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Addis Ababa University
Faculty of Journalism and Communication

**Communication Strategies of the Organization 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

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September, 2010
Addis Ababa

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Examiner	Signature	Date

DECLARATION

I, Biruk Belete, declare that this project work entitled “Communication Strategies of the Organization 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*” is my own original work. I have carried it out independently with the guidance and suggestions of the research advisor. And it has not been presented in Addis Ababa University or any other University. *And* all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Biruk Belete

(The Researcher)

Signature

LETTER OF CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that Biruk Belete has carried out his project work on the topic “Communication Strategies of the Organization 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*” under my supervision. This work is original in its nature and is suitable for submission in partial fulfillment of the requirement to earn masters degree in journalism and communication.

Abiyi R. Ford (Prof.)
(Advisor)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this paper has been a joy and a pain as well. Ultimately, however, it has given me a sense of satisfaction. Especially for a beginning researcher, any project of this kind and magnitude requires the assistance of many people.

It would not have been possible to devote so much time and energy to this work without the patience and understanding of my school (Graduate School of Journalism and Communication). My deepest gratitude goes to the school for being ever-patient and not quitting on me.

A very special vote of appreciation goes to Prof. Abiyi R, Ford (my advisor) for his guidance, advice and constructive comments. His sharp eyes, and all wise observations as well as suggestions have been an indispensable part of the creation of this paper from the inception.

It is a heart felt gratitude that I extend to ORDA: its forest and communication experts and its all lovely people of the community informants for their dedicated responses to my questions. A special thanks goes to Ato Wondie (communication officer), Ato Abebe (IT expert), Ato Mekonnen (forest expert), Ato Fetene (zone coordinator), Ato Bantayehu(forest development supervisor), W/ro Yeshe (field expert), Ato Solomon and Ato Girma (site controllers).

Thanks are also due to my friends and colleagues for their enthusiastic and professional advice and their plain brotherhoodness. Most advices formally and informally offered have sustainably helped and their support is gratefully acknowledged. Any remaining shortcoming is, of course, my own responsibility.

Biruk Belete

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Acronyms

CTA:	Technical Center for Agriculture and Rural Development
CBOs:	Community Based Organization
DSC:	Development Support Communication
EPA:	Ethiopian Environment Protection Authority
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
GIS:	Geographical Information System
GOs:	Governmental Organizations
GTZ:	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IGAD:	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IPCC:	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IT:	Information Technology
NGO:	Non-governmental Organization
ORDA:	The Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara
UN:	United Nations
UNFAO:	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
U.S.:	United States

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Appendix one: Guide questions for FGDs

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Appendix three: Profile of informants

Appendix four: About ORDA

Abstract

The seriousness of environmental issues has been in the fore mainly because of its significance to human sustainability. This paper also acknowledges the critical importance of communication strategies in environmental protection particularly in the process of forest resource development and its sustainable management and thus human sustainability. Hence, the paper dominantly dwells on exploring the communication strategies of ORDA: a local non-government organization operating in Amhara region in promoting tree plantation and sustainable community forest development as an integral part of its rural development programme. 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. The study mainly centers on addressing the information, education and communication practices ORDA use to create awareness, as well as mobilize the rural community on sustainable community forest development. The challenges in sustainable community forest development (institutional, technical, socio-cultural and others), the communication strategies ORDA adopted to promote sustainable community forest development and the harmony of message contents with the local cultures and contexts are the central issues discussed in the paper. Appropriateness of the approaches and the lessons learned from the programme are also included. Qualitative data collection designs: FGDs, in-depth individual interview and participant observation with a semi-structured guide questions were used to garner data. Visual data were also included in the overall data collected. The research was based on Woldia Akababi Woreda, part of Semien Wollo zone in Amhara Region. According to the theories and research questions used in the study, the data gathered from Tikurwuha and Gebriel rural villages woldia Akababai woreda were presented, discussed and analyzed qualitatively. As a result, it was indicated that traditional communication was most effectively used by ORDA in mobilizing local communities in tree plantation campaigns and equally favored by the communities was interpersonal communication. Sembeties, zikirs, religious venues, social gatherings were some of the centers for the information exchange in the communities. In addition, occasional illegal free grazing, illegal tree cutting from the community forests were some of the socio-cultural challenges in sustainable community forest development that the study discovered. Based on its findings, the paper suggests some options and strategies for optimizing ORDA's present communication approaches and minimizing their limitations. In other words, it calls for some reappraisals in the methods of communicating environmental messages for effective forest development and conservation programmers among traditional, predominantly non-literate and common resource dependent poor Woldia Akababi Woreda communities and by extension, Amhara as well as Ethiopian tree planters.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Call it out of an instinct to survive or out of intelligence and manual dexterity to become the most competent and resourceful; throughout history human beings have taken advantage of nature. Not only have taken control over the planet's inhabitable land, they also have used its natural resources including its soil, minerals, water and its rich variety of animal and plant life.

Unfortunately, as (Mayer, 2001) wrote, humans in those times, have been too preoccupied with ensuring survival to be concerned about the effects of their activities to their surroundings. Hence, same processes that have produced human gains have given rise to the trends that the planet and its people can not bear (Lechner and Boli, 2004).

Nowadays, beyond the economic and social problems, global climate change, rising demands for non-renewable resources, ozone depletion, water pollution and loss of biodiversity are few among the environmental issues on the globe that make the top stories of the world news plane.

Environmentalists believe it is important to preserve biodiversity as it is nature's only blueprint of itself. Today, loss of habitat accompanied with water pollution, human population growth and deforestation threaten biodiversity. Though deforestation on a major scale has been occurring world wide, the UNFAO data (Mayer, 2001) showed that more recent rates are even higher.

In Ethiopia too we are observing growing environmental problems. IGAD (2007) reported that because of over exploitation even areas of high productive potential have been severely degraded in Ethiopia. EPA (2008) stated that the impact of land degradation and moisture stress

compounded by limited sources of alternative incomes, population pressure, and massive removal of vegetation cover are further worsening the livelihoods' security. Deforestation in Ethiopia like the rest of the world is a timely issue threatening the loss of biodiversity.

There has been a growing interest about environment in recent times more than ever before. This phenomenon, according to environmentalists (Mayer, 2001; Montgomery, 2003; Olusola, 2006), of course is due to the realization that environment is synonymous with human sustainability. This has galvanized several environmentalists to make efforts on preservation of the environment and about how to make it sustainable.

Currently, therefore the issue of natural resource conservation and their sustainable use has become one of the central topics in the global development agenda.

In fact, as Soola (2009) observed, the current concern for sustainable development through conservation of natural resources (of which forest is a chief) is long overdue. His justification is that forests constitute a critical scarce resource, indeed mankind's life support system which requires and deserves prudent management if severe dearth of forest products and future ecological disasters are to be averted.

On the other side, recognition of the important role of multiple partners in sustainable forest management including local people, NGOs and governments is resulting in an expansion of the audiences of forestry information which in turn needs for communication based on dialogue, feedback and flexibility (Dember and Anderson, 2005).

Furthermore, "Communication is a key process of bringing people together to cooperative towards addressing the problem of environmental and natural resources on which many of rural people's livelihoods and survival rely" (Cadiz, 2007). Therefore, successful, sustainable forests development efforts are based on "participation, and participation in turn requires two-way communication" (Dember and Anderson, 2005).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

With limited alternatives, more than 80% of the country's population, living in rural areas work on agriculture and depend mainly on common property resources, either for construction facility, fuel wood or grazing land. Thus, these continuous practices, leaving the land severely degraded, are causing further environmental problems.

Similarly, IGAD (2007) identified that agriculture expansion, wood fuel, charcoal production, overgrazing, recurrent drought and in some cases fires are the various pressures that have been subjected to increasing deforestation and its rate (this being the most serious threat to sustainable forestry production). In countries like Ethiopia, overgrazing and wood fuel extraction have contributed to suppression of even re-growth to the extent that people now rely on crop residues and cow dung for part of their energy needs (Kigenyi et. al 2002 in IGAD, 2007).

Dishearteningly, however, environmental education in Ethiopia is not fully developed in the curriculum of colleges and schools and there is very limited environmental education at all levels of the country according to some studies (for instance, Daniel, 2005) done on the state of environmental education in Ethiopia.

One way or another, it can be argued that the country's forests are in a state of more than diminishing. The magnitude of forest and/or environmental problems (though cannot be explored here) underscore the urgent need for a more determined approach to solving the problems. In a similar effort, to cope especially with the rapid depletion of forests and thus sustainable forest development in regional and country level:

First, the Ethiopia government has responded by recent changes in the policy and institutional framework for forestry (EPA, 2008: 46). It stated that the changes emphasized decentralization of forest management with the

participation of local communities in combating deforestation. Moreover, as a strategy, forestry's integration with other land use practices was also accentuated.

Second, in the Amhara regional state, the Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA), has responded to deforestation. Its community forest resource development project at Woldia Akababi Woreda is worth-noting. Presently, ORDA is also the largest and the leading organization in forest and water resource as well as integrated rural agricultural development among the non-governmental organizations operating in the region.

