 years. More importantly, as a lecturer of Bahir Dar University, I advised different students who
conducted their senior essays and term papers that examined the organizational communication of ORDA for more than four years. I read different documents and browsed its websites to cross check the students’ papers. All these urged me to think about ORDA and to know its contribution as the prominent actor of development in the region using participatory communication paradigm. The situations illustrated above were part of the driving factors to do the current PhD research on the perceptions and practices of participatory communication in Ethiopian context, ORDA.

In addition, while I was in my office at Bahir Dar University in January 2013, the Program Manager of the Faculty of Humanities introduced me with two persons who came from ORDA for getting communication professionals who could examine candidates for their vacant positions in the organisation. Fortunately, I was one of the persons assigned this responsibility by the program manager and the department as I have already started my PhD project in ORDA. Then, I and my two colleagues did our best to satisfy the organization, on the one hand, and for our community outreach program on the other. Indeed, the incident was a special opportunity for me to build my friendly relationship with ORDA. Thus, considerable cooperation and collaboration observed during the data collection.

I even developed my relationship with ORDA more strong using formal cooperation letters from Bahir Dar University where I am working as an academician. Accordingly, the university wrote me a cooperation letter to ORDA stating the purpose of my research, and requesting for cooperation during the conduct of my study (see appendix D). ORDA responded positively. As a result my stay in ORDA was interesting. From
top positions to lower positions of the change agents they were positive to share what they have and experience in ORDA. This contributed much more to the successful completion of the study. More specifically, they spent their time with me to share their experiences, views or perceptions. Even they arranged visits to their development sites with their own cars and drivers and assigned coordinators to help me meet the local community. They gave me different documents with no reservation that made my field work very successful. They did this with busy schedules and at times readjusting their daily plans. For example, while we were visiting the development project sites and rural kebeles, there were other programs they had to postponed and rearrange their daily schedules.

Engaging in fieldwork

The field work was carried out in Sekota, Wadela, Lay Gayinet and Bahir Dar by three phases or round trips. The first round trip was focusing on sites visiting, establishing rapport, making pilot study and arranging things for interview and FGDs at the sites in Sekota, Wadela and Lay Gayint. This round was conducted from 25 May to 04 June 2014. The second round trip was organised for actual data gathering in the three sites (Sekota, Wadela & Lay Gayint) where they are far from the researcher home town and it was conducted during 25 June -19 July 2014. The third round was focussing on gathering data at the head quarter of ORDA; Bahir Dar (my home city), and it was done during 02-26 January, 2015. Generally, the field work was carried out for two months.

The actual data gathering process was started with first getting the consent and letter of access from the top management of ORDA. Thus, I went to the selected sites (Wag
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Hemra-Sekota, South Wollo-Wadela & South Gonder-Lay Gayent) and contacted the project managers of ORDA and stayed there from 25 May to 04 June 2014. I delivered the letter and made brief introduction about the research purpose and the data collection process. All the three sites’ managers arranged a brief meeting just the next morning of my arrival, and introduced me with the development experts and other logistic staffs working there. The introductory discussions included five to six development experts and the logistic staff in each project site. The main purpose was to introduce and establish good rapport with them. The discussions included introducing the main purpose of the study, explaining data collection processes, and identifying their professional roles and positions and briefing some introductions about the development projects and arranging programs for the second round trip.

All the discussions in the three sites were effective so as to help the researcher to establish good rapport with the development experts, and get good insight about project sites and the local community. The discussions were held for 30 to 45 minutes. I also used such opportunity to conduct the pilot study. I conducted one interview at each of the three sites. Thus, with all discussions, pilot study and with some documents (such as annual plans, project proposals and annual reports, manuals and their telephone numbers), I returned to Bahir Dar, my home city.

After three weeks of preparation, I went to the research sites for the second round field work during which the actual data collection was conducted for 25 days (25 June -19 July 2014). From the first round discussion and reading of their documents, I selected the specific project sites for the field visits, and for getting the local people who have
had long time relations with the organization. The three project offices provided cars which enabled me to go to the rural localities (kebeles) for field visits or project sites and get the local people. The field work had multi-dimensions including observing contexts of the overall development works, visiting the physical development project sites and aid food ware houses, arranging and conducting individual interviews and FGDs with the local people and development workers and managers, and getting involved in community conversation sessions as well as a drama as observer.

The filed observation was conducted with the help of coordinators assigned by ORDA and with the help of development experts, I used note taking based on checking the observation check lists prepared for this purpose. My role was a non-participant observer, simply identified as a researcher.

Generally, the filed observation considered three irrigation sites, two closure areas, one nursery sites, physical soil and water conservation works, and lots of small scale apple production and eucalypts tree plantation areas. Besides, the observation conducted on health centre, developed spring water areas, water pumps, bridges, roads, a rural town established by ORDA (Shera Gent found in Wadela), big ware houses, one open defecation free rural kebele, rural villages and individual households.

As part of my observation, I collected data by participating in the different communication activities of the organization. For example, in a community conversation conducted by a project called Search for Common Ground in Sekota and VESA meetings in Lay Gayint. I also observed a drama show in the aid food
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distribution centre in Sekota. I participated as observer because I was new to those rural areas. I was sitting in the corner and jotting down what happened during the community conversations and the drama session. I also used observation checklist as a framework of reference for jotting down things (see Appendix C).

The interviews were conducted in a bottom up process as participatory development paradigm dictates. That is, the interview started with the local people first, then it was conducted with the professionals and managers from the lower to higher levels.

During the field work, I reflected on issues encountered in the field visit and interviews and filed them as diaries. Then, I used these notes during data analysis for recalling some incidences and identifying the significant themes of the research.

Returning to Bahir Dar, I started the data transcription process for having a preliminary understanding about the research issues before moving on to the third round interviews conducted at the headquarter. Reading my field notes and some of the documents also helped me enrich the preliminary understanding of the research issues. With such considerable awareness of the research points, the individual interviews were conducted with the communication staff and top level managers in Bahir Dar, the headquarters of the organization. Conducting such interviews at ones home town is not as such difficult, and I became relaxed as there were no time concern, cost, home sickness and feeling of alienation that confronted me in the rural areas. I conducted eight in-depth interviews and, side by side, visited the library for days (2-26 January 2015).
That is, I had to spend more hours in ORDA library to identify and collect different documents (annual reports and plans, project plans, magazines, brochures & research works, training manuals). Relevant documents were analysed considering their relevance for answering the research questions and enriching the findings from other data sources.

All the individual interviews except four were conducted with a tape recorder. The four research participants from the development workers were not interested to be recorded and I was forced to take notes during their interviews. All the interviews were conducted in Amharic which is the official language of the region in particular and the federal language of the country in general. All the research participants then are fluent in it. On average each FGD session took two hours while the individual interviews lasted for 45 to 120 minutes. The reason for such variation of time duration was because of data saturation that enabled to reduce the interviews time as I started the data reduction process in the field though special attention was given not to miss important issues.

It is important to note that during individual interview most of the development workers and managers were assertive enough to speak on behalf of the organisation and their personal feelings, perceptions and attitudes about the research issues. Only a few participants were hesitant to speak the perspective of the organisation. The interviews with development workers, communication officers and managers of the organisations were conducted in the offices of the organisation while the interviews and FGDs with
the local community were conducted in Farmers Training Centres and under the shade of big tree in the rural areas.

4.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

The data analysis process started with preparing the data for analysis; then carrying on to deeper understanding of the data, representing the data and conducting interpretations of the wider meaning of the data using the theoretical framework of the study (Creswell, 2002:220). Denzin’s (1998) four phases of data analysis and interpretation were employed in this research. The phases are sense making, representation, legitimation and desire. Sense making refers to the process of filtering the data and deciding what to include and exclude; while representation is about addressing issues of voice and of how to present the self and others. Legitimation refers to providing a rational and credibility for the text. Desire is to mean producing an interesting and inviting report to the reader.

Applying Denzin’s (1998) techniques of data interpretation and Creswell’s (2002) procedures of data analysis, all the data were transcribed and read several times before entering into coding. In the process of data analysis and interpretation, field notes were also used to enrich the research report. The analysis was continued till saturation where the emerging of new themes or sub-themes becomes null. Finally, bunching of themes in each research question was made and written.

The specific procedures of data analysis and interpretation were guided with the following six phases Creswell (2002):
Step 1. Preparing and organising the data for analysis. The first step included interviews transcription, filed notes typing, documents scanning and categorising and arranging the data according to the information sources (such as managers of ORDA, development experts and practitioners and the local people). Besides, transcriptions of individual interviews, FGDs and field notes from observations of certain activities and copies of certain documents were prepared for further analysis. The transcriptions were made in Amharic and translated into English that made up 434 pages of document. A unique identification number was assigned to each data source such as interview or FGD. This facilitated the data management, retrieval and analysis process. Accordingly, the individual interviews and FGDs data were coded in the ways that are used in the analysis part. That is, the individual interviews with the local community were coded as LC that stands for local community. Since there were six individual interviews with the local community members, they were coded as LC1, LC2…LC6. The FGDs with the local community were coded as FGD, and the six FGDs were coded as FGD1, FGD2…FGD6. The individual interviews with the development workers were coded as DW interview and numbered DW Interview 1, DW interview 2 and so on till DW interview 12. The interviews with the members of the management of ORDA were coded as MMT interview that stands for member of the Management Team and numbered as MMT interview1, MMT intervie2, till MMT5. Interview with the communication officers were coded as CO that stands for Communication Officer and numbered as CO1, CO2 and CO3.

Step 2: Reading and understanding all the data. In this step, the first objective was to get the overall comprehension of the data, and making reflections on the general
understanding. That is, the researcher, tried to understand the major themes, the tone of the ideas, and reflect on the depth, credibility and utilisation of the data.

Step 3. Making detailed analysis with the help of coding. The analysis was focusing on exploring the perception and practice of participatory communication in ORDA. As stated by Newman (2007:330), coding in qualitative study refers to “organizing the raw data into conceptual categories that creates themes or concepts”. Coding is a fundamental part in the process of data analysis. By sharing Newman’s idea, three phases of coding were applied in this study in order to guide the data analysis and interpretation process. These are open coding, axial and selective coding.

Open coding was made during the first reading of the collected data. Here, the main task was finding themes and assigning initial codes and trying to reduce the mass of data into categories. Accordingly, 210 initial codes were identified using the word track technique of the Microsoft word program. The next phase, axing begins. Here, based on the first phase, the researcher moved towards organising ideas or themes, and pointing out the axis of main concepts for analysis. In this phase, the 210 codes were classified and organised into 22 initial themes. Irrelevant codes were rejected based on the research questions and objectives of the study. Thus, the third or last phase, selective coding was used. This coding refers to the identification of foremost themes of the research. In other words, selective coding involves scanning data and earlier codes. The researcher then, looked selectively for cases that illustrated themes, and based on the themes comparisons and contrasts were made. Such analysis process could lead to get well developed concepts that can be used for making some generalisations on the issues
addressed. In doing so, the data were categorised thematically mainly based on the research questions and orientations of literature reviews.

The literature review reinforce to emerge the research themes that include the conceptions of development, approaches of development, types of participation, perception towards participation, perception towards participatory development, conceptions of communication for development, development communication models, approaches to participatory communication, dialogical communication, empowerment, indigenous knowledge, indigenous communication systems, community participation, challenges of affecting participatory communication for development. These major themes are found in the literature and searched in the data to answer the research questions. In addition, new themes were also expected and emerged out of the data. These were specific cultural and religious practices affecting development, impact of political context for dialogical communication, additional factors affecting participatory communication, the paradoxical persistence of poverty, aid and development works mainly because of the marginalisation of communication. However, it is important to note that in one way or another above themes are interrelated to each other and analysed using the theoretical frameworks of the study discussed in the previous chapter.

Generally, the themes emerged out of the study are presented by seven major thematic categories:

1. development works reflecting the traditional approaches
2. participatory development: perceptions and practices
3. participatory communication in development project phases
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4. perception and practice of participatory communication
5. participatory communication approaches
6. factors affecting participatory communication
7. persistence of poverty, food aid and development works in rural Ethiopia

Step 4. Determining the final themes - descriptions of the setting, the people and the categories as well as themes (in a way that lead to writing the analysis part) was made.

Step 5. Showing how the description and themes represented the narratives of qualitative study. Here in-depth data analysis continued using different techniques (such as narration, illustrations, figures, quotations) for detailed discussions of themes.

Step 6. Interpreting or articulating the meaning of the data. Here the general lesson of the findings was presented. The discussion used participatory communication theory as a frame of reference to reflect on similarities and differences between the theoretical issues and the practical experiences. That is, using the literature on participatory communication, the study made comparisons of the findings with other similar research reports to confirm or disconfirm. Thus, the researcher ended up with synthesising the major findings and making conclusions as well as recommendations (Creswell, 2002: 200-222).

The above steps generally, do not show a linear form of the data analysis. Both, the data collection and the analysis processes were iterative and at times simultaneous. It is a kind of cyclic process, back and forth from of data collection and analysis and at times to problem re-formulation and revising of the research questions. Thus, the preceding steps mentioned were not linear. Such processes could reflect one thing i.e. using a
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combination of inductive and deductive process although the inductive process dominates the work. This is based on Creswell’s (2002:210) notion of the nature of qualitative research that reinforcing the simultaneous and iterative “activities of collecting, analyzing, and writing up the data”.

Finally, it is important to note the role of self reflectivity in the process of data analysis and interpretation. As Lincoln and Guba (2000) notes, reflectivity refers to the critical mindfulness of a researcher about the subjectivity of his or her research account and his/her impact on the process of data analysis and interpretation. Reflectivity is important for the reason that the researcher’s identity and outlook shapes the research process. The authors explain that “reflexivity […] demands that we interrogate each of our selves regarding the ways in which research efforts are shaped and staged around the binaries, contradictions, and paradoxes that form our own lives” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000:183). Besides, Primeau (2003) contends that the subjective nature of a qualitative research account could be addressed by self reflectivity since the account is a narrative constructed by a researcher. Thus, it is important to note that this qualitative research account is shaped by my positions, theoretical lens and methodological preferences. However, this doesn’t diminish the quality of the research since reflexivity enhances the quality of a research account by enabling us to examine oneself as researcher such as the influence of our assumptions and preconceptions on the research process (Primeau, 2003).
4.9 Ethical Considerations

In doing this research, the rights of the individuals involved in this study got due attention and respect. As mentioned by scholars such as Deacon, Murdock, Pickering and Golding (1999), Best and Kahn (1993) and Bhattacherjee (2012) ethical considerations include issues of harm, informed consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of the data sources. All these ethical issues were carefully considered in the course of this study. For example, consent and access letter from the target organization (ORDA) were granted (see appendix D). Personal as well as group interviews and observations were made confidential, and name references were not made to mean real persons during the reporting of the research result. Participants were also informed about the purpose of the study before involving them. Especially the rural community who are illiterate, verbal explanations were used in order to get their free consent. Such approach could make the research considered the local culture (by adopting the Western concept of consent letter usually in written form). Therefore, this research used both written and oral consents based on the local situation. Research ethics was not the onetime task; it was an ongoing process till the end of the research and reporting.

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, more explanations and justifications on how qualitative research methodology is selected and used for the study were made. The discussion could enlighten us qualitative case study research as an important path to an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon focusing on particular case(s). In this case, the particular case is perception and practice of participation and communication in the
context of development in ORDA. To validate the data, and deepen our understanding of the research issues, various data gathering instruments were employed. These are in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis and observation. Content analysis and thematic approach were used to analyse the data. Series of steps were applied to interpret and analyse the data. These were preparing and organising the data for analysis, reading and understanding the data, coding the data, generating description of the setting, the people and the categories and the themes in a way that lead to writing the analysis part. That is, the narratives of qualitative study were formulated using different techniques such as narration, illustrations, figures, and quotations. The final step was focused on interpreting the data and writing up the report.

The methodology enabled the research to identify the types of development being practiced by the development agent and to explain why such development practice is undertaken and why other methods were neglected. Besides, it provided insights as to how to change or introduce new methods (example, participatory and holistic) to improve development. The next chapter will present the findings, the analysis as well as the interpretation of the major findings of the study.
5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation of the study that focuses on the perceptions and practices of participatory communication in the development efforts of ORDA. More specifically, this chapter is organised with the following research objectives:

- To assess the perception of development by ORDA’s development practitioners
- To examine the approach of development by ORDA’s development practitioners
- To explore the perception of participatory communication by development practitioners of ORDA
- To see the practice of participatory communication by ORDA
- To examine the perception of the local community about participatory development communication practices of ORDA, and
- To find out factors that facilities or hinder the practice of participatory development communication in ORDA’s development efforts

The major findings of the study are categorised into seven parts. In the first two parts, the research describes and analyses the perceptions and practices of development in general and participatory development in particular. To have a holistic view of the issues, the analysis considers both the organisation and the local community perspectives. The third part narrates the status of participatory communication in the development project cycles.

The fourth part focuses on the perception and practice of communication in the context of development works. It mainly presents how ORDA conceives development communication
in general and participatory communication in particular and this section reveals practices of participatory communication for sustaining development.

The fifth part of this chapter discusses the participatory communication approaches of the organisation. Here, the major communication approaches like community gathering, community conversation and drama, as edutainment approach, are presented.

The sixth part analyses the factors affecting participatory communication in the development process. The major factors impeding genuine participation and participatory communication are discussed. The seventh part or the last section presents a critical reflection on the persistence of poverty, food aid and development works in the rural Amhara region, Ethiopia focusing on the communication aspect. The purpose of this part is not examining the prevalence and dimension of such issues in detail, rather reflecting on how the factors that are discussed under part five affect the development process.

5.2. Development Works: Under the Shade of Traditional Approaches

Although the main purpose of this research seeks to understand the perception and practice of participatory communication in the process of development, it seems imperative to understand the general context of development in the organisation and the wider contexts in which it is practiced. Therefore, this sub-section specifically addresses the conception and practice of development by the local development actor, ORDA and the local community.

Let us begin with the organisation and proceed to the local community living in the research sites. One of the senior managers of the organisation defines development with the perspectives of ORDA as follows:
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Development is defined from the economic perspective. It is the increment of income to the local community in which self-reliance could be maintained. It is building their capacity to feed themselves. There should be sustainable economic change to achieve this. To this end, we are working in different asset creating activities. Our development work includes changing attitude, building skills and capacities of the local community primarily for their economic empowerment. We are working with the poor section of the society who are aspiring for self-reliance. (MTT interview 2)

The above quotation could highlight us that ORDA as an organisation perceives development as economic growth of the local community. This is a perspective drawn on the modernisation and the dependency paradigm despite their convection on the idea of participation. Many development workers share such economic notion of development: For instance, one of development workers states:

Development is growth; it is the economic growth of the community. For example, road construction is a development work since it increases market integration of the people. This in turn develops their economic capacity. (DW interview 1)

The above excerpts could indicate that ORDA conceives development as economic growth mainly focusing on food security. Such conception of development is also visible from vision and mission statements of the organisation and its strategic plans. The vision of ORDA is given as: “the vision of ORDA is to see poverty free people of Amhara, Ethiopia” and its mission is presented: “the mission of ORDA is empowering poor community and their organizations in Amhara to achieve livelihoods and environmental security” (ORDA, 2012). These statements illustrate that ORDA is primarily established to working for the fulfilment of food security.

Moreover, understanding ORDA’s conceptions of development, examining its four strategic plans was a must. Thus, the first strategic plan (1997-2003) defined ORDA’s priority areas: natural resource protection, agricultural development, rural water supply and access, road
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construction and emergency food aid. During this period, ORDA implemented seven Food Security and Integrated Rural Development Projects in Sekota, Ibnat, Belesssa, Wadla, Tach Gayint, Lay Gayint, Gublafto and Gidan districts. Of such areas, the three districts namely Sekota, Wadela, Lay Gaynet (Nefas Mewcha) are the focus areas of the study. The second strategic plan (2004-2008) further refined the areas of priorities and restructured the organization under four programs namely Environmental Rehabilitation and Agricultural Development, Forest Resources Development, Water Resources Development and Disaster and Relief Programs (ORDA second strategic plan, 2004; ORDA third strategic plan, 2009; ORDA fourth strategic plan, 2014).

The priorities continued during the third (2009-2013) and the fourth strategic plans (2014-2018), with widening areas of coverage, doubling budget amount, and diversifying interventions from year after year. For instance, in 2013 ORDA managed to implement 78 diversified projects in 63 districts in partnership with 32 funding partners. Currently, ORDA is working on natural resources development, water resources development, food security and agricultural development, and rural diversification programs (ORDA, 2014). The program list doesn’t include cultural development program which shows the little attention is given to such aspects of development aspect. There is no significant variation among the priority areas of programs in ORDA for the last two decades. Generally, the main focus of ORDA’s development efforts is on livelihood achievement under economic growth.

In other words, economic growth is the main objective of ORDA’s development works. Therefore, the economic conception seems to be the dominant approach of development in ORDA. This implies that, the economic conception of ORDA shapes the development activities on the ground in which ORDA’s various development projects have been designed
primarily for their economic benefit of the local community. Even when I asked about the major development works ORDA performs, the common answers were the hard development works such as building health centres, developing spring water development, constructing hand dug well, constructing roads and irrigations, protecting environment using development workers and the local people. The actual field observations also demonstrated such attention given to the development activities mentioned.

The ORDA’s economic focused conception of development seems to become different from the definition of participatory development which focuses on holistic development including the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of a given society. The emphasis on economic issues usually marginalises the dimension of human development in which participatory development and communication is all about. Moreover, the emphasis on economy as a single criterion for defining development entails that the development approach is top down and participatory development communication becomes a missing link.

In addition, ORDA perceives poverty as a shortage of basic needs or materials. The research participants’ responses show that they perceived poverty as lack of resources to satisfy basic needs. One interviewee (DW interview 3) states “poverty is lack of basic needs. It is something that is associated with food insecurity”. Here, some more examples are mentioned:

Mainly the perception of poverty is related to economic issues. Low level of agricultural production which is insufficient for the consumption of the local community is evidence to what extent the people live under the poverty line. People living in our project area are categorised into absolutely poor and poor people. (MMT interview 2)

There are lots of poverty manifestations in our project area. For example, many people are unable to feed their family. Eating one meal per day is not simple; there are lots of people who could not find something to eat once in a day. Poverty is observable in their shabby and ragged dressing and the overall low
quality of life in this area. Therefore, ORDA is working to change such trends. (DW interview 5)

Hence, the conceptions of development and poverty in ORDA may be drawn on the economic perspective of development. For example, the conception of poverty as shortage of basic needs or materials may reinforce the organisation to work for the fulfilment of such basic needs that reflect the economic conceptions of development. Therefore, there seems to have a direct relationship between conceptions of development and poverty in ORDA. Both revolve around the economic dimension of life such as food insecurity and the absence and presence of material wealth. There appears also to have a direct relationship between the conceptions of development and poverty and the actual development practices on the ground. The mushroom of self help groups (SHG) and credit associations in each village where ORDA has been working are additional evidences that could illustrate ORDA’s attention to economic growth.

The perception of development by the local community is also related to avoiding poverty. For the local community, poverty is conceived as the result of lack of basic needs. The poor are those who cannot feed themselves, who wear ragged clothes/dresses. The poor are those who receive the food aids from aid agencies. The following excerpts, which were taken from the local community show how they perceive poverty and the poor.

Poverty is when somebody lives in a state of hopelessness. It is a state when he lives with the support of others. Poverty is when one is not engaged in a work that cannot help him feed his family or it is the absence of work for some of us. Poverty is the lack of cattle. If a person does not have a cow, an ox, or goats, he is called poor. The poor are landless too. By any means if a person is under food aid program, he is poor. (FGD 1)

If a person has an ox, he is rich, so he is not poor. If a person has a corrugated iron house and an ox, he is not poor. (FGD1)
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There are people who live in absolute poverty. They could not get their enough meal as they need. There are beggars also. Such people are dependent on the safety net food aid. They live in a difficult situation. (FGD 3)

The local community also perceives development as economic growth that focuses on building terracing, soil fertility and environment protection to increase productivity. The following verbatim expressions mirror the conception of development by the local community.

ORDA has been working road, terracing, water and soil protection, seeds distribution as development works. Development is building terrace. To protect the soil erosion, we build canals. We produce apple. They provided potato and wheat special seeds. (FGD 2)

Development is protecting the environment from soil erosion. We have been working this under the development program of ORDA and the government. (FGD 4)

The local community members commonly define development as “terracing for soil and water conservation”. This conception could be the result of local community’s involvement in the stated development works for their material and labour contributions. As mentioned above, the power holders (benefactors) define poverty as shortage of materials or basic needs. They refer development as material fulfilment and food security, and the local community (beneficiaries) takeover such conceptions. In other words, the economic dimension of development activities in their area (by governmental and nongovernmental organisations) shapes the conceptions of development and poverty by the local community. Such economic led conception tends to affect development practices. Especially the human development component is missing or marginalised in the development process of ORDA. As a result, the non material aspects of development and poverty are overlooked from the development process both at the perceptual and practical levels.
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Generally, the above discussion reveals that the economic conception of development is the dominant trend and it shapes the development practices on the ground. Such economic conception also seems to intermingle with the top down approach which implies that the development work is under the shade of the traditional development approach.

The top down approach focuses on economic growth, and considers the local community as passive receivers of project benefits. Development projects are designed by the elites and development organisations which hardly consider local needs and concerns. Decision making powers and resources are controlled by outsider change agents. On the other hand, horizontal or bottom up development approaches consider the local community as active agents of their own development and actively involve them in the development process. Local needs and concerns are prioritised in this approach. The bottom up approach seeks the empowerment of the local community and enables them to determine their destiny. Unlike the top down approaches which the decision making power and resources are controlled by the local community. Now let us go on to the discussion on the development approach of ORDA.

ORDA’s development work is predominantly top down. It means development projects are designed without the active involvement of the local community, and local needs and concerns are rarely prioritised. Besides, the local community is not empowered to control resources and to make decisions that determine their future. Development projects are designed primarily for fulfilling the requirements of donors and the local governors. The community become at the third level in the hierarchy of requirements. The usual procedure in the design of development projects commences from securing fund from donors. Hunting fund is one of the top priorities of the organisation. In other words, the development works are chiefly dollar driven and supply driven.
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One of the development workers states such strong influence of the donors in the design of the projects as follows:

> If the program is funded by USAID and FHI, they make decisions about all the activities and programs and give it to ORDA head office. The head office sends to us keeping the organisational hierarchy and originality of the project as determined by the donors. (DW interview 2)

In such type of projects, the donors measure and count each and every activity of the projects. ORDA is simply the implementer and participation becomes rare (DW5). Thus, it is participation as co-option. By doing this, the type and place of development projects are determined before contacting with the local community. After that ORDA goes to the community with the already decided projects. The room for involving the community during the design stage of projects is rarely opened as mentioned by a development expert:

> We cannot conduct need assessments for the donor driven projects. What we do is we go to the community with decided projects such as water, road, health centre, etc., and orient them and seek their contribution. You see the projects are already pre-determined. What we do is convincing the community for their contribution. Then we implement the project, and hand it over when we leave the place. (DW interview 5)

Such types of economically driven projects are predetermined, and they make the development approach top down. This makes localising development and empowerment become difficult. From the above data it could be possible to infer that projects funded by donor organisations such as USAID and FHI are top down. They are powerful in deciding the type, the nature and place of the projects. This process marginalises the local community from actively participating in all the phases of the development works. The development approach makes them mere beneficiaries, not active participants in their own development process. Broadly seen, this reflects how the development assistance given by the international development partners determine the development approach and marginalise the involvement
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of the local community from the start of the project. This is in line with Quarles van Ufford’s argument about such problems of the development industry as follows:

The availability of large funds means that the local peoples have limited if any control over spending and that their views on planning are mediated through ‘local organisation’ in the form of an institutional representative structure set up by the developee's national government (1993: 136).

The above problem also demonstrates that the development assistances of the international donors show a move towards donors tend to create donors funding government programs rather than local development projects and programs by a local NGO or the community. A good example that illustrates this move is that the PSNP project in Amhara region, which is a huge government project mainly funded by the international donors. ORDA has become the implementer of this project mainly in the food insecure districts of Amhara region since 2005. In such cases the government has the right to decide the type and place of the projects. Neither ORDA nor the local community are the decision makers of such projects. Accordingly ORDA is becoming the implementer; while the local communities could be the beneficiaries of such top down development projects. Specifically, the district string committee has strong power to decide the type and place of such government and donors sponsor projects. A development expert expresses such procedures of the development projects as follows:

The local administrative determines what should be planned and implemented in a given place. This means ORDA does not have the opportunity to plan by conducting its own base line survey or PRA with the local community. The local communities do not have the right to determine the type and place of ORDA's projects. The sector offices and the district string committees have a great role in this process. They can decide on behalf of the local community. Such experience is reflected in the PSNP project. (DW interview 3)

The move towards the international donors to sponsor government projects such as the PSNP give chances to government policy priorities which in turn disregarding localising
development works and views of the local community. Therefore, such move enables the government to have absolute power to decide the type and place of PSNP projects and limit ORDA’s role as implementer. This also clearly mirrors that ORDA is working in line with government priorities. One of the participants states such procedure as follows:

The district string committee decides the place and type of the projects. This committee is believed to know the development gap at the district level. It is not common that ORDA experts conduct a base line study to design the projects. It is the string committee that decides such issues. (DW interview 5)

In each district, there are string committees that decide the place and type of the projects funded under the PSNP. The district administrator is the chair person whereas managers of sector offices like as water, agriculture, health and others are members of the committee. ORDA is represented by the project office manager who is the minute taker of the committee. This is how ORDA’s participation is manifested in the process of decision making. It is this committee that decides PSNP projects in which ORDA is there only to implement.

Therefore, the aforementioned discussion indicates that ORDA usually goes to the community with the already approved projects. This could make development works supply driven, other than demand driven. That is, ORDA has been looking for funds from donor organisations for filling gaps of the government by implementing the government sponsored projects. Such approach of development projects are primarily focusing on meeting the requirements of donors and the government rather than addressing the needs of the local people who could develop mistrust and frustration on the projects.

However, because of the severe and multi-faceted problems since the local communities are facing; ORDA rarely face strong resistance from the communities against the already approved projects. In other words, regardless of the type and nature of projects, the
community usually need benefits out of the projects including road, and clean water, jobs, food, seeds, and financial credit. Consequently, it could be argued that the high level of poverty and inadequate infrastructures silenced the people while the implementation of projects that are planned without their involvement. Thus, it has become common for ORDA’s development experts meet the local people for giving orientation about the projects decided without the involvement of the local community. The main goal of the orientation is to inform about the projects, their uses and benefits and ask them for contributions. The contributions are usually labour and materials though a few people are participating in the committee works such as water committee, irrigation committee and road committee. For some of the committee members who are living in absolute poverty, the organisation pays food for labour contributions.

Therefore, when ORDA wants to implement development projects, it should pass through the local level structure. That is, the already approved projects are required to be ratified by the local government structure for final implementation. Generally, ORDA needs to follow the already established government groupings and structure for the implementations of the projects.

Everywhere in rural Ethiopia, the government has its own development structure and organisation at the local level to make the people participate in development works. At each locality, thirty persons are organised in a group and this group is further broken down into six smaller groups having five members in each. Such groups are usually called one to thirty and one to five development groups respectively. Every productive person in rural areas is required to go through the lines of such structure. Besides, the leaders of the groups are made members of the ruling political party and it is mandatory for a rural person to involve in such
development grouping. Even the government calls such structure development army or army of development (DW interview 5).

