Language Attitude and Language Conflict in West Africa

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The utilization of information for development in Nigeria: problems, attitudes and cultural shock

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Introduction

Africans have had in place, cultures that help in the organisation and sustenance of their societies. Culture basically is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, moral, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men, as a member of society" (Tyler Edward, 1970).

One of these cultures is indigenous information system, which existed before the advent of mass media and formally organised bureaucratic system and it is still existing today despite change (Giddens, 1993). The indigenous information system leads to indigenous innovation and experimentation.

However, with urban development and efforts by African countries to "catch up" with the developed world, this indigenous information system has been replaced with exogenous information system, especially in the implementation of government development programmes. This was done without considering the fact that African societies have their own traditions, which have sustained their societies and can be improved upon in the course of social transformation.

This study therefore examines the effects of this replacement of the indigenous information system with exogenous system and its implications on the implementation of development programmes. This

is the central focus of this research as it outlines a case study of an Igbo society of Nigeria.

The colonial government in Nigeria realised the importance of information with its establishment of public enlightenment centres. Audio-visual equipment and materials such as cinema were used to enlighten people on government programmes as they affect agriculture, health, education, etc.

In 1976, Federal Information Centres (FIC)-an off-shoot of Federal Public Enlightenment Centres-were established in all the state capitals of Nigeria, with the primary aim of transmitting events to the public at the grassroots level and enlightening them on Federal government activities and policy programmes as well as transmitting to the Federal government people's reaction in form of 'feed back'.

However, available field reports by government research section, national newspapers and personal observations have proved beyond doubt that the huge government investment on such media establishments in the state has failed to yield the desired results with regards to their campaign activities. This is because the exogenous channels were unable to establish a chain of mutual dependence between the traditional and cultural diameter of the peasant villages and its own now stimulus (Ugboaja 1980).

In a study, Mendalson (1981) argued that there is need for target audience research before public information campaign is carried out. This is with a view to determining the audience, values, beliefs, life styles, needs, motivation and above all mass media habit. Similarly, Quaido (1985) believes that information efforts should take care of peculiar situation it seeks to address, vis-à-vis information strategies that address the 'core value of Africans'.

In respect of family planning, Wusu (1977:40) explains that the failure of family planning is attributable to lack of understanding of the culture of the people and concludes that, in supplying information on family planning or any social change, or innovation to a community, it is necessary to ascertain the characteristics of the target audience before embarking on any family planning education campaign.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of traditional methods was demonstrated in a research by Fiofori (1975) who transplanted into familiar oral narrative modern family-planning information, taking care not to over load them with foreign content. The result observed was

that the incorporated stories heightened interest more than the original ones, and led to attitudinal change.

Several other studies have suggested various mediating factors that can make or mar effective communication of social change, programmes. These factors include the relevance of the message to audience, contents of the message, presentation of the message, credibility of the source; audience participation in decision-making process, cultural and social structure, etc.

Apart from the above studies which exposed the inadequacies and shock in the old methods of information dissemination, there are response patterns as indicated below (following Okwilagwe, 1993) which have intrinsic qualities that make the information either to facilitate or frustrate social change along the traditional-new continuum.

Tradition	New
1. Trust and supportiveness	Suspicion and Defensiveness
2. Open-mindedness and flexibility (Empathy)	Closed mindedness and dogmatism
3. Attraction and Affection	Alienation and hostility

As a result of its suspicions, hostility and dogmatism as perceived by the people and its tendency to alienate the people, the local people find it difficult to detach the new media from colonial tax drive (Wilson, 1982), hence the cultural shock, which is the traumatic effect of disorientation caused by a major change in the environment. In most cases, it affects "time-honoured" tradition of the people affected.

In a work by (Gecan, 1995:557), on BBC world news as related in local stations:

> the elders were aware that the news came from
> those who had conquered and dominated them and
> it was listened to with close attention.

On the community factor in media news, Fredric and Kosiki (1989) agreed that the conceptualisation of the metropolitan news media and their location in the social fabric suggests that they affect the overall assessments.

Tradition and development

Many schools of thought have emerged in an attempt to explain the relationship between tradition and development. While some see this relationship as a zero-sum one which makes them diametrically opposed to each other, others see some areas of positive and complementary role in the relationship where tradition can be used to facilitate and enhance development (Madu, 1999).