And third, as forest conservation is a group-anchored and culture-bound environmental practice, "addressing the current assault on our forests should be the concern of not only for forest and environmental experts, but also of communicators and educators" (Soola, 2009). As he added, being the articulation of social relations among people, accompanied with other inputs, communication can help not only in addressing but also in redressing the threatening blight of forests.

On top of this, for any one concerned with effective communication on an issue with a climate change, it is essential to understand what "Opinions' and 'attitudes' really mean in terms of what people may actually do when a messenger asks them to take action, or how they will respond when they are told about a problem or solution" (Rose et. al, 2005).

The assumption of this project therefore is that there is an urgent need for more study on the communication strategies that are being employed in addressing environmental issues or specifically, sustainable community forest development programs.

Hence, this study attempted to explore the communication strategies of ORDA employed in its community-based sustainable forest development

program presently under action at Woldia Akababi Woreda (Tiqurwuha and Gebriel Sites). This study was undertaken guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the main socio-cultural and other challenges in sustainable community forest development?
2. What communication strategies is ORDA presently using in its operational areas to promote sustainable community forest development?
3. To what extent ORDA's communication approaches and the contents delivered are culturally suitable and participation oriented for their effectiveness?
4. What lessons can be learned from ORDA's program?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. Exploring how the forest communication strategies of ORDA are prepared-from planning to implementing as part of sustainable development for the food-insecure rural communities.
2. To assess the main challenges of sustainable community forest development.
3. To identify to what extent forest communication approaches adopted by ORDA are culturally suitable and participatory.
4. To generate recommendations enhancing quality communication in sustainable community forest development.

1.4. Significance of the Study

An environment-oriented, research of this kind may come up with essential findings on which organizations and decision-makers pay attention to as a prerequisite to spending money and time; by understanding the consequences of their decisions on the regeneration and sustainability of the natural environment.

It is hoped that this study of communication strategies through its findings, may point communication issues of significant importance. It may serve as a hint to identify if organizations like ORDA, presently participating in natural resource (like forest) conservation and development are engaging appropriate communication strategies for the effectiveness of their projects.

To some extent also, the study may do some image clearance job to the poor and rural grass root communities being often blamed for deforestation and environmental degradation through unstable practices. This paper may do so for the reason that its findings indicated that those communities might play a major role given they got access and opportunity to alternatives and to actively participate in information exchange as well as project implementation.

Furthermore, this study was also guided by the belief that ORDA may find communication quality enhancing recommendations given based on the research findings.

This study may also serve as a pointer to a further need of research on the field.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This project is not broad enough to cover all the audiences of ORDA's communication strategies in its study, which is one of its limitations. In other words, ORDA has both internal and external communication strategies and the study focused on its external strategies. The external communication strategy again varies according to the nature of the audience and this study limited it self mainly to the beneficiaries.

Moreover, ORDA's forest resource development was found to be multi-directional and diversified: Biodiversity conservation, agro-forestry,

individual household establishment and community/ social forest development. However, this study again limited itself to community forest development part and accordingly narrowed the scope of the research participants to this subject.

1.6 Organization of the Paper

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: chapter two reviews the theoretical and empirical literature on communication theories and communication modes applicable in forest development. Chapter three reviews the methodology adopted. Chapter four presents and shows the data presentation, and data analysis & interpretation part. Finally, the last chapter (chapter Five) presents the conclusion and Recommendation part. At the end of this paper Bibliography and Appendices are also included.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

An introductory research paper of this kind can not explore all aspects of environmental view and concerns. Nevertheless, equipping one self with some introductory understanding about environment and its issues as well as sustainable natural resource management, may help exploring and analyzing communication strategies in sustainable community forest development.

Finding one all coherent universal definition seems difficult as environment and its issues meant different things for different people or organization. Montgomery's definition seems suitable for the purpose of this project:

The environment is the sum of all the features and conditions surrounding an organism that may influence it. An individual's physical environment encompasses rocks and soil, air and water, such factors as light and temperature, and other organisms present. One's social environment might include a network of family and friends, a particular political system, and a set of social customs that affect one's behavior (2003: XV).

Similarly, environment is the entity of interactions of biotic (living) and non-biotic (non-living) elements, which enhance and feed the living life on earth. It also includes the natural biophysical environment of air, soil, and water, biodiversity of biologic ecosystem, human health, and values of culture, scientific, religious, and social heritages. In the natural, every-thing-living and non-living-is interconnected which makes the earth a place of complex relationships, and they become even more complex when the activities of humans are factored in (Mayer, 2001).

According to Allen et. al (2004), every human activity exploits the natural resource of the environment and the intensity of the exploitation of these resources determines the environmental consequences. For obvious reasons therefore, many modern environmental problems like acid rain, ground water pollution and toxics in processed food can demonstrate the human effect on the environment.

Moreover, IPCC reported that the current global climate change is unusual compared to the earlier changes occurred in earth's history.

The concentration of CO² in the atmosphere has reached record high related to more than the past half-million years, and has done so at an exceptionally fast rate. Current global temperatures are warmer than they have ever been during at least the past five centuries, probably even for more than a millennium. If warming continues unabated, the resulting climate change within this century would be extremely unusual in geological terms. Another unusual aspect of recent climate change is its cause: past climate changes were natural in origin. Whereas most of the warming of the past 50 years is attributable to human activities (IPCC, 2007: 114).

As a result, there has been a growing realization in governments and NGOs that it is impossible to separate economic development issues from environmental issues. For instance, Montgomery explained that the question of sustainable development is a major focus of the United Nations:

How can developing nations continue to advance in technology and standard of living, and how can development continue elsewhere, without causing serious environmental damage or excessive consumption and eventual exhaustion of finite resources? Resource limitations are an important part of discussions of sustainable development along with such issues

as safe waste disposal, threats from pollution, wildlife habitat distraction, and loss of biodiversity (2003: 230).

On the other hand, Lechner and Boli (2004) wrote that humanity has the ability to make development sustainable, “to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

2.2. Ethiopian Forest out look

2.2.1. Deforestation as a Threat

As Wubne (1991) wrote, in the late 19th century, about 30% of Ethiopia was covered with forest. As he stated, the cleaning of land for agricultural use and the cutting of trees for fuel gradually changed the scene, and today forest areas have dwindled to less than 4% of the country’s total land.

The northern part of the high lands are almost devoid of trees except the patchy remnants of old-aged Afromonane forest which can be found mainly around the Ethiopian Orthodox churches (Alemayehu: 2006).¹ Also, about 45, 000 Km² of dense forest exists in the southern and south western section of the highlands including coniferous forests and the majority consisting primary of woodlands (Earth Trends, 2003).

Before 1974 about half of the forest land was privately owned or claimed, and roughly half was held by the government. There was little government control of forestry operation prior to the Ethiopian Revolution. The 1975, land reform nationalized forests. Thus, the government controlled harvesting of forest land. In some cases, individuals had to secure permits from local peasant associations to cut trees. But this measure encouraged illegal logging and accelerated the destruction of the remaining forests (Wubne, 1991).

In general, bearing in mind that estimates on the amount of forests vary based on the source of the information, the estimated remaining total high

¹ http://www.flipcart.com/book/ethiopian_orthodox_church_forests_opportuni

forest area (EPA, 2008) distributed in the regions of the country is about Oromiya (63%), SNNP (19%), Gambella (13%), Dire Dawa (0%), Harari (0%), Amhara (2%), Tigray (0%), Benshangul (2%), Afar (1%), Somali (0%).

2.2.2. Reforestation as a Response

In the past system, to ensure that conservation activity conformed to government policy and directive on land use, reforestation programs were organized through Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development or District Offices that planned, coordinated and monitored all work. Reforestation programs resulted in the planting of millions of seedlings in community forest through out Ethiopia. However, critics maintained that the local peasant associations lacked decision-making authority. As a result, reforestation programs did not perform well because of inadequate case of premature cuttings by peasants (Wubne, 1991).

In the present system also (FAO, 2001, in EPA, 2008), forest plantation programs have been initiated on a large scale in selected regional forest priority areas to rehabilitate formerly forested areas and produce industrial and construction wood. It explained that the total area of planted forests is estimated 216, 000 ha comprising industrial, fuelwood and commercial plantations.

In addition, the country has prepared a number of forestry and environmental action plans including the Ethiopian Forestry Action Plan (EPA, 2008). While the new forest policy has a target that the forest cover should increase 9% with in five years, it was reported that this ambition is not yet reflected in the actual situation in the regions where, despite the large scale interventions, forest cover is still shrinking.²

2.3. Challenges of Forest Resource Sustainability

As FAO (1995, in Mayer, 2001) estimated, forests covered close to 27% of the world's total land area not including green land and Antarctica. As FAO

² [Http://www.efdinitiative.org/research/publication/ppublications-repository/policies-to-increase-forest-cover-in-ethiopia](http://www.efdinitiative.org/research/publication/ppublications-repository/policies-to-increase-forest-cover-in-ethiopia)

stated some of these forests were natural, old-growth, undisturbed ecosystems; some were fragmented, disturbed environments, and some were tree plantations. And over a billion people depend partly or wholly on these forests thus, forests more than ever are being challenged by multi polar unsustainable human interventions.

In Europe acid precipitation kills forests and more than 11 million hectares of forests are destroyed yearly around the world most of which is converted to low grade farm land unable to support the farmers who settle in it (Lechner and Boli, 2004).