By organising such groupings, the government claims that this is used to mobilise the people easily for development works such as terracing and aorestation. However, such structure and groupings could mainly open for manipulation of power for politics. It might serve as a means of controlling the people under the government hierarchy. On top of this, the political criterion may marginalise members of the community who could perform development works better than those in the political party. The premature democratic climate of the rural area might lead to manipulation. Despite such fear, ORDA still needed to use this line of structure and grouping at the locality level to get the people at the grassroots level and to implement the projects decided by the stated forces (donors, the government and the districts string committee).

ORDA has to follow strictly the already established development lines. Thus, it is in such conditions that ORDA has been working on its development projects. That is, ORDA should follow this development line to reach the local people and to organise them. For example, to make irrigation or water committee, ORDA should pass through these government groups and lines.

This establishment could be a barrier to approach and organise the community based on the interest of the organisation. The political establishment of the government lines and groupings may have potential distractions of contacting and assigning roles to hard working workers and influential persons in the community. That is, politics seems to be at the centre of the role assignments. Accordingly, it appears imperative to argue that development is a
political decision where the ruling party politics plays a great role. This scenario may also make things hard for getting development inclusive in the context of immature political culture of developing countries where some sections of the community may be marginalised.

One of the interviewees said:


ORDA does not have the license to organise and approach the people as it wants. We are working with the government. We prioritise development issues as directed by the government. Thus, following this government line/structure is the government strategy that we should work with. Respecting the established line is mandatory. (DW interview 8)

This form of intervention by the government could affect ORDA to approach the people directly at the grassroots level, so ORDA has to go with the people via the established line with its approved projects by the local government and the donors. This in one way or the other confirms that the dominant development approach is being employed top-down. That is, power is in the hands of the international donors and the district administrative or the string committee i.e. the government. This makes the local people receivers, not partners of the development projects; and thus, ORDA is a bridge between the local community and development partners. Hickey and Mohan (2004) refers this as substitute participation. Substitute participation is observed when the NGOs act as a bridge between the community and other development partners. In doing this, they are expected to reflect the perception, need and preferences of the community. The NGO experts are required to speak on behalf of the beneficiaries. However, pushed by their own self-interest and their survival, NGOs might disregard or manipulate actual grassroots concerns and needs. As a result, even the community leaders may not have a chance to be part of the decision making process. The NGOs substitute the participation of the community in a way that sustains their survival which in turn leads to social control, not social change; i.e. tyranny, not transformation (Hickey & Mohan, 2004:9).
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As a result, the economic conception of development and the use of top down approach hinder ORDA to realize holistic development since holistic development happens with communicative experiences and process, not in a top down fashion. The absence of such critical engagement closed the eyes of the local community not to see the root causes of poverty related with the social, economic, political and cultural world of the community. They rather see the root cause of poverty and their low quality of life as the result of the intervention of super natural power, bestowed by their God. This is similar with Rogers’s argument about the mentality or subculture of peasants that affect the development process in developing countries (Rogers, 1962). For example, in Wadela where drought and chilly weather are recurrent problems affecting the life of the local community, one of the group discussants from the local community utters such belief as follows:

Our poverty is a result of God’s maltreatment. God does not give us what we deserve. What can we do if the rain does not come at the right time, if the snow damages what we sow on the land? We are working but God does not help us. We ploughed, we worked hard but God damaged everything that we did. This vicious circle complicated our life. Poverty is from the Heaven, it is God’s order. When the crop reaches to maturity the snow damages it. This is beyond our control. It is from the above (by observing on the sky). Man is not poor at birth but God does not help us. We are poor, not because we are lazy rather God does not help us to get the fruit of our effort. For example, this year we had a very good seedling of barely. We thought we can feed our family by getting good production. We were very eager to feed ourselves. However, suddenly the chilly damaged it. It cut our throat. It is like killing us. Because of this, poverty is with us. If God does not help us what can we do? We have no choice. (FGD 3)

All the group members nodded their head in agreement with this discussant. This is a sense of fatalism. There was sadness on the faces of the group discussants. Such strong held belief discloses the absence of basic constructs of participatory communication such as dialogue, critical thinking, problematisation and action and reflection as means of empowerment (Freire, 2005; White, 1994; Cadiz, 2005; Mefalopulos, 2005 & 2008; Servaes, 2008). If, for instance, Freire’s style of dialogical communication had been employed, it could have
enabled the local community to open their eyes and critically analyse the root causes of their poverty, i.e. questioning the social world they are living in. That is, rather than challenging the development approaches and policies, the power inequality, the absence of equity in their social environment, and examining flaws in their cultural world, the discussants pointed their figures towards the remote sky. Instead of questioning the status quo they live in, the history they passed in, the socio economic and political world they live in, they wanted solutions beyond the horizon. This is inconsistent with Freire’s (2005) model of dialogical communication that has been claimed to enable the poor to become critically aware of and reflect about their status in society that in turn motivates them to liberation from cultural, social, economic and political injustices. Or as he argues that dialogue is a gateway to understand one’s reality and the world.

This could reveal that there is a gap in the development approach of ORDA. The local community are not guided to open their eyes to critically examine the root causes of poverty and search the solutions of the environment. In contrast to Freire’s notions, the local community could not understand their reality and the world around them. The paradox is that while observing the vicious circle of poverty in the region, ORDA and its development partners have chosen to distribute food aid for three decades rather than searching long standing solutions. This could affect sustainable development or any future development efforts. In the long run, no one benefits from such negligence of addressing the root causes of poverty. For its short term benefit, the sustainability of food distribution seems that the development industry has jobs to do and get paid for it. What is disheartening is that this is done at the cost of developing dependency syndrome by the local community. This in turn has become one of the challenges of the development industry (see 5.7).
In a nut shell, it seems possible to argue that the development industry will be in a war created by itself i.e. dependency syndrome. This battle will cost its energy, money and time in a way that sustains, if not, creates further poverty.

As mentioned above, ORDA has been heavily investing its time, energy, capital and money on physical projects such as irrigation, road, water and environmental protection. By focusing on these physical projects, ORDA does not give attention to change the traditional practices that affect development works. This focus on physical projects enables ORDA and the funding agencies to keep control over projects. In Amhara region in general and in the research sites in particular, there are lots of traditional practices that impede the development works. For example, several of religious holidays forbid physical engagement of works and lots of celebrations or religious feasts created the scare resources in the area. Such things are serious problems. That is, religious holidays and celebrations affect the rural life since the majority could not perform the agricultural practices. For example, in Sekota, Wadela, and Nefas Mewcha there are several off days for religious worships and feasts by Orthodox Christians as stated by the development workers below. One of the research participants from Sekota narrates such experience as follows:

As farmers are guided by their religion, they have too many religious holidays in the area on which they spent their days without agricultural work for the sake of religion. Members of the local community are dominantly Orthodox Christians. Normally, the Orthodox Church identified every Saturday and Sunday as Sabbaths. And also the monthly 5th, 7th, 12th, 16th, 21st, 27th and 29th days are holidays in the local area. Agricultural works in these days are prohibited by the religious followers. In addition, there are additional holidays that have been assigned as time for worship and rest by the local community which in turn significantly reduces the time that has to be used for productive works. For example, one week following the fasting of the month of June (sene tsom), one week following the fasting of the month of August (fisleta) and one week following Easter holiday in every year are worship and rest days, and agricultural works are not performed in our area. These days are additional off days to the yearly national Christian holidays namely Easter, Epiphany and Finding the Cross. (DW interview 2)
Too many religious holidays that affect the agricultural practices is in line with the claim of Andrew and Dennis (2008), which states the powerful influence of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on the daily life. Alemayehu (cited Andrew & Dennis, 2008: 57-58) also calculated the religious holidays in North Gonder, and conclude that “only fourteen days were left for work in average month”.

Moreover, other traditional practices such as funerals, memorials of dead persons by relatives and wedding ceremonies impede the development process. The local peoples extravagantly invest their scare resources for such traditional celebrations. Celebrations are marked after celebrations in the local rural Amhara.

There are lots of celebrations in our area. But development does not come by marking lots of celebrations. Celebration demands expenditure. There are still lots of celebrations and feasts on funeral, memorial and weddings in our area. (DW interview 1)

The presence of these traditional practices in the research areas discloses two main points. On one hand, that little attention has been given to the soft development issues in the research area. On the other, there is a gap in the development conception and approach of the organisation. That is, lack of conceiving and approaching development holistically marginalise the soft development issues; hence the development approach fails to address the root causes of poverty and backwardness in the region.

It seems there is a universal agreement among scholars (Mundy & Lloyd-Laney, 1992, Bame, 2005; Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; White, 2008; Huesca, 2008) about the role of indigenous knowledge (IK) for sustainable development. IK is also central to participation in development process since existing knowledge and experience are pre-requisite for
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contribution to the development work and decision-making. For instance, Senanayake (2006:87) argues:

Indigenous knowledge is considered as the social capital of the poor. It is their main asset to invest in the struggle for survival, to produce food, to provide for shelter and to achieve control of their own lives.

Contrary to the general trend that advocates the importance role of indigenous knowledge; little focus was given to it in ORDA. Indigenous knowledge is rarely practiced by individual development workers’ effort. For example, one of the research participants responds that “indigenous knowledge is not as such used. It is not significantly used specially in our program” (DW Interview 9).

In addition, there is no guideline or policy that encourages the use of local knowledge in the development works by the organisation. Lack of formal and organised practice to use local knowledge for sustainable and participatory development by itself would mean that ORDA uses the non participatory nature of the development approach. That is, using local knowledge for participatory and sustainable development is the missed opportunity in ORDA’s development effort. This is in line with what Rogers (1976) and Huesca (2008) state that the acknowledgement of local cultures, values and knowledge for development is devalued in the traditional approach.

Generally, the above discussion illuminates that both at the perceptual and practical levels, ORDA’s development work is under the shade of the traditional approach. That is, the dominant economic conception and top down approach of development reveal that the local organisation fails to localise the development works. This is in line with Sengupta’s (2007: 239) observation of the mainstream development works which is contrary to the advocacy of participatory development at the theoretical levels. The author explains that contrary to the
promotion and intention of human development at the theoretical level, the practice is dominated by the modernisation approach of development. This leads to closing the room for active involvement of the local community in their own development process.

5.3 Participatory Development: Perceptions and Practices

Understanding and examining how participation is perceived and practiced in ORDA are among the central focuses of this research. As we have already indicated, there is little participation of the local community in the development works of ORDA. This section presents how participation is perceived by the development agents and the local community and how they practice in the different stage of development projects. It is good to remind here the basic tenets of participatory communication (Quarry & Ramirez, 2004: 23) for framing the discussions:

1) Decision-making by community members and beneficiaries regarding project development; 2) community-level dialogue and consensus-building; 3) utilization of local knowledge generated by PD methods 4) benefits generated by projects.

The authors contend that decision making power, dialogue and local knowledge are among the basic tenets of participatory development. Based on these and other tenets, ORDA’s development experts’ perceptions of participatory development could be analysed. That is, the development experts who are working in the three project sites state their perceptions towards participation and participatory development. For instance, one of the interviewee defines participation as “labour and material contributions by the local people during physical development works” (DW interview 9). Similarly, another interviewee (DW interview 1) defines it as “the involvement of the people in the development works of ORDA”. Besides, participation is also perceived as:

Participation is the involvement of the local community with materials, labour and sometimes by cash contributions. For example, when there is health centre or
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hand dug well construction, the community participates by collecting water, stone and sand. This is what participation is meant in our context. (DW interview 2)

The above responses of the interviewees indicate that participation is perceived as martial and labour contributions of the local community. Based on Yoon’s (2004) categories of participation, such understanding of participation is grouped as participation in implementation where people are encouraged and mobilised to take part in the realization of projects with their own division of certain responsibilities and tasks. In such form of participation, the local communities are not part of the decision making process and it is referred as pseudo-participation (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009:6).

White (1994:17) calls such type of low level of participation as pseudo participation and he refers it as non-participatory for the reason that such level of participation restricts the local people as listeners of decisions made by outsiders or local elites.

On the other hand, the high level management members of ORDA conceptualise participation in the form of making labour and material contributions as well as having empowerment and decision making roles of the local community. For example, a member of the top management defines participation as: “participation is the involvement of the local community during project implementation and administration after being handed over” (MTT interview 1).

Such conception of participation is similar to that of the conceptions of development workers discussed above. That is, both parties understand participation of the community in the development process as a form of contribution.
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However, some members of the top management have different conceptions of participatory development. For example, one of the research participants defines participatory development as follows:

Currently participation is the involvement of the community in the problem identification and implementation of development projects. The planning team of ORDA consults the community during the project design stage. During the implementation stage the local community participate with labour and material contributions. After its accomplishment, the project will be administered by the community. However, our plan for the future is empowering the community to handle development projects. At that time, we will play only a facilitator's role. The community will be involved starting with problem identification, planning, and managing development projects. We will move to such levels of participation step by step. In the long run the goal of participation is empowerment of the communities in managing and implementing development projects. (MTT interview 2)

The above quotation could demonstrate the current understanding of participation in ORDA where information provision as well as material and labour contributions are emphasised. Perceiving participation as a process of community empowerment stated by a few of the senior management members of the organisation is not widely known in ORDA especially among the development workers who actually implement the development projects.

Nevertheless, empowerment is at the centre of participatory development. It is one of the basic notions that determine the level of participation in the development process (Mefalopulues, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The findings of this research confirm that the perception of empowerment in ORDA has two dimensions. The first dimension of the conception is related to economic empowerment of the local community while the second dimension is about decision making process. In this regard, one of the research participants (DW interview 2) defines the economic dimension of empowerment as: “empowerment is self-reliance, it is achieving food security”.

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On the other hand, empowerment is conceived as a decision making process by the local community:

Empowerment is the ability to become a decision maker in the development process. Building the capacity of the local community members enables them to decide by themselves. When they reach at this stage, ORDA will withdraw from being implementer of the development projects. This is our direction for the future. But ORDA will reach to such stage step by step. Currently we do not have an educated community that can handle everything by its own. (MTT interview)

This perception informs that the power of making decision on development issues will be shifted from the development organisation or funding organisations to the local community. As mentioned by Mefalopulos (2003, 2008) and Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), this conception of empowerment is the highest level of participation. They refer that the highest level of participation is empowerment, where there is the transfer of power to make decisions on resources from change agents to stakeholders then reach the status of shared decisions on development activities. It is about the need of power shift from the donors or the organisation to the local community. It is about changing the status quo. It is about building the capacity of the local community to decide on their fate.

The above scholars considered such phase of participation as genuine participation. However, this highest level of participation i.e. empowerment does not seem to be practiced in ORDA. The projects and practices do not allow such form of empowerment though a few members of some of the management in ORDA conceptualise participation as a form of empowerment. There could be several factors affecting the practice of such genuine participation (empowerment) in ORDA (See 5.7)

When we see the perspectives of the local community concerning participation in development process, they associate it with material and labour contributions. Even there is
no significant difference in the perception among members of the local community. They perceive participation as material and labour contributions in the development process which is similar with the perception of the development workers and some members of the management. Excerpts taken from the group discussion and individual interviews of the local community recount this. For instance, a discussant in (FGD 6) defines that “participation is collecting water, sand and stone for building schools, health centre and road or bridges”.

Similarly, an interviewee (LC interview 2) emphasis “it is working together in the canal and terrace building”. In addition, another interviewee (LC interview 1) pronounces that “we participate in the protections of the environment in the form of building terrace”.

The discussions and excerpts above show that there is no clear perception of participation difference between the development workers and the local community. Both perceive it as labour and material contributions. Pretty (1995:61) considers this type of participation as participation for the sake of material incentives. This type of participation is limited to resource contributions, for instance, labour or land by the local people. For such type of contributions, people will get food, cash or other material incentives as exchange. The sustainability of community participation is highly associated with the life time of the incentives. This is exactly observed in the experience of ORDA.

The above discussion tends to reveal that the perceptions of participation in the development process are dominantly inclined towards labour and material contributions by the development workers, management members of ORDA and the local community.

The paradox is that such perception is different from what ORDA’s official documents refer to community participation. For example, the third and fourth strategic plans and performance review of the third strategic plan refer participation beyond labour and material
ORDA believes that active and equal participation of all poor communities in identifying development challenges, formulating solution, mobilizing development resources, implementing the development plans and managing development achievements ensures sustainability of development results. (ORDA’s 4th Strategic Plan, 2014: 51)

The above reference to participation is different from what the results of the study reflect. Furthermore, the above mentioned official documents clearly define community participation as one of the basic development implementation strategies. The reference includes the extent of community participation in the phases of development interventions. The document also states that “ORDA strives to make community participation, including decision-making, mainstreamed in its development endeavours at all levels” (ORDA performance review of the third five years strategic plan, 2014:5).

However, mainstreaming of genuine participation is not observable in the actual development works, and is not reflected in development workers who live and work with in the local community. Such development workers seem not to be informed about such official conception of participation. They could not refer any document in defining community participation during the interviews. For instance, two of the research participants’ responses show how they are not informed about ORDA’s official stand about community participation:

ORDA does not have any written document about community participation. We usually sign memorandum of understanding with stakeholders on working projects. Of course, we understood participation as materials and labour contributions made by the community together. But there is no written material used as a guideline about participation. (DW interview 8)

These responses show that the mainstreaming of community participation claimed in ORDA’s official documents and the existing understandings as well as practices tend to be
contradictory. That is, there seems to have a clear gap between what is written and what is being practiced. Perhaps it is also possible to think that the documents that define participation as an implementation strategy (in the way mentioned above) may be needed to hold the attention of international donors since participation has become a fashionable word in the international development agenda. In any ways, there is a clear gap between the documents’ definition of participation and its conceptions of the development workers and some members of the management developed. This may be implied that the conception of participation by development workers emanates from the practices or their daily activities which is different from what is written officially. In short, it is safe to conclude that the written position of the organisation about participation seems to be nonexistent in the real world practices of development.

Generally, the absence of mainstreaming the official documents’ definition of participation creates a vacuum in understanding participation as an empowerment process. Because of such gap, there is no shared meaning in understanding participation as empowerment process among senior management of the organisation, the development experts and the local community members. Though a few senior members of management perception is based on their theoretical knowledge (which is in line with the definition set in the official documents), is not reflected in their practices. Even it is possible to say that participation has not become a shared knowledge among practitioners. Both the local community and the development experts perceive participation based on their real life experience which reflects participation as a form of contribution. In other words, it is not an exercise of self reliance. One of the research participants of the study expresses:

The main reasons for their participation are to create a sense of belongingness and to achieve sustainability. When the community contributes their labour and resources then they would own the project. When they own the project it becomes sustainable. (DW interview 1)
A member of the organisation’s management also states three purposes of community participation:

Community participation has three purposes. The first one is to create a sense of belongingness by the local community. The second is to enable the community to contribute something to the projects during the implementation stage. They need to contribute labour or materials. The third or the last is to enable the community to manage the projects after handing over. If there is a sustainability of projects, this means the community own the projects forever. (MMT interview 4)

Therefore, the above data demonstrate that the purpose of participation is limited to creating a sense of belongingness, getting materials and labour contributions, and to the purpose of administration after handing over the projects to the community. Such purpose is different from what the official documents claim that sustainable development is the main reason for implementing community participation. That is, the official document states that community participation should be implemented to encourage community driven development. It says “working in ways which encourage and enable communities to influence decisions, identify their strengths, and thereby stimulate community-driven developments” (ORDA third strategic plan, 2009: 27).

In general, the dominant perception of participation as contribution by development agents and the local community is in line with Berner’s (2010:4) idea referring participation as exploitative participation. This kind of participation occurs when development agents seek beneficiaries’ contribution for development projects in terms of money and work on the pretext of building the sense of ownership, under the masked goal of minimising costs and improving efficiencies. Even there is a danger that the gathering of information by using participatory rural appraisals may lead to exploitative participation for the reason that policy makers may manipulate it based on their own priorities, not the priorities of the poor.
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The next section discusses participation more at the practical level specifically the participation of the local community in planning, implementation, and evaluation and management of development projects. The discussion shows the status of participatory communication in the stages of development projects.

5.4 Status of Participatory Communication in Various Stages of Development Projects

The most important advantage of employing participatory communication in development initiatives is to understand the series of specific activities across the different phases of the project. Development initiatives, in general, pass through four phases. These are problem identification, project planning, project implementation and monitoring, and project evaluation. To obtain stakeholders’ active participation in these different stages of a development project, scholars (Bessette, 2004; Mefalopulos, 2008) discuss series of steps as a guideline. The steps understand participatory communication as a process that involves establishing community relationship via planning and implementing to monitoring and evaluation. Mefalopulos (2008:72) specifically classified the practical application of development communication into four broad phases. These are communication research, strategy design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

While communication is the heart of participation in the development process, it is hard to imagine participation without communication. Quarry and Ramirez (2004: 23) put this as: “of course not all forms of communication include participatory processes – many simply aim to persuade or pass information. But all forms of participation are essentially communication processes”. Therefore, this subsection examines the status of communication in the different phases of development projects.
5.4.1 Participation at the Level of Problem Identification (Communication Based Assessment)

Proponents of the participatory paradigm argue that the local community should have a central role in the identifications of development problems and activities (Mufalopulos, 2008). The communication roles should start with the commencement of projects. For instance, for Bessette (2004:28) participatory communication is an integral part of a development process that should commence from the beginning of a development cycle.

Both ORDA and the community disclose that participation of the local community in this stage of the development process is performed. Usually, key informants or FGD participants of the local community participate during project inception if the project is not designed by the huge donors and the government. When projects are designed by huge donors or the government, the problem identification is done by the donors such as USAID, FHI and the government themselves.

Nevertheless, the involvement of the local community in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises and baseline surveys are avenues for participation in the problem identification stage. One of the research participants states such issues as follows:

> During the project identification time or data gathering stage, we involve the local community. We gather data using different methods such as key informants and FGDs and PRA. (MMT3)

The use of PRA as participatory tool is reinforced from the expression of one of development experts:

> We use PRA, though we do not use it fully. We use PRA selectively as we need. It also depends on the experts’ preference. There is no direction by the organisation which dictates to use specific participatory tools like this. (MTT interview 4)
The above response reveals that the tool of participation known in ORDA is PRA. PRA is used by the project design and planning team during the problem identification stage. However, it is used in a limited scope. The development workers who work in the actual project sites are not familiar with PRA.

Generally, the aforementioned data reveal that participation at this stage is one time activity which is performed during the time of base line survey. Therefore, both the development workers and the local community responses enlighten participation as a form of contribution. This entails that participation is not an empowerment process. That is, the participation of the local community in this stage could be labelled as passive participation. It is clear that this passive participation could not empower the local community. Moreover, the data enlighten us that the problem identification stage ignores the communication part of the work. There is little communication needs assessment in ORDA as part of the problem identification of the development projects. Communication base assessment as suggested by Mufalopulos (2008) does not seem to be experienced in ORDA. Even the development experts are not sensitive to this work.

5.4.2 Participation at the Level of Planning

In the process of participatory development, planning is the second important phase in which the local community is believed to take an active role during project planning. This subsection explores the experience of ORDA. A member of local community says:

We do not participate during the planning stage of the projects. They give us orientation about the project, how and when it should be performed, and they do their best to convince us what our role should have to be during the implementation stage. (FGD 6)

In addition, a development worker states:
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We do not involve the local community in the planning stage. Even we believe that it is not our responsibility. Planning and decision making is done by the development workers, not by the community members. (DW interview 10)

A member of the senior management also expresses about the level of participation of the local community during the planning stage as follows:

Formerly the local people accept what we bring to them. Recently they have started to give their idea during the project preparation stage. Sometimes they propose the better idea they think of. But changing the project type or design is impossible not only for them but also for us. The project donors have their own desire, which makes it impossible even to alter the place of the project. Thus, we try to involve the community not in planning, but during the implementation and evaluation of the projects. (MTT interview 4)

Generally, both the development workers and the community members consider planning as a responsibility of the project offices and the head quarters. Therefore, development experts and other specialists and management members at the head quarter design the planning based on the information gathered during the problem identification stage. Involving the community at this stage is not common in ORDA. In other words, local people are not active participants of the planning process. Specifically, the communication part of the development projects is determined without the involvement of the local community. That is the communication approach and messages are determined by development experts.

This reveals that the planning and decision making process is usually done in a top down fashion. The donor driven nature of the projects contributes to this top down approach of the planning stage. As a result, development projects may not reflect the interest of the local community. They may rather reflect the interest and priorities of the donors and the governments, and, at times of ORDA itself. This goes with Bunch’s (1995) view who argues that the real ‘power behind the throne’ is outside the local community, in this case donors, the government and the organisation.
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5.4.3. Participation at the Level of Project Implementation

In a project cycle, the implementation phase is a level where the majority of rural people will be in a position to be involved in the development process. This sub sections explores the experience of ORDA in this phase.

One of the research participant states the participation of the local community in this phase as follows:

The manifestations of community participation are many: first the community participate with labour contribution. With labour contribution, the community might convey cements from the store to the site, collect sands especially in the remote areas that could not be reached by cars, collect stones, provide eucalyptuses timber, dig the land to build basement, watering the constructions. Sometimes, they contribute money between five to six birr per head when we build school and health centres. The second form of community participation is that they participate in unloading building materials on cars and conveying them to building sites. Community participation is, thus, manifested in these ways. (DW interview 8)

Similar view is expressed by a member of management of the organisation:

Community participation has different forms in different projects. For example, in some projects if some community members participate as member of a committee, it is considered as community participation. In some projects such as water construction, participation includes labour and materials contributions of the local community in addition to participating in the form of committee members. (MMT interview 3)

The members of local community during group discussion also state their participation in this stage of the development processes. For example, “we participate by contributing labour, collecting water, stone, and sand when they build a school, spring water and the irrigation canal. We are also working on terrace” (FGD 1).

Community participation in this stage is mainly manifested through labour and material contributions and sometimes with cash contribution. From the above excerpts we can
understand that participation at this stage is used to reduce the labour cost of projects and to create a sense of ownership among the local community. A development expert states that the main objective is to create a sense of belongingness:

The main reasons for their participation are to create a sense of belongingness and to achieve sustainability. When the community contributes their labour and resources, they own the project. When they own the project, it becomes sustainable. (DW interview 1)

This type of participation is accompanied by some penalties imposed by the local leaders and committees of the project. That is, punishment is there that if a member of the local community is absent from the project work he/she will be penalised with money. One research participant shares such experience and this shows the cost of penalty base participation. The experience as recounted below is about an incident happened in Wadela in 2013.

In our locality in kebele 013 there was a man who was a member of the food for work program. We paid birr for the participants. When this man was absent we punished him i.e. cut some amount of money by calculating the days. This was bad for him. He was again absent five days during the next month work program. Before the end of the month he wanted to compensate his absence. For this he had started work early, before the actual time. The actual time of entering the job was between 7:30-8:00 AM. He had started before this time thinking that he could compensate those five days. Sadly one morning he died entering into abyss while he was moving the stones. I think this man was obliged to do this because of his poverty level and because of the penalty. You will get such kind of persons having such experience if you move around the locality.

The case demonstrates that pseudo participation might include force by project leaders as penalties for the absentees that they think may lead to manipulation. Besides, the cost of pseudo participation might be human life. This is in contradiction with the tenets of participatory development that advocates development as human centred activity.
Moreover, the communication aspect is practiced not in accordance with the basic principles of participatory communication. For example, the production of communication outputs is practiced without the involvement of the local community (see further discussion in 5.5).

### 5.4.4 Participation at the Level of Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects

The following sub section presents the status of participation at the phase of monitoring and evaluation of development projects. One of the research participant states their level of participation as:

> There are committees for each activity. The committees participate in the evaluation process. We evaluate each performance with the water or school committees. The community include both females and males. They have a chairperson, minute writer, and cashier. The peoples are part of midterm and final phases of the project evaluation since the committees participate in the evaluation. We work with them. But the planning is done without the involvement of such committees. (DW interview 10)

Other development experts also respond:

> I do not see any strong participation at this level. The project office decides lots of things. Participation is not as such organised and strong. But we gather information from the committees. I do not believe there is full participation at this stage. (DW interview 5)

This type of participation refers to the reliance of development initiatives on a few community leaders that are considered as representatives of the community, and they are expected to express the community needs and expectations. This could not make the participation reflected in the wider local community. As stated by Hickey and Mohan (2004:19), “much of what is considered ‘participatory’ is more a process whereby large numbers of people are represented by a relatively small group of participants”. This type of
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approach could not help redress local power inequalities and ended up exclusive participation which gives room for the continuation of existing social structures.

During monitoring and evaluation of development projects, the local community participate mainly with providing information. This means the role of the local community is limited as respondents. Such very limited degree of participation of the wider local community shows rare participation at the lower level of the ladder i.e. passive participation such as information giving or consultation. Similarly, with the planning stage the local community does not play an active role in this stage of development projects. Once again this mirrors that the organisation does not give significant place for the local community to be active players of the development process. The research participants’ response elucidates that monitoring and evaluation of the projects activities are mainly performed by project staff and the committees. This committee is responsible for communicating the results to the wider community members. Once again, the communication part is isolated from the evaluation of projects. There is no organised and visible effort that evaluates development communication practices in ORDA. The absence of communication evaluation in ORDA placed the organisation in a perspective different from the idea of participatory communication. For example, Cadiz (2005:150-151) states that the evaluation component of participatory communication enables implementers to know past shortcomings and be armed for tomorrow’s better performances. In this way, it can be used as an axis of learning from within. The evaluation should be made with active involvement of all the stakeholders focused on the local people.

The above discussion reveals that the dominant perception of participation (from both the organisation and local community perspectives) is material and labour contributions of the
local community. Such perception of participation seems to shape the practice of participatory development on the ground. That is, participation at the practical level is manifested by the material and labour contributions of the local community. Thus, contribution is simply co-option, not participation. Genuine participation needs the active involvement of the local community in all the phases of the development projects. The community should have to be part of the decision making process. However, in the form of contribution, the local communities are participated in the implementation of the development project primarily for their cheap labour and material contributions. In ORDA, contribution has become the dominant trend of the so called participatory development. Besides, the local community usually participate being committee members for a development projects. They involve in water committee, irrigation committee and road committee. The main role and responsibility of the committees are mobilising the community for labour and material contributions and administering the projects after being handed over by ORDA. Conceptualising and practising participation as a form of materials and labour contributions is levelled as a low level of participation (Pretty, 1995). It is also said to be ‘ritualistic participation’ which is used as a means to an end where people are co-opted to participate in a pre-planned project (Berner, 2010: 2).

Though there is some kind of difference between the conception of participation by a few of the management members who see participation as empowerment and decision making process, finding genuine participation that empowers the local community seems to be impossible. More specifically, participatory development in the context of ORDA appears to be achieving expert-led pre-determined objectives that marginalise localisation of development. It is not an empowerment process, and it rather fails to legitimatise the poor as decision makers of their destiny, value their knowledge and appreciate their capacity for
change. This tends to contract with Nici and Susan’s (1995: 11) argument on participatory development:

When participatory development emerged, its purpose was to enable categories of people traditionally objectified and silenced to be recognized as legitimate ‘knowers’: to define themselves, increase their understanding or their circumstances, and act upon that knowledge.

On the basis of the aforementioned data and discussion, the next section discusses how participatory communication is perceived and practised in ORDA.

5.5 Perception and Practice of Participatory Communication

This section presents the perception and practice of participatory communication in ORDA. Based on the data, the communication works in ORDA can be grouped into five major themes. These are:

1. communication as dissemination of development information
2. communication as image building activity
3. communication as relationship building, cooperation and information sharing
4. communication as orientation and persuasion
5. communication as attitude and behaviour changes

More specifically, the communication works of ORDA could be divided into five major themes. These are:

1. communicating development activities and success stories of the organisation to the general public and development partners and it is perceived as a dissemination of information and image building activities
2. communication within the development teams is perceived as relationship building, cooperation and information sharing
3. communication with the local community (project beneficiaries) is perceived as orientation and persuasion
4. communication with the local community is perceived as attitude and behaviour changes activities

The section below presents these dimensions of communication in ORDA focusing on its perception and practices.