Writing on the desirability of tradition in development especially in developing countries, Tessler et al (1973) argued that the cultural objectives of a developing nation often conflict with one another. He therefore called for the repudiation of traditional norms in the name of progress and increased growth. He suggested that long standing attitudes and beliefs be re-examined and those that appear to retard economic, political and social development be denounced. Similarly, customs judged to be backward and inhibiting are discouraged. They are to be replaced with more productive modes of behaviour.

Tessler was also of the opinion that there should be a determination to preserve traditional culture in order to provide identity and continuity. He opined that many individuals also desire to maintain "time-honoured" tradition in order to minimize dislocation associated with rapid social change. To buttress his argument, he posited two basic questions.

(1) How do we admit change without sacrificing continuity?
(2) How do we pursue development without losing identity?

He provided answers to these questions. According to him, they do not pose political dilemma. Traditional values that threaten to retard development can be readily disavowed if they are not firmly tied to the society's quest for identity and continuity. Similarly, traditions that provide an important measure of continuity or that are integral part of the national patrimony can be supported and even given a place of honour if they are not compatible with development objectives.

On the dilemma involved in the relationship between tradition and development, Tessler admitted that some sets of traditional values are centrally linked to the struggle for both development and identity. For him, they cannot be preserved without limiting the former and cannot

be repudiated without impairing the latter. He concluded that, in these instances, a society is indeed faced with a cultural dilemma, and ambivalence and tension are the inevitable results.

Writing on the interaction of both modern and traditional systems in developmental process, Barrows (1976:28-30) argued that the relationship between the central "modern" system and the traditional chiefdom of the rural periphery, are faced with the problem of how old and new interact. According to him, change is holistic. Traditional societies are so tightly interwoven and internally so highly interdependent that change in one sector or society entails a corresponding change in all other sectors. All change according to him entails systematic conflict between traditional role and modern role. Modernisation proceeds to the extent that the later displaces the former. For instance according to Barrows, a role prominently in the traditional order might be that of the "Chief" while a modern role might be that of the "Civil servant". This displacement model of development therefore assumes that individuals playing the role of the "Chief" will inevitably resist the successful performance of the "civil servant" role whenever they interact. This is based on the assumption that the incumbent of the old role perceives their interest threatened by the new role and act accordingly. Also old are not sufficiently malleable to adopt to circumstances changed by the additional of new roles in to the social matrix.

On economic development of the rural people, Schramm, (1964:20-21) pointed out that their economic development requires in addition, a "social transformation". For him, social transformation is basically a set of human transformation of people to be educated, and informed, attitudes and values to be changed, human relationship, customs, social behaviour to be reviewed, and rethought. He further observed that:

> If national economic development is to occur, there must be a social transformation and in order for this to happen, human resources must be mobilised and difficult human problem must be solved (1964:21).

Writing from the same economic angle, Smock and Smock (1972:109) argued that the economic condition of the people is a function of rural development. According to him, rural transformation

depends to a considerable extent on the ability of the government to formulate progressive and feasible programmes designed to improve the economic conditions and the quality of life in predominantly agricultural communities. Realising that the rural dwellers in Nigeria are mainly farmers, they argued that:

> Before this programme could be effective, the government must develop the capacity to penetrate society in order to reach the people and the local communities it seeks to change (1972:108).

In his own contribution, Nyerere, (1977), contented that development has a purpose, "that purpose is the liberation of man". For this liberation to occur, his culture must be taken into consideration as to avoid the shock associated with it.

For Parmar (1975:8), self-reliant development in developing nations involves the formulation of concepts and policies of development based on their own socio-economic and cultural realities rather than on ideas inherited from the North.

In his analysis of the Middle East modernisation process, Lerner, (1988:ix) argued that Western model must be freed from the constraints of what he called "ethnocentricism" or continued attachment to tradition in order to function effectively. According to him:

> Few today will quarrel with the view of modernisation as a behavioural system or with the proposition that modernisation requires a systematic transformation of life ways if growth is to be made self-sustaining.

Contributing to this debate, Whitaker (1970) in his study of the politics of tradition continuity and change in Northern Nigeria, challenged the idea of a valid application to all contemporary traditional societies undergoing modern influences of conceptual tools or heuristic devices derived from Western experience of modernisation. He described these societies as "confrontational". He argued further that:

>In so far confrontational societies accept or absorb elements of modern Western societies the effect must be the displacement of corres-ponding elements of traditional society (1970:458).

This "confrontation" between tradition and modern conceptual tool for development has great implication for tradition. In this regard, Whitaker (1970:458) notes that:

>One of the several possible results of confrontation is partial acceptance of modernity with partial rejection of displacement of tradition.