Sustainable forest development is also being challenged by lack of funds. This is because major forestry activities like forest inventory, plantation maintenance, lack of transportation for adequate monitoring and control conveying staff and materials to and from the site of activities and several others depend on the availability of fund (Eud et. al, 2007).

Poor governance is another challenge. Where there is weak governance, poor people have few incentives to manage their resources and face significant barriers to building sustainable livelihood for themselves. Where there is lack of effective management, common property like forests can be over-exploited, unregulated competition and resource degradation happens.³

Similarly in Ethiopia, as EPA (2008) observed, the present management practices have not been able to control or stop the loss of forests. As it stated, though the regional forestry action plans have been prepared in many of them, the regional governments have not gone beyond the preparation of the document and implementation of investment programs have not yet been in place.

It was suggested that in order to reach its forestry potential, Ethiopia needs not only have an effective forestry service but also attract the investment

³ <http://www.theidlgroup.com/FRR/ForestSectorDevelopment.htm>

from individuals, communities, and commercial actors. For this, clear property rights, appropriate institutions, and organizations, technical support, and appropriate policies and clear guide lines are needed.⁴

2.4. The Need of Communication in Sustainable Forest Development

FAO (2007) categorized human development needs broadly between materials needs and communication needs. It stated that any given development problem and an attempt to resolve will present needs related to material resources (including the conditions to acquire and manage these) and needs which involve communication: for sharing information, influencing policies, mediating conflicts, raising awareness, facilitating learning, supporting decision-making and collaborative action etc. According to FAO, these two aspects of development needs should go hand in hand and be addressed in a systematic way by any development effort.

“Communication as a systematic strategy is an essential part of all development projects, and it is essential that all concerned are able to share information and convey messages that comply with the overall objectives of the work being undertaken”(gtz, 2007). It further stressed that a communication strategy which every one has ownership is essential for the well-being of the development project.

Environmental communication in general, refers to communication practices used by media, organizations, or any other participant in public life, and relating to the theme of environment (like sustainable development, or air, water, or fauna and flora etc). It may be also considered as a process which involves both communicators and audiences and is achieved through effective message delivery, interactive listening, public discussion and debate.⁵

⁴ [Http://www.efdnitiative.org/research/publication/ppublications-repository/policies-to-increase-forest-cover-in-ethiopia](http://www.efdnitiative.org/research/publication/ppublications-repository/policies-to-increase-forest-cover-in-ethiopia)

⁵ <http://www.nau.edu/~soc-p/ecrc/>

To Cadiz (2007), while information and communication address people's lack or wrong knowledge about for example a natural resource management, communication is not a simple task of giving some information that we presume they do not yet have. Rather, Cadiz argued, "it is through participatory communication that people can come and work together toward long-lasting natural resource management as well as social change beyond individual behavioral change".

Aligned to this, IGAD (2007) reminded that the forestry sector should adopt a multi-sectoral and participatory approach as development within the forestry arena is affected by what happens outside. It suggested that information sharing should be encouraged so that successful interventions are scaled up to a wider arena. Research, education and training systems need to be reviewed focusing on changing forestry priorities and developing the science and technology solutions required to meet the needs of the poor according to IGAD.

To conclude this section, though it is just a part in the development agenda as communication alone can not bring about social development unless work hand in hand with other social factors, "it is nonetheless a very crucial dependent variable around which other factors revolve"(Olusola, 2007).

2.5. Applicable Communication Theories in Sustainable Community Forest Development

2.5.1. Development Communication Theory

To Rogers and Everett (1976), change can occur without communication and communication without change, but communication may play a role, sometimes a key role in changes like development. They extend explaining that communication effects gap is by no means inevitable and this gap can be avoided if appropriate communication strategies are pursued in development efforts.

In a similar way, development communication was defined as one perspective of communication practice addressing the gap or problems of

underdevelopment and promotes modernization. Hence, because the problem of underdevelopment was thought to be an information problem, communication was presented as the instrument that would solve it and thus, it was basically meant the transmission of information (Schramm, 1964).

The transmission view of communication being the commonest perhaps in all industrial cultures, “dominates contemporary dictionary entries under the term. It is defined by terms such as ‘imparting’, ‘sending’, ‘transmitting’, or ‘giving information to others. It is formed from a metaphor of geography or transportation”(Carey, 1989: 15).

The development communication theory was also reinforced by economic theories developed during the 1960s in which underdevelopment was considered to be a consequence of industrial and technical backwardness—“this could only be resolved by borrowing modernization strategies and importing know-how and capital from the industrialized countries of the North” (Kumar, 1994: 77, cited in Gandelsonas, 2002).

On the other hand, the notion that communication plays a role in the process of development is an aged phenomenon and scholars engaged in development debated the value, purposes, and meaning of communication for development (Melkote and Steves, 2001). However, the reality which has come through development communication strategies still present a grim picture; “the poor are still facing with fantasizing visions of wealth that are broadcasted all over the world but like mirages, they retreat when they approach them (Servaes, 2002).

On one hand also, it is argued that “our understanding of development communication emerges from our understanding of development as empowerment and communication as shared meaning involving issues at all levels of consideration: the grassroots, large community, regional, national, and global levels” (Melkote and Steves, 2001: 44).

Accordingly, in its recent meaning the term DCS is described as development planning and implementing in which adequate action is taken of human behavioral factors in the design of development project and their objectives. DSC also stands for linking all agencies involved in the planned development works such as political exclusives, political planners, development administrators, subject specialists, field workers, opinion leaders, media representatives, researchers and the beneficiaries who continue the final delivery points and the consumers of the information.⁶

The specialist(of DSC) on his side has the job of bridging the communication gap between the technical specialists with expertise in specific areas of knowledge, such as health, agriculture and literacy and potential users, who may need such knowledge and its applications to improve their performance, productivity, or their health (Melkote and Steves, 2001).

However, “development scholars and practitioners still tend to be split between those who view communication as an organization delivery system versus those who view communication more broadly as inseparable from culture and from all facets of social image” (Melkote and Steves, 2001: 37-38).

To squeeze the juice from the fruit, the development communication which was originally championed during 1950s and 1960s was not proven to be effective in actualizing change or development. The commonly mentioned reason behind was that the communication model used to promote “the objective of encouraging the industrialization and economic synonymous was one-way, non-participatory process, with most messages being international and persuasive” (white et. al, 1994: cited in Gandelsonas, 2002).

This and the failure of many development projects in the 1960s led development communication (also referred as the Bretton School of

⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/development> communication

development communication) to re-conceptualizing its top-down methods (Manyozo, 2006).

The school now has reviewed its approaches over the years and has been the most dynamic in testing and adopting new-development approaches and methodologies (Manyozo, 2006). According to him, currently, the World Bank defines development communication as “integration of strategic communication in development projects based on a clear understanding of indigenous realities”.

2.5.2. Participatory Communication Theory

According to IGAD (2007), a number of governments have decentralized natural resource management and emphasized the role of civil society and communities. This resulted due to the recent trends in natural resource management recognition that user-based national resource management is a better alternative for promoting the conservation and development of forestry and biodiversity resources as IGAD explained.

One of the new approaches being tried by many stakeholders including the Ethiopian government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the development of participatory forestry resource development and management in which local communities play an important role through joint forest management has gained acceptance (EPA, 2008).

Researchers also have found out that community participation can lead to increased equity and sustainability if the process empowers diverse members of communities especially the most disadvantaged, to mobilize and gain access to resources and to advocate for change to improve their position (Kristin, et. al, 2006: 2).

As Gandelsonas (2002: 63) argued, “seen either as input into development projects, or as a process where by poor people can gain influence and access

to resources for improving living standards, participation is definitely a major useful tool for development policy and practice.”

At this point, it is worth-mentioning that it is more of puzzling to put the concept of participation with a single definition as the term meant different things to different people at different times. As Mulwa (2003) mentioned, for some people, participation is involving people in implementing an already planned projects.

For others, however, community participation is a voluntary involvement with proper knowledge and training in which communities are equally gratified. It is the active involvement of members of a particular social unit in all aspects of development procedures (Planning, decision-making, evaluating, monitoring etc).⁷

As Gugushvili (2005) stated, public participation in decision-making is a core issue of good environmental governance for raising accountability and reliability of decisions, reducing risk of possible conflict, and inconsistencies and facilitating implementations.

Similarly, Melkote and Steves (2001) stated that “participation as-a-means to the end approach could be visualized along a continuum ranging from attempts at mobilizing of the populace to cooperation in development activities, to empowering people so that they may articulate and manage their own development”. In fact, development means lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect and environment. Development aims to educate and stimulate people to be active in self and communal improvements, while maintaining a balanced ecology (Servaes, 1993).

On the other hand, as increasing poverty in many countries triggered criticism of one-way approach, two-way communication methods were

⁷ <http://www.wikipedia.org/Wiki/developementcommunication>

developed in parallel to one-way, top-down models from the 1950s onwards. Buber was an early advocate of more open and respectful dialogue who was echoed by Freire, a Brazilian researcher on development issues, who in turn advocated communication strategies that would raise poor communities' awareness of the cause of problems and conditions (Gandelsonas, 2002).