5.5.1 Communication as Dissemination of Development Information

One of the dominant development communication perceptions of ORDA is related to dissemination of development information. The following excerpts from the development workers demonstrate how communication is perceived as dissemination of information. “Development communication is a dissemination of development information to the public” (DW interview 3). “It is reporting the development activities of the organisation to inform and motivate the stakeholders about development” (DW interview 8). “It is advocating development to tackle poverty in the region and to secure food sufficiency” (DW interview 11).

From the excerpts, it could be understood that development communication is perceived as dissemination of development information from the organisation to the general public. In other words, it is a one-way process and lacks a dialogic aspect. Because of such conception of communication, disseminating information is one of the dominant communication activities in the organisation. Such types of development report practices of ORDA are usually done in collaboration with media institutions. The major communication channels for dissemination of information and advocating development are the regional mass media agency namely the Amhara Television, Amhara Radio and Bekur Newspaper, and other
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national radios and television channels such as EBC, FBC and Ethiopian Radio, and the print media namely Addis Zemen newspaper. Experts from the communication and IT department of ORDA say that ORDA has good relationship with the above government owned mass media especially with the regional mass media agency. They added that such intimacy enables the organisation to broadcast different programs about the performances of the organisation such as water supply, environmental protection, irrigation projects and livelihood activities. The wider coverage of mass media using Amhara Mass Media Agency reflected on the soil conservation, tree plantations of trees and environmental protection, irrigation projects, potable water coverage, introduction of apples and eucalyptus trees to farmers in the project sites such as Wadela, and Bati.

The dissemination of information by the organisation has two major objectives. The first is informing the general public about development activities and motivating them for development and self-reliance. The second is building the organisation’s image. In both cases information dissemination is predominantly success orientated, and focused on portraying strives for economic development. One-way top down information dissemination model is also practiced in all situations.

Emphasising on success stories and framing development as economic growth are reflections of the country’s journalistic practices at the wider level which dominantly follows development journalism model. That is, the development journalism model has become the major practice of development reporting in the country especially by the government media (Skjerdal, 2011; Negeri, 2012). For instance, Negeri contends:

Success stories mainly originated from government sources were given more emphasis in development reporting. The success stories are basically economic in nature and are framed from the government officials’ perspectives. (2012: 128)
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Generally, such results seem to reflect the old development journalism under the Marxist perspective of Dependency Theory (Banda, 2006). It deviates from the usual conception of participation. This form of development journalism which reports chiefly the positive aspects of the economic development is the dominant trend in the country. This affects the media to look into gaps and malpractices of the development process. In other words, the media reports of the organisation are made and broadcast by the above mentioned government owned media that advocate development journalism in the way mentioned above. There is also media tour program organised by ORDA by inviting journalists from government mass media for the purpose of information dissemination and image building (CO 1, 2 &3). This is practiced because the overall media landscape of the country has been framed towards development journalism by the current government.

Therefore, the above mentioned pushing factors and the organisation’s strong affiliation with the ruling party pave the way for setting the information dissemination practices under the influence of old development journalism. This tends to be in contradiction with the role of mass media in the participatory communication paradigm in that unlike the old development journalism approach, the mass media should not fall under the control of the power holders. They also should work for the interest of the mass, at the grassroots level, not for power holders (Somavia, 1981).

The communication materials such as the organisation’s magazines, newsletters and case stories published on its website are full of success stories. The communication works are primarily success stories of the economic dimension of development though ORDA has been facing several challenges in the development works.
5.5.2 Communication as an Image Building Activity

One of the dominant communication conceptions of ORDA is considering communication as an activity of image building. The main objective of such conception of communication is selling the organisation’s image mainly to the international donors. Once again communication is perceived as information transmission for image building. The position of the communication department in the organisational hierarchy reveals that communication is conceived as image building activity which is similar to public relations (PR) work. When one observes the management structure of the organisation, Communication and IT section placed at the head quarter level (see figure 5.1). The Communication and IT department, (better to call it PR department) functions as a unit only at the head quarters level. The structure does not extend itself to the district levels or project levels, where major development projects are implemented. This creates a huge vacuum in the communication work of the organisation in actual development projects’ implementation. As the organisation’s structure shows, there is a resource mobilisation and communication office which is found only in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia where there is no actual project is implemented. This also implies that resource mobilisation and communication does not seem to be necessary at grassroots level. Of course, the main purpose of this office is hunting funds from different organisations and donors residing in the capital and having such mobilisation and communication department would be appropriate for such purpose.
The absence of communication unit out of the head quarters, Bahir Dar, and Addis Ababa, may indicate the marginalisation of development communication in ORDA. Because of the absence of communication departments and experts in the project offices there was no one who is responsible for the communication works. This could make the communication work to be performed by ‘everybody’ with no formal training and principles. That is, knowledge and required skills of development communication seems to be disregarded. In other words, the duty of communication in the project implementation area becomes everybody’s responsibility regarding his or her profession. This could lead to unprofessional practices of communication in the development works. One of the research participants states this:

The major problem is that we do not practice communication scientifically. We work communication in a traditional way. Communication is not taken as a critical component of the development work. For example, there are times that we are working without communicating with the local community; we conduct base line study without interacting with the local community. We do not work on awareness creation after the project design is approved for the local community.
We don’t do community conversation; hence we do not create a sense of belongingness. Because of these gaps, to be honest, there are failed projects. For example, last year there was a failed irrigation project called Gizan irrigation project found in Dangela, West Gojam. It failed because of lack of communication. We did not communicate with the local people and the concerned government officials appropriately. (MMT interview 3)

The above expert not only indicates the poor status of communication practice in the development process but also the adverse effects communication barriers have brought about. That is, communication is marginalised in the development process as it has not been taken as a basic ingredient of the development process and such marginalisation of communication might have caused to fail projects as the above research participant reported us.

Even the position of communication as clearly observed in the organisation’s structure reveals that the communication’s main function is regarded as image building. This in turn implies the de-emphasis given for communication by the management of the organisation. The interview responses of senior management members as well as the communication officers note that the main mission of the communication department is image building.

The main function is image building. It serves to give information about the performance of ORDA to the local community and the donors. It is a means to get funds. It is a strategy for lobbying to secure funds. Such activity also informs the government about the performances of the organisation. It might also motivate the community for change. However, the communication work is not strong. It is working in a traditional manner. (MMT interview 4)

Consistently, it seems possible to argue that the focus of the organisation on image building and success stories reveals that there is the ‘PR-isation’ of development communication and such activity has becoming the reflection of the country level picture. The majority of the development reports by the mainstream mass media of the country used government sources which mirrors the influence of PR on development journalism practice. As Negeri (2012) in his study states:
The result of this study (his study) revealed that 85% of the practitioners depend on government information for their development reporting. Media portrayal of the government as the champion of development and good governance and the selective presentation of only success stories equated the practices of government media journalists to image building exercise. On the other hand, the finding indicated that the practice related to investigating problems in development and good governance activities was found to be unsatisfactory.

The above excerpt reveals that the media environment of the country is under the influence of government public relations. In other words, the government public relations are major sources of the development reports disseminated by the government owned media. It is clear that working with such media climate influence ORDA’s communication work. Therefore, practising development journalism to report success oriented reports with a top down approach using government (PR) sources could blur the boundaries between PR and development journalism in the country in general and in ORDA in particular.

Likewise, the communication and IT department of ORDA is also responsible for coordinating the internal communication works of the organisation. The department use varieties of communication systems to satisfy the communication needs of the large number of the staff (800 employees) working in the different programs and departments. The most commonly used communication channels are the annual organisation’s magazine called ORDA, its quarterly newsletter called Emerta, and bio-diversity newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, the organisation’s web site, e-mails and social media (Facebook). These communication systems are used to transmit timely information among the staff and to build good relationship between different programs and departments of the organisation. The communication is characterised by horizontal and vertical organisational communication systems. Such internal communication work is a PR work in the context of development. In other words, it works for the smooth and timely transmission of information between different programs and units and among the staff. The internal communication practice is not
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as such strong to satisfy the huge organisation. The factors for the poor practice of communication could include lack of professionalism, inadequate man power, structural problem and lack of attention by top management of the organisation and lack of budget (see 5.7).

5.5.3 Communication as Means of Building Cooperation and Relationship

This section presents the communication practices among the development teams of ORDA. ORDA’s internal communication among the development staff is based on building and maintaining cooperation and relationship building. The development staffs also called “development army”, a name taken from the current government’s terminology which has been used to refer to the civil servants and others who are in the front line of development works. The development army is defined as an army who fight against poverty. The essence of development army refers two things. One is the organisation’s strong affiliation with the ruling party, and the other, is a means of considering the development workers as vanguard in the development activities of the organisation. ORDA calls the development workers as ‘an army’ that march at the forefront in fight against poverty. One of the development experts responded:

We are a development army in the sense that we are fighting against poverty and food insecurity. We are at the front line in this war. We consider ourselves as living in a war zone as far as poverty and chronic food insecurity are living with us. (DW interview 5)

The notion of development army may be good for initiating the development works for social change and development. Drawing out poverty as a living matter in a war zone could drive strong commitment out of the workers. However, the notion is not internalised by local community and it could not mobilise them at the grassroots level. They say it as “it is not something unique, it is simply propaganda. Nothing is changed in our work and life” (FGD
5). Therefore, it is safe to argue that it is difficult to become a winner in the battle against poverty and food insecurity without the genuine involvement of the main stakeholders- the local community. And the local community has fatalistic view of life whereby they see poverty as an act of God that they cannot do anything about. Thus, it is hard to become a winner in the battle against poverty unless every member of the local community becomes genuine army of development.

In the field visit I observed that there is a good team sprit among the development workers of ORDA. This is observable in the three research sites (Sekota, Wadela and Nefas Mewcha project offices). They respect each other and communicate freely without considering the organisational hierarchy. The project coordinators are not considering themselves as boss, rather they consider themselves as a coordinator of the development team. Other staffs also see them as not bosses but coordinators. One of the project coordinator says:

I do not consider myself as a boss. I’m simply Ayelle (pseudo name for this purpose). I am simply the development team coordinator. All staffs in our office call me by my name. I urge the new comers to do so and they accept it. There is no boundary between me and other team members. We are working for the common goal and development works that needs open interaction and smooth relationship. (MMT interview 1)

I observed such open interaction and smooth communication among development teams in ORDA. When they communicate and discuss an issue, it seems that there is no position difference among them. There is a horizontal communication between project managers, development experts, program coordinators, animators and promoters. At the project office level interpersonal communication is the dominant communication mechanism. Since the staffs are manageable at the project office level (between 15 to 20 on averages) interpersonal communication enables them to build a good relationship. It is also common to hear the development teams calling each other with pet names, a kind of informal communication that
can be evidence for their intimacy and friendship. They consider communication at this level as a means of relationship building and cooperation.

We are like a family living inside a house. We respect each other, communicate freely and work together for a common good. We have a good understanding and cooperation among the staffs. I did not experience and observe any significant communication problem among members of the development team. (DW interview 2)

Another research participant states how such friendly relations and cooperation are the reasons for his stay in ORDA.

I have been working in ORDA not for its salary or other material benefits. ORDA is not good in this regard. I have stayed in ORDA not to lose such friendly and equitable relationship among the development team of ORDA. We assume that everybody is equal in our project office. Our boss is not the coordinator; our boss is our work. The manager is simply the coordinator. You could not get such relationship and free work environment in Ethiopia especially in government organisations. As I told you before, I had worked in the government offices before I joined ORDA. The communication and the relationship climate were different from here. It is like working in a different world while living in the same country. (DW interview 4)

The quotation above and my observation reveal that the development team has been working in an egalitarian situation. The team members are open to give and admit comments, suggestions and feedback about their performances. Interpersonal communication is the dominant communication method among the development workers. However, such egalitarian communication environment is not observed in the communication with the local community. That is, the communication channel between the local community and the project offices are dominantly top-down. It is based on a teacher- student relationship which is old fashioned. ORDA fails to broaden horizontal communication experience into its communication process with the local community. In the next sub-section, we can see how ORDA’s development practitioners communicate the idea of development with the local community.
5.5.4 Communication as an Orientation and an Activity of Persuasion

The fourth theme of communication is focusing on the communication works of ORDA for hard development issues. The point here is exploring how the organisation communicates such development issues to the local community. The communication works for the hard development issues such as water project, environment protection, and agriculture and livelihood projects are perceived as information transmission and persuasion activities. In other words, the role of communication, here, is understood as information transmission about the projects. This information has been used as means of persuading the community so as to make labour and material contributions. Awareness creation is also among the purposes of such communication work. That is, awareness raising activities basically group under the information transmission model which is characterised by a one-way and top down communication approach. Besides, community gathering is the dominant communication means of addressing the local community. The data from the development experts revealed that communication with the local community is perceived as information and persuasion activity. For instance, one interviewee notes:

Communication in our context is giving orientation about the relevance, dimension, procedure and duration of the projects. It is used to convince the local community for participating in the project. (DW interview 3)

Such conception of communication is further substantiated with the following statements given by one of the communication experts of the organisation:

After planning development projects, communication is used for the implementation. The purpose is to convince the local community in order to participate in the development works. For example, to construct potable water, they might contribute labour and materials such as sand, stone and water or they might cover the fence. We convince them to do these by informing the benefits of potable water. Participating in these activities creates a sense of belongingness. This makes the local community think as owners of the project. We call it community mobilisation. Communication is used to mobilise the community to participate in the development works. (CO interview 2)
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In order to understand more on the status of communication in the development process, the following question was posed to the participants:

Researcher: When communication is mainstreamed in the development works, it has become part of the main process starting with the design stage, not the implementation stage. Is this practical in ORDA?

Participant (interviewee): No. Usually it is the planning team who is responsible for the needs assessment. The communication work is done to implement the projects, and this is normally done after the design is approved and the fund is secured. It is common that the communication persons go to the local community after the plan is approved. Communication is usually needed when the project becomes ready for implementation. (CO interview 2)

The above excerpt could show that formal communication work is not practiced during the design stage of development project. The communication work is started during the implementation of development projects for the purpose of information dissemination and persuasion of the local community. Pretty (1995:61) refers this form of participation as “passive participation”. The scope of this type of participation is limited to information transmission. The local people are informed about development projects by change agents working around them.

Furthermore, the conception of communication as transmission and persuasion in the development process shapes their conceptions of participatory communication. In other words, participatory communication is perceived as the gathering of the local community to participate in the orientation and persuasion sessions about development projects. Such conception of participatory communication is stated by a development expert:

Participatory communication is orienting the beneficiaries of development projects about the relevance of the projects. It is informing their potential contribution and their responsibility. It is the participation of members of the community in these discussions. (DW interview 2)
The conception elaborated above is also confirmed by other development experts during the interview session:

Participatory communication is gathering the local community and engaging in discussion about the project types, their roles and responsibilities in the process of the project life span. (DW interview 8)

These responses reveal that the main purpose of such communication (information transmission) is to orient and convince the community for labour and material contributions, and administration after handing over the projects. The purpose of such communication is to inform predetermined objectives. In this context, it is unlikely to use communication for empowerment; it may rather be used to manipulate local community since the development workers (change agents) might work in favour of the organisation’s priority. Sonderling calls such role of communicators as ‘agents of propaganda’ (Sonderling, 1997:39) since “the change-agent is always in the business of persuading the mass to accept the institutional propaganda” (Freire, 1974: 96-97) Therefore, there may not be genuine participation that empowers the community in the development process.

The preceding data and discussion reflect ORDA’s low level of perception and practice of participatory communication. That is, the participatory communication culture of ORDA manifests information sharing stage which is not considered as genuine participation by scholars like Mufalopulos (2003:97-98; 2008:52). Such phase of participatory communication is simply levelled as information dissemination from development experts to the local community in a top down fashion. That is, the main purpose of communication is not empowering the community by redressing the power inequalities in the area but restricting them to persuasion and information sharing.
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Generally, ORDA’s development communication with the local community has two dimensions. One of which is the communication works employed for hard development issues (like irrigation, environment and water supply) discussed so far. The second dimension is the communication works for soft development issues such as gender equality, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation. The next section presents how communication is perceived and practiced for the soft development issues.

5.5.5 Communication as an Activity of Changing Attitude and Behaviour

This fifth theme is focusing on the communication works of ORDA for soft development issues such as gender, health, sanitation and hygiene. In this dimension of development projects, the role of communication is understood as not only awareness creation but also attitude and behavioural change. Relatively speaking a communication centred development works are reflected in this type of development issues, and different types of participatory communication such as community gathering, community conversation and drama as edutainment tool are practiced. The following section discusses these communication approaches.

5.6 Participatory Communication Approaches in ORDA

The commonly used participatory communication approaches in ORDA are gathering of the local community, making community conversation and preparing drama. The practice of each participatory communication approach is presented and analysed in the following section.

5.6.1 Community Gathering

ORDA uses community gathering as one of the major means of communication with the local community. This is done specifically to orient and persuade on new projects in a given area.
and to create awareness about different development issues. The development experts gather the local community and orient about the use, the benefit and duration of the project and they try to persuade them to participate in the implementation and administration stage of the development projects. This communication practice is typically done for the hard development projects such as clean water supply, road construction, irrigation canals and environmental projection. ORDA usually uses the government development structure (see 5.2) to gather the local community and discuss issues related to hard development. The very purpose of such gathering is thus, orientation and persuasion.

ORDA also uses community gathering for awareness creation about different development issues such as the negative effects of dependency syndrome, gender equality, HIV/AIDS prevention, hygiene, sanitation and nutrition. The common communication avenues for such issues are aid food distribution centres, market places, traditional and religious places such as churches and mosques.

Gathering of the local community in the government structure and traditional communication avenues enable the development experts to get large member of audiences. The very purposes of such communication are persuasion, orientation and awareness creation. This line of discussion makes the communication practices become top-down and such top down communication approaches could not provide opportunities for conducting dialogical communication. As a result, bringing about the required change of attitude and behaviour change mainly in the aforementioned development issues such as dependency syndrome, gender inequality, hygiene and sanitation becomes difficult. Indeed, awareness creation is not enough for such type of deep rooted societal problems. It is also difficult to attain social change and sustainable development by such type of communication practices. Generally, the
top-down fashion of such communications with the local community rarely practices the participatory communication in the development efforts.

5.6.2 Community Conversation (CC)

Community conversation is one of the relatively widely used communication methods of ORDA. It is mainly implemented in soft development issues such as health, hygiene, sanitation and gender. In relation to this, one of the research participants explains:

There are several projects that have conducted community conversation, and there are a few that do not have community conversation. For example, health and sanitation project, gender projects, HIV/AIDS and HTP projects have conducted CC. The Transaction HIV/AIDS project has also carried out an organised community conversation for 15 weeks. (MMT interview 3)

Results from the documents analysis and field observation also indicate the practice of community conversation in some of the development projects of the organisation. For example, the health and sanitation project in Sekota and Wadela, the Search for Common Ground, a gender project in Sekota (see more discussion on table 2), and The GRAD project with the VESA’s in Nefas Mewcha are practicing community conversation and drama.

The excerpts, presented below illustrate the nature of CC in ORDA. More specifically, the participants of CC state some procedures and characteristics of CC in the projects such as health, nutrition, gender and VESA.
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1. Excerpts from the research participants about CC (The participants are beneficiaries of Health, nutrition and hygiene from Sekota and Wadela)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpts about health, sanitation and hygiene projects from Sekota and Wadela</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They read from the training material and we listen attentively</td>
<td>(LC interview 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we completed the module we certified for that</td>
<td>(LC interview 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually we are expected to listen what the facilitator speak as directed at the beginning of the sessions.</td>
<td>(LC interview 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I took the training to be prepared as team leader, they teach us in the health centre. Generally, 30 mothers at a time participated in the discussions.</td>
<td>(LC interview 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I teach the team members in the same way as I learnt from others. Dominantly I teach them. But we have also conversation among the participants.</td>
<td>LC interview 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They give us lecture about nutrition and the way and value of child feeding.</td>
<td>(LC interview 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read from the module and try to clarify ideas from them. I invited them if they have questions and comments. I also ask question to check whether they are clear or not.</td>
<td>LC interview 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: community conversation excerpts from health and nutrition projects beneficiaries in Sekota and Wadela

2. Excerpts from the research participants about CC (The participants are beneficiaries of Search for Common Ground, the gender project in Sekota)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpts about Search for common ground, a gender project in Sekota</th>
<th>Research participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not all of us are speaking during the discussion; a few individuals dominate the session.</td>
<td>(FGD 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have disused on the issue presented by the facilitator.</td>
<td>(FGD 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is infrequent to share what we feel and think freely.</td>
<td>(FGD 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a man who teaches us about gender equality using the pictures. He talks about our problems and we listen attentively.</td>
<td>(FGD 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: community conversation excerpts from a gender project participants in Sekota
2. Excerpts from the research participants about CC (the participants are members of VESA groups in GRAD project)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpts about CC by VESA groups in Nefas Mewecha</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The promoters teach us frequently once in three months. Usually the chair person of the VESA committee teaches us.</td>
<td>(FGD 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty one persons are involved in the VESA group. There are women and men in the groups.</td>
<td>(FGD 4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The session is not open to discuss any issues as we want. It is set by the chairperson.</td>
<td>FGD 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They teach us but we forget when we return to our normal life</td>
<td>(FGD 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually males dominate the discussion. Females rarely speak before males</td>
<td>(FGD 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are expected to listen carefully and could not speak without permission</td>
<td>(FGD 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3: community conversation excerpts from VESA groups, GRAD project in Wadela

Results from field observation, confirms that agendas in CC were set by the promoters and the sessions were held to achieve pre-determined objectives. The other problem of the CC is that the local community members are not involved in participation during the program design and planning stage. They simply participate during the implementation stage. This is similar to the participation of the community in the hard development issues discussed so far (see 5.4). This is one of the significant implementation gaps observed in ORDA’s communication practice. Involving the local community in the planning of communication works is missing. This directly contradicts with the notion of participatory communication that advocates the participation of the local community in the communication planning process (Cadiz, 2005:150-151). This scholar also reinforces that the plan should clearly state the role of indigenous communication systems in the development process. This is so because the local communities are familiar with these communication systems which are suitable for local situations and they can be used as means for empowerment. However, the relevance of
indigenous communication systems for sustainable development seems to be overlooked in ORDA (see further discussion in 6.3).

The aforementioned excerpts tend to reveal that CC in ORDA’s different development project are characterised by formal type of communication and is practiced in a top down fashion. This is far from the tenets of dialogical communication in which both parties are expected to contribute to the production of knowledge and the discovery of their social world. There should be equal spirit and horizontal communication between the facilitators and the local communities in the genuine participatory communication setting which is non-existent from ORDA’s experience. Therefore, ORDA’s experience is different from the dialogical communication tenets expressed as follows:

Dialogue implies a balanced relationship, which goes beyond the analysis of communication flow directions. Participatory communication presupposes a people-based communication, or one characterized by a horizontal flow. This presupposes a readjustment not only of the communication flow, but also of the power balances. (Mefalopulos, 2003: 241)

Generally, there are six major problems discovered in the practice of CC. These are:

1. the formal nature of the communication
2. large group size
3. inadequate skills of the facilitators and
4. infrequent practices
5. discussion sessions are held to achieve pre-determined objectives
6. the local community members are not involved during the program design and planning stage

These problems could defer the practice of participatory communication where the community rarely involve actively and get empowered. As a result, observing the basic tenets of participatory communication becomes difficult.
In ORDA’s practice of CC, there is a significant communication tool that needs to be discussed. This tool is the image box used by one of the aforementioned projects, Search for Common Ground, a gender project in Sekota. The section below discusses the use of this communication to facilitate CC.

➢ The Image box as a Communication Tool

In the gender related works of ORDA particularly in Sekota project area there is a gender project called Search for Common Ground. The principal objective of this project is to narrow down gender disparity in the rural Amhara region where gender gap is deep rooted. To change such patriarchal Amhara society, the project used CC as a major communication method with the help of image box. The main purpose of the image boxes is initiating CC in a remarkable and memorable way. The facilitator first presents the image box to the participants by explaining the major issues involved. After presentation and explanation, the facilitator opens the stage for CC.

There are eight image boxes prepared for this project which contain major gender issues in the area. The image boxes hold different images that reflect gender related problems and is portrayed in the daily life of the rural community. Labour division, heavy work load, property right, decision making power and female education are topics designed in the image boxes to initiate discussions. For example, the image box challenges the traditional labour division widely prevailed in the rural Ethiopia. In the rural Ethiopia while ploughing the farm land is male’s activity, fetching potable water and collecting fire wood for home consumption are only left to women. This is the tradition which is part of the rural life in the Amhara region. The image box criticises such long standing tradition by reversing the roles i.e. assigning
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females to ploughing, fetching water and collecting fire wood to men. These were unthinkable to happen in the society.

One sample of the image box that shows the gender issue is presented (see picture 5.1) for further clarification. The image figures out issues about the economic empowerment and property rights of rural women and these are typical problems in the rural Ethiopia. The facilitator of the search for the common ground project narrates the issue in the image box as follows:

The image box depicts a gender problem in a family life. The picture over there (see picture 5.1 below) demonstrates there is a husband, his wife, their cow and the buyer in the picture. The husband wants to sell the cow without consultation with his wife; hence the wife opposes him by insisting that the cow is important for their children. The issue leads to strong verbal exchanges between the husband and his wife, and then followed by a physical attack. This injured the children’s emotions and they become frustrated and sad. This changed the mood of the family into a dark cloud. The fighting between husband and wife and the subsequent children’s frustration have become a loudly heard agenda in the village. Then the matter needed the intervention of the local religious leader. The priest mediates the problem between the husband and the wife, and the issue is resolved. Finally, the family has resolved things and continued their normal life.

(DW interview 4)

Picture 5.1: an image box from Search for Common Ground project (taken from Sekota project office)
The narration is a good example of a gender problem in rural Ethiopia. It presents a common problem which challenges the economic dominance of males and breaks the silence of the rural women who are insisting on having a say in their property matters. The image box presents the issue in a clear and memorable way. It is a call for rural women to voice their problem. The picture is attractive, easy to understand and it fits into the rural context. This is the strong side of the image box. Even the way the problem is mediated with the intervention of the local power holder, the priest, considers the culture which is very close to the life of the local community. It is a symbolic call for religious institutions to struggle against gender related problems. The mediation between the husband and the wife to handle the fighting was not made by the police or any other government structure; it rather respects the local structure and acknowledges the local power holders. This is a very good approach for making use of indigenous solutions for such local problems.

However, the facilitator points out that in a meeting of 30 to 40 persons little chance was given to the participants to talk about the issue. The CC session also holds both males and females may limit the participation of females since speaking before elders and husbands is taken as a taboo act. The facilitator states such problem as follows:

Yes, there was this problem at the beginning of the sessions. The conversation was dominated by males. However, gradually females now start begin to participate in the sessions and we are observing improvement. (DW interview 4)

One female participant (LC interview 2) notes such male dominance by stating that “males were always at the front line. But now there are improvements to speak before our males”. Furthermore, the discussion was conducted once a month which continues for four months to complete the eight image boxes.
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We usually discuss two image boxes for two hours per day. We have monthly meeting with the community for this discussion. So it takes normally four months to complete the eight image boxes. (DW interview 4)

One month gap between the sessions could lose memories of the stories and the program may lose its momentum. That is, it is difficult to create a strong link between lessons with such a long time gap. Such unwise handling of the project may break continuity of the program and affect the cumulative impact of the project.

The stated problems of the CC namely formal nature of the communication, large group size, and inadequate skills of the facilitators and the absence of the community at the design and planning stage of the projects affect the participatory nature of the project which is different from Freire’s (2005) dialogical communication model (see 2.3.2 & 2.3.4).

5.6.3 Drama as Edutainment Approach

The other visible development communication approach in ORDA is edutainment where drama is used as a live performance using amateur actors. Although edutainment is an important communication approach in the social change or development process, the practice is not significant in ORDA. It is used in some selected projects such as health, sanitation and nutrition and gender related issues. It is used infrequently. The Sekota and Wadela health, hygiene and sanitation projects used six dramas per year with the assumption that behavioural change is important to address problems related with health and sanitation. Drama has also been shown occasionally during the food distribution days and safety net graduation days to teach about gender issues.

The other problem is the poor performance and handling of the drama. Although the drama tries to reflect the rural way of life, the performance is not catchy since the amateurs do not
perform artistically. There is also no dialogue after the drama shows. This makes the drama to be used in one way fashion like the first generation edutainment as stated by Tufte (2008). By using such infrequent interventions and poor handling of the communication practices, it is hard to achieve the required behavioural change in the rural setting where problems are deep rooted.

The above mentioned communication approaches specifically the CC and dramas are focusing on attitude and behavioural change of the local community. Their model of communication is behavioural change communication (BCC) focussed on individual change of behaviour. Although it is good to practice individual behavioural change, communication for development issues such as health, gender, and dependency syndrome, it is not enough to tackle such deep rooted societal problems by individual behavioural changes only. The issues need social change that needs to address some environmental and socio-cultural factors. In line with this, UNAIDS (1999: 21) argues:

Seeking to influence behaviour alone is inefficient if the underlying social factors that shape the behaviour remain unchallenged. Many health communication programs proceed on the assumption that behaviour, alone, needs to be changed, when in reality, such a change is unlikely to be sustainable without incurring some minimum of social change. This necessitates attention to social and environmental contexts.

In the communal Amhara society, it is hardly possible to achieve the desired change by BCC only. The complex problem such as gender and health in the context of Ethiopia (ANRS) needs integrated intervention of varieties of communication approaches such as communication for social change, advocacy and BCC.

ORDA also uses brochures, pamphlets, and posters as communication tools to transfer development messages for the local community. In Ethiopian context where the majority of
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rural people are illiterate, the use of such non-participatory communication tools is not appropriate and significant.

Generally, the above discussion elucidates that, at the practical level, participatory paradigm was not the dominant development communication approach of ORDA. Based on the discussion, it is possible to deduce that participation and participatory communication was not institutionalised.

The next section identifies the major factors that shape the development thinking and practices focusing on the participatory communication.

5.7 Factors Affecting Participatory Communication

This sub section analyses and discusses the major factors that affect participatory communication. The potential of participatory communication for sustainable development is presented so far. Accordingly, participation is a buzzword in the development discourse and is preached as the hopeful and legitimate path for sustainable development. But when it comes to the practical level, it seems not to be reflected. A number of factors could hinder the implementation of genuine participation. That is, many factors could shape the practice of development and participatory communication in ORDA. Thus, this section discusses the major factors affecting the practice of participatory development communication.

One of the significant factors that affect participatory development is the nature of the perceptions ORDA has about development. As the aforementioned sections clearly discussed, ORDA perceives development dominantly as economic growth and it approaches development in a top down fashion. This conception and approach largely determine the
practice of participatory development on the ground. That is, the economic perspective of development closes, if not narrows down, the room for employing holistic development. This in turn impedes the human dimension of development which is the major concern of participatory development. As a result, the conception of development by itself shapes the development practices on the ground, and this limits the opportunity for practising participatory development. On top of this, the top down approach of development does not give room for the participation of the local community. The top down approach rather is suitable for centralised administrative. In this regard, Servaes and Arnst (1999:114) argue the existence of administrative obstacles in employing participatory approach. In other words, participatory approach is hardly practiced by a centralised administrative system that is structured to manage important activities such as decision-making, resource allocation and information dissemination. Such kind of structure usually has no room for people’s involvement in decision making, resource allocation and information generation and access. In such types of organisations one-way, top down planning and decision-making take places even without a need for assessment by professionals.