Whitaker however accepted in his work that some elements of modern institution can prove functional for the maintenance of traditional pattern. Citing example with the major political party in Northern Nigeria (then the Northern People's Congress or N.P.C.), he said that the modern institution of party control of the economic and legal resources was a mechanism for rewarding politically loyal aristocrats. In pursuing economic development, the N.P.C. was often able at the same time to accord favourable entrepreneurial opportunities to local traditional rulers, highly remunerative membership in regional and national boards and corporations. In this way, we saw how native authorities were given an economically and politically advantageous roles in the dispensation of modern services and in the legal regulation of economic activities which governmental control of modern services and development of projects entailed.

From the foregoing arguments on the relationship between the modern elements and traditional elements in development, it is evident that tradition poses a fundamental question in development paradigm especially at the rural level. The basic question therefore is how to admit change without sacrificing continuity and how to pursue development without losing identity. The two positions are most likely to result in cultural shocks. Basically therefore, the issue now is the old (tradition) which is deeply rooted in the people can interact with the new (social change) which though alien to the people but enhances their well being as members of a society, without a substantial dislocation of the tradition and that at the same time ensuring that the benefits envisaged in this social change are achieved.

Methodology

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to collect data for this study. Essentially, this involved a group discussion that gathered people together from similar backgrounds and experiences to discuss topics central to the objectives of this study. Generally the participants were purposively chosen. Focus groups were conventionally homogeneous, that is, the participants were recruited to particular groups on the basis of some common characteristics, to maximize within the group, and to avoid a situation where individuals dominate or withdraw because of difference in class, sex, age, experience, acquired knowledge, or any other characteristics salient to the discussion.

The discussions were also characterized by group dynamics. The informal setting, relaxed atmosphere and open-ended nature of questions were used to encourage participants to feel free from the constraint typical of one to one interview and ensured they expressed their views openly and spontaneously. The settings of the discussions on this research were in the neutral and natural settings. For instance, the Ekeiwu Okuku market square and the Okuku community school were used as venues. The researcher allowed for sufficient time for the recruitment of members of the group. Also the time of sessions (date and hour) were appropriate and convenient to the members. The size of the groups ranges from 5-15. The researcher also acted as a facilitator. He was responsible in ensuring that the discussions were conducted in a relaxed manner bearing in mind the objectives of the research. The researcher made use of a discussion guide which had earlier been prepared. The discussion guide which the researcher used in this study was based on issues central to the objectives of the study.

In this study, the facilitator/researcher was ably assisted by a note taker /recorder. The following materials/instruments were made available for the exercise: tape recorder, cassettes, papers, pencils, biros, etc. The note taker, took notes during the session and recorded the discussions. He was able to retain the impression and information given by members of the group.

In most of the sessions, entertainments were provided for the members of the group. This in no small way encouraged them and showed that the researcher is appreciative of their time and energy in honouring the researcher's call.

In all, most of the sessions went on as planned. The record of discussion was complete and accurate.

Question Guide

1. How do you see the efforts government is making to develop the community?
2. People in this community have talked to me a bit about change especially the fear of "dislocation" Do you agree with them?
3. I have also heard that many people in this society objected strongly to the relocation of market stalls which was meant to expand and modernise your market. What are the reasons for this negative responses?
4. Could you explain the reasons for the failure of some of the government development programmes in your community such as:
   (a)   Birth control and family planning
   (b)   Female genital mutilation
5. What is your advice on how these programmes will succeed in future?

TABLE 1 :1   CHARACTERISTICS OF MEMBERS OF THE GROUPS

GROUPS

CHARACTERISTICS

1. SIZE OF THE GROUPS

- 5 – 7
- 8 – 9
- 10 – 12
- 13 – 15

1:2 AGE

- 25 – 30
- 31 – 40
- 41 – 50
- 51 – 60
- 51 – 65
- 66 – 75

1:3 OCCUPATION

- Farming
- Teaching
- Petty Trading
- Palm wine tapping
- Hunting

1:4 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

- Below Primary 1
- Primary 1 – 6
- WASC
- Above WASC

1:5 LANGUAGES

- Igbo
- English
- Others

1:6 NUMBER OF CHILDREN

- 1 – 2
- 3 – 4
- 5 – 6
- 7 – 8
- 9 and above

KEY:
+   APPLICABLE (A member of the group falls into the category)
.   NOT APPLICABLE (A member does not fall into that category)

A look at the size of the groups as shown on Table1:1 shows that of the twenty three groups, the composition of majority of the groups ranged between 10 and 12 as eleven groups fall into that category. This is followed by groups of between 8 and 9 category. The category of between 13 and 14 members had three groups while only one group had as low as 5-7 members. This small group is not unconnected with the very young age of members, as very few youths occupy the position of tradition and leaders who are the focus of the study.