In top-down models, people were asked to change time old practices on the basis of a foreign form of knowledge that dismissed their local traditions in the name of "true' knowledge (McKee, 1992). However, studies in a variety of third world rural settings found that marginal and illiterate groups preferred to communicate face to face rather than through mass media: One-way sources of communication (Okunna, 1995). Consequently, communication was redefined, to mention one, as a process of creating and stimulating understanding, as the basis of development rather than information transmission (Agunga, 1997).

Similarly, participatory communication identified encouraging participation, stimulating critical thinking, and stressing process, rather than specific outcomes associated with modernization and progress as the main task of development (Altafia, 1991). In addition, community empowerment became one of the main contributions of participatory theories to development communication. For example, it was indicated that empowerment is possible only if community members critically reflect on their experiences and understand the reasons for further failure and success of interventions (Bradford and Gwynne, 1995).

As a rap up for this section, participatory communication for Cadiz (2007) is not just a set of techniques or procedures to make people change their knowledge, attitudes and practices. Rather, it is a firm belief that people should voluntarily engage in activities as part of a process of gaining critical understanding of why they are doing so.

If people understand why and voluntarily change their practices and activities, such changes are likely to be more long-lasting.

They may also initiate action that brings about social change beyond individual behavior change. In social change, people work together in agreement to make some changes happen at the community or societal level (Cadiz, 2007).

2.5.3. Social Mobilization Communication Theory

Social mobilization is the cornerstone of participatory approaches in rural development and poverty alleviation programs. It is a powerful instrument in decentralization policies and programs aimed at strengthening human and institutional resources development at local level. It also strengthens access local poor to social and production services and efficiency of locally available financial resources, and enhances opportunities to asset-building by the poorest of the poor (Mukundan, 2006).

“Mobilization refers to a process in which people join together to take action oriented measure to accomplish one or more objectives” (Brown, 2001). In other words, mobilization is a process through which community members become aware of a problem, identify the problem as a high priority for community action, and decide steps to take action (Thompson and Pertschuk, 1992).

Brown (2001) argued that externally driven community level mobilization in the forest conservation context is required when status quo management arrangements prove insufficient. In other words, when local institutions are weak and many barriers to involving communities exist, mobilization will be required. “Social mobilization of rural poor at community level will be successful if directly linked with issues affecting their livelihoods” (Mukundan, 2006).

In East African context, some reports suggested that a range of support activities are needed to make community based forest management work. These include policy reforms, development-enabling legislation, capacity building at local level, and refined planning processes to support

community-based decision-making and above all adaptive institution at the local level are needed (Brown, 2001). In addition, for successful social mobilization of the rural poor, there is a need for improved access to public information on local development issues directly linked with their livelihood interests (Mukundan, 2006).

Community is a word that encompasses many different types of social groups, organizations and institutions. For the purpose of forest conservation, communities must be defined by locations such as villages or groups of villages, community counsels, church groups, youth groups, women's groups, or kinship groups (Brown, 2001). In the development lexicon, social mobilization is allied with empowerment and participation of these community units. An extra plus is that many types of neighborhood groups, health and literacy programs and the mass media-newspapers, radio and television-also play a vital role in social mobilization in the community level (Mukundan, 2006).

2.6. Modes of Communication

2.6.1. Mass Communication

People need access to resources but, in order to gain access, they first need an awareness of where resources exist and how they can be obtained. They also need the necessary information, knowledge and skills to turn these resources in to positive livelihood outcomes (Gandelsonas, 2002). As a role, media are extremely important in raising awareness and knowledge about a given problem (Atkin and Wallack, 1990). Moreover, the media are able to expose large amount of people to messages and generate conversation among audiences and others who were not exposed (Rogers, 1998). "The more informed poor people are, the more they are able to initiate and negotiate development changes in their settlements that reflect their real needs and concerns (Gandelsonas, 2002).

When it comes to the media in developing countries, it is to serve as catalysis in the development process through the provision of pro-

development information. Thus, “rather than indulge in the trivial and the sensational, the media have the primary responsibility of seeking to promote the socio-economic development and transformation of society” (Soola, 2009). This includes conservation of natural resources through tree planting and effective forest management.

As a medium of information education and entertainment, television possesses the unique characteristic of sound, sight and motion which it combines with simultaneity. It also transcends the bounds often imposed by illiteracy on information and knowledge (Soola, 2009). It also again has changed “the way teachers teach, governments govern, religious leaders preach, and the way we organize the furniture in our houses’ (Baran, 2002). Similarly, according to Soola (2009), demonstration of modern tree planting or forest management techniques on television can make them both graphic (because of the transitions-the cut, the dissolve, the super imposition and so on) and attractively real to rural tree growers or forest managers. However, he added that television suffers a severe limitation as it is priced beyond the financial reach of the rural poor and its centralized operations make social involvement and participation almost impracticable.

Permanence, possibility of information custody, storage, close reading, and future use and explaining difficult and involved process are unique advantages of print media (Soola, 2009). Readers use a newspaper to get information about and interpretation of public affairs, for relation and escape, for prestige (newspaper content is raw material for conversation) and for social contact (Baran, 2002).

As a result, creatively and strategically used, editorials, features, news reports, columns, cartoon strips, laden with forest conservation information, the newspapers, when available, “can be a potent medium for disseminating information” (Soola, 2009). Here again, newspapers can be economically demanding for rural dwellers in addition to the user requirement of being literate.

2.6.2. Interpersonal Communication

It would be wrong to assume that development mainly or only requires media channels. The reason is that as Bander (1994) argued, social learning and decision making are not limited to considering media messages but listening and exchanging opinions with a number of different sources, and thus interventions can not solely resort to the mass media. Also, as Servaes (1999) noted, "mass communication is important in spreading new awareness of possibilities and practices, but at the stage at which decisions are being made about whether to adopt or not to adopt innovations, personal communication is far more likely to be influential".

Research on cooperation also has indicted that groups in which subjects are able to talk among themselves showed higher rates of cooperation than those who were not allowed to discuss the problem faced. "Thanks to interpersonal communication: the group may develop a sense of belongingness and affiliation with each other which might accompanied by a shift of focus from self-concern to heightened concern for the well being of the group as a whole" (Shroeden et. al, 1995, in Gandelsonas, 2002).

On the other hand, as Soola (1988, in Soola, 2009) observed, communication of new ideas by mass media often strives to provide general information and create general awareness, ignoring such vital specific as "what the nature of the new idea is, where and how it can be obtained, at what cost, how it can be applied, and the gain of adoption". Thus, coupled with impersonal and anomic nature of the mass media, often reduces their effectiveness, efficiency, forcing would be adopters to seek for alternative in interpersonal networks, Soola stated.

Additionally, although personal contacts are important for nearly everyone, they are particularly so for poor people in developing countries. "Many poor people cannot afford radios, televisions, or even newspapers or books. As a result, many poor people are almost wholly dependent on talking to other people to get news and information to help them manage their lives" (Rusklis, in Gandelsonas, 2002). Thus, for most new ideas, particularly

those rooted in group values, such as tree planting or growing, “our searchlight must turn in the direction of the indigenous and interpersonal networks of rural tree growers” (Soola, 2009).

Mckee (1992) observed that “nothing can replace community involvement and education in the effective dissemination of information”. He stated that interpersonal communication and the action of community workers account for much of the success of several projects. Moreover, though television, radio, and other media are important in disseminating messages, social networks are responsible for the diffusion of new ideas (Valente et. al, 1994). The interpersonal networks that could also be influential in promoting the culture of tree planting forest management include family, relatives, neighbors, friends, priests, imams, extension workers and opinion leaders (Soola, 2009).

2.6.3. Traditional Communication

The traditional or ritual view of communication is by far the older of other views. As Carey (1992) noted, in a ritual definition, communication is linked to terms such as “‘sharing’ ‘participation’, ‘association’, and ‘fellowship’ and the ‘possession of common faith’ ”. According to him, this definition exploits the ancient identity and common roots of the terms, “‘commonness’, ‘communication’, ‘community’, and ‘commonness’ ”.

“For people supportive actions of neighbors, such as small loans, caring for children, and sharing food or other goods, are often major means of economic survival” (Rabrenovic, 1994, cited in Gandelsonas, 2002). Such verbal and non-verbal genuine traditional ways to communicate messages of affinity, affection, and other values among residents can promote very strong social ties and constitute the basis for supportive networks (Gandelsonas, 2002).

In the same vein, community-based forms of traditional communication such as songs, theaters and other activities need to be promoted as they could provide opportunities to identify common problems and solutions, to

reflect upon community issues, and mobilize resources (Hamelink, 1990). In Africa, for example, popular theater has been successfully used to increase women's participation and ability to deal with primary care problems—through song and storytelling, women were able to raise awareness and attention to issues and address problems, something that had not been achieved through “modern” media (Meana, 1991).

Carey (1992) stressed that a ritual view of communication is “directed not toward the extension of messages in space but towards the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs.” Similarly, Soola (2009) explained that indigenous communication is people's communication, one they can easily identify and relate with. According to him, though lacking the reach and simultaneity of the conventional media, “this seeming inadequacy of indigenous media is richly compensated by its being influential in value-laden, group-anchored and culture-bound issues such as tree or forest management practices.”