On the whole, the dollar driven nature of the development projects such as Fota Irrigation Scheme, PSNP, DEFAP, and GRAD discourage the practice of ORDA’s participatory development. In addition, the short duration of most of the development projects affects the practice of participatory development where considerable length of time more than the standard duration of three to five years of development projects will be needed. Even the international donors want tangible and timely report for their fund, not the process of participation which takes long time to use it effectively. In the international development context the usual duration of development projects is between three to five years. Such short duration time obliged the development organisations to rush into deadlines and reports, rather
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than to work on participation and empowerment of the local community. The research participants state that people’s participation consumes time and costs resources and they usually prefer using the top-down approach. In short, donors set their fixed time and this affects the implementation of participatory development in ORDA. The organisation of course, should rush to perform the development works based on the donors’ schedule. This in turn directs the attention of the organisation to prepare reports and to keep deadlines rather than to consider local demands and build consensuses. The short duration of projects’ life span is also mentioned as impediment of participatory development by scholars such as Servaes and Arnst (1999), Mefalopulos (2008) and Waisbord (2008). For example, Servaes and Arnst (1999:115) contend that highly structured and deeply institutionalised projects are not suitable for participatory development.

The other factor that shapes the practice of development in ORDA is the conceptions of participation and participatory development. ORDA’s development workers perceive participation of the local community as labour and materials contributions as well as administration of the projects after being handed over. This conception could also limit the participation of the local community to a very low level. As a result, there is participation as contribution which is at the bottom line of the ladder of participation given by Pretty (1995). Therefore, while participation is not perceived as an empowerment process, the local community becomes not part of the project design and planning stage of the development projects and the communication process.

The second factor that affects the participatory communication is related to ORDA’s perceptions of the local community. ORDA’s view of the local community is as simple as beneficiaries of the development works, not as stakeholders, and this could affect the
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communication work. More specifically, the development agents view the local community as beneficiaries of the development works and the food aids. They consider them as receivers of benefits and aids. For instance, one of the research participants (MTT interview 1) states: “We refer them as beneficiaries, not stakeholders. Our stakeholders are the international donors and the regional government. The local communities are our beneficiaries”. This notion creates a giver-receiver relationship between the two parties. This may result in power imbalance in the relationships of the two parties. Therefore, the power remains in the hands of the giver i.e. the organisation. This giver–receiver mentality affects the communication environment where conducting interaction with equal status becomes difficult between the two parties. As a result, communication is used commonly for information flow from the development agents to those who receive the benefits and aids i.e. the local community.

This giver-receiver mentality and the long time aid in the region further create another major impediment to participatory communication. This is the dependency syndrome. Because of the existence of aid for three decades by ORDA, and its partners or other organisations, the local community may have developed deep rooted dependency syndrome. For example, there was a food aid in the research area during the 1983 and 1984 famine of the country (Sisay, 2002).

Dependency syndrome is one of the major impediments of sustainable development in ORDA’s intervention areas. As pointed out above, the development work and aid has been going side by side for more than two decades. The development work could not affect the aid work. Rather the aid work affects the development work by developing dependency syndrome. The presence of such dependency syndrome is apparent and has become one of the major impediments of sustainable development. Lots of expressions that substantiate the
presence and dimension of dependency syndrome are prepared by research participants. For example, one interviewee says:

There is no doubt about the existence of a dependency syndrome in our locality. People choose being dependent than working and changing their life. They compete for aid although some of them have better income. (DW interview 8)

One of the important cases that demonstrate the high levels of dependency syndrome in ORDA’s intervention area and the absence of genuine participatory communication is the ineffectiveness of Fota Irrigation project in Belessa. A research participant who was involved in studying the project design and administering its implementation narrates the case as follows:

The Fota Irrigation scheme was built five years ago, and covers around 300 hectares of land. ORDA built the scheme since the place is convenient for irrigation, and Belesa is one of the food in secured district that has depend food aid for a long period of time. After the irrigation has been built the local community refused to use it. Thinking that if they started production using the irrigation project, the aid would be stopped. If the aid stops, the charity could not reach their homes. Imagine, they refused to use it after we built and it was a mess for us. The main problem for the Fota project failure is the community’s sense of dependency on aids that has developed for years. It was this attitude that led to the failure of similar irrigation projects around Sekota. But, I recently heard that within these two years, there has been an improvement in this project. Some individuals have started to use it after five years of resistance. (MMT interview 4)

This case depicts the high level of dependency syndrome and the price of lack of participation of the local community at the start of the development projects. Even it could see how the development approach could not break the dependence syndrome. This generally implies that communication is not effectively working for attitude and behavioural changes.

Of course, a development worker expresses the trajectory of aid and dependency syndrome in a more extended and complex way that reflects the political dimension of aid in Sekota region:

The local people expect some temporary benefit from development organisations and projects. They do not expect social welfare. People hunt for individual and
temporary benefits. We warn them by saying that the safety net aid will leave the place as a call to prepare them. Very sadly, there are farmers who verbally replied that aid will continue by changing its project name as we have seen for so many years. This is the result of long time persistence of aid in the area. Maybe aid is politicised. Some of the local community think that the government should feed them to sustain its power. This is a result of long time war in this area, and may be the relationship between this place (Sekota) and the current ruling party. ORDA has been providing food aid starting from the then war time in the ‘independent’ areas from the Derge regime control. (DW interview 2)

These expressions enlighten how long time relief works affect the attitude and behavioural of local community. They develop a feeling that the government is responsible to feed the community as it has been doing it for three decades in Wagehemra zone. This zone was a place of armed struggle between the then Derge regime, and the current ruling party. Waghemra was a place of armed struggle during the extended war of the 1980s by the then guerrilla fighters of Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) and the Derge. ANDM, the current ruling party of the region, had started its armed struggle in this place in 1982 (ANDM, 2012). ORDA started its aid in 1984 by the members of ANDM in the same place, just after two years of ANDM’s birth, by the party members. This creates special affiliation between the organisation and ANDM. Even this special relation confuses some of the local people and sometimes thinks that ORDA and the government are the same. It is also very clear that the local people accommodated the then insurgents during the war time, and they consider aid as affirmative action for the war struck region and should sustain it as long as the government exists. This is an indication that dependency is a deep-rooted problem in the area which impedes efforts of sustainable development.

Still other development worker states the depth of dependency syndrome as “there are people who give births to a baby in order to increase the amount of food aid since the amount of distribution consider number or members in families” (DW interview 3).
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This response reveals how aid could change the attitude and behaviour of the local community. One of the research participants who live in Hamusit locality, Sekota, expresses the tendency of dependency with tone of discrimination from food aid as follows:

I have neither wealth nor health but [I am] discriminated from [receiving] the food aid. I have no supporter and I am also aged as you see me. But I am ignored by those warehouses which are my neighbours. I have seen them daily but they do not see me. …the reason is I have no relatives who have power and acceptance to speak on behalf of me. (FGD 6)

The above participant is an old woman who lives in Hamusit a small rural town, Sekota district. Her home is found near the big aid warehouses pictured below (see picture 7). Her expression exemplifies the dimension of dependency syndrome, and a feeling of discrimination. Such mixed feeling of dependency and discrimination has been raised by different participants of the study. If members of the local community do not get the aid for different reasons, they consider it as discrimination. Such mixed feeling shows that aid creates dependency attitude on one hand, and discrimination on the other. Such feelings of discrimination affect the participation of the local community in the development process.

One of the development experts states the existence of dependency syndrome and feeling of discrimination as follows:

The organisation could not satisfy everybody with food aid; hence, there might be people with a feeling of discrimination. We are working with the district and local administration to get the list of people who need aid to lead their life. In such a situation there might be people overlooked by those administrators. But most visible is that the dependency syndrome is rooted, and majority of the community wants to be part of the aid. (DW interview 2)

The data demonstrate that in all the three research sites namely Sekota, Wadela, and Nefas Mwecha the persistence of poverty, dependency syndrome, aid and development works were observable (see further discussion 5.8). The trends are similar. Lots of people rely on aid.
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Feeling of dependency in one hand, and feeling of discrimination on the other, is found side by side.

The paradoxical issue is still there as there are constructions of warehouses around. Rather than sustaining development and breaking the attitude of dependency through self reliance and empowerment works, ORDA together with the big donors continue building aid warehouses as if they want to sustain the food aid. The following picture depicts the construction of new aid warehouse in June 2014, and this symbolises the persistence of poverty and aid in the region. Having seen these new constructions of aid houses, how the local community is expected to bring about change in attitude and behaviour? This is another concrete example to the paradox of the development works in the region.

![Picture 5.2: a warehouse under construction during my field work in Sekota rural area](image)

The local community expects some kind of temporary benefits to participate in the development process. They see development project as creating employment rather than doing something that they must take control, and develop so they become self sufficient. In the absence of some type of payment, they are reluctant to mobilise themselves in the process
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of participation and empowerment that could result in long term impact on the life of the community.

The existence of dependency sentiment among the beneficiaries of ORDA was also found in Bruke’s (2010) study: analysing communication strategies in community forest development projects around Woldia district.

The other factor is related to the perception of development workers about communication in the development context in general and in the local community in particular. As discussed so far (see 5.5), the development workers consider communication as information transmission or persuasion activity, not as a means of empowerment. Specifically, this notion is prevailing for hard development projects, which have been the dominant works of ORDA, with the top down communication approach. That is, communication has been considered as transmission of development message from the project offices to the beneficiaries. Therefore, participatory communication has been rarely considered as the major approach in communication which is only practiced for soft development issues of malpractices. Besides, while participation and dialogue provide people with power interims of economic and political conditions as well as gender, ORDA seems to fail in making use of them.

The other major factor that affects the practice of development communication, in general and participatory communication in particular, is lack of professionalism of the communication department in the organisation. When we see the profile of the communication staff, there is only one expert who has graduated in the field of communication. Others are not from the field of communication. In all the project offices of the research sites there is no one assigned based on his /her profession of communication. Because of this gap, participatory communication could not be practiced professionally, and its role for development may not be understood well. In other words, the lack of skills to
handle participatory communication is the result of such gap of professionalism. As the discussion in previous parts (see 5.6.2) elucidates, poor handling of CC affects the communication with the local community not to be dialogical in ways that empowers the local community. Generally, lack of knowledge and skills on how to communicate in the development context are among the gaps that hinder the communication works of the organisation. This is in line with Waisbord’s (2008) critical reflection on the marginalisation of participatory communication. He contends that when other disciplines determine the status of communication, professionalism will suffer a lot. Other privileged professions in development may need communication to disseminate information in order to achieve their pre-determined objectives. As a result, community’s participation, dialogue, decision-making, local knowledge and empowerment and other notions of participatory approach will have no room in the development process or they might be manipulated. This will result in the prevalence of information model of communication that favours dissemination of experts’ information commonly in a top down fashion. The technical mentality of these professionals will pave way for the continuity of the top down approach by blocking the participatory room. The weak status of communication in development organisation will limit the adoption of participatory communication, and this in turn would limit the potentials of communication for sustainable development (Waisbord, 2008)).

The other factor that affects the practice of participatory communication is lack of adequate human resource. The communication unit has only five members of staff specifically the unit manager, one communication officer, one IT officer, one web master, one audio-visual officer. For such a huge organisation that administers more than 800 employees, seven Zonal Coordination Offices and 22 Project Offices at grassroots or district level (ORDA 2013) covering the communication works with only such a few members affect the communication
practices seriously. For example, only one officer who is not from the communication filed is assigned at the front line of the communication unit. The worst case is that nobody is assigned for the communication work in the project offices where actual development work is performed. As a result, one could observe the poor handling of participatory communication. This is similar with what Waisbord (2008) contends that constant structural problems such as insufficient budget, poor management, corruption, lack of political commitment to help the poor and marginalised people, and inadequately trained staff are chained development organisations in the third world.

The structural problem is a visible factor observed in this study, and it could hinder the development communication works. As discussed in so far (see 5.5), the communication and IT department of the organisation is placed only at the head quarter level. In all the project offices of ORDA, there is no communication department. In other words, at the project offices level there is neither communication department nor professionals who can work for communication. Because of this there is no one who is assigned for the communication works of the development projects. The communication work is usually performed by other professionals as additional task. This creates two problems. One problem is the marginalisation of communication in the development process and the other is making communication works every body’s business. Such practice could seriously affect the perception and the practice of participatory communication. Such type of problem is also loudly voiced by Waisbord (2008) as he refers this disregard as subordinate status of communication. As the author notes communication is usually housed in health, financial or agricultural programs in a way that obliges it to play only a role of subsidiary discipline. As shown in the previous section, the absence of communication departments and experts in all ORDA’s project offices discloses this fact. This makes communication as “every body’s”
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business. Such dependency takes away its autonomy, and fails to determine its objectives and approaches. Professionals from other disciplines thus assume the authority to determine its status. Similarly, this problem in general becomes a challenge for realising participatory communication in ORDA.

Another factor (being a result of neglect and marginalisation of the communication element in the organisational structure) is lack of adequate budget or funds. The communication and IT unit in ORDA does not have its own budget code. They use budget from other programs such as environment protection, water and irrigation projects and agriculture as well as livelihood programs. These units usually get money by bargaining with program coordinators. This makes the communication unit dependent on other programs. This is additional evidence for the marginalisation of communication in ORDA.

Still the other factor that is affecting ORDA’s communication work is the absence of communication policy and written communication strategy. A communication policy that directs the communication works and determines the type of communication approach as well as channels is missing. Lack of awareness and attention on the role of communication policy to direct the communication practices may be the reasons for the absence of communication policy and strategy. This could create a huge gap on communication works where irregularities and discontinuities become common as a result of interest and skills of the development experts who are usually assigned from other disciplines. The communication work has also no clear direction. Such type of problem is raised during the interview by the development experts:

There is no communication policy and strategy that guide our work. The communication approach is determined by the experts who are responsible for implementing the project. For example, if the project is health, the health officer is responsible, and if it is agriculture, lively hood officer is responsible to do good
communication. This is the usual trend in ORDA. It is based on the personal skills and interests. There is no direction about the type of communication mechanisms used in the development works. (DW interview 2)

Similarly, another participant of the study further states the issue as follows:

> There is no guideline given by ORDA. We are working by ourselves. From my experience I understand the role of respecting other cultures. When I communicate with the local people, I try to consider the way of life of the community, their culture, tradition and religion. I respect this. No one tells me to do this, but I should act like this to implement my work in collaboration with the community. We do this only by applying our own personal knowledge. (DW interview 7)

In addition, a former communication officer of the organisation states the disorganised communication works as follows:

> ORDA’s communication work does not have any written guideline and strategy. It is like distributing meat, ‘shero’, (a local non-meat food), beans, and cabbage for peoples meeting in a big hall where there are different interests and backgrounds. (CO interview 3)

Generally, there is neither a communication policy nor a written strategy that guides the communication works of ORDA. Because of the absence of such policy and strategy that guides the communication work, the communication activity practised in unsuccessful manner.

The strong affiliation of the organisation with the current ruling party is yet another factor that affects participatory development. The strong relationship between the organisation and the party that started from the organisation’s birth has its own impact on the performance of the organisation. That is, the board and the top level management of the organisation are members of the ruling party. Especially the executive directors and board members are and have been prominent and influential persons of the ruling party. This affiliation could have both positive and negative impacts on the development practice of the organisation. The
positive aspect could be the organisation can have a strong support from the regional government, and can be seen as one of the leading development partners of the region.

On the other hand, the strong affiliation restricts ORDA’s intervention in the development process. This special and historical relationship directs ORDA’s work to fill the development gaps prioritised by the regional government. As a result prioritising the needs of the local community which is the main concern of participatory development would be disregarding, and obliging ORDA to prioritise working for the political establishment of the ruling party. Even, this special relationship affects the image of the organisation. There are people who view ORDA as a government organisation which is working to maintain the political establishment. One of the research participants from the local community states that “ORDA is the government and the government is ORDA” (FGD1). Besides, the development experts state that such affiliation necessitates ORDA to assign those who are close to the political system for positions of the different projects. Such things could make the development works instrumental for maintaining the political establishment of the government. Therefore, in such context, it is difficult to practice genuine participatory development that reinforces power sharing and empowering of the local community since the democratic environment has not yet matured. Such claim is echoed by proponents of participatory communication scholars as they argue that participation requires equitable sharing of power or influence that empowers the disadvantaged groups (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

The other impediment to practice genuine participatory communication is related to the political history of the region in particular and the country in general. That is, the socio-cultural and historical contexts of community also affect participatory communication. By its very nature dialogical communication needs democratic environment which is not compatible
with the socio-cultural context of the region. The long time repression of the local community by the power holders since the country had been in the strong hands of dictators silenced the community not to engage in much dialogue. Following the 1974 revolution of the country that led to the fall of the last emperor of the country, there was a bloody civil war till 1991. Soon after the revolution, the coming of the Derg military Junta into power began to suppress different voices and take serious measures against those who had different opinions and voices. Especially the “red terror” that killed hundreds and thousands of people could not disappear from mind of most of Ethiopians and it could have impact on the socio cultural context of the country.

During the Derge regime and before that time, criticising the government and having opinions different from the regime had serious consequences or there have been some kind of retaliation such as jail, torture and killings. Killing was performed publicly during the “red terror”. The worst case was that parents were asked to pay money to take body of their dead sons or daughters lying down on the streets. This political history of the country has had cross generations impact on the mind and actions of most Ethiopians. As a result, the community were forced to live under the shell of terror. In other words, there was no room for freedom of speech and dialogue. Any discussion of freedom, justice, equality and equity were officially banned. The existence of censorship was additional evidence for the dimension of suppression of alternative voices during the Derg time. The widely known Ethiopian proverb ‘silence is gold’ reflects the political history of the country that shapes the socio-cultural life of the society till today. In line with this, Bessette (2004:18) contends that lack of democracy and freedom of expression affects participatory communication. His point of discussion focused on the need for a favourable environment to use the participatory approach. The favourable environment mainly refers to democracy and the right to express divergent views.
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The author argues that it is impossible, if not, difficult, to use participatory communication for social change in the absence of democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression.

While the current government has taken different measures to tackle the problems mentioned above since 1991, the legacy of the above mentioned dark political history of the country deeply affects the contemporary Ethiopian society. For example, there are changes at the theoretical and practical levels about freedom of speech including the abolition of censorship and protection of freedom of speech by the Ethiopian constitution of 1995 (Ethiopia. Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia. Constitution, 1995). However, what was rooted in the society about the repression of those having different opinions and positions have made established tradition of silence and needs a series of actions to be changed. That is, because of the fragile democratic system of the country, it is hard to tackle this deep rooted frustration and establish a free dialogue culture. This is similar with what Waisbord (2002:21) elucidates that infant democratic culture of the developing countries has contributed a lot to the accumulation of power in the hands of local elites. Even the local people may not be interested in the participation of development process due to fear of retaliation by the power holders. Therefore, in such complex contexts practicing participatory communication becomes impossible, if not, difficult.

On top of this, the political economic climate of the country after the 2005 national election changed the role and performance of the NGOs in Ethiopia. The charities and civil society proclamation set restrictive regulation on non-governmental organisations in a way that hinder approaching development from multiple-dimensions (Ethiopia. Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia, Charities and Civil Societies Proclamation, 2009). The law restricts foreign and local NGOs that earn more than 10 per cent of their income from foreign aid to engage in the human dimension of development such as democracy, freedom and justice. By
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refereeing the restrictive law, ORDA which gets more than 10 per cent of its income from foreign aid limits its work only on hard development issues. This politico-economic climate of the country restricts the practices of development in ORDA. ORDA considers working on the human dimension of development as a political work that should be left aside for the political parties. Talking about the major components of participatory paradigm such as empowerment, equity, equality, justice and freedoms are considered as crossing the red lines marked by the incumbent government. The research participants state that such issues are considered as taboos in the development process of the organisation. This is another factor that opens room for the marginalisation of human centered development work in ORDA. The impact of such restrictive measures on NGOs and development works is vividly echoed by scholars such as Desalegn and Wendwossen (cited in Haylemeskel, 2015) and Haylemeskel (2015).

In summary, the above discussion highlights the major factors hindering participatory communication:

- the economic perceptions of development
- the top down development approach
- short time span of the development projects
- the perceptions of participation as labour and material contributions
- the perception towards the local community as beneficiaries, not stakeholders of ORDA
- the dependency syndrome
- the perceptions of communication as information transmission
- lack of professionalism of communication
- lack of adequate man power
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➢ problem of the organisation’s structural
➢ the absence of communication policy and formal strategy
➢ political interference and lack of democratic culture

The above factors could be categorised into three sub themes. These are the individual factors, the institutional or organisational factors and the environmental factors. The individual factors consist of the perceptions and practices of the individual development works or experts in ORDA. These factors include the views, perceptions and beliefs of development workers about development as economic growth, participatory development communication as information sharing and persuasion, and participation as labour and material contributions. Besides, such individuals’ perception towards the local community is as beneficiaries, not stakeholders. Even, the existing low level of communication professionalism could be part of the individual factors hindering the practice of development communication.

The institutional factors, on the hand, refer to some features that affect participatory development communication. These are factors beyond the scope of individual experts or development workers. These factors include the top-down development approach, organisation’s structural problem, lack of adequate man power as well as absence of communication policy and strategy.

The last thematic category, the environmental factors are associated with the wider development context beyond the immediate control of the organisation. These include the wider political history and socio-cultural contexts of the region / country, dependency
syndrome, short time span of the development projects and the impact of donors and government interventions.

The thematic categorizations of the factors do not have clear cut points. There are some factors having overlapping meaning. For instance, professionalism might have both individual and institutional dimensions. The durations of development projects might have both institutional and environmental dimensions.

Generally, these factors tend to create a huge gap in the communication and development works of the organisation in general and the participatory communication activities in particular. The aforementioned discussion substantiates the claim that communication is a marginalised discipline in ORDA, and the development context is not conducive to participatory communication. As a result, ORDA’s communication for sustainable development work seems to be insignificant and genuine participatory communication tends to become the missing link in ORDA’s development process. This is in line with Inagaki’s (2007: 38) contention:

In principle, participatory projects are open-ended and rely on organic emergence of development vectors and substance through participatory engagement of diverse voices. In reality, many participatory projects are goal-oriented, framing participation as a strategic instrument to achieve pre-determined outcomes.

Therefore, such absence of genuine participation in the development processes could hinder sustainable development in ORDA’s development works in ways that figure out the existing regional socio-economic situation. The next section will enlighten us about a paradoxical co-existence of poverty, food aid and development works in the region where the aforementioned gaps (factors) of hindering the development interventions are present.
Although, it is hard to blame only ORDA for the paradoxical co-existence of poverty, food aid and development works in the region, the results of the study indicate the existence of serious limitations on the development approaches and efforts of the organisation. The next section further reveals the persistence of poverty despite the extensive development works and food aid programs in the region.

5.8 The Persistence of Poverty, Food aid and Development Works in Rural Ethiopia

This section analyses the persistence of poverty, food aid and development works in the region to substantiate the argument that the long time development interventions have major limitations or gaps discussed in the preceding section. Based on the discussions so far, the researcher argues that lack of genuine participation is one of the major gaps in the development process. The previous discussion also discloses the deterring effect of the perceptions of the local community about their quality of life and the development interventions on the efforts of development.

In spite of the ORDA’s claim that the international donors, development organisations and the regional government have been exerting significant development efforts on the region for such long period of time, the existing living conditions of the society reflects severe poverty in the rural Ethiopia in general and in the rural Amhara region in particular. In the region, the paradoxical persistence of poverty, food aid and development works for long period is evidently observed. Of course, the present government has designed a number of policies and strategies in the last two decades to alleviate, if not, minimise poverty in the country. Such policies and strategies include the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) and the Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to end Poverty (PASDEP) (Devereux and Guenther, 2007). Besides, the Food Security Program (FSP) and the Productive Safety Net
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Program (PSNP) are interventions to avert the chronic food insecurity problems of the country, and to tackle vicious circle of poverty (Andersson et al, 2009; Arega, 2012). All theses policy documents also reveal that poverty is understood as lack of basic needs or income such as food security or economic self reliance which is similar to the perception of ORDA as discussed in the previous parts.

Despite decades of efforts in providing ‘basic needs’, the country has low profile in food security and development status. Specifically, the research sites namely Waghemra (Sekota), South Wollo (Wadela) and South Gonder (Nefas Mewcha) are characterised by chronic food insecurity and drought which could reflect the country level profile. They are part of the lists of the food insecure districts of the region. These regions are under the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) which has started in 2005. The locals depend on development aid food or money which is given to them as they have no incentive to develop their own resources. PSNP has been working in chronically food insecure districts to provide transfer payment to the food insecure rural households in a way that reduces asset depletion. The project has US$ 500 million budget annually and targets to reach more than seven million Ethiopians (Gilligan, Hoddinott & Taffesse, 2008).

The existence of such type of huge projects in the region is part of the evidences that reveal the persistence of poverty and aid in rural areas. To understand the existence and depth of poverty in the region, one can simply observe the poor quality of life in the rural Amhara: the housing status is poor, hygiene and sanitation problems; even the rural people’s torn and dirty dressing indicate that they are still lacking basic needs as well as social changes. One can understand the degree of poverty by observing the squalid face of common persons and their ill-being. That is, it could not be difficult to see how quality of life is measured by observing their way of life. Observing people who wear torn clothes, dirty shirts, and walk with bare
feet in the hostile environment of rural Ethiopia are still common phenomena. The common rural people are squalid and penury with torn and fray dressing. For example, ORDA’s document presents the deep rooted problem of the Sekota district as follows:

Sekota woreda is droughts prone, food insecure and economically disadvantaged woreda of the region… Together with backward farming tradition, drought, shortage of farmland and draft oxen, pest occurrence, low input use, poor extension support, and occurrence of HTPs are major production constraints that aggravate food insecurity of the woreda. (ORDA-Sekota DEFAP, 2014:5)

To avert such trends, ORDA, international donors and the regional government have engaged in food aid and development works for more than two decades. Specifically, ORDA has been working around Sekota since its establishment. However, the districts still remains one of the backward and poor areas of the region vis-a-vis the persistence of aid and development works. Once again this substantiates the above claim which states the limitations of the current development approach and the presence of the aforementioned factors that affect the development works. One of the participants of the study from the development workers expresses the dimension of poverty in the region as follows:

Poverty in our district is manifested by hunger. Especially during the summer season specifically on July and August, there are lots of community members with serious problems. Because of the poor soil fertility, whatever amount of rain is raining, aid is inevitable. The community harvests not more than for five or six months. The land is so degraded and hence you see a lot of people who are suffering from poverty. You will feel a lot when you see such farmers. They farm but they could not feed themselves. The poverty level is deep rooted. (DW interview 2)

Chronic food insecurity is the sign of destitution in the area. Environmental degradation and shortage of rain are factors contributing to the problems. The other participant narrates the manifestations of poverty in the study area as follows:

There are lots of poverty manifestations in our area: lack of self reliance is poverty. Having only one meal per a day is poverty; there are lots of people who have one meal per day. Poverty is observable simply in their worn-out dressing and the overall low quality of life in this area. (DW interview 7)
Similarly, another participant elucidates the existence of deep rooted poverty by comparing it with other problems of the community:

There are major problems in our district which include shortage of basic infrastructures such as road, schools, health centres, and clean potable water. But the worst problem is the food gap. Where ever you go, people may not ask you about clean water, first they need food. Closing the food gap is top of their desires. (DW interview 2)

The persistence of poverty along with aid and development work is uttered with a dissatisfaction tone by one of the participants of the study from the local people as follows:

They distribute wheat and oil for us. They work development for us, for example, they build bridge, road, and spring water. We have seen them for a long period of time engaged in different development activities in addition to the food aid. However, our life is still as it was some years ago. We are living with poverty as of yesteryears. (FGD 6)

These responses illustrate how the local community perceive the development efforts, the food aid and the poverty. Such manifestations reflect that the efforts could not change their life. They feel that they are living with poverty vis-a-vis the presence of development efforts. They observe that the development efforts could not change their life and they are depending on the food aid. They perceive how their life is not changed vis-a-vis three decades interventions in the area for the reasons mentioned above i.e. the gaps in the development approach and the existence of the factors that affect the development process.

During women’s group discussion, a mother reflects on the existence of poverty and its dimension in their area as follows:

I have nothing. I am a widow and hence upbringing children for a widow mother is so difficult to express. I have sustained my life and my sons with the aid provided by ORDA and other organisations. One of my sons is a servant in a private peasant home with low wage to plough the land. The other is a daily labourer and usually moving here and there in search of better job. I feel I am selling my sons. I curse my fate for this. Life is difficult; poverty has been living with us. I am poverty. I have lived in absolute poverty with aid [from the development projects]. (FGD 5)
This excerpt demonstrates the dimension of poverty in rural Ethiopia and how the local community perceives their lives. Her grief, which symbolises many others in the region, shows us the chain of poverty in the region and its agony. The grief is fresh and loudly heard which symbolises those voices which are crying in the prison house of poverty. Her tone and facial expression depict the depth of poverty. The above rural mother does not only say that she is poor but also she herself is a symbol of poverty—“I am poverty”. Moreover, the excerpt mirrors how the local community perceives their life which is trapped with poverty.

Similar expressions were used to describe the persistence of poverty in the region with male participants of group discussions. For example, a 24 year rural youth says the following:

I do not have a cow, an ox or even a donkey. My parents have been living in absolute poverty. They have been living on food aid provided by Safety Net Program. I was a daily labour till this year. This year I am part of this irrigation project built by ORDA. I have a hope to change my life via this project. (LC interview 1)

Such narrations that confirm the depth of poverty were commonly heard during the individual and group interviews of development experts and local people. Besides, there seems a consensus among the development workers on the persistence of poverty and its depth in all the research areas. There is no disagreement to say that the problem is deep rooted and complex. The following are some of the verbatim expressions by development workers who are working for and living with the local community. “There are people who will starve if the food aid is stopped” (DW Interview 1). “There is an absolute poverty in this area” (DW Interview 2). “There are families who lead their life with food aids” (DW Interview 2). “Many people still are backward in this area” (DW Interview 6). “Quality of life is very low and hence difficult to achieve in a near future” (DW Interview 5).
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Such expressions by development workers who are familiar with the daily life of the people at the grassroots level unveil that life is still manifested in by poverty for numerous families. Food insecurity is a major problem that confronts the rural people.

The other discernible confirmation for the persistence of poverty in the selected research areas are the existence of aid warehouses. In Waghemra, North Wollo and South Gonder zones, where ORDA has been working for long period of time, there are big aid warehouses that store wheat, food and oil. The warehouses have been distributing food for more than two decades. The presence of big warehouses built by USAID and FHI, the international partners of ORDA, in these areas unearths that the people are still dependent on aid. This is another evidence for the persistence of poverty and aid. Currently, these two donors have been working with ORDA to distribute mainly wheat and oil for the community under PSNP. ORDA is the implementer of the PSNP in the Amhara region. It is the local partner of these donors. In all the three research sites, there are lots of people who lead their life with aids. During my filed study, I saw the food distribution centres crowded with people who were receiving the food aid. Observing rows of people who were receiving and carrying aid sacks is common in the three research sites.