On the age of the members of the groups, it was also shown from table 1:2 that in most of the groups, participants were between the age range 61 and 65.

From the age range involved in the group discussions, it appeared that the more elderly members were involved in the discussions. This can be explained by the nature of the research, which is focused on the culture of the people. The elderly members of the community were seen as more resourceful because of their age and experience and wisdom that go with it.

The other noticeable feature of the members of the group is their occupation. Table 1:3 shows that majority of members of the group engage in farming as an occupation. This is closely followed by petty trading. These days, petty trading is used to complement what they gain from farming which is no longer as lucrative as it used to be. Ranking third in this order is teaching. The few educated ones in the community resort to teaching in the primary schools as grade 2 teachers. Ranking below teaching is hunting (which is one of the traditional festivals of the community). Below this ranking is palm wine taping which ranked the lowest. In the community, there are families that have it as their "trademark". Further analysis of the nature of occupation shows that more than half of the members of the groups engaged in more than one occupation.

In terms of the educational background of members of the groups, Table 1:4 shows that majority of them do not have formal education at all. The twenty three groups have members that fall into this category. Those with educational level ranging from primary 1-6 appeared in twenty two of the twenty three groups. The educational qualification of West African School Certificate (WASC) was indicated by only eight groups. Above WASC, only seven of the groups have

members that fall into that category. The above situation shows the low level of education among the members of the various groups.

On the language used in the discussion as indicated on Table 1:5, Igbo language dominated all the discussions. English Language was used occasionally by some members who had problem with the use of Igbo to properly explain themselves. What the facilitator/researcher did here was to ensure that somebody in the group explained the questions to the understanding of every body present. Apart from Igbo language and sometimes English language, no other language featured in the course of discussion. The range of the number of children by members of the group is shown on Table 1:6. It shows that more members of the groups have total number of children in the ranges of 7-8 and 9 and above.

Data analysis

Tradition and change in Okuku community: the people's response

The governmental and community rural development programme in Okuku are always designed by either the people themselves or the government and directed towards the improvement of the standard and quality of life of the people.

These programmes have never been completely accepted in the community. In most cases, they are subjected to the traditional disposition of the people, which as it were, determines the success or otherwise of any development initiative in Okuku Community as shown in table II

Tradition which governs almost every aspect of living of the people in Okuku has had a tremendous influence on the acceptability or otherwise of these programmes which are directed towards the good of the people.

Essentially, the majority of the people in Okuku Community as shown in this study are of the opinion that there should be a determination to preserve traditional culture in order to provide identity and continuity. "We don't want anything that will come and destroy what we have", they stated. They opined that they deserve to maintain "time-honour" tradition in order to minimise dislocation associated with rapid social change. A few others in the community

believe that the erosion of traditional life portends an oportunity for them, freed from the constraints of tradition and oriented towards a different world. The members of this group welcome the opportunity for a new cultural destinies as indicated by 21% of those interviewed. They however expressed the opinion that there might be initial shock in their traditional lives.

The majority in the community who insist on maintaining the status-quo argued that the possibility of change is fearful. Almost instinctively, these individuals in the community realise that the experience they have acquired over a life-time will count for little should life-honoured ways of life disappear. Backed by this conservatism of the majority, the Okuku Community is putting up a determined and extraordinary fight for survival as demonstrated in their responses to the various governmental and community rural development initiatives in the community. Some of these programmes include:

1. Relocation of market stalls in Uborji

Uborji is one of the five villages in Okuku Community of Igbo society which form the study area, and in fact, the most prosperous with a well established market at the centre of the village called Ama-Eke. The market which comes up every "Nkwo" (fourth day of Igbo week) from where it derived its name, Nkwo-Iborji is the most successful individual market in Okuku apart from the Eke-Iwu market which is owned by the Okuku Community. NKWO-UBORJI is a daily market which comes up every evening.