To conclude the modes of communication section, much of the current thinking is that successful interventions combine media channels and other forms of communication. Against arguments of powerful media effects that dominated communication in the past, recent conclusions suggest that blending media and interpersonal channels is fundamental for affective interventions (Flay and Burton, 1990). In addition, no single medium can be relied upon for tree planting /forest management information dissemination. As a result,

A multi-media strategy which exploits the rich resource of the various media forms will unarguably outperform any single medium, regardless of its avowed possibilities. However, the media forms must work in synergy, with the mass media serving to extend the reach of the indigenous media (Soola, 2009).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study mainly depended on verbal qualitative data and partly on visual data that were thought to give some illustrative functions. In order to narrow the gap that might be created as a result of using a single approach (qualitative), a triangulation technique was adopted in the process of collecting sets of data.

The triangulation technique was used to help strengthening the generalizability of the research findings by double checking them from various angles. In fact, triangulation basically refers to “the observation of the research issue from (at least) two different points” (Flick et al, 2004:178). The underlying intention of using it is “to compensate for any one-sidedness or distortion that may result from an individual method, theory, database or researcher” (Steinke in Flick et. al, 2004).

Flick et. al (2004:14) mentioning Ragin (1994) stated that “Research design is a plan for collecting and analyzing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he or she has posed“. According to them, this design touches almost all aspects of the research from the minute details of data collection to the selection of techniques of data analysis.

Similarly, as the research design, this study was approached qualitatively. The primary reason behind was the nature of the study (exploring communication strategies of ORDA) and the character of the central subject- reforestation (being a group-anchored and culture-bound environmental practice) as a response to deforestation that this research attempted to address primarily. In addition, in an attempt to address any climate issue (Rose et. al, 2005), understanding behavior (what people do, how they do it and why) is a better basis for extrapolating the likely effect of

communications propositions than opinions. For this, they pointed that “good qualitative research usually sets out to establish and understand why people do what they do before exploring ways of persuading them to consider doing things differently.”

While dealing within qualitative framework, it was strived to garner verbal data through qualitative interview research designs; group discussions and in-depth individual interviews. Observation which is one of the qualitative designs was also used when needed. In addition to verbal data, visual data were also included in the gathered overall data.

As mentioned just a moment ago, this study mainly deals with exploring and explaining the communication strategies of ORDA in sustainable community forest development. As a result, in designing this project, qualitative method was emphasized as one main angle to the study. This was done for the reason that “qualitative research is noted, above all for its explanatory power and for the richness and depth of information it generates” (Holland and Cambell, 2005:5). To Denscomber (2003: 233) also, “qualitative tends to rely on detailed intricate and thick description of events which may convey the complexity of the situation and provide the reader with sufficient detail to judge for himself whether the researcher’s interpretations of the phenomenon is justifiable and relevant for other circumstances”.

3.2. Research Participants

Selecting research participants is believed to be one of the important aspects of planning and designing a research study. In fact, “the specific research design used in a study often determines how the participants will be selected for inclusion in the study” (DeMatteo et. al, 2005). According to them, the research being investigated, the research design being used, and the availability of an appropriate numbers and types of study participants are among several factors that determine how potential participants are selected.

Similarly, an honest effort was made in deliberately selecting the appropriate study area and purposively deciding the relevant research informants for possible effective outcome of the research study.

3.2.1. The Study Area

ORDA was intentionally included as participant for the reason that “NGOs based in rural areas play an important role in improving sustainability in forestry and natural resource management” (Ramanathan, 2006). Besides, it seemed well experienced thus, appropriate for a participatory communication research of this kind. It has been working especially in North Eastern rural Amhara region since its foundation in 1984. And most of all, it volunteered to participate in the study.

The study areas, Tiquwuha and Gebriel community forest sites, were selected for their relevance observed as the field data collection process advanced or as the study case went on constructed.

The North eastern area including Semien Wollo Zone (where the sites are located) of the Amhara region, as is common, is known for its recurrent drought induced famine. Historically also, this area was the traditional free zone holdings of the then Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement and thus, it was victim of civil war. For this and other similar reasons, these areas of Amhara region were poverty oriented and hence environmentally severely degraded.

To rehabilitate the environment as well as enhance the food insecure rural poor, ORDA has been engaged in sustainable community forest development programs including Woldia Akababi woreda. Accordingly, Tiquwuha and Gebriel community forest site villages were selected and included to take part in dealing with this study.

3.2.2. Research Informants

An attempt was made to consciously select informants who would give an intensive, related and hence, reliable data which could enable to answer the research questions rose and ultimately success of the research project.

Accordingly, communication and IT experts from ORDA head office (Bahir Dar); ORDA forestry and communication experts in Bahir Dar (main office) and in Semien Wollo Zone (branch office at Woldia Ketema), community forest development site and seedling nursery controllers, community forest development securities, occasional tree planting group leaders, and selected members of the village communities who in some way involved in the community forest development project were deliberately selected and included in the data gathering process as informants.

Moreover, some visual data related to the aforestation activity of the organization and the communities in the sustainable forest resource development program, were also collected.

3.3. Data Collection Techniques

Two types of data were gathered in the process of dealing with this research project-mainly verbal qualitative data and partly visual data.

While gathering verbal data, different forms of data collection designs were applied. This include; FGDs, individual in-depth interviews and participants' observation. The visual data were simply requested and collected from ORDA branch office administrator.

If is said that good environmental decision making requires good understanding of human environmental interactions and implementation of decision-making processes that integrate scientific understanding with deliberate process to ensure that the science is judged by the range of parties interested in the decisions (Brewer and Stern, 2005). Similarly, to come up with information reliable enough to answer the research questions

of this particular project, first, verbal data collection techniques were triangulated. Second, an attempt was made to further triangulate verbal data with visual data.

3.3.1. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Being a field data collection technique, the FGDs were undertaken in the judgmentally selected project sites-Tikurwuha and Gebriel, rural villages of Woldia Akababi wereda. In these villages there are four 'ni'uses'- the smallest unit in community forest management. Accordingly, after one FGD was conducted at each unit, two were held among Sunday church worshipers and groups selected from one of 'Hiwas' (awareness creation meeting day) meeting. In each of the FGDs, it was arranged in a way that six people would participate.

Deliberately employing this technique was accompanied with the researcher's intention to observe the concept and urge of discussants towards ORDA's communication strategies in the sustainable community forest development effort. In other words, it was assumed that "focus group discussions can be extremely useful techniques for obtaining individuals' impressions and concerns about a certain issues, services or products" (DeMatteo et.al, 2005). Moreover, to Buddenbaum and Katherine (2001: 127), "focus group discussion makes the response possible to probe beneath surface opinions behaviors towards the research project."

As much attention was made to make the selected inclusions of each FGDs from individuals who shared a particular characteristics of participating in the occasional tree planting campaign and well aware of the community forest development project of the organization. An intentional attempt was made to heterogenize the participants of each group in sex, age and sometimes educational status as forestry may mean different things to different participants. Moreover, with the support of the site controllers, individuals who were perceived to have adequate socio-cultural knowledge

and being active participants in the community forest development program were consciously included in conducting the FGDs.

As DeMatteo et. al (2005) stated, FGDs enable a researcher to obtain data from a relatively large number of participants in a short period of time. They observed that “the information obtained from focus groups can provide useful insight into how various procedures, systems, or products are viewed, as well as desires and concerns of a given population. “A similar view also states:

Focus groups have proved popular in this area because they seem to produce rich qualitative material well suited to detailed interpretive analysis (transcripts of people discussing their views and actions in their own words, and in some degree, on their own terms) (Deacon et. al, 1999: 55).

3.3.2. In-Depth Individual Interview

According to DeMatteo et. al (2005), a thorough interview is a form of self report that is relatively simple approach to data collection. Although simple, as they stated, it can produce a wealth of information and is also an efficient way to collect a wide variety of data that does not require formal testing.

Hence, in-depth individual interview was another versatile approach applied in this project. It was conducted with relevant individuals at different levels lead to the construction of the study case. The researcher performed in-depth interview with communication officer and IT expert of ORDA head office, forestry experts at Semien Wollo Zone ORDA branch office, Tiquwuha and Gebriel community forest development site and seedling nursery controllers, community forest securities, former tree plantation group leaders, community leaders and individuals selected from each FGDs representing the community.

In the process of conducting this, a semi-structured interview question guide was used to ensure consistency between the research issues and the data gathered. Related to this, Deacon et. al stated that:

Semi-structured interviewing abandons concerns with standardization and control seeks to promote an active open-ended dialogue... The interviewer controls the discussion by referring to an interview guide that sets out the issues to be covered during the exchange (Deacon et. al, 1999: 65).

Moreover, a decent effort was made to make the guide questions to have a quality of stipulating and presenting the affective, cognitive or perceptive and value-oriented meaning about communication and sustainable forest resource development.

Just one more thing, as most questions asked were loose and open ended, an interactive conversations were created between the interviewees and interviewer. Interviews were recorded on audio cassette (where this was accepted to the interviewees) which in the meantime allowed for intensive note-taking.

3.3.3.Participants' Observation

In an attempt to double check as well as to get a clue of understanding about the truthfulness of the information discussants and interviewees were giving, with best effort, a deliberate and systematic observation approach was used.