It is clear that one NGO or development program in general cannot be ‘blamed’ entirely for their failure to lift the rural poor out of poverty in Ethiopia. However, it can be argued that the development approach of the organisation is not best designed to support poverty reduction. Even the context of the food distribution centre is one of the tangible evidences showing the extent of poverty and lack of basic needs which mirror the ineffective development approaches at least by the target organisation, if not, the approaches by international donors, partners and the regional government.
Picture 5.3: a warehouses in Sekota rural area, Hamusit locality (picture taken during the field work)

One of the paradoxes in ORDA's works was that it was possible to observe huge aid warehouses that store and distribute wheat and oil on the one side, and the development works on the other side. It is easy to understand the persistence of poverty and the continuation of the food aids. Again it is not a mystery to understand the development works in the region do not empower the people to be self-reliant as long as there is continuation of poverty and food aids. With the continuation of food aid, we cannot talk about self reliance and empowerment, at least, at societal level. Normally, holistic development and poverty should not co-exist at the societal level. One should dominate the other. In contrast, the development works, food aids and poverty co-exist in the research sites which prove the existence of gaps in the development practice and its approaches. The above discussed dimensions of poverty and food aid are similar with the reflection by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development that states life is difficult for many rural households, and they are dependent on safety net programs and are vulnerable to migrations for hunting other life alternatives (Ethiopia, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2010:2)
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Although there are visible development works in irrigation, environment protection, potable water development and other basic infrastructure facilities, bringing about significant change in the region’s development becomes a nightmare. In the above discussion, we have seen the persistence of poverty and aid vis-a-vis the development works. As the data presentation elucidates, even if there are a few positive changes in the region, a lot will be needed for the societal socioeconomic development.

The depth of poverty and aid at the country level is also best described by a government document (Ethiopia. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2010: i) as “measures of human development have improved but remain unacceptably low. Poverty and food insecurity are concentrated in rural areas, and the poorest sub-sector of rural households are chronically reliant on social safety net programmes and food aid”. Moreover, the region’s current drought crisis which is worst of its kind in the research sites (see reports UN, 2015; Al Jazeera, 2015; BBC, 2015) reveal that the long practiced development approach has major limitations that substantiate the argument of this paper discussed so far.

To sum up, the persistence of poverty, food aid and development works could indicate the presence of major gaps in the development interventions made by ORDA in the region. Based on the data presentation and the analysis, the study could argue that genuine participatory development communication becomes a missing link that creates major gaps in the development efforts of the organisation, ORDA.
5.9 Conclusion

The data presentation and analysis reveals that the dominant development approach of ORDA is found under the shade of the modernisation or dependency paradigms. It is dominantly top down and economic centric. The results also reveal that participatory development is missing both at the perceptual and practical levels. Besides, development communication in general and participatory communication in particular is marginalised in the development process of the local organisation. Factors such as personal, institutional and environmental could affect the practice of participatory development in the organisation. Moreover, the research results disclose the region’s persistence dependency syndrome and poverty that could reflect the ineffectiveness of the current development approach of the organisation. Therefore, this study argues that if there is a space for participation and participatory communication as major development approach, dependency syndrome and poverty will be eradicated, if not, reduced.

The next chapter presents the summary of the discussion, conclusion and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER SIX

6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter reviews the major findings of this study where the existing state of knowledge about participatory communication and its practical experiences are presented briefly. First, summary of the major research findings and their implications are stated. Then, the concluding remarks and recommendations of the research are followed. Finally, a few possible limitations of the study and the research gaps of future research works are presented.

6.2. Summary

The central research question of the current study is how participatory development communication is perceived and practiced in ORDA? This question is drawn on the assumption that participation and participatory communication will facilitate holistic development and it is my personal interest in examining whether genuine participation is used and best understood by different individuals working in the development process. Specifically, the following research questions were formulated in order to address the objectives of the study:

- How do ORDA’s development practitioners perceive development, i.e. is there any reference to participation?
- How do ORDA’s development practitioners approach development?
- How do the development practitioners of ORDA perceive participatory communication?
- How participatory communication is practiced by ORDA?
How do the local communities perceive participatory development communication practices of ORDA?

What are the factors that facilitating or hindering the practice of participatory development communication in ORDA’s development works?

Based on such research questions, sated above, and the following major findings are presented.

- The dominant development conception of ORDA becomes economic in nature. That is, both ORDA’s development workers and the local community perceive development from its economic perspective. This result seems to contradict with their claims about participatory development.

- The development approach of the organisation tends to be top down. Both the economic conception of development and the top down approach of ORDA’s development practices tend to reflect a traditional approach where genuine participatory development becomes a missing link.

- The significant attention to the economic perspective (hard development) of development could marginalise the human dimensions of development (soft development) such as participation, empowerment, democracy, freedom, justice and equity. That is, such investment of hard development issues at the expense of soft development issues, in one way or the other way, challenges the implementation of holistic development approaches.

- The research results reveal major cultural and religious practices that negatively affecting the development process. These are religious feast and celebrations including funerals, memorials of dead persons and weddings.
The data confirm that both the ORDA’S development workers and the local community understand the concept of participation in development, very selectively, as labour and material contributions that do not seem to reflect real participation but co-option, and this could be related to the old conception of modernisation and dependency paradigms. Nevertheless, a few of the management members of ORDA perceive participation as a form of empowerment process which is consistent with the organisation’s official documents’ reference to participation.

At the practical level, all the stages of ORDA’s development projects reveal that there is no genuine participation of the local community. Especially utilising, the communication as part of the development process seems to be disregarded in ORDA’s development projects.

The result indicated that communication is perceived as a tool of development, not a process of empowerment. It is not considered as a basic ingredient of development and such conception of communication in the development efforts is in line with one-way, top down traditional approach.

The major communication practices in ORDA is best described as one-way top down communication approach which is inconsistent with the principles of participatory communication and it is rather reflects the legacy of modernisation theory in the contemporary development works.

The research results show that development communication in general and participatory communication in particular tends to be marginalised in the development efforts of ORDA.
Although genuine participatory communication becomes a missing link in ORDA’s development works, the organisation uses different types of communication approaches such as community gathering, community conversation and drama as edutainment. The research results further reveal that such communication approaches are inconsistent with the basic tenets of Freire’s (2005) style of dialogical communication.

The research findings show three major factors such as the individual, the institutional or organisational and the environmental affecting the practices of participatory development communication in ORDA.

The research indicates that there is a paradoxical persistence of poverty, food aid and development works in ORDA’s intervention areas. Cognisant of the difficulty of blaming one organisation for such paradoxical co-existence, the thesis argues that the absence of participatory paradigm contributes to the sluggish development efforts in the region. In other words, the study argues while genuine participation becomes the missing link in the development process, to bring about sustainable and holistic development would be unthinkable.

As the data presentation and discussion in the previous chapter illustrates, the dominant development conception of ORDA is an economic perspective. Both ORDA and the local community perceive development from the economic perspective. Such economic conception of development outweighs other dimensions of development and shapes its practice on the ground. That is, the economic perception of development is related to their conceptions of poverty that refer to shortage of materials or basic needs. While,
both the organization and the local community perceive poverty as lack of basic needs, their goal of development, thus, becomes to fulfil such material shortages.

As learned from the consecutive strategic plans (1997-2013), annual reports, observations of actual development practices and the responses from the research participants, the development activities are predominantly focusing on hard development issues. This means that the major development activities include construction of rural roads, development of springs, construction of hand dug wells, small scale irrigations, and environmental protection and livelihoods expansion. These development activities are referred as hard development issues, and they have been accomplished for more than two decades. In short, the three interventions program of ORDA namely environmental protection, water resource development, agriculture and livelihood are dominantly practiced in ways that improve primarily the economic development of the local community. The fourth intervention area, the gender unit is basically limited to mainstreaming activities and sometimes hunting projects from other development partners. Much attention to the economic perspective (hard development issues as mentioned before) of development tends to marginalise the human dimensions of development (soft development issues) such as participation, empowerment, democracy, freedom, justice and equity. That is, such terms like democracy, freedom, justice, equality and equity are absent from the development vocabularies of the organisation. Thus, it seems imperative to argue that hard development issues are advocated at the expense of soft development issues where employing holistic development approaches becomes questionable. It sounds calling this development approach as “development divorced from its human or cultural context is growth
without a soul” (Servaes & Malikhao, 2007: 6). In such contexts, development decisions are made by the organisation, the regional government and international donors. The local community or the stakeholders are not part of the decision making process of the development projects.

While the organisation, ORDA, is practicing development activities dominantly with a top down approach, the organisation claims that it supports participation. For example, in its official document, ORDA placed community participation as a key implementation strategy for sustainable and effective development (ORDA third strategic plan, 2009; ORDA fourth strategic plan, 2014). However, the results of the study reveal that genuine community participation is hardly observed.

The donor driven development approach observed in the findings opens room for having influences of international donors and the regional government on the development approach of ORDA. That is, the dollar driven development approach could force ORDA to prioritise the needs of these development partners. This in turn closes the opportunity for prioritising the needs of the local community. Such ORDA’s experience seems to confirm Paulos’s (2006: 28) argument, “the activities of most NGO’s in Ethiopia are supply driven. They aim to satisfy the source of their funding to carry out their prescribed projects”.

The move by international donors to work with the priorities of the government projects such as the case of the Production Safety Net Program (PSNP) project tends to seriously influence the selection of priority areas by local NGOs in their development practice. This also reflects the complex interaction among the local agents, the government and
the international partners in the development arena. The interactions reveal the presence of power inequalities between the donors and the recipient organisation as well as between the recipient organisation and the local community. These inherent power inequalities among the development actors could paralyse the practice of development communication in general and participatory communication in particular.

The practice of ORDA and the interaction with development partners reflect that in this era of the participatory development, the traditional top down approach remains a dominant development approach. In this age of promoting the local development approach even the local development agents remain under the influence of the huge forces. In other words, it is safe to argue that the international donors and the regional or national government use local organisations as another avenue of practising the economic base and top down development approach. ORDA’s experience reveals that while promoting local development at the verbal or written level becomes simple, practically, top down approach remains the recurrent fashion of development employed in ORDA.

Generally, both the economic perception, and the top down development approach reveal that the ORDA’s development practices appear to be under the shade of the traditional approach. That is, the traditional development approach seems to be employed dominantly despite the advocacy of participatory development to becoming the “dominant trend” (Rahman, 1995) at the theoretical level.

The finding demonstrates that ORDA’s development workers conceptualise development as economic growth and approach it in a top-down fashion. Their
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reference to participation is not genuine or authentic. The discussion enlightens us development is not a participatory process of social change.

The research result shows that there are religious and cultural practices affecting negatively the development works. For instance, several religious holidays prohibiting agricultural activities. Even there is a common held belief that poverty is an act of God. Besides, lots of celebrations such as religious feast and other traditional practices including funerals, memorials of dead persons by relatives and weddings ceremonies. Therefore, such socio-cultural factors could create scarcity of resources in the area, and impede the development process.

Although there have been some efforts by ORDA and the government to curb such cultural practices in the last decades, the practices are still active in the sites where research was conducted. To change such kind of cross generational and traditional practices, there should be sustainable and multifaceted efforts by development partners of the region. Especially, in the area where culture and religion are intermingled, it is difficult to change the attitude and behaviour of people with a campaign and infrequent communication works. However, this research argues that participatory communication has the potential to tackle such old aged practices. In Amhara region where the religion and culture are mixed and the boundaries are blurred which makes it is challenging to change the attitude and behaviour of the local community. In such type of critical situation, the practice of genuine participation could help to curb the cultural practices and facilitates development. In turn, this could show how more emphasis on participation can help economic development succeed. The next important theme of the
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research is focussing on understanding the perception and practice of participatory communication for sustainable development.

The perception and practice of participatory communication is the principal area of focus in this dissertation. The results confirm that both the organisation’s development workers and the local community perceive participation as labour and material contributions which do not reflect real participation but co-option. Only a few of the management members of ORDA understand participation as an empowerment process. These members understand the idea and theory of participation well but because of internal and external obstacles (see section 5.6), genuine participation does not seem to be practiced. In ORDA participation is limited to the bottom level of the ladder as listed on the participation indicators scale/ladder outlined by Pretty (1995) i.e. participation as contribution and Berner’s (2010) ‘ritualistic participation’ where people are co-opted to participate in a pre-planned project.

The pseudo participation stated above in ORDA deviates from the participation advocated at the theoretical levels. For example, the definition adopted in this study states that participatory development is an act of development that enables the active participation of the local community in the design, implementation, evaluation and management of development projects. It is a process of empowerment of the local community in making decisions and managing resources that affect their life. This type of participation does not need pre-planned projects but empowerment of the poor in the decision making process.

This low level of participation is manifested in the different phases of the ORDA’s development projects. Following, a brief discussion of how participation in general and
participatory communication in particular is presented with the usual four stages of development projects.

In the design and problem identification stage of development projects, the local community is expected to participate in the form of key informants or Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The involvement of the local community in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises and baseline surveys are avenues for participation in the problem identification stage. However, such form of participation is hardly observed in the projects designed by international donors and the government itself. The participation does not seem to be an empowerment process based on genuine dialogue but it is a onetime activity for gathering information. Mefalopulos (2008:72) calls such engagement of the local community in the first phase of development projects, the Communication Based Assessment (CBA) which refers to investigating the overall socio-political, economic and cultural environment of the development setting. With the involvement of all stakeholders, it explores the what, who, and why of development problems. The development practitioners could use dialogue as a means for exploring the above-mentioned concerns so as to build mutual trust with stakeholders. Nevertheless, the aforementioned tools of ORDA such as key informant, FGD and PRA are not in congruence/agreement with the essence of dialogical communication. As Mefalopulos (2008: 72) indicates, the main purpose of communication based assessment is to discover, filter and authenticate both development projects, and communication objectives. However, this aspect of communication appears to be disregarded by ORDA.
In the second phase of the development projects (the planning phase), the participation of the local community is overlooked. Planning is considered by development experts and the local community as the task of professionals, not as the responsibility of the local community. When we see specifically the communication part of the development projects, Mefalopulos (2008:30) states that the development agents should define clearly the type of change desired, and decide the most suitable communication approach for the development initiatives at this stage. He explains selecting the communication approaches, accompanied with designing appropriate message to address the identified problems and achieve the desired change. Development practitioners, therefore, should select at this stage communication approaches for a two-way communication, not a simple dissemination of information. Nevertheless, ORDA’s experience tends to disclose that at the planning stage no due attention is given for the communication works. Communication approaches and messages are identified without the involvement of the local community. Appropriate communication approaches and messages are not clearly identified. The development workers who are implementing the projects use them as they want without any guideline. This unveils that participatory communication has been marginalised.

The third phase of development projects, project implementation, is the phase in which the majority of rural community is involved in the development process. Community participation in this stage is manifested through labour, material and cash contributions. When we observe the communication part, implementation refers to the execution of the communication approaches and activities decided and based on phases one and two. The main task at this stage is the production of communication outputs, and
communicating with the stakeholders (Mefalopulos, 2008). Bessette (2004) reinforces these activities for active participation of the local community in the development communication process. However, once again, this form of communication does not seem to be practiced in ORDA regardless of the tenets of participatory communication. For example, ORDA produces communication outputs without the involvement of the local community.

The fourth stage of development projects, participation in monitoring and evaluation, is the stage in which limited participation is practiced. At this stage, the local community is required to participate via committees such as water committee and irrigation committee. Such form of involvement made the participation a way of representation with a limited degree. Looking from the communication perspective, the fourth phase, monitoring and evaluation, refers to the overall follow of development communication efforts and evaluation of its effectiveness. As mentioned by Mefalopulos (2008:29), monitoring the ongoing communication intervention is referred as “formative evaluation and the evaluation of the final result as summative evaluation”. Formative evaluation enables us to know the status of communication activities conducted. It gives an opportunity to take corrective measures for greater effectiveness of the development initiatives. On the other hand, summative evaluation helps us know the impact of the intervention and determine the achievement of the development communication goals in general and the communication objectives in particular. None of these types of evaluations are performed in ORDA. ORDA does not seem to conduct any evaluation for its development communication works.
Therefore, based on the research findings, the practice in all the stages of development projects revealed that there appears not to have genuine participation of the local community in ORDA; especially, the communication department seems to be disregarded in the phases of development projects. In the absence of genuine participation, it is hard to achieve the empowerment of the local community since “empowerment is the result of the process by which community decide what to do, lead where to go, and are involved in actions” (Waisbord, 2008: 509). The practice of participatory communication in ORDA’s development projects is inconsistent with the model of participatory communication advocated by UNESCO (1977) that conceives participation as the public involvement in communication systems including the production process, planning and management of communication systems and activities. Such involvement goes beyond consultation of the public in decisions making process (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008:171).

The pseudo participation in ORDA is similar to Abraham’s (2002) finding that reveals the presence of different conceptions of participatory development among Care-Ethiopia workers and the absence of authentic participation of the local community in the planning and implementations of various projects in Borana Zone, Eastern part of Ethiopia.

Similarly, Henry’s (2004) study revealed that the form of participation constructed by the Gurage Peoples Self Help and Development Organization (GPSDO) in the Gurage communities (South Ethiopia) is passive and hierarchical which lacks empowerment of the community.
The economic conception of development discussed so far and the top-down approach of development in general and pseudo participatory development in particular could influence the conception and practice of communication in general and participatory communication in particular. That is, the economic conception and the top-down development approach of development shapes the place of communication in the development process. Accordingly, communication is perceived as a tool of economic development, not a process of empowerment. Communicating for development in ORDA is better understood with the following five major dimensions of communication emerged out of the data:

1. dissemination of development information,
2. image building activities,
3. cooperation, building relationship and information sharing
4. orientation and persuasion activities
5. attitude and behavioural change activities

A brief discussion of each communication dimension is given below.

ORDA perceives development communication as merely dissemination of information about the development activities and success of the organisation to the stakeholders and development beneficiaries. This is dominantly done in one-way model of information transmission which is in line with the top-down development approach of the organisation.

In this respect, the best examples were development reports about environmental protection, irrigation projects and livelihood activities including the introduction of apples and plantations of eucalyptus production in ORDA’s project areas such as
Wadela. Such types of development reporting are usually done in collaboration with media institutions. The major communication channels for dissemination of information and advocating development are the regional Mass Media Agency, national radio and television channels (ENA, EBC, Fana radio) and the print media namely Addis Zemen newspaper. The country’s journalistic practices claims to use development journalism as a dominant model influences ORDA’s development communication works that emphases on communicating success stories and adopting economic development perspectives. Such condition could contradict the argument advocated by Quarry and Ramirez as “communication is not about broadcasting messages to passive audiences; it is about giving people the tools to take control over their lives and broaden the choices they have” (2012:125).

The second dominant conception of communication in ORDA is perceiving it as an activity of image building. The main objective of such conception of communication is to sell the organisation’s image for development partners such as the international donors and other bilateral organisations in order to secure funds. In other words, communication is understood as information transmission, and the position of the communication department in the organisational hierarchy reveals this fact that communication is conceived as image building activity to sustain the development projects by securing funds. At the structural level, the communication unit or department is found only at head quarter level. The structure is not extended to the actual development sites or project office levels. There is no communication expert or person assigned for the communication part of the development projects. This makes the communication activity in the development process as ‘everybody’s’ business. This
clearly mirrors that development communication is a marginalised profession in the organisation. ORDA uses varieties of communication channels for its image building activities. The most common ones are the already mentioned mass media institutions, the organisation’s magazine called ORDA, quarterly newsletter called *Emerta*, biodiversity newsletter, pamphlets, brochures, web site, emails and social media (e.g. face book).

While the perspectives of participatory communication, the above two functions (transmission and image building) of communication could be labelled as information dissemination levels of participation that indicates the lowest form of participation. It involves the stakeholders by simply disseminating information, and is usually referred as pseudo-participation. It is also characterised by one way, top-down communication approach (Mefalopulos, 2003:97-98 & 2008:52).

The third communication theme is focussing on the communication among the development teams of the organisation. This form of communication is perceived as building cooperation and relationship. Considerable amount of team spirit and cooperation among the development staff is observed. The communication environment is horizontal and egalitarian. Besides, interpersonal communication is the dominant communication method among the development teams working in development project sites.

The fourth theme is emphasising on the communication works of ORDA with the local community. This communication dimension reflects the communication works of the hard development issues such as water projects, environment protection, agriculture and
livelihood projects where communication is perceived as information transmission and persuasion. That is, the role of communication in such development projects is understood as not only information transmission about the projects that have already designed and planned out of the community participation, but also persuading the local community about their labour and material contributions. Typically, this is in line with the information transmission model characterised by a one-way and top down communication approach. Accordingly, community gathering becomes the dominant communication method to get the local community for the purpose of orientation and persuasion.

The fifth and last theme emerged out of the communication dimension is associated with soft development issues such as gender, health, sanitation and hygiene. In this part of development projects, the role of communication is understood as attitude and behavioural change as well as awareness creation. Based on Mefalopulos’ (2008) category of participation, this could be labelled as participation by consultation, which is primarily one-way communication from change agents to stakeholders with strong focus on feedback. In the name of feedback, opinions and views of the stakeholders could have a chance to be considered by change agents though decisions are made by outsiders (Mefalopulos, 2003:97-98 & 2008:52).

Generally, the conception of communication in the development efforts seems to be in line with one-way top down traditional approach. This is contrary to the new approach of the alternative/or participatory/dialogical paradigm that advocates the conception of communication as two way process requiring the active engagement of stakeholders.
In other words, considering Mefalopulos category of participatory communication in a development process, it could be concluded that high levels of participation known as collaboration and empowerment (Mefalopulos, 2008:7) are hardly observed in ORDA’s communication practices. More specifically, genuine participatory communication tends to be practiced rarely in the development projects of ORDA.

Although genuine participatory communication becomes the missing link in ORDA’s development work, meagre form of participatory communication including community gathering, community conversation and drama are employed as edutainment in ORDA.

These results reveal that ORDA practices communication with various dimensions such as information dissemination, image building, relationship building, information sharing and persuasion, and attitude and behavioural change. Besides, the dominant approach to such form of communication is top down approach. Generally, the perceptual and practical experience of participatory communication does not seem to be institutionalised. The research results reveal that the tenets of participatory communication (such as empowerment, dialogical, problemitasation, endogenous, action and reflection, acquiring skills, increasing self confidence, control over oneself and one’s environment, achieving quality of life, freedom, understanding one’s ability and limitations) are not found in the development process (Freire, 2005; Moemeka, 1994; Mefalopulos, 2008). Genuine participation is the missing link of the development process that could affect the sustainability and holistic nature of development. Communication is not perceived as a basic ingredient of the development process; it is
rather perceived as transmission of development information. This finding confirms Enghel’s (2015: 13) argument which states:

For the most part, in development communication scholarly work published between 2003 and 2013, communication and media initiatives are understood to support development intervention, in line with what appears to take place in practice. In correlation with the fact that development is understood as the driving factor and communication is considered as subsidiary.

Because of the perception of communication illustrated above, communication is practiced predominately in the top-down fashion.

Different factors affect the practice of participatory development in general and participatory communication in particular in the process of development. The next section reviews the major impediments of participatory communication including individual, institutional and environmental.

Based on the preceding discussions, it seems clear that these dimensions of factors create a huge impact on the development communication works in general and participatory communication activities in particular. Especially, ORDA’s communication works for sustainable development becomes insignificant and genuine participatory communication could be the missing link in the development process. Both at the conception and practical levels, communication does not appear to be a basic component of the development process. This finding, thus, contradicts with the following notions of communication in the development process:

We reaffirm that communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and a foundation of all social organisations. Everyone, everywhere, at any time should have the opportunity to participate in communication processes and no one should be excluded from their benefits (Servaes & Malikhao, 2007:18)
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The discussion also makes clear that the stated factors could affect the overall development efforts of the organisation. The ineffectiveness of the development efforts are observed from the persistence of poverty and food aid in the intervention areas though ORDA’s development projects have been working for more than three decades. Although, it is thorny to blame only ORDA for the low quality of life and the prevalence of destitution in the intervention area, the existing persistence of poverty, food aid and sluggish development works reveal that the development works of ORDA do not seem to become successful in bringing about the desired change.

6.3 Reflection on Participatory Communication Theory and Practices

This section reflects on the findings of the study in ways that illustrate how the experience of ORDA understands the theory and practice of participatory communication in the development process. The findings tend to question the realisation of the existing literature on development communication by revealing how tenets of participatory paradigm could actually be missing in the perception of development agents and in their development practices on the ground.

The findings of this study in general highlight how genuine participatory communication is a missing link in the development process of local development agents and having awareness of such issues assumed to contribute to successful development in the region in particular and Ethiopia in general. The traditional top down approach employed in ORDA seems to disregard advocacy of participatory approach in the mainstream literature as well as in the international development agents like the UN and World Bank. This condition remind us Simpson’s critical reflection on
the current status of the development arena: “Indeed, in the development industry (not in the academic discipline of development communication), only one theory dominates the field: the 'paradigm of domination' that regards communication as top-down domination elaborated by US scholars in the 1950s” (Simpson, 1994:6).

The research findings imply that lack of people-centred and localised approach of development affects the effectiveness of the development interventions. The governing conception of development in ORDA is economic, and at the organisational level poverty is perceived as lack of basic needs and resources. This is in line with Thomas’s (2008:32) explanation of the concept of poverty in which the author refers it as lack of resources. Thomas elucidates that conceptualising poverty as lack of resources such as basic health services, education, shelter, land availability, and unemployment becomes a recurrent problem of lots of development interventions. As he argues, this is the most widespread belief normally associated with economic or material shortages. Even scarcity in communication is defined as lack of radio sets and lack of access to newspapers. Although criticised theoretically, this conception of development and poverty is among the commonly held understandings of development approaches implemented by governmental and non-governmental organisations. The solution to poverty in this model is focusing on providing necessary materials and infrastructure including food supplies, shelter, health-care centres, schools and job opportunities and communication tools. This is similar to what ORDA has been engaged in for more than two decades. In other words, ORDA’s approach of poverty seems to be narrow which lacks important components. For example, Sen (1999) argues that poverty is more than
economic problems and is a capability deprivation which encompasses varieties of domains such as income, health, education, empowerment and freedom.

As explained by Thomas (2008:32), approaching poverty as material shortage, which means seeing it only as an economic problem, focuses on the manifestation of poverty, and could not address its root causes. Addressing the root causes requires empowering the poor in political, economic and cultural arenas. Contrary to tackling the root causes of poverty, this approach disregards the local/indigenous knowledge, ability and cultural identity of the poor as invalid and backward which is similar to the experience of ORDA. That is, the approach considers traditional/or indigenous knowledge system as backward, unscientific and irrelevant. This assumption leads to the marginalisation of the indigenous knowledge in the development process. As Escobar (19915:13) argues “[d]evelopment has relied exclusively on one knowledge system, namely, the modern Western one. The dominance of this knowledge system has dictated the marginalisation and disqualification of non-Western knowledge systems”. The end result of this marginalisation of traditional knowledge system becomes the failure of development projects across the developing countries. ORDA's development experience tends to reflect such experience. The conceptions and practice of development, and the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge, which are reflected in ORDA's development, could not be related to the human centred and localised approach of development.

In the literature of development and the official propaganda of the international development agency, participatory development is acknowledged for practising. Nevertheless, as this research result shows claims and theoretical assumptions of
participatory development do not seem to reflect the practice on the ground. This is in line with Mefalopulos’s (2005: 249) critique that there is a huge gap between the theoretical and practical use of participation. Theoretically participatory development is one of the prominently promoted concepts, though wider manipulation and distortion is usually observed in its implementation.

In ORDA’s intervention areas, the *passive involvement* of the local community in the development process could not empower the people to participate in the decision making process of the development works. This dissertation argues that the lower level of participation of the local people could be one of the decisive factors that hurdle sustainable development in the intervention areas. In other words, the marginalisation of the local community in participation of the development process could be one of the reasons for the persistence of poverty and food aid in the region despite the long-time development interventions. Of course, it could also be argued that these people might exclude themselves from participation because of their belief that they cannot change their fate without the help of the super natural power, God. Nevertheless, it is imperative to argue that the development approach and practice lacking human element or holistic dimension could contribute a lot to the sluggish development efforts in the region.

The major themes emerged out of communication activity of ORDA are: disseminations of information, image building, cooperation and relationship building, awareness creation, orientation and persuasion and attitude and behavioural changes. These reveal that basic ingredients of the new alternative development paradigm such as dialogue, empowerment, endogenous, involvement, cultural renewal, action and
reflection and liberation (Freire, 2005; Moemeka, 1994; Mefalopulos. 2008) are missing in the local development efforts of ORDA. Using Huesca’s (2008:187) explanation about the instrumental approach to participatory communication, such experience of ORDA reflects absence of normative theories of participation as opposed to functional or administrative perspective. The following figure, figure 6.1, depicts the overall communication perceptions and practices of ORDA.

**Figure 6.1: major purposes of communication in ORDA**

The figure clearly shows that communication is conceived as a tool for development though the overall place of communication in the organisation is not a central ingredient of the development process. In participatory communication, however, scholars’
advocate that communication is not just a means towards predetermined development goals, it is rather part of the development process that empowers the local community. Besides, the process could be dialogical and dynamic, not linear like the top down approach of communication (Melkote & Steeves, 2001:337; Huesca, 2008:185). In contrast to this notion, the communication process is not an important issue for ORDA. The approach to communication becomes an end by itself. This communication as means to an end perspective is in line with Guimaraes’s (2009:8) notion which elucidates that participation may, for instance, mobilize the local people’s contributions via involvement to implementation of development works, to increase projects acceptance and sense of ownership.

In the Amhara region where ORDA has been working on development for three decades, there are fertile grounds to implement genuine participatory communication. For example, the existence of community radios in ORDA’s intervention areas such as Waghimra Community radio and Kombolcha Community radio, and the rich traditional communication systems of the local community are the missing opportunities for ORDA to localise development works and to engage in dialogical communications for empowerment. Some of such missing opportunities are discussed here after.

I. Community Radios and Indigenous Communication Systems: Missing Opportunities

I.1 Community Radios

There are two community radios in ORDA’s intervention areas of the Amhara region. These are Waghimra and Kombolcha Community radios. The Waghimra and
Kombolcha Community radios narrowcast to the Sekota and Kombolcha dwellers and the rural community living in the neighbouring rural kebeles respectively.

The horizontal nature and local focus of a community radio would enable ORDA to use these channels as alternative communication means. However, ORDA is not working with them although, ORDA’s Sekota project office and Sekota community radio station are located in neighbourhood distance. As discussed in the previous chapter (see chapter 5), ORDA’s eyes are focusing on the regional and national mass media institutions. They overlook such opportunities. For example, I got an opportunity to give training and conduct impact assessment of the community radios in 2014 and 2015, and this job gave me the chance to look into their relation with ORDA. Accordingly, no program was presented about ORDA by the community radios, or ORDA did not present programs using the community radios. During my field work for this study, I cross checked this with ORDA’s staff, and there is no relationship developed between the NGO and the local radio stations. This might be evidence that the local NGO is looking outside the local environment for cooperation. That is, ORDA has been working with international donors but not with local social change agents (community radios). ORDA would have been raised local concerns and issues using the community radios as communication channels near to the community. That is, the organization would have made a series of dialogues using the community radios. Lots of development issues of ORDA could have been presented using the community radios as horizontal communication systems. However, ORDA’s preference were the regional and national mass media which are working in a top down approach which reflects the situation how the organisation is far away from participatory development approaches.
I.II Indigenous Communication Systems

After the deconstruction of the dominant paradigm and its positivistic functionalist assumption of development communication in 1970s, the quest for alternative communication systems gets due attention to alternative development paradigms. Part of the search was towards examining the potential of indigenous communication systems for sustainable development. With the emergence of participatory paradigm for development, the importance of cultural variables for successful and sustainable development has received worldwide recognition. This recognition has reinforced us to use traditional media for facilitating people’s participation and promoting self-reliance (Bame, 2005:65). As stated by Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005:16), indigenous communication systems are communication forms “rooted in the social fabrics of indigenous communities”. They are intertwined with the everyday life of indigenous people and their local knowledge. Contrary to this notion of the alternative paradigm, ORDA does not seem to use the traditional communication systems to engage in genuine dialogical communication. The indigenous communication systems which are part of the rural life are overlooked. At the institutional level there is no strategy or policy that guides the indigenous knowledge systems for development or social change. The indigenous communication systems such as tales, traditional songs and dances are not used for development. Besides, the long last traditional institutions in the region such as Iddir1,

1 *Iddir* is defined as an indigenous “association made up by a group of persons united by ties of family and friendship, by living in the same district, by jobs, or by belonging to the same ethnic group, and has an object of providing mutual aid and financial assistance in certain circumstances.”(Mauri cited in Dejen, 1993: 28)
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*Iquib*\(^2\) and the traditional coffee ceremony\(^3\) could have been used as an interesting communication avenue to get the local community and engaged in dialogues since these institutions are part of the daily life of the local community. However, such traditional communication systems and avenues are overlooked by ORDA.