TABLE II   PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS TO CHANGE

PERCEPTION

	GROUPS																						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1. Fearful of change	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2. Joyful about it	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+
3. Could cause disruption	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
4. Total acceptance/supportive	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Suspicious of it	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
6. Trust	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Hostile towards it	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
8. Open mindedness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
9. Close mindedness	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
10. Husband's position	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11. Helpful	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. Destructive	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
13. Disagreement	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

KEY: + MENTIONED BY A PARTICIPANT IN THE GROUP

  - NOT MENTIONED BY A PARTICIPANT IN THE GROUP

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   As it were, there was the need to expand and renovate the market to meet the standard expected of a modern market in a developing community. Since this cannot be possibly done in the present location and in order to ensure expansion as well, there was every need to relocate the market. The essence of this was to have more land available and also to ensure a befitting and modern market for the village, with a view to attracting more traders from far and near. This programme which was internally initiated was the work of those indigenes of the village who were living in the cities and who wanted to contribute to the development of their village.

   This story as told in one of the group discussion went this way. One evening, they called the elders and opinion leaders in the village to a meeting and informed them of their plan, requesting them to render as much help as they could. At the end of their discussion, there seemed to be a general agreement on the need to relocate the Nkwo-Uborji market to a more strategic and more accommodating place. In their lack of experience, these people from the cities, however, had not yet learned the subtleties by which a "yes" may after all mean a "No" in certain cases. The following morning, when they gathered at the village square ready to work out the modalities of the project, they found the place practically deserted. The elders and the people in their shock have all gone to their farms. The implication of this is that the people have refused flatly to allow the relocation of the market. So, that was how the Uborji people felt about the project that some people were imposing on them. For the people their culture frowns at relocation of market stalls.

   With much difficulty, the elders and the people were brought back to another meeting a few days later. In the course of their discussion they did their best to make the elders and the people of the village to talk freely.

   The dialogue exposes the fear of change in a traditional set up like Okuku Community. It also underscores the importance of information in development in the rural communities, without attracting the shock associated with it.

   On the negative response to this well-thought out change, this researcher adopts a comparative method of field investigation, which situates the present in the context of the past by interacting with the more elderly members of the community for the purpose of tapping from them oral data for reconstructing of the past. It was gathered

from the elders that the reason for the rejection of the relocation of the market is based on the significance of the village square or Ama-eke where the market is located.

The village square or Ama-Eke is seen as the materialization in linear space of the people's corporate existence, collective will and world view. By this nature and function, the village square which accommodates the markets symbolises "organizational law" where indigenous activities take place. Essentially, therefore, the village square or the Ama-Eke could be associated with the people's myth, historical events, rituals and highly sacred in nature.

The village square is not just any clearing or any open place. Usually, certain events, rituals or the depositing of some unifying village symbols consecrate it, thus making it a symbolic cultural centre, a social and spiritual life-line which, like the umbilical cord, holds the community to their ancestors, gods and roots of origin.

The above aptly describes the nature of the Uborji market (NKWO UBORJI), which informed the negative response of the elders and members of the community as regards its relocation to what was described as a more strategic, more auspicious and more accommodating site with modern stalls.

2. Birth control and family planning

One of government efforts at checking over population was the introduction of birth control and family planning. In order to make it accessible to the rural people especially the rural women, government ensured that every health centre, clinic or maternity home had a birth control and family planning unit. In order not to discourage the rural women, services of this unit were offered free of charge. Posters, leaflets, traditional rulers, union leaders and leaders of market women were used to disseminate information on the activities of the unit responsible for birth control and family planning. Their activities also involved counseling about birth control and directing parents on how to use it with the aim of making them achieve the desired number of children.

The officials of Better Life for Rural Women Programme in conjunction with officials of the health ministry, held several meetings to mobilise the people to respond to the birth control and family planning. In one of their meetings with the people, the Better Life for Rural Women officials, were able to tell the people that family planning

helps in building up a healthy and happy families by enabling the couple to have the number of children they want at the right time, In this way, parents are able to provide the children with necessities of life, care and love. They requested the people to take advantage of the incentives provided for the exercise and also cooperate with the officials.

The people who have gathered for the meeting listened attentively and dispersed quickly immediately after the meeting as their spokesman had assured the Better Life for Rural Women officials of their co-operation.