In addition, wondering around the community forests, seedling nursery spots, as well as spending sometime at the branch office and traveling with the organization's employees while chatting were among several events that created observation opportunities to the researcher.

Observation seems to include a range of different understandings in a research. To DeMatteo et. al (2005), for instance, this approach lies on the direct observation of the construct, of interest, which is often some type of behavior.

To Deacon et. al (1999: 251), however, the term observation is reserved for research in which “the participation is necessary, and is intended to generate more information and data than would be possible without participation”.

Similarly, in this study, by pre-informing the participants about the objectives of the project and value of its contribution as a whole, a rapport for participation was settled. This helped a lot to get the participants cooperate and respond with much freedom and interactively.

3.3.4. Visual Data

Visual data, specifically, photos which were thought to be relevant to the research topic and enhance answering the research questions were collected. The Semien Wollow Zone ORDA branch office coordinator at Woldia Ketema positively responded when asked and happily contributed the visual data for this project.

The meaning of any particular photographic image is made up of the connotations that have attached themselves to the people, places and objects it depicts, and the associations that have grown up around the particular formal and technical conventions used to organize and light the space in front of the lens (Deacon et. al, 1999: 180).

In addition to verbal data, interviews and group discussions, as Flick et. al. (2004: 179) stated, “Visual data are currently receiving considerable attention in qualitative research” Thus, new perspective in the triangulation of data is emerging as they explained. So is what was tried to do in this project. Besides their triangulation function, the researcher thought that photos could make the research project more alive and participatory.

3.5. Data Presentation and Analysis

Transcribing all the qualitative data collected was the first step of the process as most of them were audio tape recorded. Then, based on the

research questions raised at the beginning of this study, the transcribed data were categorized in a way they give meaning and be convenient to the data analysis. The visual data as well were categorized according to their relevance of illustrating and supporting the central issues carried by the categorized verbal data.

To the best effort, it was tried to use informed judgments to help decide how important each datum and text within documents and how it may contribute to finding an answer to the research questions or count as evidence to the answer.

The remaining visual data are placed at the appendix of the paper. However, the verbal data that were not used were ignored. And finally, with all the researcher's effort, the categorized verbal data (Amharic) were translated to this language (English) and presented with as much care as possible. The guide questions used were also translated and placed at the appendix of the paper.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

After a systematic processing of the data collected, four methodological aspects were used in presenting the relevant findings of this study: Key informant in-depth interviews, FGDs, participant observation and visual data. Once again, in an intention of compensating the single qualitative approach used in the research, a conscious combination of different methods was made.

As a catch up, exploring the communication strategies of ORDA in promoting sustainable community forest development was one of the main objectives of this study. Accordingly, the focus of the analysis and discussion is weighed to sustainable community forest development communication strategies as ORDA employ them. An effort was also made to relate the data presentation and analysis with the communication theories reviewed in the literature part of this paper.

So, in its organization, this part of the chapter is followed by sustainable community forest development challenges' section. The part that weighs the appropriateness extent of ORDA's communication strategies follows after the section of communication strategies of ORDA discussion is consumed. The section that lists the lessons from the project wraps up this chapter.

4.2. Challenges in Sustainable Community Forest Development

4.2.1. Organizational Challenges

4.2.1.1. Institutional Challenges

Expert interviewees informed that there were several institutional challenges that ORDA faced through out its history (since its foundation in 1984) that tested its forest development efforts. According to them, ORDA was mainly

challenged by a lack of fund and its dependence on external funding for the reason that the preference of international funding agencies to Europe or U.S. based NGOs in funding had a discouraging impact on local NGOs such as ORDA to have direct access. Difficulties related to establishing sound fund raising strategies were also mentioned.

In addition, lack of focus in planning, not giving due attention to organizational capacity in project planning, inadequate logistical capacity, staffs turnover due to low remuneration, limited visibility works, inadequate participation and ownership of the community in development efforts were the dominant challenges alluded by all experts at all levels.

However, over the years “the organization has developed in terms of human power, systems development, number of intervention areas, type of programs and donor base,” (communication officer, Head office). As he stated, signing a tripartite agreement between the regional government and Bureau of Agriculture to administer and manage relief and food-for- work resources and working in partnership and cooperation with government offices at all levels has enabled ORDA to efficiently and effectively implement its development programs in Amhara region.

As a forest expert at Head office responded, though it did some reforestation work before, it was in 1997 that ORDA begun extensive reforestation program. According to this informant, till 2008, through its reforestation programs, ORDA was able to increase the natural coverage of the region by 0.41% and the plantation coverage by 12.3% through 152 million seedling plantation.

The communication officer also informed that ORDA has formed a new structure named as IT and GIS unit recently in view of the importance of information technology in development programs.

In short, it was observed that ORDA still is donor fund dependent. However, as was also informed by most experts, its achievements were partly because

of the better commitment between ORDA and government staff in capacity building activities, improved service delivery capacity of government line offices and enhanced capacity of ORDA and government staff with regard to planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of development programs.

4.2.1.2. Technical Challenges

Reported from the in-depth interview with study areas community forest site and seedling nursery site controllers, there were several technical challenges in the forest development activities. The researcher also physically observed part of the challenges including site selection for seedling nursery.

It was observed that ORDA has two nursery sites in the study areas-located to the west of Tikurwuha village. One is placed approximately 50 meters



from the nearest street. And by it, a government rural agriculture seedling nursery is found which has an implication of wise nursery site selection-easy for any collaborative action. However, the other one is found walking down to the bottom of a moderately sloped hillside where there is a small river at the bottom. The challenge informed was going up that slope while carrying a basket full of seedlings. The forest technician explained the situation:

You do not know how difficult it is for the rural villagers to transport the seedlings to the waiting car. During the plantation season, the hillside is usually muddy which creates

additional challenge and around 700,000 seedlings ready to be planted have to be transported. Some times, people fall and get hurt and another time hundreds of seedlings might be destroyed. And the cost of one seedling, when ready to be planted, it has already consumed around 18 Birr. (Forest Technician, Woldia Akababi Woreda).



In addition, “this branch office has a serious transportation problem. As a result, commonly human labor is used to transport the seedlings to the hillsides where even there is infrastructure” one of the former tree plantation group leaders explained the situation.



Community forest site controllers of both villages in support of this idea said that let alone for seedling transportation, there has been just a car doing the job of conveying staffs and materials to and fro site activities.



From both site controllers and expert informants and at almost all levels reaction, it was observed that in principle they all understood and knew that there were institutional and technical challenges. Some of them even believed that these challenges were not worse than what ORDA had encountered and hence resumed working even under pressure. In fact, the head office communication officer reminded that the initial volunteers who found ORDA were characterized by personal qualities of honesty, perseverance, transparency and willingness.

4.2.2. Socio-Cultural Challenges

4.2.2.1. Dependency Attitude

From an in-depth interview with expert groups, it was perceived that in the early days of forest development attempt, ORDA faced inadequate participation and ownership of the community due to dependency attitude or mentality. According to them, when ORDA arrived there with some

resources, almost all the rural dwellers of Woldia Akababi Woreda, thought that it came to donate some aids. As a result, forest development supervisor (branch office) informed that things did not go right at the beginning. As he stated, through religious leaders (priests and imams) and community elders, the organization had to explain that it came to do forest rehabilitation at the hills collaborating with the community. This explanation also included that every individual of the community would be paid (in kind) for every small job that he would contribute in the forest development activity.

The forest technician informed that things were a lot better these days, and “it was only when dwellers saw what ORDA and part of the communities who agreed to work with it have done with the hills that almost all Woreda Villagers accepted to continue the community forest development programs.” The forest development supervisor also emphasized that ORDA’s vision related to forest development and other programs was meant to change the poor community’s dependence attitude on entirely natural resource (forest) and aid and hence enable them to stand on their two feet. As he stressed, for the sustainability of the rural poor as well as its projects, ORDA “gives more attention to social dynamics and software aspects rather than hardware aspects.”

On the other hand, informants of the site controllers reminded that out of selfishness and lethargy (non-employment) still sometimes in the nights illegal tree cutting from the community plantation forests was occurring. These informants pointed fingers mainly at individuals who migrated from remote rural areas to woldia town. As most of these informants asserted, a kebele administrator (previously participated in tree planting campaigns) who illegally dissected some part of the area enclosures and cut trees from the community woodlots for personal advantage was also another individual claimed for illegally abusing community forests.

However, the branch office experts including the coordinator believed that compared to its previous extent, presently, the illegal cutting has decreased

a lot. What surprised the researcher was how the forest development supervisor viewed this cutting from unexpected angle. He explained that “people may cut trees out of a decent lack of awareness or out of greed which in both cases is a crime. From the illegal cutting, on the other hand,



the organization learns that the trees are ready to give service to the community, that they are matured, that people have started tasting the fruits of their hard work.”

Concerning conflict resolution, all expert groups supposedly informed that the organization was the last body to get involved in resolving conflicts as it did with the kebele administrator (took him to court). According to them, it primarily gave the chance and the authority to the local people to solve the problems (conflicts) through their traditional conflict resolution methods. Gebriel site community informant and village council confidently supported this idea responding that always before any case especially related to conflict was taken to ORDA, the community did its best to give solutions based on the local rules that the community was well aware off.