There was no an organised effort for using such long standing communication systems and avenues in the development process. Nevertheless, there are infrequent and limited individual efforts by development experts to use these traditional communication avenues, not the systems. The main reason for not using such opportunities is lack of awareness and attention about such valuable traditional communication systems for development. The value of indigenous communication system for participation and sustainable development was not understood by the development experts. The common responses by the development experts could be represented by the following interview (DW interview 1) excerpt: “I don’t have much knowledge about indigenous communication systems. As I told you there is no training about this. No one directs us to use them”.

Because of such knowledge gap, using indigenous communication systems for participation and sustainable development becomes a missing opportunity. The indigenous communication systems and avenues could have been used to engage in

\(^2\) *Iquib* is defined as a form of indigenous “saving association in which weekly or monthly payments of a fixed sum are exchanged for the privilege of receiving a large sum at some point in the life of the group.” (Levine cited in Dejen, 1993:9).

\(^3\) The *Ethiopian traditional coffee ceremony* is a colourful social ritual which gives opportunity for open dialogue for community members.
Freire’s type of dialogical communication or Habermas’s public sphere (Goode, 2005). They could have been used as a means and place of dialogues. They would be serving as public sphere and an eye-opener. The instrumental perspective of participatory communication in ORDA may also discourage looking into such opportunities of communication. This condition seems to correspond with Huesca’s (2008:186) criticism of instrumental approach for ignoring the role of grassroots’ communication, indigenous knowledge and other cultural values.

The other gaps in the communication works of ORDA is lack of integrating the traditional communication and modern communication systems for sustainable development. ORDA tends to fail to integrate such communication systems and to approach development holistically.

The data presentation and the analysis part illuminates that several factors affect the practice of participatory communication in ORDA. These factors could be categorised into three sub themes. These are the individual factors, the institutional or organisational factors and the environmental factors. In the following figure, figure 6.2, such factors and their impact on participatory communication are presented.
Heck (2003) also pronounced that the political culture of a country and the legislative environment that hinders freedom of association at theoretical as well as practical level would disdain genuine participation. He also states socio-cultural factors affecting participatory approach. The socio-cultural barriers refer to the local people’s prevalence of dependent mentality, sense of frustration and suspicion of officials. The author argues “that all these form a ‘culture of poverty’ of the silent, excluded majority for whom survival is the sole aspiration” (2003:12). Hence, it seems clear that in such kind of submissive culture, participation for development and change would face tremendous problems. Servaes and Arnst (1999:119) call such dependent mentality as “self-depreciation” of the local people that leads them to expect solutions from the above. In this context, expect from the above includes from the super power, as one of the research participants from the local community articulated (see 5.2).
Generally, these results showing the experiences of ORDA inform us about the relationship between the perception and practice of development approaches and interventions. Perception tends to shape the practice of development on the ground. Besides, the influence of international development partners in one way or the other, affects the development approach and practices through which development works are under the shade of traditional approach vis-à-vis the advocacy of participatory paradigm in the international development arenas. In simple terms, the so called local is not actually local as the so called participatory becomes not in fact participatory. The supply driven nature of development works affect the localisation of development efforts. Furthermore, the marginalisation of communication from the basic components of development works also impedes the overall development performances.

6.4 Conclusion

Since the evolution of the international development concerns in the 1950s, development works in developing countries have been experiencing different development approaches. Practical level development approaches have been contributing a lot to the success and failure of development projects in developing countries. The development experiences of the last six decades inform us that sustainable development is impossible without the active participation of the local people. In other words, the promising approach for holistic development is horizontal and bottom up, not top down. After the failure of the modernisation and dependency paradigms, advocacy of participatory paradigm at the theoretical and practical levels came to exist (Melkote, & Steeves 2001; Mefalopulos 2008; Searveas, 2008). For example, one of the leading development organisations, the World Bank, has allocated
almost $85 billion to local participatory development over the past decade (Mansuri and Rao 2013: 1). This proves how this paradigm is getting due attention in the practice of development. In addition, Mefalopulos (2008:7) declares that “many past project and program failures can be attributed directly or indirectly to the limited involvement of the affected people in the decision-making process”. At the theoretical level, it seems there is a universal call towards this participatory approach. Thus, this research used the participatory communication as a theoretical framework. This means that the basic constructs of participatory communication (such as dialogue, endogenous, genuine participation, critical thinking and problematisation) as means of empowerment, and the role of communicator as facilitator in promoting social change are used to analyse and interpret the data (Freire, 2005; White, 1994; Cadiz, 2005; Mefalopulos, 2005 & 2008; Servaes, 2008).

This case study reveals that the dominant approach of development in ORDA is under the shade of the traditional modernisation and dependency approaches. The economic perspective of development and its top down approach illuminate the persistence of traditional modernisation approach in the development practice of local development agents. ORDA’s development approach is not human centred and holistic but reflects the assumptions of the old dependency theory. Much attention is given to the economic dimension of development at the cost of the basic ingredients of human development, and the unique demands of the situation of the Ethiopian locale such as participation, empowerment, equality, freedom and equity are absent in the development vocabularies of the local change agent i.e. ORDA.
Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Therefore, this thesis concludes that by investing its resources, time and energy on hard development issues, ORDA seems to miss the chance of working on soft development issues. The marginalisation of the soft development issues is like building a house without establishing its appropriate foundation. If a person could not build a strong foundation, the house would not have the required strength and durability. Similarly, the economic led development works could not achieve human development by itself. Thus, the thesis argues that the economic conception of development does not enable us to tackle poverty and achieve inclusive and sustainable development. As a result, the data indicate the persistence of poverty, food aid and sluggish development efforts for more than two decades in rural Amhara.

Besides, the presence of cultural practices that affect development works revealed that the development approach has given little attention to local issues and concerns. In turn this mirrors that participatory paradigm is not practiced. However, it is possible to argue that the practice of genuine participation could help us curb the cultural practices and hence facilitate even economic development.

Furthermore, the research results conclude that both at perceptual and practical levels participatory development is found at the lower level of the ladder of participation by development workers and the local community. Participation is considered as labour and material contributions of the local community in the implementation of development projects. The local community is not active participant of the development process. This finding is in line with Thomas (2015:77) critique of development interventions as “the
articulation of needs remains to a large extent the privilege of external agents rather than local people”.

The absence of genuine participation could in turn affect the perception and practice of communication in development works. Development communication in general and participatory communication in particular is perceived and practiced primarily for dissemination of development information, image building, awareness creation, orientation and persuasion and attitude and behavioural changes. When we relate this with the mainstream literature about models of development communications (Mefalopulos, 2008: 59, see chapter two) ORDA’s practice on the ground confirms that monologic model of communication for development is the dominant one which is at the expense of the dialogical model of communication. As a result, communication is not a basic ingredient of the development process. Rather, communication is perceived as a tool of development.

The findings reveal that communication in general is superficial and participatory communication in particular is missing in the development process. ORDA does not invest on it; hence it affects the sustainable development process. ORDA’s such experience tends to contradict to the idea of scholars such as Mefalopulos (2005: 249) and Melkote and Steeves (2001: 351) stating that people’s genuine participation and empowerment are the two basic ingredients of communication for sustainable development.
To sum up, genuine participation was hypothesised as the missing link in the development efforts of the development organisation in Ethiopia. In turn, this reveals that participatory communication is out of the development bag of ORDA since achieving participation is part of a communication activity. The experience of ORDA does not go with the tenets of participatory development. For example, Mefalopulos (2005: 248) argues that “any intervention, be it in the social, rural or environmental dimension, needs to be based on a participatory model in order to be sustainable”. Different factors such as individual, institutional and environmental could affect the centrality of communication in general and participatory communication in particular. For instance, the research unveils that political context prevent implementing participatory development. This makes clear that participatory communication is a marginalised discipline in the process of development or social change. This further confirms that genuine participatory communication is the missing link in the development process. In other words, the marginalisation of communication affects the development process in the organisation where there are persistence of poverty, food aid and sluggish development efforts vis-a-vis three decades of interventions.

6.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are presented:

1. The finding indicates that the dominant development conception of ORDA becomes economic in nature and the development approach tends be top down. It is argued that such conception and approach hinders the effectiveness of the development. Therefore, the study recommends that the very concept of development needs redefinition to include both the material and nonmaterial
Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

notions of human development and the approach should be changed to bottom up, if not, horizontal.

2. The research results reveal major cultural and religious practices that negatively affecting the development process. So it’s suggested that ORDA and other development partners could use dialogical communication in order to tackle the cultural practices which affect development. Freirean (2005) notions of dialogue could use as liberation strategy for the community to be free from the practices that hurdle development.

3. The finding confirm that both the ORDA’s development practitioners and the local community understand the concept of participation in development, very selectively, as labour and martial contributions that do not seem to reflect real participation but co-option. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that such low level of conceptions should be reshaped by different intervention such as training. Especially building the capacity of development practitioners and enlightening them with the ethos of participatory paradigm is important.

4. At the practical level, all the stages of ORDA’s development projects reveal that there is no genuine participation of the local community. Especially utilising, the communication as part of the development process seems to be disregarded in ORDA’s development projects. Therefore, it is recommended that ORDA should involve local people actively in all the phases of development projects including the decision making process. Moreover, the centrality of communication in all the stage of development should be acknowledged. Communication should be institutionalised and be part of the project document. It is possible to involve communication experts starting from initial stage of development projects.
5. The major communication practice of ORDA is best described as one-way top down communication approach which is inconsistent with the principles of participatory communication. It is strongly recommended that for successful development, ORDA needs to use two-way communication or dialogical model of communication in order to overcome the barriers of sustainable development stated in the discussion section.

6. The research results show that development communication in general and participatory communication in particular tends to be marginalised in the development efforts of ORDA. Therefore, reversing such trend is critical and ORDA should mainstream participatory communication for sustainable development. Such action might include redefine the roles and objectives of communication for development in ways that are different from public relations.

7. The research indicates that there is a marginalisation of indigenous communication system in the development works of ORDA. ORDA could benefit a lot using the rich traditional/indigenous communication systems. The indigenous communication systems might include tales, traditional songs, stories and dances. Besides, the long last traditional institutions in the region such as Iddir, Iquib and the traditional coffee ceremony could have been used as an indispensable communication avenue to get the local community and engage in dialogue since these institutions are part of the daily life of the local community. Using the community radios that are working in the project areas is also another opportunity for ORDA to practice participatory communication.

8. The study shows that the communication structure or unit in ORDA is found only in the head quarter and this paralyses communication for development
practices. It’s important to note that the structure or communication unit should be reached up to the project office levels where actual development works are performed.

9. The absence of communication policy and guidelines was observed in ORDA and this further marginalises communication for development practices. It is suggested that the preparation and use of a communication policy or code of practice that guides the place and practice of communication in the development contexts is important. The communication policy could indicate the position of communication for empowerment and sustainable development. The policy might also specify the role of indigenous knowledge and communication systems for local development. It can also point out the integration of the traditional and modern communication systems for sustainable development.

10. The study further reveals that development communication works are “every body’s” business in ORDA and this reflects its marginalisation. It is recommended that communication for development needs to be practised by professionals for its effective operation. It is also important to note that with assigning communication professionals, ORDA could check accountability.

11. The finding reveals that ORDA’s dependency on foreign funds affects its development approach not to be participatory. It is very crucial for ORDA to engage in generating its own income to empower itself and protecting its autonomy from the influence of external forces such as international donors and the government. In turn this will enable it to sustain its development efforts by itself. ORDA could see different income generating activities as alternative ways
6.6 Limitations of the Present Study

Unlike quantitative studies, this qualitative case study’s data and findings cannot easily be generalised to other contexts and organisations. In addition, this study focuses on the perception and practice of participatory communication where it addresses only certain aspects of ORDA’s development efforts in Ethiopia. The work also represents a partial view framed by the theoretical orientations and research questions of the study. Another limitation is on the difficulty of separating ORDA’s development impacts from the development impacts of other organisations. That is, since ORDA’s establishment in 1984, there have been lots of development interventions and changes in the community by governmental and nongovernmental organisations similar with other communities across the country. For example, significant expansion of roads, schools, electrification of some rural towns, access to modern means of communication such as mass media and telephone. There is no doubt that these changes and interventions have impact on the local communities. Because of this difficulty the study did not study the specific impacts of ORDA’s intervention on local communities. What I did is limited reflection on the quality of rural life vis-a-vis long time development efforts. As a result, it remains open to understand which change is achieved due to ORDA’s and other organisations’ interventions and the cumulative effects on development. Regardless of these limitations, the study could shade lights on how participatory communication is perceived and practiced in ORDA and reveals major gaps in the development industry.
6.7 Suggestions for Future Research

- Studying other local development organisations’ experience in other regions and compiling the lessons about participatory development communication could enrich our current knowledge and experience about participatory paradigm.
- Studying the perceptions of donors about participation and participatory communication is important to enrich our knowledge about participatory communication.
- Studying participatory communication in government development organisations is also another fertile area for future research to understand the perceptions and practice of participatory communication by different development actors.
- Although it is demanding, as mentioned above, long time development interventions impact studies are very important. ORDA did not conduct an impact study to understand its three decades of efforts. By conducting a grand research project we could learn about the impacts of local development agents on quality of life and sustainable development.
- The research reveals the existence of cultural practices that affect the development works. Lots of religious holidays and celebrations such as religious feast, funerals, memorials of dead persons by relatives, and weddings ceremonies impede the development process. Since this is not an exhaustive study, further research could examine the extent of the problem and its actual impact and search solutions from the perspectives of participatory development.
- This research makes a critical reflection and evaluation on the persistence of poverty and food aid vis-à-vis development works in rural areas and tries to
articulate argument for such paradoxical co-existence. This is done focusing on
the experience of ORDA which makes the perspectives narrow and the analysis
limited. However, such type of complex issues needs studying the experiences
of major development actors of the area that includes governmental and
nongovernmental organisations and the local community. The research also
suggests a multi-disciplinary approach in order to understand these complex
issues.

- It is clear that women could be marginalised in the development process
  because of patriarchy and tradition. Therefore, gender and participatory
  communication could be another potential research topic in Ethiopia.
Appendix A

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Appendix A


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Appendix A


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Accessed 07 September 2012


Accessed 06 October 2013


Accessed 25 February 2014


Accessed 04 January 2015

Appendix A


Accessed 06 October 2012

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Guide for Development Practitioners

Dear participants:

The purpose of this interview is to gather relevant data in order to understand the perception and practice of participation development communication in the context of local development organizations specifically in ORDA development works. I am asking you to share your genuine experiences to enhance the success and validity of this research. As mentioned in the consent form, your personal details will not be revealed to any other body and I assure you to maintain its extreme confidentiality. I also assure you that the responses you provide will only be used for the purpose of materializing this research project.

Part I: Demographic Information

- Sex
- Age
- Marital status
- Occupation/position
- Educational background
- Place of work

Part II: General Questions about the Organizations and Their Works

- What are the major activities of ORDA?
- Describe the philosophy of ORDA?
- Describe how ORDA became involved in the development work. How did it begin?
- How did the local community react to your project initially?
- What are some of the needs of the community in your project area? How do you identify their needs? How do you approach their need?
- Who are the participants/ partners of your development projects? Why?
- What are the usual steps/procedures in your development work?
- What is at the centre/heart of your development work?

Part III: Perceptions towards Participatory Communication (PC)
Appendix A

➢ What does the word poverty mean to you?
➢ What about and underdevelopment in ANRS? What are the root causes?
➢ What does the following words to you?
   • Development
   • sustainable development and
   • Participatory development
➢ What is participation and participatory communication?
➢ What are the roles of participatory communication for sustainable development?
➢ How do you define empowerment? What are the different ways to achieve empowerment?

Part IV. Practice of Participatory Communication

➢ Extent of Participation in the Project Cycles
➢ To what extent are the local people participating in the development works? (Levels of participation in projects life cycles)
➢ What does community participation involve in ORDA?
➢ What are the values/advantages of local people’s participation?
➢ How do you involve the local people in the development process? Describe the specific procedures that you follow?
➢ How do you address the involvement of different groups such as children, women, people with disabilities and the elderly?
➢ How do you evaluate the local community participation? What is your judgement/opinion about the levels of participation?
➢ Do you give due consideration for local needs, realities and perspectives in your development projects? If yes, how do you incorporate them? If not, Why?
➢ How do you decide on the issues that need to be focused on in your development work?
➢ How do you communicate the community? What are the mechanisms that help to involve the community in the communication process?
➢ Does the community have opportunities to influence program planning, implementation and evaluation for ADA/ORDA activities? How?
Appendix A

- How does ORDA/ADA develop development strategies and goals? How are they perpetuated/sustained and evaluated?

4.2. Major Participatory Approaches and Communication Methods

- What are your strategies/approaches to promote participation?
- Do you have policy that promotes participation?
- What type of relationship do you have with the local community? How do you establish it?
- Have you established community groups/associations? How do you form community groups? How it works?
- Do you have a communication policy? If yes, how it works? If no, why not?
- What are your communication strategies with the local people/beneficiaries?
- What are the major communication tools that have been employed in your development work? To what extent are they effective? Why?
- Have you used participatory communication in your development works? If yes, to what extent? How does it work? If not, why not?
- How participatory communication is practised? What are the communication methods? Mention some of the major participatory communication works.
- Do you have facilitators in the communication process? Who are they? What are their roles?
- How do you handle divergence of interests/ divergent interests among participants in the communication process?
- What are the major challenges your organization has ever faced to secure the real participation of the local community?
- Have you conducted a communication need assessment in your development initiatives? If yes, how? If no, why not?
- Are you using and promoting IK in sustaining development? Why? How? To what extent you are using? What are the actual works (actual examples)? If no, why not?
- Do you use indigenous communication systems/mechanisms? If yes, why? How? And what are they? If no, why not?
- What are the values/advantages of indigenous communication systems for participation and sustainable development?
Appendix A

- Do you integrate indigenous/local communication system with the modern communication methods? If yes, how? Can you give me any examples for this? If not, why?

Part V Major Achievements/changes by the Organizations
- What are the major achievements of the organization so far?
- Describe the “hard issues”/ the tangible outcomes and “soft issues”/the social changes?
- How the social changes are expressed?
- Are the changes sustainable? If yes, how? If no, why not? What are the actual examples that show suitability or failure of development projects?

Part VI. Challenges of Participatory Communication
- What are the major challenges you have ever faced in the struggle to bring about sustainable development? (Be it environmental, economic, social, cultural, political, etc?) How do they affect your effort?
- What are the social, economic, cultural, political organizational, etc, factors that inhibited the participation of the local community? How do they affect it? What are the solutions?
- In what ways does ORDA challenge HTP such as FGM, early marriages, gender gap, and health issues? Are there any unintended consequences of your HTP related works?

Part VII. Factors Promoting/Encouraging Stakeholders’ Participation
- What are the factors that promote the practice of PC? How they promote?
- What are your recommendations for the better performances of development works and people’s active participation?

VIII. Additional General Issues
- What are ORDA’s opportunities for development?
- What do you like about this organization?
- What do you dislike about this organization?
- If you could change something about ORDA, what would it be?
- What are some of the lessons learnt so far about development?
- How do you predict the future of this organization and the development works?
Appendix B

Question Guide for individual and group interviews with the local people

Dear participants:
The purpose of this interview is to gather relevant data in order to understand the perception and practice of participation development communication in the context of local development organizations specifically in ORDA development works. I am asking you to share your genuine experiences to enhance the success and validity of this research. As mentioned in the consent form, your personal details will not be revealed to any other body and I assure you to maintain its extreme confidentiality. I also assure you that the responses you provide will only be used for the purpose of materializing this research project.

Part I: demographic information
- Sex
- Age
- Marital status
- Occupation/income
- Educational background
- Village name
- Do you have any children? How many and how old are they? Their jobs?
- Number of people in the household?

Part II: Local communities’ views towards the development organizations, participatory development communication works and the changes in the community.

➢ How do you perceive development? (What are the narratives surrounding development efforts and the community involvement)
➢ How do you perceive poverty: its causes and solutions?
➢ What are the major day to day difficulties/challenges that you and the community faced? List from the most challenging to the list one.
➢ What is the community doing to sort out the problems and seek practical solutions by themselves?
What are some of the opportunities for the community in the village?

What type of relationship you have with ORDA? How was it established?

How do the community members in your village participate with the organization?

What is ORDA’s role in your community? How do you feel about ORDA’s work?

How do you participate in the development process of the organizations?

What is the value/contribution/advantage/benefit of your participation in the development process?

How does the organization communicate you? By what means? How frequently?

Are you comfortable with the way the development organization communicates with you/the community?

What do the local people benefit from ORDA?

What changes have you seen in the community over the past years? How do you perceive the changes?

Have you ever been provided with training on the following issues (health issues, gender issues, HTPs, environmental issues) by the organizations? If yes, how? For how long?

What barriers have you faced to participate actively with the development organization?

What do you like about the Organization? Is there anything you don’t like?

What would happen if ORDA didn’t exist?

Is there any group of people or individuals that might be excluded from the benefits of the development projects for various reasons? If yes, who are they and why?

What recommendations do you have for the organization for better performances?
Appendix C

Observation Check list

Date of Observation: from………………. To………………….

Instruction: Tick “Yes”, if the appropriate activity is observed or “No” if it is not observed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items/ Tasks to be observed</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Overall development context and works</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>How does the overall development works going on? See the development infrastructures? The development projects look like?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>People’s way of life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>What are the observable changes in the community? (social as well as material)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>2 Participation and communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>People’s participation in the development work?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>How the communication environment does looks like?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>How do they communicate /interact with the local community?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>How does the community participation manifested?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Are the communication works prepared with the involvement of the community?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Food Ware Houses</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>How the food ware houses looks like?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Visit to the food distribution days- how does the general mood looks like?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Appendix D: consent and access permission letters in English and Amharic

To: Adem Chanie Ali

Subject: Research consent and access permission

We acknowledge your request for permission to conduct research on our organization towards the fulfillment of Ph.D thesis. ORDA is pleased to grant you permission to interview, observe and collect different documents relevant to your research with its staff and community members who associated with ORDA’s work.

In addition, ORDA has been assisting you in making field visits for the purpose of data collection as outlined in the research proposal.

With regards,

Dejene Minliku Mekoya
Deputy and programs Director

www.orda.org.et
Appendix D: consent and access permission letters in English and Amharic

Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA)

Ref. 2005/0-1-1-05-53
Date 14/09/2006

Head Office 251-058-2264376/201411 P.O.Box 132, e-mail orda-1@ethionet.et Bahir Dar, Ethiopia
Liaison Office 251-011-513893/157815 P.O.Box 8122 e-mail: orda.liaison@ethionet.et Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

 Orc: 29/37 - 92 - 25 - 875

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TO:- Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA)

We hereby certify that we are the representatives of the organization and have the authority to act on behalf of the organization. This certification is valid for the duration of the project.

Project Title: "Communication, Participation and sustainable Development"

Project Code: 2005/0-1-1-05-53

Date: 14/09/2006

Signed:

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Amharic:

-----------------------------------

1. Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA)
2. Project Title: "Communication, Participation and sustainable Development"

Name:

LOGO
Appendix D: consent and access permission letters in English and Amharic
Appendix E

Sample of Data Transcription

Interview date: 28/05/2014
Place: Sekota, ORDA Project Office
Interview with a development worker (DW Interview 1)
Research topic: Participatory Development Communication in Ethiopia: a Local Development Organization in Focus

Researcher: I thank you very much Mr. X1. As I told you before the main objective of this interview is to gather data for the research aiming for the fulfilment of PhD. Thus, this is academic research. The main purpose of the research is to understand the experience of participatory communication in the development works of ORDA. Accordingly it strictly follows the ethics of the research as indicated in the consent form. Thank you for sharing your time and your experiences as well. Now let us begin our discussion from your bio-data.
Participant: No problem. We can start.
   Name: X1…
   Sex-M
Researcher: your age please?
Participant: 25
Researcher: your marital status?
Participant: I’m single
Researcher: you are a bachelor. You are an independent man (for warming up)
Participant: smiling. Yes.
Researcher: what is your position in ORDA?
Participant: hygiene and sanitation officer
Researcher: would you tell me your educational background and work experience?
Participant: I have BSc degree in Environmental Health and I have two years and nine months work experience here in Sekota, ORDA.
Researcher: would you tell me the major activities of ORDA in this area?
Participant: yes sure, there are lots activities performed by ORDA. The major activities of ORDA are:
   ➢ agricultural works especially small scale irrigation
   ➢ watershed management works
   ➢ environmental protection
   ➢ spring development and hand dug well construction
   ➢ basic infrastructures such as schools, health centre, road, bridge
   ➢ nutrition, hygiene and sanitation
   ➢ distribution of food aid sponsored by FH and USAID under the food for work programs (safety net)
Researcher: what is ORDA’s philosophy that you are using as a principle?
Participant: the philosophy is that change the life of the people. We emphasise the local development that ORDA is currently working. We need to change the local community.
Researcher: what is the usual development projects procedure?
Participant: first, we discuss the project objective with the district administrative and the district string committee. After that we orient the local people about the objectives, relevance, and duration of the projects. Sometimes, there are
complaints about the priorities of development issues or projects. The local community asked for water first than road.

Researcher: what are the major problems of the local community?
Participant: there is high dependency syndrome in the society. Even they expect payment to participate in trainings about some development issues such as nutrition, sanitation and hygiene. They said that without payment they do not want to participate in trainings. A sense of dependency creates resistance to participate in the development works. This is observed whether the agenda is health or not. The other major problems include lack of road, schools, health centres, clean potable water. There are repeated demands by the community on these kinds of basic infrastructures.

Researcher: what is the response of ORDA when the local community demand a development project?
Participant: usually the questions are presented for the District administration. The district string committee discuss the issues by considering the levels and dimension of the problems by comparing all the kebles in the district. It is in this way the community demands get response. It is not ORDA or the local people that decided on the project. The decision is in the hands of the district string committee. Development is like holy water/tsebel which is distributed here and there in order to minimise the community's dissatisfaction.

Researcher: what happen if the needs of the local people and the District differ?
Participant: sometimes there are actual differences and at such situation the District decides. This creates feeling of resentment which minimises the sense of belongingness of the local community on the development projects.

Researcher: how do you describe ORDA's relationship with donors?
Participant: the donors order us to do projects of their choice. In order to secure funds, ORDA should fulfil the donors’ requirement. Donors are our blood cell. Usually there are formal agreements between ORDA and the international donors to do in the way they want. Donors dictate everything. In that regard, we are loyal to them not for the need of the community. The donors have the lion share in deciding the development projects. Then the district have tiger share. We have the cat share and the local people are simply receivers of the development benefits.

Researcher: what are the main stakeholders of ORDA?
Participant: the sector offices at district level such as agriculture, heath, education, etc.

Researcher: what are the major activities of your office?
Participant: there are different projects in our program. For example, we are working on ODF (open defecation free) village which is a USAID financed program. One keble is certified/graduated as ODF. Working on such issue was challenging especially at the beginning. The project takes more than eight years to be effective since 1998 E.C. At the beginning the local people saw us as working for our benefits, not for them. Now there are interesting changes among the farmers in our projects area. They have started to use latrine which was not seen before. Currently we are working to extend such OPD experience to other districts. We have been providing trainings for the local community. There are committee in each gote(village). The committee members are responsible for the implementation of such OPD project. They
have monthly meeting for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation. The OPD project is a joint work by the government, the international donor and ORDA.

Researcher: how do you describe poverty and backwardness?
Participant: both are deep rooted in this area. Even though there are development works, what is left is mountainous. There are people who will starve if the food aid stops.

Researcher: as an expert, what are the causes of poverty and backwardness in this area?
Participant: the first is the high magnitude of illiteracy. As a result people could not use modern farming techniques, they may not understand what you show and train them. Farmers are still lead traditional way of life. There are also lots of celebrations in the region that affect development works. Celebration, celebration, celebration...development does not come by lots of celebrations. Celebration comes with costs. There are still lots of celebrations on funeral, memorial and weeding in our area. The topography also contributes for poverty. It is ragged and drought area with little rainfall.

Researcher: what is development in this area?
Participant: development is growth; it is the economic growth of the community. For example, road construction is a development work since it increases market integration of the people. This in turn develops their economic capacity. The other is political affiliation. If you build road or bridge, people have a positive attitude about the politics/ the government. This is the real experience in Hamusit. There is a bridge in Hamusit kebele. Before the bridge construction the local community questioned the government about the absence of development work in this area. Even they said that “why we are forgotten”? After construction of the bridge they are silent and have positive attitude towards the government. Thus, generally development is improving the economic capacity and the political affiliation with the people.

Researcher: what is sustainable development?
Participant: in short, it is extending the development projects working here in other areas. For example, if we repeat the ODF (open defecation free) village to other kebels, this is a sustainable development work. It is improvement of development activities like this.

Researcher: I see. What is participatory development?
Participant: participation is the involvement of stakeholders in the process of development works. Discussing with the stakeholders such as the district and kebele administrative and orienting the local community about their responsibility in the development process.

Researcher: what about community participation?
Participant: it is orienting the beneficiaries about the relevance of the development projects. It is informing their potential contribution and their responsibility. It is the participation of the community in such type of discussions.

Researcher: have you been working like this?
Participant: yes we did like this. For example, in our program about nutrition for pregnant and lactating mothers, we encourage them to speak about the value of nutrition. We train mothers using modules prepared for this purpose by donor organisations.
Researcher: how do you involve these mothers?
Participant: by giving orientation about the program
Researcher: what is the purpose of community participation?
Participant: the main reasons for their participation are to create a sense of belongingness and to achieve sustainability. When the community contributes their labour and resources then they own the project. When they own the project it becomes sustainable.
Researcher: how do you get the participants at the first time?
Participant: for example, in our health and nutrition project, first there is a registration of pregnant and lactating mothers in each kebele by the government health extension workers. We took the list from them and call a meeting and then orient about the program. We organise them into a group of 15 members together and they have prepared their own guideline/regulation. They have a scheduled meeting to discuss on health related issues according to the modules. Sometimes we did a home to home visit with the help of the government health extension workers who know the villages and the mothers.
Researcher: do you use the government structure and organisation to perform your work?
Participant: yes, we use it completely. We did not form our own organisation/forming groups
Researcher: can ORDA establish its own development structure?
Participant: no. We do not have that option. An organisation could not establish its own group or association. It should follow the government structure or line and we follow the government line. We use the usual development group established by the government (the 1 to 30, 1 to five groupings).
Researcher: ok. Which means of an organisation could not have a chance to establish a better development groupings/organisation than the government?
Participant: that is not possible
Researcher: why so?
Participant: it does not have the license to do that. We are working with the government. We prioritise development issues as directed by the government. Following this government line/structure is the government strategy that we should work with.
Researcher: how do you communicate the local community?
Participant: we distribute pamphlets. We teach at the food ware houses during aid distribution days about the consequence of dependency syndrome. Although, they are infrequent we use drama and community conversation to teach issues about gender, hygiene, sanitation and nutrition.
Researcher: what is communication in ORDA?
Participant: communication in our context is giving orientation about the relevance, dimension and procedure and duration of development projects. It is convincing the local community to participate in the project.
Researcher: who perform the drama?
Participant: there is a drama group in the District. Usually we mad payment for them to have a drama show.
Researcher: are they part of ORDA?
Participant: no, they are not. We pay for them when we need a drama show.
Researcher: what is empowerment?
Participant: empowerment is accomplishing our tasks according to the objectives set during the design of development. In our program, empowerment means certification of mothers after two and half year participation in the project. There is a check list to evaluate its implementation. If they finished according to the check list then they will graduate. This graduation is empowerment.