The second visit of the officials to the designated health care centres in the community showed that nobody had visited the centres either for advice or prescription since the inception of the programme. The reason for this was that some people have gone to town with the notion that a programme was on to reduce their family sizes. This insinuation runs counter to the tradition of Okuku. As it were, the people insisted that they derive satisfaction from having children. Children in Okuku Community are regarded as a source of respect. It is their belief that one can only be respected and praised in the community based on the number of children one has. They argued that they cannot specifically say which of the family members stands as a son or daughter in time of their burial when they die, hence any attempt to deliberately reject children is seen as not only against God but also against their culture and tradition.

On the economic front, they still insist that since their occupation is predominantly farming, children are used as labour on the farm and this means that the larger the number of children a family has the larger its labour force.

As if these arguments are not enough, the community members (whose attachment to their gods and goddesses still remain strong), maintain that it is their gods and goddesses that normally give or send children. Any attempt to adopt family planning will show them as ungrateful to these gods and goddesses and that the consequence might not be imaginable. These arguments of the people actually informed their rejection or at best a suspicious approach to examining the provision of the programme, as they express shock at the provision of this programme.

3. Female genital mutilation

Circumcision is an age-long traditional practice in Okuku Community that must take place within the first two weeks of birth. It involves the partly or whole severing of the clitoris. Although this practice varies from one group to another, the common feature remains the traditional belief, norms and value attached to it by the various communities that indulge in it.

The practice also involves men and women who have learnt the art either from their parents (as in the case of inherited practice)or under the apprenticeship of those who have been in the art for long. The community has come to embrace what they regard as the virtue of circumcision.

However, with conscious effort by government and some non-governmental organisations to raise the status of women in Nigeria, there has been a very serious campaign against the practice. According to this group, the practice is just a crude and wicked mutilation of the female genital. They contend that the practice is very harmful to the health of women. Apart from the crude practice in the rural areas which involves the use of unsterilised instruments with the resultant transmission of diseases from one patient to another, the practice of circumcision sometimes results in hemorrhage. These agencies finally argue that circumcision hinders maximum enjoyment derived from intercourse with their male counterparts.

Armed with these arguments, these agencies were able to convince the initiators of government development programmes to include the eradication of the practice of female circumcision in their objectives. These rural development programmes like Family Planning Programme and Family Economic Advance Programme (FEAP), have incorporated it in their programmes and are making conscious efforts to discourage the practice especially in the rural areas.

The Okuku health centre was used as a springboard for the war against female circumcision. Since some of the women come to the health centre for the delivery of their babies, the officials reason that it would be more result-oriented to start with the women who come there to deliver their babies.

Initially, the rural women did not understand what was going on until it dawned on them that their children were no longer going to be circumcised. Their response was very swift. They engaged the services of the native experts to circumcise their children for them. In addition,

the number of children born in the Health Centre reduced as most women refused to go there for fear that they might be forced not to circumcise their children. They expressed their shock that their "time-honoured" culture was being destroyed.

However, the development programmes and the officials of the health ministry did not relent in their efforts to convince the people not to circumcise their children. The next step they took was to hold a meeting where they met the people for face-to-face explanation. As it were, the women also had the opportunity to express their views and position on the issue of circumcision. Without mincing words, the Okuku Community women told the officials of their firm belief in circumcision. According to them, circumcision was a source of fertility as the goddess of fertility is always appeased whenever blood from the circumcised clitoris is poured on the ground. They argued further that circumcision inhibits excess sexual enjoyment which consequently maintains the value of the society. It is the belief of the women that uncircumcised women are unclean. They insist that in the uncircumcised, the clitoris protrudes beyond the level of the major which makes it look untidy.

Conclusion

Africans have had traditions which help in the organisation and sustenance of their societies. One of them is the system of information dissemination which also helps in the development of their societies. The introduction of development programme alien to the people have in most cases resulted in cultural shock.

This study shows that the people are determined to preserve traditional culture in order to provide identity and continuity. For them, the possibility of change is fearful, hence the cultural shock. They are also of the view that there is the need to maintain "time honoured" tradition in order to minimise dislocation associated with rapid social change and development. On the utilization of information, also the people maintained that any information could be welcomed provided it does not destroy the bases of their existence.

The people's response to information for development programmes is informed by their belief that any development programme that provides an important measure of continuity or that are an integral part of the "traditional core value" can be supported. They believe that

information could be welcomed and utilized provided it does not destroy the bases of their existence. Any information on development therefore that threatens traditional values can be readily disavowed not minding its development potentials

The fear of change, dislocation, destruction, suspicion, and hostility which are some of the variables that inhibit information in a traditional Nigerian setting may have great implications for developmental efforts in the country.

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