Observed from all levels of respondents and participants’ reaction, the overall inclination is that the village dwellers are developing aspirations in combating poverty through hard work. Some of the FGDs respondents and informants in both sites even went to the extent of saying that they always are eager to participate in ORDA’s tree plantation campaigns as they got paid the wage they deserved for their labors.

4.2.2.2. Past Communal Habits Refusing to Die

In relation to forest depletion, there were many past communal habits practiced for ages in the study areas. “Our fathers shared and used the neighborhood in common. They were traditional people and thus depended on the communal use of the natural resource they shared. We are as well part of that tradition taking it from them,” said a community elder (Tikurwuha) explaining the matter. The elder honestly stated that till recently, he practiced the communal habits despite all the restrictions and awareness creation educations given by ORDA. According to him, through time, however, let alone himself (one of the pioneer elders mediating ORDA and the community), the community in general was becoming free of the habits and started learning to live with the new styles of the communal life.

Another key informant argued similarly that there were the habits which played their own role in destroying the natural forests and other natural resources of the areas. 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 and unsystematic pruning of trees for fuel wood were some among the past communal practices this and other informants mentioned.

The forest development supervisor also informed another habit by which a peasant came back home carrying a tree (or a branch) whenever he went out to work on his farm or pay a simple visit. Traditionally, it was considered as one way of helping the home lady in fuel wood collection. However, before knowing, a lot of wood would be gathered which through time decayed or burned on farm field for the ashes and the peasant repeated the same process again which implied the effect it created on the natural forest destruction.

However, all expert respondents believed that big improvements were made in regulating and minimizing the anti-forest past practices though there

were some remaining hesitant parts of the community in understanding the unnaturalness of their practices to the environment. As expert groups informed, this was achieved through continues education to create awareness, introduction of modern fuel saver technologies (like 'Ennat Middijja') and modern alternative energy sources (like biogas and solar). Moreover, rural communities were also encouraged and supported by the organization to develop individual seedling nursery and plantation and educated and advised to implement birth control methods for family planning.

All discussants in both sites supposedly explained that among the past communal practices fuelwood gathering and free grazing in community forests and area enclosures were still rarely practiced. This being their last choice and out of a blurred understanding that their animals do not create any mess against forests were some of the reasons behind these rare practices.

On the other hand, it appeared that all the expert groups accepted the rare occurrence of these acts, but reminded that the number of free grazers and illegal wood fuel gatherers from the forests was decreasing through time. They added that these communal habits would not end by just telling people not to practice them rather they die when the new sustainable practices get adopted among the people. In relation to this, it was indicated that ORDA was working seriously on awareness creation by building the capacity of government and NGOs, regional, woreda and kebele managements, and the journalists of the region who all in one way or another influence and support the poor rural dwellers (expert informants).

From the reactions of both FGDs and key informants, the researcher perceived that the community in general understood the impacts of communal habits on destroying natural as well as plantation forests.

4.2.2.3. Lack of Awareness

Some community members have now started even secretly informing the persons' identities who illegally cut trees. Others have started requesting to monitor the forests being on the side of the forest securities. Moreover, when even they are called for meetings and discussions on environment and related issues, they were observed to fully attend and participate in idea exchanging activities by for example, asking for better explanations. Even in some cases they have already begun to discuss forestry issues of the community at the available gatherings and opportunities. Sometimes, some community members looked so empowered that they go to the extent of critically criticizing the authorities for not taking immediate and serious measures on individuals who were caught while cutting community trees (All expert groups).

Perceived from this and overall in-depth interview with expert groups, an increasing awareness of the rural community was reported. Part of the reasons mentioned was the different benefits that the community started gaining from the reforestation program. As a result, asking when and where the next plantation program would be was becoming a common community question.

Gebriel site village council positively explained that ORDA launched a blessed program and there were many changes noticed since then. As he stated, he remembered that ORDA's first purpose for establishing the area enclosures and community forests was meant for ecological regeneration rather than economic benefits. However, he reminded that people experienced increasing economic benefits and thus, actively participated in afforesting as well as monitoring the community woodlots which in turn proved an increased awareness among the community.

Most informants from both sites on their part shared the view of the village council. They responded that they understood and got adequate knowledge

about the benefits of the community forests and area enclosures. Specially one informant said that:

Since ORDA began the reforestation project in our village many things are getting better. Now we have grass for our animals, house cover or we can collect and sell it even back to ORDA itself as it needs it for seedling nursery. We have also individual woodlots which we planted with the support of the organization. We can ask the kebele administration for permission and sell some of the trees to financially support our family (Former group leader, Tikurwuha).

Similarly, Tikurwuha key informant responded that ORDA did various things to the awareness of the community. Paying the wage (in kind) in return of their labors which partly taught the community that if they work they would not be hungry, the lessons obtained through the religious leaders and community elders selected among the local people and trained by ORDA, experience sharing discussions, and watching the entertaining movies that ORDA occasionally invited through which the community enjoyed while learned about forestry were some of ORDA's efforts made to raise community awareness (Expert and Key Informants).

Moreover, it was emphasized that the majority of the community developed awareness. A systematic approach through the religious leaders and community elders to communicate the community messages about the dos and the don'ts related to the developed forests and the voluntary and direct participation for the community in the whole sustainable forest development project implementation were mentioned as other fundamental reasons behind the change (Expert informants).

As the researcher's observation, perceived from the overall inclination of the respondents and their reaction, there is an increasing awareness on sustainable forest use and environmental protection. However, there were also informants who reminded that individual behavioral change creation is what the organization should work on in-depth as its next step.

4.2.3. Other Remaining Challenges

Understood from the key informants and FGDs responses of both sites, community forest-tree tenure right remained an issue of concern and a challenge to the sustainability of the forests developed. The reason informed was that though the peasants have the right to cut the grass to feed animals or sell it, their right for direct economic benefit from the trees seemed debatable. On the other hand, the forest development supervisor at the branch office reminded that the area enclosures and the community forests were established mainly for ecological rehabilitation. According to him, before the project began, ORDA and the local community agreed that one way or another in the final analysis, the communities would be the real direct beneficiaries.

In the mean time, however, the community forest security informants at both sites almost cried explaining that illegal logging was challenging them day in and day out. Especially, the Tikurwuha site securities complained that it was becoming more difficult to monitor the whole site due to their limited number (only 13 of them) and broadness of the site. The site controller informants of both sites also confirmed that the forests were under pressure often forcing them to enhance the securities monitoring the forests which they considered it another load of work that no authority from main branch office understood or knew.

Furthermore, except rarely grown acacia tree plantations, the researcher observed that in both sites, the eucalyptus plantation forest covered most of the hillsides in some cases to the approximate areas of farm lands. A criticism associated with eucalyptus tree is the depletion of soil nutrients.



For example, the French Institute of Research for Development and its partners in Burkina Faso and Senegal (Spore, 7: 2008), revealed the exotic plants (Eucalyptus, exotic pines, Australian acacia) which are well adapted to the extremely harsh conditions and areas with mineral-deficiency soils have undoubtedly proved their effectiveness in producing biomass and combating erosion. However, it was indicated that the species have also upset the structure of the soil and reduced the diversity of certain mushrooms and bacteria that are crucial to a healthy ecosystem.



From overall impression of what the expert groups informed, it was induced that there was not clear cut legislation about the local community's ownership right to directly gain financial benefits from the developed forest trees.

On the other hand, from the researcher's observation, the reaction and responses of both key informants as well as FGDs respondents of both sites indicated that they were well aware and confident that the forests belonged to them and were benefiting from them. However, the responses of community forest security and former informants proved that people were still involved in massive illegal cuttings that had a negative implication for the sustainability of the forests.

4.3. Communication Strategies Adopted in Promoting Sustainable Community forest Development

ORDA has a strategic framework of communication to identified both internal and external audiences. The discussion here focuses the approaches it used to communicate its external audience which again identified as mainly donors and partners, media and the direct beneficiaries of its development projects specifically forest development programs.

4.3.1. Approaching Donors and Partners

4.3.1.1. Internet

In addition to regular e-mails regarding activities, quarterly news letters and other relevant updates are sent to international partners, ORDA's communication team uses uploading documents project results and other relevant information on ORDA's website so as to keep its international donors and partners informed (Expert groups).

The communication team also planned to post ORDA's documents on the websites of other NGOs and government offices working on a similar areas to reach wider number of international organizations that have an already established relationship and thus to garner support. As well, the communication unit works on encouraging and convincing relevant organizations like donors, collaborating organizations and networks to create links from their website to ORDA's existing website. This way, ORDA tries to reach a better number of visitors than earlier (Expert groups).

From the researcher's point of view, with the mounting materialization of technology and the nature of these particular audiences, it is perfectly appropriate to use electronic means of communication.

4.3.1.2. Public Promotional or Information Materials

The communication unit also prepares a communication pack which contains one brochure that was intended to update readers of ORDA's project and activities. A system of informing visitors about ORDA's overall

activities through photo galleries is already in place in the organization (communication officer).

Other promotional materials like newsletter (quarterly entitled “ORDA brief”), fact sheet, and success stories pack were the major ones that the organization used to approach its readers including donors and partners. In addition, it makes these materials like copies of brochure to be accessed by liaison offices abroad (Britain and U.S.) so that the international audience can easily access them (IT Expert).