Researcher: how does the local community participate in the development projects?
Participant: by material and labour sometimes cash contribution. For example, if there is school or hand dug well building, the community participants collecting water, stone and sand.

Researcher: how ORDA works for disabilities
Participant: I do not see any work about these persons in my stay in ORDA

Researcher: how did you evaluate the participation of the local community in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects?
Participant: I do not see any strong participation in these phases. The district decides several development issues. The participation of the local community is not as such organised and strong. I do not believe there is a full participation. We implement what the District decides. The District intervention is to avoid unnecessary repetitions implementation of development projects in certain kebels (localities) and to use our limited resource efficiently.

Researcher: can you build a school if the District does not accept the proposal?
Participant: no. It is not possible. We have to respect their decision.

Researcher: how do you give training about your projects for the local community?
Participant: there are group leaders and animators in each locality. The leaders are chairing the development groups established by the government in each locality. These leaders and animators have been providing training. There is a checklist to monitor the training. There are also promoters employed by ORDA to facilitate the development process. Theses promoters are living with the community. Usually the promoters are grade ten graduates and they are familiar with the language and culture of the community. We give trainings before they begin the job. One promoter is assigned for two kebels. We are working the health and sanitation project into 12 kebels in the district.

Researcher: do you have a qualification or training about communication in health and development contexts?
Participant: I don’t have the qualification of communication in development works. I have short term training for five days about BCC such as GLIDRA and drama with other non communication issues about health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation. Communication was a sub-topic in the training designed primarily for health issues. The training aims orientation about the role communication plays in our project implementation. The communication method for health and nutrition is BCC and GALIDRA. Of course, we have gaps by the animators to implement the GALIDRA. They may not implement appropriately.

Researcher: did mothers regularly attend the training?
Participant: yes they attended. Usually the attendance is more than 90%
Researcher: do you use indigenous knowledge (IK) in your work?
Participant: I don’t see it in our program
Researcher: what about indigenous communication systems?
Participant: I don’t have much knowledge about indigenous communication systems. As I told you there was no training about this. No one direct us to use them. We use drama to show and to reflect on the actual life of the community. The characters in the drama show teach the community about our development issues with entertainment. Usually, we did this during food distribution days and ODF (open defecation free) village declaration and graduation days. Fikreselam Kbele is the first ODF (open defecation free) village from the District and hence the District is the first in the zone.
Researcher: ok. I’m coming to the last part of my questions. What are the major successes of ORDA?
Participant: there are several small scale irrigation works, road construction to connect the rural kebels, potable water supply works. ORDA is the first to achieve ODP in Waghemra Zone, the Fikreselam Kbele ODP certification is a good example.
Researcher: is there any experience that the local community refused to drink the newly constructed water supply by ORDA?
Participant: no such experience in our locality. But I heard in other places that the society refused to drink the water after construction by claiming that the place was used as a grave for their ancestress.
Researcher: is there any observable change in your program as of the ODP?
Participant: yes, there are some changes in hygiene and sanitation. For example numbers of dehereiya cases are decreasing after the intervention.
Researcher: is there any study that shows this?
Participant: not yet. Impact study will be conducted in the future. But there are some observable changes about children physical building. Problems resulted with malnutrition is decreasing.
Researcher: are there development results sustainable?
Participant: yes
Researcher: how?
Participant: after completion of the project we hand over it to the government. After that the government is responsible for the sustainability.
Researcher: does ORDA recheck the condition of the projects after certain period of handing over?
Participant: I did not see this type of work until now. After handing over the responsibility is the government body. There is no such type of work by ORDA.
Researcher: are there failed projects in ORDA?
Participant: after I employed here I did not see such type of projects.
Researcher: what do you like from ORDA?
Participant: I like the work environment. We are working with good relationship. We help each other. I have enjoyed the relationship and collaboration among the colleagues. There is a good group work sprite in our office.
Researcher: that is interesting. As the positive sides you mentioned above, there might be negative sides that you may not like in ORDA. Is there anything that you dislike from ORDA?

Participant: sure there are. The payment is low compare to other NGOs. Because of this, ORDA loses veteran experts. This is a big challenge for ORDA. ORDA should evaluate this trend and make correction in order to move forward.

Researcher: what do you change if you have a chance to change from ORDA?

Participant: I will change the scale of the salary and make it competitive to other similar NGOs

Researcher: you know ORDA since your childhood living in this locality. Now you are a development worker in ORDA. There are development works nearly for three decades and side by side there are also food aids. Even new construction of ware houses are going on.

Participant: yes. There are

Researcher: thus, how do you see such paradox?

Participant: I feel the pain. Yes, it is touching!

Researcher: having all such paradoxes can we say that ORDA is successful in its development work?

Participant: I could not say it is successful. I would say the works are good but what is left is mountainous.

Researcher: at least why ORDA fail to avoid new warehouses constructions that symbolises the continuation of the food aid?

Participant: the warehouse could not be avoided. They will continue since the food insecurity so serious problem. There are people who will starve if the warehouses stop the food distribution.

Researcher: what about the donors? Do they want to continue the food distribution?

Participant: yes, they want that. I do not know the reason but their focus is food distribution, not the development work. They may want our dependency on them.

Researcher: these are all my questions. I really thank you very much. I will respect the ethical guideline in the process of the research. I might call you if I have additional questions.

Participant: ok. That is possible. You are welcome.

Researcher: thank you very much

Participant: never mind! Thank you.
Interview date: 09/05/2014
Place: Sekota, ORDA Project Office
Interview with a Development Worker (DW Interview 2)
Research topic: Participatory Development Communication in Ethiopia: a Local Development Organization in Focus

Researcher: I thank you very much Mr. X2. As I told you before the main objective of this interview is to gather data for the research aiming for the fulfilment of PhD. Thus, this is academic research. The main purpose of the research is to understand the experience of participatory communication in the development works of ORDA. Accordingly, it strictly follows the ethics of the research as indicated in the consent form. Thank you for sharing your time and your experiences as well. Now let us begin our discussion from your bio-data.

Participant: no problem. We can start.
   Name: X2
   Sex-M
Researcher: your age please?
Participant: 40
Researcher: your marital status?
Participant: married and have a daughter
Researcher: your specific position
Participant: agriculture and capacity building expert in ORDA, Sekota project office
Researcher: what is your educational background?
Participant: I have first degree in Rural Development
Researcher: would you tell me your work experience?
Participant: emmm. In ORDA I have more than 9 years serves and in government office I had more than 7 years. Generally, I have more than 16 or 17 years work experience.
Researcher: oh, you have plenty of experiences. Nine long years means you know ORDA very well. This is a very good input for the research issues. Have you worked here for nine years or in other project sites?
Participant: I started my work in ORDA in Mersa project site. I have joined ORDA since 1997 E.C. when the safety net (DEFAP) program has started in 1997 E.C. I came here when the Mersa projects phase out. I joined ORDA
Researcher: ok. What are the major activities performed by your office?
Participant: the works in ORDA are related with local communities. Livelihood works are widely practiced to change and improve the individual life. Nutrition has started recently. And another widely work is environmental protection.
Researcher: what are the major development works ORDA performs?
Participant: the major development activities include agricultural works especially small scale irrigation, watershed management work, environmental protection such as terracing and spring development. It also includes hand dug well construction and other basic infrastructures such as health centre, road and bridge.
Researcher: what is the organisational philosophy of ORDA?
Participant: the organisational philosophy which is taken as the goal is to see the regional people free from poverty. Creating a self relied society by avoiding aid. The struggle of the organisation is to achieve this. And now it is working to reach to that goal.

Researcher: ok. This is a very great goal. What is the principle to reach to that goal? a principle that often appears in your mind?

Participant: after leaving the government office and joining ORDA, what I know is working with the local community at the grassroots level. Different from other NGOs ORDA has experts who work and live with the local community at the grass root level. I was working at the locality level when I was in Mersa. I think ORDA’s principle is working at the grass root level.

Researcher: when you start projects, for example, the project that we have visited today, or it might be livelihood and environmental protection projects, how does the local community accepts you?

Participant: ahha. Most of the development projects in ORDA are dollar driven. This means that they are predetermined. You have given the projects in number with implementation detail and by dealing with the district administrative you will implement on a locality determined by the district string committee.

Researcher: is it top-down?

Participant: most of the development projects are top-down. There is no discussion with the local community and develop the proposal based on their needs. The project is prepared in the head office and they send us for implementation. We perform as they send us. However, to implement the projects we have to discuss with the local community. We discuss with them, the local community, only about the implementation of the projects. The discussion is about how we implement the projects send from head office and who the community members that participate in the projects are.

Researcher: do you face resistance when you do that?

Participant: no there is no as such resistance because we go there with benefits. We do not go there with our empty hand. We have something in our hand and hence there is no resistance.

Researcher: perhaps related with prioritising of development projects. Are there any incidents that the need of the local community and the donors mismatch regarding prioritising the projects?

Participant: emm. As I told you before the projects are predetermined. For example, in USAID projects changing the project is strictly forbidden. If the project is spring development, it is spring development. If it is bridge, it is bridge. You cannot change it whether the local community need it or not. Since it is already decided our task is to persuade the community to accept the projects. You cannot do your own project design by identifying the community problems and prepare the planning accordingly. Sometimes when ORDA has its own budget we do this especially in the area of natural resources conservation and we have discussion with the local community about whether terracing or plantation of trees is prioritised or not. We have a little room for their voice. But, usually, you cannot change the road project into water. Even they do not ask you to change this. They know that this is
not possible and usually they do not ask you to do this. They accept directly what you gave for them.

Researcher: ok. How many localities your office covers in the Sekota district?
Participant: the DEFAP project has planned to cover 60% of the district by nutrition. There are 34 localities in this area and we try to cover 60% of these localities.

Researcher: you are working in the community for nine long years. From development perspectives, what are the major needs or problems of the local community?
Participant: usually, the community members need projects that enable them to get money directly. They prioritised their direct benefit by involving in the projects. They do not oppose whatever number of projects you take there. They only calculate what they get from the projects. They calculate the benefit in terms of money. They need immediate benefit. Most of the time projects on water and road are highly acceptable in addition to nutrition by the community. Forestation and trees plantation has relatively speaking low acceptance. Usually, the focus is on water and road projects.

Researcher: ok. What are critical problems of the local community in this area?
Participant: yaa. There are major problems in our district which include shortage of basic infrastructures such as road, schools, health centres, and clean potable water. But the worst problem is the food gap. Where ever you go people may not ask you about clean water, first they need food. The food gap is top of their desires. There are families that lead their life with food aids. For the food gap there are different reasons.

Researcher: can you mention some of them?
Participant: for example, problems related with soil fertility and environmental degradation. But the community considered these problems as seconded. When you teach the local community about soil composition for fertility, they do not give due attention. First, they need food aid. So the major problem is bridging food gap.

Researcher: so food gap is a critical problem?
Participant: yes. It is a critical problem
Researcher: what are the usual procedures of development projects from planning to implementation?
Participant: as I told you before all programs and activities of the projects come here as measured and counted.

Researcher: who measured and counted them?
Participant: for example, if the program is from USAID, FHI decides all the activities and programs and give it to ORDA head office. The head office sends us keeping the organisational hierarchy and originality of the project as determined by the donors. You cannot do starting from the grassroots level by conducting need assessment, dealing with the community’s needs and interests. We do not have such kind of activities. However, what we do is we go to the community with decided projects such as water, road, health centre etc and orient them and seek their contribution. You see the projects are already predetermined. What we do is convincing them for their contribution. Then we implement the project and hand over it and then we leave the place.
Appendix E

Researcher: so, ORDA (the head office) receives projects from the donors and give it to you. Where do you take the projects that you received from the head office?

Participant: after we received the projects we are working with the district government sector offices about the implementation of the projects. If it is a food security project we are working with agriculture office, if it is about health project, we work with health office, if it is women’s issue, we work with women affairs office. Together with the sector offices we decided the specific locality that the project is implemented. The sector office have better information about which locality has a gap or a problem that needs intervention. Then we contact the local community following the government structure to start the project. There is no way that involves the local community to decide the importance of the projects and prioritise as they need. There is no such procedure. This is because ORDA does not have its own budget. It gets funds from donor agencies and hence it does not have freedom. Before, I came here, I heard that there was a Netherlands government project which gave freedom to mobilise or switch the budget from one development sector to the other based on the local contexts. But this is not possible in USAID and FHI projects. The room is closed. If the program is funded by USAID and FHI, they make decisions about all the activities and programs and give it to ORDA head office. The head office sends it to us keeping the organisational hierarchy and originality of the project as determined by the donors.

Researcher: what are the stakeholders’ of your development work?

Participant: the main stakeholders are the district government sector offices such as agriculture, education, health, women offices, etc. Almost all government sectors are our stakeholders except justice and security offices.

Researcher: ok. Who are your right hands?

Participant: is that from the stakeholders ‘angel?’

Researcher: the right hands of your development work

Participant: our right hand to do our development work is the government structure. You cannot do your work out of the government structure. Even you cannot move out of the government structure. Because the government has a good structure up the bottom level and has human resource and the capacity. Thus, without integrating with them we can’t do by ourselves. Therefore, for the success or failure of our work the government structures are determinant. I can say that the government is the right hand of ORDA.

Researcher: ok. Good. How do you conceive poverty and backwardness of the local community?

Participant: I sometimes feel bad. You may not know the community’s life in detail. If you move further into the local villages you will get community members who make you sad due to their miserable life situation. There is low quality of life in this specially area. You could get farmers here like any other parts of the region but if you compare them with others area you could feel sad very much when you look their life trapped with absolute poverty and hungry. In this area, there are people who live in a difficult situation because of poverty and hunger. The poverty is deep-rooted here.

Researcher: I see. Do you mean poverty is manifested by hunger?
Participant: definitely. Poverty in our district is manifested by hunger. Especially during the summer season (July and August) it is common that there are several community members with serious problems. Because of the poor soil fertility whatever amount of rain is raining aid is inevitable. The community harvests not more than for five or six months. The land is so degraded and you could see a lot of people who are suffering from poverty. You will feel sad so much when you see such poor farmers. They farm but they could not feed themselves. The poverty level is deep rooted.

Researcher: you describe it well. What do you think about the causes of poverty and backwardness?

Participate: I placed the topography as the first reason because the environment’s potential of productivity is deteriorated from time to time. This is the main cause of food shortage in this area. There are also so many holidays celebrated by the local orthodox Christianity followers. As farmers are guided by their religions, they have too many religious holidays in the area on which they spent their days without agricultural work for the sake of religion. Members of the local community are dominantly Orthodox Christians. Normally, the Orthodox Church identified every Saturday and Sunday as Sabbaths. And also the monthly 5th, 7th, 12th, 16th, 21st, 27th and 29th days are holidays in the local area. Agricultural works in these days are prohibited by the religious followers. In addition, there are additional holidays that have been assigned as time for worship and rest by the local community which in turn significantly reduces the time that has to be used for productive works. For example, one week following the fasting of the month of June (sene tsom), one week following the fasting of the month of August (fisleta) and one week following Easter holiday in every year are worship and rest days, and agricultural works are not performed in our area. These days are additional off days to the yearly national Christian holidays namely Easter, Epiphany and Finding the Cross.

Researcher: I see this is also a big challenge. Does the environment lost its capacity of because of over exploitation of the natural resources or are there any causes?

Participate: it is exploited across generations and naturally the environment is not suitable for agriculture. It is suitable for military strategy. This is suitable for poverty. Once you harvest in one year you can’t harvest for the next year. The soil could not give production whatever you plough and sow. This is one factor. The second is the local community has a culture that chained them not to work. The culture contributes for the poverty. There are many religious holy days that hamper them to work. Because of many religious holy days, nonworking days are more than working days. It seems there is an official declaration for not to work. For example, in this month from starting 21-27, there is no work. This is difficult. If they do not plough their land for such days how do they become productive to feed themselves? They might miss good rainy opportunity to sow and plough the land because of the holydays. Even weeds affect the seeds and the productivity since farmers do not act at the right time for the sake of the holydays. If you come here during September and October those crops covered with weeds is more than that of free from weeds. The cultural influence is difficult which affects their productivity. So that, after land degradation, this cultural factor
contributes a lot for their poverty. The third factor is population pressure. People do not use family planning and it is common to observe seven or eight children in a family that could not provided their basic needs. You get seven or eight very closely born children. Thus, I think that the sum of these three factors chained the community not to move forward.

Researcher: you explain it very nicely. What is development?
Participate: development?
Researcher: yes, what is development?
Participate: by definition development is multi-dimensional that includes the economic, political, the social aspect of life. When you reach at the self esteem statues, it is called development. When you achieve self reliance in the economy and developed the political system then it is called development. I think most of the time development is difficult to achieve. Development is achieved when all the people become efficient in the political, economic and social systems.

Researcher: good. Is it in this perspective your office is working for? I mean to achieve this multidimensional development?
Participate: emm. When development projects are designed they seem focusing general development. Generally, they refer development. However, in practice the focus is the economic dimension. They ignore other important components of development. For example, politics is out of the development work. Even the economy targets only few individual not to change the whole community. Without including such components achieving multidimensional development is difficult. The political dimension is worked in another line by other bodies. We designed projects in name of development but the focus is the economic growth.

Researcher: ok good. What about working on soft development issues? You are building schools, irrigations, roads, health centres, etc. Do you work on also attitude and behaviour change of the local community? For example to change their work culture that you mentioned before?
Participate: yes, recently there are works that targets attitude and behaviour change. To change the cultural barrier we are striving to teach the community using every opportunity. We teach during our training programs and community conversation programs are designed for other issues. Besides, currently there is a project called Search for Common Ground funded by FHE that targets community dialogue including males and females. The main purpose is narrowing gender gap by raising cultural issues that affect quality of women’s life as an agenda. There are good progresses on gender issues.

Researcher: when this project has started? Is currently working?
Participate: yes. It is working.
Researcher: who is running the project?
Participate: the gender facilitator. You can get him in his offices and get further information. There are good posters prepared by search for common ground, funded by FHE. The posters show different cultural issues that affect gender equality in the region and they are good to facilitate community dialogue.

Researcher: ok. I will contact him. Which one gets more attention? Is that the hard development works mentioned before or the attitude and behaviour change?
Participate: ORDA invest much on building physical projects
Researcher: how do you understand sustainable development?
Participate: in my understanding it refers to the management of development projects by the local community and keeps its sustainability after the development agent handing over it. This will happen if the local community involve starting from planning of projects. But this is not the case in ORDA since most of the projects are dollar driven. As a result peoples do not own the projects after you hand over them. As you saw when you move in the local villages there are many hand dug wells that are not functional. They stopped the function because the people could not repair them. They refused to repair them since they do not own the projects. Had it been participated starting from the planning stage, the community might protect from damage and even cover cost of maintenance. Usually projects are funded the donors and after hand over attention are not given. I understand suitability in terms of the management of the projects by the community after the NGO’s left the place.

Researcher: ok. Good. How do you understand participatory development?
Participate: it is the participation of the local community by material, labour and sometimes by cash contributions. For example, if there is a health centre or a hand dug well building, the community members’ participant by collecting water, stone and sand. This is what participation in our context. We give incentives for people’s participation.

Researcher: what do you give? Is that wheat?
Participate: yea, it might be wheat or other types of payment. They come for the wheat instead of coming by thinking the long term benefit from development works. They don’t come by self mobilisation. Rather they come with the coordination of the locality administrator. For example, when we build health centre or school, the locality administrator ordered the community members to involve in the development works, not by their own initiatives. So usually people’s participation is possible by material incentives or forced by the administrators, not by their own initiatives.

Researcher: are there any efforts to convince the community to participate by understanding the significance of development works?
Participate: from the beginning, we do this when we go there with the projects decided above. We go there with schools or health projects and then we try to convince the local community about the benefit of the projects and ask them to contribute what they have. We go there with the approved projects. We talk a lot to convince them about the benefit of the projects. Had it been they involve starting from planning, they would be participated by their own interest.

Researcher: you mentioned above community dialogue.
Participate: yes

Researcher: what is the importance of community dialogue for sustainable development?
Participate: it is good if community dialogue is widening its scope. When a husband and wife come together to discuss an issue it creates a sense of equality. When they both enable to understand the value of a project and equally participate and get the benefit, then they can manage and protect the projects for their sustainable use.

Researcher: what is participatory communication?
Participate: participatory communication is orienting the beneficiaries of development projects about the relevance of the development projects. It is informing their potential contribution and their responsibility. It is the participation of members of the community in these discussions.

Researcher: what about empowerment? What it refers to when ORDA says that it is working to empower the people in ANRS?

Participate: empowerment is self reliance. It might be economic empowerment, social empowerment and political empowerment. The political empowerment is related with expressing themselves and the economic empowerment is free from dependency on others, building heir capacity. ORDA is working in this respect-the economic empowerment. When the DEFAP project has started in 1997 it was a livelihood project. It started studying the livelihood status at the house hold level and designs the projects considering the potential of each house hold to change their life. It had grant for that purpose. However, the projects could stay for long time. It collapsed in brief time. But there people who empowered economically by that project. In short, for ORDA, empowerment is self reliance and achieving food security.

Researcher: I see. Let me return once about participation that you explain before. If you asked to determine the level of people’s participation in the development works using terms such as low, medium and high, how do you level it?

Participate: emmm. It is not reached to medium level. It’s not also empty. It is not also very low. At least the power holders are participated at the locality level. The local peoples are not participated by mobilising themselves. It is something between low and medium. But I am sure that there is neither high nor medium levels participation. We don’t have that language even.

Researcher: ok. How the participation of the community is manifested in the development works?

Participate: usually they have labour contributions

Researcher: for example, you told me that you have had training of the local community today morning.

Participate: yes

Researcher: who called them for the training? How do you get them?

Participate: the project is hen rearing which includes fifty community members. ORDA discuss with the district and the district announced to the locality and the locality identified the persons and gives the list of persons to the locality development workers. The government development workers and health extension workers together with our animators assess the potentials of the persons for the project.

Researcher: does the local administrator have criteria to identify the beneficiaries?

Participate: hen rearing is a project that target to improve the nutrition status of pregnant and lactating mothers. So this is the main criterion. Using this is main criterion the locality may use other criteria such as focusing persons who actively participate in women’s issue and who can teach others and act as role models.

Researcher: so you get the trainees today using such procedure. How many mothers were participated in your training?

Participate: 13 women

Researcher: what was the training is about?
Participate: the training was about the importance of nutrition. I teach them why they are given the hens for them. I also teach about saving and its benefits. The training is not only about how they rear the hens.

Researcher: for how many hours have you given the training?
Participate: three hours. You cannot teach farmers more than three hours. If you use more than three hours they might sleep or lose interest. They are not interested to stay more than that. It was a three hours training. We focus on the main issues and then at the end we check whether they understood it or not.

Researcher: how do you do this?
Participate: by asking questions

Researcher: where do you give the training?
Participate: in the farmer’s training centres (FTC) or sometimes besides to the tree.

Researcher: do you have strategy that encourages participation?
Participate: there is no formal strategy.

Researcher: what about policy about participation?
Participate: there is no such policy

Researcher: do you have community base groups?
Participate: we have self help groups (SHG) in the locality.

Researcher: who organise them? Is that ORDA or other body?
Participate: ORDA organise them.

Researcher: how do you organise them?
Participate: it is based on the health project. Mothers who are organised under this project has monthly meeting to discuss about health issues and in that day they save some amount of money based on their economic capacity. They give credit for the members from their own saving. They help each other by doing that.

Researcher: are there success stories that can be mentioned as examples from the self help groups?
Participate: perhaps there might be stories. However, because of shortage of facilities specifically shortage of car, we could not have continuous follow up to register their progress. In the absence of car you could not go in to the rural villages as you want to prepare their success stories. There are SHG who prepare shero, berbere and sell it for profit.

Researcher: do you have many self help groups?
Participate: yes we have

Researcher: how many are they?
Participate: for example, in the Berber rural locality we have 13 SHGs. We have in each locality where the health and nutrition project is functional. This grouping is based on 1to 30 grouping development groping established by the government.

Researcher: does ORDA have communication policy?
Participate: what?

Researcher: a communication policy that directs the communication works of ORDA. A policy that shows the type of communication approach and channels used by ORDA. A communication policy that dictates your communication work.
Participate: there is no communication policy and strategy that guide our work. The communication approach is determined by the experts who are responsible
for implementing the project. For example, if the project is health, the health officer is responsible and if it is agriculture and lively hood the officer is responsible to do a good communication work and so on. This is the usual trend in ORDA. It is a personal skill. There is no direction about the type of communication means to be used in the development works.

Researcher: is there any communication strategy prepared by ORDA?
Participate: there is no fixed strategy. Sometimes we have used leaflets and brochures.
Researcher: how do you communicate the local people mostly?
Participate: usually we use face to face communication. We discuss with the community about our agenda by gathering the community.
Researcher: do you use leaflets to communicate with the local community?
Participate: no. They are farmers. They could not read it
Researcher: do the animators live with the community?
Participate: yes. They are living with the community there in the rural village
Researcher: do you face communication problems when you discuss with the community?
Participate: sometimes we face language problems. When you go further to the rural areas the local language is Hemsegna (the local language). There are people who could not understand Amharic. We face this problem. Sometimes we are working with interpreters.
Researcher: how do you describe the communication and relationship among the development team in this office?
Participate: we are like a family living inside a house. We respect each other, communicate freely and work together for a common good. We have a good understanding and cooperation among the staffs. I did not experience and observe any significant communication problem between the development teams.

Researcher: do you use indigenous knowledge system to sustain development?
Participate: I don’t have knowledge about this.
Researcher: local cultures, values, thinking that enhance development. For example if there tradition that enhances afforestation, that encourages good working habits, etc.
Participate: there are no such issues
Researcher: do you stick to the modern science to in your development work?
Participate: yes, we applied the science
Researcher: do you use traditional communication systems, such as Azmare, traditional dances?
Participate: in my field there is no such thing. But the gender offices use drama for mainstreaming gender. They used drama to teach about issues such as equality and early marriage. They are doing that during food distribution days and terrace construction times they used that last hour.
Researcher: ok. I am moving to the last part.
Participate: ok. No problem
Researcher: what are the major successes of the development works in this area?
Participate: in the locality that we are working there are people who start saving as their culture. There are also behaviour changes about nutrition. Mothers are better feeding their children in this project than the previous time. There are also good works about potable water and irrigation.
Content from the image:

Researcher: good. Is there any other social change in this area that you did not mention before?
Participate: yes there is social change about open defecation. There is a village certified as ODF (open defecation free) village.

Researcher: is that Fekreselam locality that is graduated as ODF?
Participate: yes. It is Fekreselam locality. Two other localities are on the way to graduation as ODF. There are also some changes about personal hygiene of the community members. Mothers have started to keep hygiene of their children.

Researcher: how do you see the sustainability of the development works and the social changes mentioned above?
Participate: Because of the high level of dependency syndrome people expect other NGOs when you are handing over and left the place. They expect other NGOs to come and do similar works. And they expect from others, rather than working to become self reliance. And there are returns after we are handing over development projects. The development works and social change motivation decrease after we left the localities.

Researcher: I have got people who feel discriminated in the process of aid distribution. Is there any mechanism to avoid such feeling?
Participate: the organisation could not satisfy everybody with food aid, and hence, they might be people with a feeling of discrimination. We are working with the district and locality administrative to get the list of people who need aid to lead their life. In such situation there might be people overlooked by those administrators. But most visible is that the dependency syndrome is rooted and most of the community wants to be part of the aid.

Researcher: what are the major challenges for sustainable development in this area?
Participate: the first is dependency syndrome. Dependency is deep-rooted.

Researcher: how dependency is manifested in this area?
Participate: the local people expect some temporary benefit from development organisations and projects. They do not expect social welfare. People hunt for individual and temporary benefits. We warn them by saying that the safety net aid will leave the place as call to prepare them. Very sadly, there are farmers who verbally replied aid will continue by changing its project name as we have seen for so many years. This is the result of long time persistence of aid in the area. Maybe aid is politicised. Some of the local community think that the government should feed them to sustain its power. This is a result of long time war in this area and may be the relationship between this place (Sekota) and the current ruling party. ORDA provided food aid starting from the then war time in the ‘independent’ areas from the Derge control. The second major challenge is the environment which includes lack of social fertility, ragged topography, social degradation, etc.

Researcher: are there works on HTP such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, and gender equality?
Participate: there is a gender related works. But early marriage and genital mutilations are decreasing. The government has ratified law that prohibited such affect the practice and there are big changes in this regard. There might be some incidents here and there but they are not a big deal currently.

Researcher: what about changes about gender equality?
Participant: there are some observable changes after the current project by search for common ground. The husbands have stated to help their wife in the home works.

Researcher: what are the opportunities of ORDA?
Participant: opportunities? Do you mean the success?
Researcher: not success. It is about enabling conditions or opportunities such as using the government structure and it has good relationship with donors as you mentioned before. If there are additional opportunities, add me please?
Participant: I think, ORDA gives freedom of work for its employees. The managements do not control the employees based on attendance sheet as government offices that apply strict attendance or time keepers. ORDA evaluate us by our work. This gives freedom for the employees. The other opportunity is the organisation’s structure is established up to the bottom level. This enables to get the local administrators or the community. The organisation’s structure is not found only at higher level. This gives to have direct contact with the local community.
Researcher: what about ORDA's history and relationship with the ruling party and the government structure. You use the government structure to facilities your work, from the higher to bottom level structures. Can we consider this as an opportunity?
Participant: yes. Sure
Researcher: what do you like from ORDA?
Participant: I like the freedom of work in the ORDA. As I told you before you are free to work. Your work is your boss. The manager does not control you using tight working hour attendance like the government offices.
Researcher: is this freedom found only here, in this branch office or part of ORDA's culture?
Participant: this is ORDA’s culture. It was similar when I served in Mersa for seven years. It is not confined to this office. I have enjoyed the freedom.
Researcher: what about the issue that you might dislike from ORDA?
Participant: if you think ORDA as NGO it does not fulfil the benefits for its employees. We have low provident fund payment and low salary. The promotion system was not clear although there is improvement in recent times. They assign somebody for a place as they want without clear criteria. There was no also guarantee to stay here if you are in conflict with the project manager. He might fire or transfer you into the harshest areas such as Belesa. But now, there is improvement. These are issues which I dislike most.
Researcher: generally if you asked to change something from ORDA, what do you change?
Participant: if I have the opportunity, I will change the payment in favour of the employees. I will do it competitive to other similar NGOS. ORDA should not hurt its employees. As far as benefit is concerned, ORDA many not fulfil the NGO status. Because of this, ORDA has been missing well experienced employees. I will change it is I have the power to do so.
Researcher: I see, this is a big issue
Participant: yes. The other is providing capacity building training. ORDA does have such program. The infrequent capacity building training is given by the donors. If the donors do not have such program as part of the project,
ORDA do not fill the gap. In ORDA there is no room for capacity building. If I live always with farmers, I may not become a better thinker to change their life. To think well than the farmers whom I am working, I should get capacity building training. Even some times ORDA hampers to attend trainings prepared by donors –FH, for the sake of not absent from work. This is a problem which needs due attention.

Researcher: Ok. My last question. How do you predict the future of ORDA and its development work?

Participant: the future?

Researcher: yes, the future

Participant: if the organisation continues updating it structure, it will be safe. Improving its structure is important. Improving the benefit of its employees should be given due attention. ORDA has good name among the farmers by providing the resources that came from different donors directly for the poor. By designing competent proposal to secure funds, ORDA could sustain itself and the development work. The other is creating a sense of ownership among the local community is also important. For this participation of the community from the beginning is important. Enhancing the relation with the government sector offices should continue. It would be better if ORDA inclined to the soft development issues by leaving the hard development works for the government.

Researcher: good. As we discussed before ORDA has a special relation with the ruling party starting from its establishment. Now it gives opportunity for ORDA. However, development is a process which needs long time efforts. But governments might change. So do you think ORDA will collapse if the government is changed? Or does ORDA continue as independent organisation?

Participant: previously the assumption was that if the government is changed ORDA will cease to exist. Because the top and middle level managers are members of the higher officials of the ruling party. Even it was difficult to join the organisation if you are not member of the ruling party. Similarly, the evaluation was party oriented. However, currently there are efforts to change this trend. And in some areas (such as Mersa) you can get even project managers who are not members of the ruling party. So if such efforts continue besides to keeping its good rapport with the local community, it will not cease to exist.

Researcher: when I move to the rural villages and ask the local community about who build the hand dug well, school, health centre, they said ORDA and sometimes the government. When I said this not by the government, instead this is by ORDA, they said they are the same. This shows there is a strong mix up between the two bodies.

Participant: yes. People have known ORDA in this area starting from the war time. They know it by its food aid. They think that the then fighters who provide food aid have become government. Most of the people know it by its former name called ERO. They usually associate it with food aids. In other areas such as Gonder and Gojjam people know ORDA with development works, not by the aid. ORDA should take communication activities seriously to
show the difference between ORDA and the government for the local community.
Researcher: do you have additional points that you want add or I missed?
Participate: I think you dig out everything (laughing)
Researcher: is that? (Laughing)
Participate: you have assessed issues up to the grassroots level which enables you to know the actual performances of ORDA. I hope you understood the gaps in ORDA also. This is good. I hope your research findings will help the organisation to see its gaps.
Researcher: ok. Thank you very much. You share your precious time and your experiences genuinely. I am really happy for this. I might call you if I have additional questions
Participate: ok. Be feeling free. Never mind
Researcher: thank you again.
Interview date: 11/01/2015
Place: Bahir Dar
Interview with a Communication Manager (Member of Management Team – MMT interview 3) (Sex-M)

Research topic: Participatory Development Communication in Ethiopia: a Local Development Organization in Focus

Researcher: I thank you very much Mr. MMT 3. As I told you before the main objective of this interview is to gather data for the research aiming for the fulfilment of PhD. Thus, this is academic research. The main purpose of the research is to understand the experience of participatory communication in the development works of ORDA. Accordingly it strictly follows the ethics of the research as indicated in the consent form. Thank you for sharing your time and your experiences as well. Now let us begin our discussion from your bio-data.

Participant: ok. We can start.
Researcher: your age please
Participant: 42
Researcher: would you tell me your specific position in the organisation?
Participant: manager of the Communication and IT Department in ORDA
Researcher: what is your educational background?
Participant: BA in International Business
Researcher: your work experience?
Participant: generally I have 19 years work experience in different organisations. From this 12 years are in ORDA where I have been working in different positions.
Researcher: what are the major activities and responsibilities of the communication and IT department/unit?
Participant: the communication and IT unit has generally four major activities. The first activity is the communication work. It promotes the organisation’s work for the external and internal audiences of the organisation. We are working also on documenting different activities of ORDA including audio-visual files. The second is performed by the IT section which focuses on enabling the employees of ORDA to use ITC such as email, internet and computer services. The third function is providing the library services for the internal and external audiences. We provide both the hard and soft copies of different materials. The fourth activity includes welcoming guests and organising events.
Researcher: what are the main purposes of the communication unit?
Participant: the main purpose of our communication work is selling the image of the organisation for donors and other development partners.
Researcher: ok. Good. How many employees are working under this unit?
Participant: in this unit, there are six employees including me. We have one communication officer, one IT officer, one web master, one audio-visual expert, and one librarian.
Researcher: ok. Good. What is the role of communication in the development and rehabilitation works of ORDA?
Participant: Communication is vital for development. We should apply it starting from the inception of development projects. Communication is important in every stage of the development process. It is needed during the implementation and evaluation processes. However, the major problem is that we don’t
practice communication scientifically. We are working in a traditional way. It is not taken as a critical component of the development work. For example, we have been working without communicating the local community and we have conducted base line study without communicating the local community. We do not work on awareness creation of the local community during the planning stage. We don’t do community conversation and we don’t create a sense of belongingness of the local community. Because of these gaps, to be honest, there are projects that failed. For example, last year there was a failed irrigation project. It failed because of lack of communication. We did not communicate the local people and the concerned government officials appropriately. We learn from that failure and we rework it. At the rework, we have been observing better performances since we communicated with the local community and the concerned government officials and now it is going on in a good way. When we see from a different angle, the communication work is found to be weak. I believe each and every activity in the development process should be communicated. It should be communicated when it is started and it should be communicated again at the implementation stage. We should perform community conversation to get the idea of the community. However, what we are doing is that we are simply rushing for implementation.

Researcher: what about the internal communication practices?
Participant: we have limitations in our internal communication work. Although we have tried our best, we did not work as it is expected from the unit.
Researcher: I see. Where is that failed and reworked project is found?
Participant: it is found in Dangela, specific place is called Gizan.
Researcher: why it is failed?
Participant: the first reason was that the local community did not accept the project. The second was it had a design problem. The design work was not performed by ORDA. The design was done by the Amhara Design and Supervision Office. They did not conduct dialogue with the community. When we implement our staff had started the digging the canals without participating and communicating the community and the district administration. Then it failed. It rebuild again as anew project. Now it is promising. We work the communication work.

Researcher: what is community participation in ORDA?
Participant: community participation is different in different projects. For example, in some projects if the community participate as a member of a committee, it considered as community participation. In some projects such as water construction participation involves labour and material contributions from the local community besides to participating in the committee work. Sometimes, each and every activity is given for community decisions. For example, in the MGD water sanitation project (Amhara MGD water sanitation project), each and every thing was decided by the local community. The money was given for them and the committee run it and decide every activity. So the community reaches to decision making stage. It was a model and a best practice project. But such practice is found rarely. Such type of project is not common in ORDA.

Researcher: was the project successful?
Appendix E

Participant: I think, yes, but we did not yet study it. We are preparing to study it.
Researcher: does ORDA have a communication policy?
Participant: no. It does not have.
Researcher: what about a communication strategy?
Participant: we do not have also. We are thinking to design a communication strategy in this year.
Researcher: ok. But in practice you might have communication strategies although it may not be well organised and in a written form. What are the communication strategies to communicate with the local community?
Participant: during the project identification time or data gathering stage, we gather data using the different methods such as key informants and FGDs. And during implementation stage, usually we prepare familiarization workshop at the district and locality levels and sometimes at regional or zonal levels.
Researcher: how do you level the participation of the local community in the different stages of the development projects?
Participant: it is difficult to judge. Before, five to six years participation was almost nominal. But now there is improvement. The community understands the value of projects such as irrigation. The irrigation committees started administering the building materials and projects after handing over.
Researcher: do you conduct a communication need assessment?
Participant: No, we do not do that. To be honest, even we do not have the knowledge about this. We did not notice before about this.
Researcher: did you give communication training for the animators and promoters and other experts of ORDA?
Participant: we did not give it. Once we gave a brief introduction about communication as a mini-part of other programs.
Researcher: do you use indigenous communication systems in your works?
Participant: we use them rarely. We use Idir and Ikub as a communication place rarely in some projects.
Researcher: do you conduct community conversation?
Participant: there are projects that have conducted CC and there are that do not have CC. For example, health and sanitation project, gender projects, HIV/AIDS and HTP related works conducted CC. For example, the Transaction HIV/AIDS project had an organised CC for 15 weeks.
Researcher: how do you see sustainable development in ORDA’s context?
Participant: sustainability is observed in infrastructure projects. But in projects that intend to change attitude and behaviour such as HIV/AIDS, the work stops while we left the place. In livelihood projects such as apple, forestation, there are sustainability since it has visible benefits.
Researcher: what are the major problems of the local community in ORDA’s development project sites?
Participant: there are several traditional practices that affect the community’s life; memorials of dead persons by relatives, wedding and baptising ceremonies for the new born babies are common practices affecting the scarce resources of the community. It hurts the community’s economic capacity. We have started the village level saving association in the interventions area to tackle such types of extravagant traditions.
Researcher: what are the major challenges of ORDA?
Participant: the first is high turnover of the staff. ORDA misses good experts since the salary is not competitive. The second is program quality problem. Our mission is empowering the local community but we have problem in empowering the community. We work for achieving something that could be counted or quantified. Actually we give little attention for changing the community in attitude and behaviour. The third is dependent on donors. ORDA will collapse if the donors stop their funds. We have to have our own resources. The absence of communication policy is another challenge. Lack of community participation is still another challenge. Sometimes, the community is busy with their own life. In some projects the project life span is short.

Researcher: ok. Good. We are moving towards the last section. What are the development opportunities of ORDA?

Participant: its special attachment with the government is a very good opportunity. ORDA started by the then insurgents. The relation with the community is also good. If ORDA far from the government, it may not be stayed as a healthy organisation. ORDA has fetched good qualities from the ruling party, when we lose such qualities ORDA’s existence will be undoubtedly shaken. Our quality is working for the community which is taken from the ruling party. Committed for the community (Hizbawinet) is an important quality. This is one of the criteria for evaluation and significant for our survival. Affiliated with the government does not hurt ORDA, rather it helps it and contributes to become a strong organisation.

Researcher: what about the impacts of its strong affiliation with the ruling party on the image of the organisation?

Participant: we should communicate the objectives of ORDA to avoid confusions. Our work is totally development, not politics.

Researcher: how do you see the persistence of poverty, aid and development works in your project areas (specifically in Sekota, Wadela and Nefas Mewcha)?

Participant: we should study the potential of each area and approach accordingly. In Sekota area the community problem is beyond one NGO. We should work beyond that. We should go towards the industrialisation since the environment is so degraded. The people become hopeless. Even the dependency syndrome is observed among the elites. They prioritise their personal benefits. The Aid business is a multi-million dollar. Sixty six million dollar per year. As written by Grahamkon. It is business which links different interest groups. This produces dependency attitude.

Researcher: Are there additional points that you could add before we finished our discussion?

Participant: emm. We said a lot. I think your research will help us a lot to our gaps. I appreciate your research area and effort. Good Luck

Researcher: I relay thank you very much

Participant: it is oky.
Interview date: 03/06/2014  
Place: Sherea Genet Rural Town, Wadela

Group Interview with Local community (male adults) FGD 3
Research topic: Participatory Development Communication in Ethiopia: a Local Development Organization in Focus

Researcher: I thank you very much all the group members. As I told you before the main objective of this interview is to gather data for the research aiming for the fulfilment of PhD. Thus, this is academic research. The main purpose of the research is to understand the experience of participatory communication in the development works of ORDA. Accordingly it strictly follows the ethics of the research as indicated in the consent form. Thank you for sharing your time and your experiences as well. Now let us begin our discussion from your bio-data.

Participants: they express their readiness for continuing the discussion

Let me start from Name: X1…
Researcher: how old are you?
Participant1: 48
Researcher: your marital status?
Participant1: married and have five children
Researcher: your occupation?
Participant1: farmer
Researcher: Educational background
Participant1: illiterate

Let me start from your Name: X2…
Researcher: your age please?
Participant2: 60
Researcher: your marital status?
Participant2: married and seven children
Researcher: your occupation?
Participant2: Farmer
Researcher: educational background?
Participant2: illiterate

Let me start from your Name: X3…
Researcher: how old are you?
Participant3: 56
Researcher: your marital status?
Participant3: married and six children
Researcher: your occupation?
Participant3: farmer
Researcher: educational background?
Participant3: illiterate
Researcher: why are you illiterate?
Participant3: our time is different from your time. We do not have schools as that time when we are young
Researcher: do you get school today in your area?
Participant: yes, there is a school used by our children
Researcher: brother, would you introduce your name please
Participant4: my name is x4
Researcher: How old are you?
Participant4: 42
Researcher: your marital status?
Participant4: married and five children
Researcher: your occupation?
Participant4: farmer
Researcher: what is your educational background?
Participant4: illiterate
Researcher: why are you illiterate?
Participant4: there was no modern education system in our area while I was kid. It was very far from here and I followed my parents’ footsteps.
Researcher: is there school in your area today?
Participant4: there is a school here in this town.
Researcher: oky. Brother, would you introduce your name please?
Participant5: my name is Mr.X5
Researcher: your age please?
Participant5: I am 50 years of age. Thanks to God
Researcher: please tell us your marital status?
Participant5: married and have seven children
Researcher: your occupation?
Participant5: farmer
Researcher: educational background?
Participant5: adult education
Researcher: so can you read and write?
Participant5: yes, I can
Researcher: brother, would you introduce your name please
Participant 6: my name is Mr X6
Researcher: how old are you?
Participant 6: 40
Researcher: your marital status?
Participant 6: I am married and I have four children
Researcher: your occupation?
Participant 6: farmer
Researcher: educational background?
Participant6: literate, up to grade eight
Researcher: oky. Now all of you briefly introduce yourself for the group. And let us now go to the main research questions. How do you know ORDA? What types of relationship do you have?
Participant: ORDA has been working different development activities in our locality. They have built health centre, school, road, bridge. For example, from Shera Gent to Melah they built 11 km road.
Another Participant: I know ORDA since 1999 (E.C). During that time they mobilised the community to plant eucalyptus tree, to build school, road and bridge.
Another Participant: I knew ORDA when they came up with the eucalyptus. I have been known it when the organisation taught us the role of eucalyptus and encouraged planting such tree.
Researcher: are they other development works that made ORDA known in this area?
Participant: as Mr. X…said, they built school and enable us to send our children to school
Participant: I know ORDA since 1999 when they built road. As that time most of the community members were involved in the road work. I was participated in the work in response to their call to work together. After the road was completed, they distributed large number of eucalyptus seedlings. They were also mobilising the people for terracing in order to protect the environment. The terracing work has been going on. Besides, ORDA built irrigation and enabled the local community to produce vegetables and fruits such as onion, potato, cabbage and tomato. They had provided different seeds. But currently they are not distributing seeds. They stopped it.

Researcher: why they stopped today?
Participant: I don’t know the reason. But ORDA does not have active projects in our village at this time. They already handed over their projects. It is said that they are working on other localities. Before, they left our village they introduced us the eucalyptus which was not a common tree in our area. Before that eucalyptus was not known to the area. Today almost all people around Shera Gent generated income by selling the tree. ORDA introduced us vegetables and such as cabbage, salad, white men onion. We do not know such vegetables before. We know only the traditional onion before that time. We have been generating income using the ORDA’s irrigation by producing the seeds. But now ORDA stopped providing the seeds.

Researcher: so how do you get the seeds, if ORDA does not give you?
Participant: after ORDA left the area we started buying from the agriculture office. They did not give for free like ORDA did. We have to pay for it. The amount is so small comparing with ORDA’s time. It is very good during the ORDA’s time. ORDA gave us for free.

Researcher: ok. Father, (pointing to a man), you do not tell us about the development works done by ORDA. What benefit do you get from ORDA?
Participant: I did not know eucalyptus tree before ORDA came to our village. They introduced and taught me about its value and gave me the seedlings for plantation. I have been generating income today.

Researcher: how much do you get per year from selling the tree?
Participant: one thousand birr (Ethiopian birr). I used this to cover the educational cost of my children. I have also benefitted from ORDA’s irrigation project. I have been producing barely using the irrigation. It enables to produce two times per year. One is by irrigation and the other is using the natural rain during the rainy season.

Researcher: emm, but why you produce barely by the irrigation, why not vegetables?
Participant: there was a problem of getting the seeds. We did not get the seeds.

Researcher: does the irrigation works well?
Participant: emm, it is good. But floods took the canal. I think because they did it in hurry, the water silts and make it difficult to reach to our land. Unless it is repaired, it is difficult to continue like this. There are lots of irrigation beneficiaries but the water could serve only half of the people resisted for the irrigation.

Other participant: yes he is right. There are around 55 farmers there in the irrigation area. The canal is damaging. It needs intervention. The canal was built using cement and corrugated iron. The floods took the corrugated iron. The technicians use five corrugated irons but we told them one is enough. They
used the tinny corrugated irons which were damaged by simple flood. We asked the agriculture office for help. But they did not give response.

Other Participant: yes. This is one big problem. I was a committee member when the Gazo river irrigation project was built in 1993 (E.C). I remember it costs 489,000 birr (*Ethiopian birr*). However, currently it has been decreasing its function. There is also another problem for using the irrigation. In another side of the river bank, down from us, there is other irrigation project which has been serving 46 farmers. There is a disagreement and sometimes conflict between the irrigation users here in our village and in that side of the river. The farmers in that side of the river claim that they could not get enough water supplies for their vegetables since they are living in the lower course of the river basin. They came here in groups and closed our canals several times. It is with intervention of the local administration that the tension is temporally solved. Together with the local administrator, they ratified regulations on how to use the water. But still there are problems between the two sides of irrigation users. When our irrigation canal damaged by floods and disabled the water to pass to their land, they considered that and we did that to hurt them because of jealously. I am afraid this might create great problem if it continues like this.

Other participant: ORDA introduced lots of things in this area. The eucalyptus and the irrigation projects. They did lots of works for us. But now they abandoned us. We do not have the technique to repair the canal. If they help the technique aspect, we are ready to provide the labour work, the stone and other materials found in our area. Usually we did like this when ORDA works different things. However, currently they did not give response for our demand. Neither ORDA nor the distract administrator do not give response.

Researcher: how does the local community participate in ORDA development works?
Participant: we were working together with ORDA. ORDA provided us material and experts and the community provided labour, collecting stone and water. We provided also eucalyptus to build schools.

Other Participant: I was a committee member for the irrigation work and I was coordinating the community to participate in the work.

Other Participant: I was also a committee member for the bridge building. I was working like what he said. We were coordinated the people. We moved home to home to mobilise the community. ORDA worked a lot.

Researcher: Can you mention some of them?
Other Participant: for example, they build schools in different centres and the build seedling. ORDA enabled our town to be covered with green. They taught the community about gender equality, and motivate women and men to be involved in the development works equally.

Researcher: How did ORDA teaches you about gender equality?
Participant: they taught females and males separately. They taught us the right of women to participate in development works. It is ORDA that taught us males should work the women’s work and vice versa. It is ORDA that enable us to have private nursery for the production of eucalyptus seedlings. Several people generated income from selling seedlings. I myself was benefitted by selling the seedlings. I was also employed in the ORDA
nursery centre up to 2000 (E.C). I stopped my work when the project was over. They worked such development works at the village levels.

Other Participant: yes, as he said (refereeing the previous speaker). ORDA performs different works in our village. For example, for the pregnant and lactating women they gave chickens, fruits and vegetables. They did not stop there. They checked how the mothers use to feed themselves and the new babies. If they distributed potato for the farmers, they checked how the farmers were producing it. They did this in collaboration with the district agriculture office. In this year there is a potato project. They help farmers to produce potato. The promoters of ORDA taught us how we could produce potato better than the traditional systems. But the soil is not productive. It is sandy and grey. It is not suitable for production. Because of this there is low productivity. ORDA workers criticised as are lazy and responsible for the low production. However, it is the land that does not give good production.

Researcher: When ORDA built the irrigation project, did they discuss with the people?
Participant: yes, they discussed with us. The people agreed with them about the irrigation. The district and local administrators approved it in 1994 and the work started after the discussions and approvals. The main problem of the irrigation canal is not related with what they worked during that time. ORDA’s work of the irrigation canal was good. It has no problem. I am one of the first people used this irrigation to produce vegetables. The problem came after awhile when people wanted to expand the water canal by themselves. The people wanted to use additional water to increase their production. This activity breaks the parts of the canal and affected its capacity. It needs maintenance and even expansion. We have asked this problem and the need for expansion but no one has been given response till now.

Researcher: Ok good. Up to know you told me about the works done by ORDA and your benefits. This is good. Now let us discuss about the major problems of the community in this area. What are the major problems that you have faced in your day to day movement? And we can discuss about quality of life in this area.

Participant: there are poor peoples in our area. ORDA has provided food aid with the safety net program.

Researcher: why the people are poor?
Participant: there is shortage of land. Those who are landless are poor. And there are also peoples who have the land but could not work due to health problems. The second is the absence of family planning. People consider having children as an asset. This is another reason for poverty. The third is that of absence of use of technology. There is no saving culture. There is also a culture several off days from work for the sake of religious holydays. There are peoples who do not work most of the days in a month. Several productive days in a month are wasted because of this.

Other participant: there are many poor people who have been suffered from poverty. The soil is not fertile. And it does not have moisture.

Other Participant: this environment is very cold. It is chilly. The chilly weather affects productivity. It damages the crops before they give the expected product.
Appendix E

Other Participant: yes, as he said snows in this area falls at the middle of harvesting time (process). It damages the seedlings or the crops before they give the final product. Usually, it aborts the production. This makes life difficult and it affects our life. We work but we are fruitless because of this harsh weather. The community members are striving for self reliance by alternatives ways such as eucalyptus production, animal husbandry and honey production, vegetables and fruits.

Other participant: besides what they said, drought also affects the community. It damages everything we have. We lose our wealth. We don’t have a culture of saving. Then when the drought comes we become empty. Insufficient rain affects our agricultural practices. Because of such reasons there has been food aid in this area for long time.

Researcher: what is the manifestation of poverty in this area? For example, are they people who will be hungry if the food aid stops?

Participant: There are people who live in absolute poverty. They could not get their enough meal as they need. There are also beggars. Such people are dependent on the safety net food aid. They are living in a difficult situation.

Participant: the chilly weather affects the harvesting process. There are times that everything on the land is damaged. Because of this there is a serious shortage of food. In this situation, the only choice becomes depending on safety net aids.

Researcher: what is poverty?

Participant: our poverty is a result of God’s maltreatment. God does not give us what a human being deserves. What we do if the rain does not come at the right time, if the snow damages what we sow on the land? We are working but God does not help us. We plough, we work hard but God damage everything that we did. This is cyclical process which chained our life. Poverty is from the above, it is God’s order. When the crop reaches to maturity the snow damages it. This is beyond our control. It is from the above (by observing on the sky). Man is not poor at birth but God does not help us. We are poor because we are not lazy rather God does not help us. For example, in this year we had a very good seedling of barely. We thought we can feed our family by getting good production. We were very eager to feed ourselves. However, suddenly the chilly damages it. It cut our throat. It is like killing us. Because of this poverty is with us. If God does not help us what we do? We have no choice. (All the group members nod their head for the agreement. There was sadness on the faces of the group discussants).

Researcher: I see. Ok. Let us turn to the next topic. Let us discuss about development. What is development?

Participant: Development is protecting the soil from erosion. If there is no soil, the land could not harvest. Development is building terrace. Development is important. It is also plantation of trees. The organisation has been working such activities with us.

Other Participant: development is producing the vegetables and fruits using irrigations.

Other Participant: it is terracing.

Researcher: when ORDA works different development activities, what are your contributions?
Participant: we have labour contribution. We implement what they provided for us such as planting the eucalyptus.

Other Participant: we collect water, sand and stone for building schools, health centre and road or bridges.

Researcher: do all the people in your locality participate in ORDA’s development works?

Participant: yes. No one disobeys to contribute labour when ORDA calls for a development work. We implement what ORDA instruct us. Of course, when the chilly damages the crops, there is feeling of hopelessness. We face such feelings. The struggle is with nature. But we accept the lessons given by ORDA.

Other Participant: we considered what ORDA told us. We have hope on ORDA. Its work gives us hope. If ORDA does not give hope and help, we could not survive in this difficult area. How can we survive in this environment with lack of soil fertility and chilly weather?

Researcher: do you mean poverty could not enable us to live without aid?

Participant: yes. The land is not fertile. It is not covered with trees. The soil is eroded. They taught us how we could plough the land to protect the soil erosion. If there is no terracing work, providing eucalyptus seedlings and other types of helps by ORDA, the people could not exist. Had it been continue like the previous years, the soil would become dysfunctional by the erosion and entered into Abay River.

Researcher: you told me before some of the short comings of ORDA. Are there additional shortcomings that ORDA should address for achieving sustainable development?

Participant: emm, as we told you before there was one male donkey that served for breeding in our locality. We used a lot benefits form that. But suddenly the donkey died. So we could not breed mules. So if it is possible we need similar male donkey which is important for the locality.

Other Participant: since the environment is not suitable for harvesting crops, it is better if the community engages in other works such animal husbandry. One of such work is breeding mules. So, male donkey is important for this purpose. If ORDA helps us in this regard we can sustain our life.

Other Participant: as Ato X said animal husbandry might be a good alternative for us in addition to vegetable production. If ORDA helps us to expand these development aspects, the community become will be happy.

Other Participant: If ORDA helps us to have private seedling nursery, I think this will be a very good source of income. We have a shortage of getting seeds of vegetables. After ORDA’s project phase was over, the district agriculture office sold us seeds with high price. When we have asked them reducing the price, they have considered our demand as dependency syndrome. The administrators criticised the Gazo locality community as dependent. However, I need my self-reliance if it is possible.

Researcher: emm, however, is there dependency attitude among the community as claimed by the administrators?

Participant: there is such attitude of dependency syndrome in the community. There is a tendency of holding mattock in one hand and holding wheat in the other hand. Even the participation of the community is different for aid works and
free development works. If there is a development work with an aid you might get 50 persons, if it is a free development work you might get only 10 persons. It is true that there is a dependency attitude in our area.

Researcher: I see. When aid started here in this area?
Participant: it has started since 1986 E.C. They started the aid to save life due to drought in that time. But now the aid is under food for work program. It is not a free aid. If there is serious problem which is unique to the usual one, there will be emergency aid that targets on saving life. The payment for food for work program is delayed in this year. For example, the community members took the aid of March month yesterday. The aid for January, February and March will be provided in the form of birr, not wheat, while the aid of April, May and June months will be wheat. The monthly aid has increased from 60 birr to 95 in this year per family. Usually the aid stops on June 30 of each year.

Researcher: are there complaints on the process of aid?
Participant: yes. The amount of aid is decreasing comparing to the previous time. The community complain about this. The community demanded that the aid should address all the people who need aid. If this is not possible, at least the amount aid should not decrease the amount.

Researcher: Are there many poor in your locality?
Participant: we the better ones become poor by the reasons we told you before. The drought and the snow damage our crops. At this time we are going down. When we lost what we have then we become poor. There is no difference between the poor and the rich in our area. Nature affects all of us.

Other Participant: Another problem is that the aid is delayed even for those who are registered as poor. For example, currently the six months aid is delayed. The community members under safety net projects have been given the aids two times. After that they are expected to graduate.

Researcher: what does graduation mean?
Participant: they become out of aid project. It is assumed that they become better farmers.

Researcher: are they enabled them to graduate after building their capacity?
Participant: as they said, yes. For example, if a family which has seven members secure their food, then it should be graduated. If they have an income that enables them to feed themselves, it is good to become graduated. However, in reality, the graduation is false. It is done for sake reporting and fulfilling the expected quota set by the district, not based on the wealth and self reliance capacity of the graduates. After graduation it is common to see the graduates could not enable to feed themselves. They do not have enough income to feed their families. The graduation makes the poor to have neither income nor the aid. It is dangers for them. There is a quota set by the government that request fixed number of graduates for each locality. 30-40 persons are required to be graduated per year from each locality. Fulfilling such number is mandatory which is ordered by the government. To fulfil this number, the local administrators certified those people who have an ox, a cow or three sheep as graduates.

Other participant: when you see the upper surface, those people have a certificate of graduation because graduation is mandatory. When you see the inside part i.e. their real life, most of them remain poor. Graduation is mandatory to
fulfil the quota prescribed by the government. As a result it is common to get people who have only two chickens are graduated.

Other participant: just similar to what my brothers said, there are lots of peoples who live in absolute poverty entitled as graduates. Many people are graduated without securing their food.

Researcher: I see. Ok. Do you have clean water supply in your village?
Participant: yes, we have hand dug well. But the theft took some parts of the steel. They repeatedly took and so many times it stopped working.

Researcher: do you have health centre in your locality?
Participant: yes, there is a health centre.
Researcher: do the health officers give good service and teach you about health issues?
Participant: yes, they teach us. But the health officers have competence problems. They are not professionals. For example, they could not give delivery service. Because of this we have to move to the Shrea Gent town health centre which is far from here. This caused mother’s death. We need professionals who give delivery service. We have also shortage of getting contraception.

Researcher: what is the situation of hygiene and sanitation in this area?
Participant: there are changes from the previous times
Researcher: do all the people have latrine house?
Participant: yes
Researcher: who is working about Open defecation (ODP)? Is that ORDA or the government?
Participant: both ORDA and the government have been working together. ORDA means government. The government is ANDM. They are working together.

Researcher: how do you get the performances of agriculture extension workers?
Participant: they have problems of providing seeds of vegetables and fruits on time. We have asked modern hives but they do not respond yet. The water harvesting wuha maqor) project is not effective.

Researcher: why it is not effective?
Participant: we don’t know the reason.
Researcher: are there problems about training on irrigation and other agricultural issues? Do they teach about modern farming systems?
Participant: yes they have been taught us. The crops development section teaches about crops production, the natural resource section teaches about natural resources, the animal resource section teaches about natural resources and the irrigation section teaches about the irrigation projects. They have been taught us in every field. The government employed such workers in each locality and they have visited us even at a house hold levels.

Researcher: ok. Before we finish our discussion, do you have additional points that you want to add?
Participant: ORDA has been working a lot. This is good. We have been benefited from its development works. However, we have a road access problem. As a result we are selling our eucalyptus trees in a very cheap price. Had it been road which links the Shera Genet to our village, we could sell it in a very good price. For example, we are selling one atana (wood) for 15 birr. But in other villages where there is road access it has been sold between 25 to 30 birr. The merchants can easily access such villages simply. But we cannot do that. Therefore, lack of access to road is one of the serious problems in our
village. If ORDA considers such problem it could be very good for the local community.

Other Participant: the other is as we mentioned before, there are problems about health services which needs improvements. There should be well trained professional health works. Because of the absence of road, if somebody is ill or if a woman needs delivery, we should walk 2 hours on foot carrying that person to get treatment or delivery service. On the way, we might loss the dear ones. There are such actual cases in our area.

Other Participant: I want to add something here. We want electricity. This is necessary for our villages and the Shera Gent. Lack of power is the main problem to use mobile telephone. Many farmers have mobile phones but they are forced to go to 4 hours journey on foot to get a place where they could recharge their mobile battery.

Researcher: how did this rural town, Shera Gent, is established? Some people said that ORDA established the town. Did its establishment relate with ORDA.

Participant: yes, this is right. It is established in 1996 E.C by ORDA.

Researcher: how did ORDA establish it?

Participant: the story is like this. When ORDA constructed road and planted the eucalyptus trees the experts came here and they built small house for them. People called it the agriculturalists’ home. Then some individuals from neighbouring kebels came here and have started living here. When the time passes lots of people joined them. When number of people increased ORDA built health centre, school and water facilities. Then it becomes centre for the local administration. Now the rural town has lots of facilities, although there is no electricity. The big aid food ware houses are also found here.

Researcher: okay thank you. If you do not have additional points that you want to add let us stop the discussion here.

Participants: first there was a silent, participants were seeing one another. Then some said we do not have additional points.

Researcher: I really thank you very much for sharing your life long experiences and giving your precious time. I thank you all of you. I have enjoyed the discussion we had.

Participants: it is ok. We thank you