It is the researcher’s understanding that the communication unit strives to communicate these audiences to provide them with up to date information about the over activities of the organization which would help the organization to keep existing donors and attract new ones.

4.3.2. Approaching the Media

The communication unit believed that ORDA’s success largely depended on a carefully orchestrated media campaign where different levels of information were provided in the media depending on their needs. As a result, the best approach it employed to handle the media is making information print ready for the media so that they can process a story as fast as possible.

4.3.2.1. Press Kits and other Promotional Materials

The communication unit prepares a press kit containing a brochur, fact sheet (summarizes past accomplishment and success) and contact details of ORDA’s project coordinators and key informants at the head office.

4.3.2.2. Tour for Journalists

According to the communication unit, field visits for the media were a particularly useful tool with which to interest the media in a project and ensure their support in the future. Accordingly, an organized visit of journalists to projects was arranged with the projects of the organization.

Media visits involved transport, accommodation, food and per diem payments. Specific programs are arranged for visits and project coordinators and community members should be available for personal interviews.

The researcher's understanding is that the communication unit gave a lot of emphasis for a fair reason that the media could further communicate ORDA's relevant messages to the wider public.

4.3.3. Approaching the Direct Beneficiaries

4.3.3.1. Mass Media

According to the communication officer and IT expert of the communication unit, the media particularly the regional played a significant role in informing the general public about the organization. As they stressed, the regional radio for instance was a very appropriate means communicating with the direct beneficiaries of its projects who were located in remote areas. They added that good use of the television was also critical to create awareness of ORDA's activities among the wide public and even to obtain more supporters of the organization.

The communication officer informed that in order to create awareness and reach the grass roots, besides its communication techniques, ORDA used the print media-'Bekkur' and 'Abyiotawi Democracy'. The reason mentioned was that the organization considered them rural development media thus used them to advocate programs according to the officer's words. ORDA has also been working with government line offices like rural agriculture, grassroots organizations, cooperatives, associations (like youth), user groups and other CBOs and government structures at all levels in informing, training and educating project participants of the rural poor. This enabled to mobilize the community resources to achieve its development goals (communication officer, head office).

An extra plus is that ORDA has made efforts to build the capability of journalists found in the region related to message preparation and

communication of environmental protection and sustainable development. Recently, for example, it gave training for journalists in the region on biodiversity and climate change. Journalist who came from Radio Amhara, Bahir Dar FM radio, Gondar Radio and Amhara TV program and other media organizations participated the training (IT expert, head office).

From this, it was easily perceived that ORDA adopted a multimedia communication approach in reaching messages to rural dwellers about the issues of sustainable forest development and its other rural projects. Notwithstanding ORDA's efforts, weighing according to the arguments of the communication theories discussed and the nature of its direct beneficiary audiences, ORDA's adaption of television and news papers, appeared utilizing an impotent channel. The reason behind is that to the direct beneficiary audiences, who in this particular case are remote area poor, the television is financed beyond their reach and they are pre-dominantly non-literate and thus lack the first reader requirement (being literates) to use the news papers.

Unless the government or the organization subsidize these poor for a TV-set, it is less probable that television reaches and teaches them about modern tree planting and all that. Beyond this, detected from the reaction of key informants and discussants of both site responses, the probability of finding a television set owner was practically none, except that some of them said they watched television when they go to the near urban town-woldia ketema to visit relatives or do something.

On the other hand, "We often listen to the radio and try to catch up with current events like if the season is going to be sunny or cloudy, rainy or windy, and when is it going to rain, and when shall we collect the crops, we often try to learn about them on the radio," (Controller, Gebriel site). However, some of them mentioned that they enjoyed and learned a lot about forestry from the entertainment movies that ORDA has several times invited them to watch(sort of 'educainment' technique).

Most informants and discussants from both sites as well, confirmed that they listened radio programs mostly the regional radio and often informed with agricultural issues. They also did not deny that there was no a forestry devoted program on any of the radio programs they listened except few presented incorporated with agricultural programs.

According to key informants of both sites, despite lack of the first reader requirement of being literate, and partly poor financial limitation, some news papers on a weekly base were used to exchange environmental and agricultural information. This was found to be done through 'Bekkur' and 'Abyiotawi Democracy' news papers which were provided both by government and ORDA. 'Abyiotawi Democracy' was with the most discussed topics through which the discussants shared experience of what happened in other similar areas related to forestry or agriculture. As they informed, based on these experiences learned, they go on discussing and deciding about what to do on their term.

Discerned from all informants and discussants in both sites, the general incline appeared to be that radio and news papers are partly functional in these villages. However, it would be a little over exaggeration to say that they are playing key roles in promoting sustainable forest development. Most respondents, on the other hand emphasized that they got more knowledge and raised awareness from the teachings of ORDA and government forest technicians given at different times in different occasions than through the media.

4.3.3.2. Interpersonal Mode of Communication

Key informants from the communities and FGDs respondents of both sites, concerning interpersonal communication informed that they completely depended on it to exchange information. Interpersonal communication was carried out by the informants and respondents at farm fields, irrigation centers, during community tree plantation campaigns and even 'tella' and 'Areki' bars (traditional drinks with moderate and strong alcohol contents).

In addition, interpersonal communication carried out frequently when problems related to church safety and the community forests (like illegal cutting) happened to come up with all coherent agreement in the information exchange processes and on the measures that should be taken (community informants and FGDs respondents, both sites).

According to the forest development supervisor (branch office), “ORDA at the beginning communicated with the community through face-to-face as well as through religious and community leaders interpersonal mediation.” As he stated, part of the rapport made between ORDA and the communities was that the area enclosures and the forests were established primarily for ecological regeneration and through time community benefits would follow one way or another. The rest-the interpersonal discussions and decisions were left to the community.

In lined with this, a village council key informant (Gebriel site), explained that” the area enclosures and the community forests of both sites have been developed through a more participatory process. According to him, a village council decides upon the enclosures, is involved in organizing and encouraging participation in woodlot development and sets local rules and resolutions. He added that in some cases where ORDA withdrew from the forest to be managed by the villagers, the village council also financed the community forest securities who were also nominated from the local people by the village council. As he said, where as in cases where the community and ORDA managed the forest (including study areas), ORDA paid the securities, usually based on food for work programs.

On the other hand “one of basic communication approaches ORDA has been exploiting in-depth and learned to be effective among the forest community is interpersonal communication” (forest technician, branch office).

As stressed by (FAO, 1994), communication for development should among other things, change peoples life style through awareness, pear counseling

technique of interpersonal communication, and social communication methods for pioneer attitudinal changes.

Coherent to this, the forest technician responded that ORDA after training and building the capacity of religious and community leaders tree plantation group leaders, site controllers and other community representatives, it sent them to the community to communicate its messages related to forestry which created an opportunity to the local people to interpersonally exchange information with individuals who grew up and lived in their neighborhood. This was found to be very important as many community members began to show a tremendous progress in feeling ownership of the forests and thus participating not only in plantations but also in monitoring the developed forests.

The process of social influence to attitude change reviewed by Opubor is also relevant here (Enemak, 2002). The process includes compliance, identification and internalization. The idea is that if an attitude is embraced under compliance, it will continue to be exhibited while the power is there. In the case of identification, the opinion lasts as long as there is a cordial relationship with the boss, but under internalization, the opinion change will depend on how important it is to the beliefs of the people.

Some how related to internalization “interpersonal communication is very essential because it helps us to closely and freely share our knowledge that we gained through ORDA’s trainings” was what Tikurwuha site controller explained. On the other hand, “in order to observe the extent and quality of understanding and fundamental differences among the knowledge, point of view and emotional reaction of the community members of the forest projects, it is interpersonal communication that is playing the great role, “(forest development supervisor, branch office).

In summary, the use of interpersonal communication seem very significant because it gives better understanding and meaning of the messages being

communicated, and also makes for ease of assimilation, internalization and message recall. Almost all informants also indicated having a natural liking, a good feeling of enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction when messages were relayed in interpersonal communication.

For obvious reasons, therefore, it appeared that all key informants of both communities and expert groups were positive about the interpersonal communication. To the same extent, majority respondents of FGDs of both sites were also affirmatively interested in approaching sustainable forest issues /message through interpersonal mode.

4.3.3.3. Traditional Mode of Communication

ORDA head office communication unit officer and the forest development supervisor (branch office) revealed that in almost all rural villages of woldia Akababi woreda (including the study areas), the experiences with area enclosures and community forest development programs at first were discouraging. This was mainly due to the past communal attitudes and the blind disregard of the views, and disinterest of the rural people. Part of the reason disclosed was that the organization tried to directly communicate and persuade (kind of transmission view of communication) the rural dwellers about its programs. It was said that the response was frustrating until the organization approached the communities through the traditional community elders and religious leaders.

“Like any other people living in rural areas, we also have our own ways of exchanging messages (about neighborhood and church safety, or holidays, funerals, farming seasons, and so on) that generation after generation depended upon,” (Religions leader, Gebriel). In the early days, ORDA used mainly religious leaders (priests and imams), community elders (female and male) and other dominant groups like traditional associations, and even school teachers of the rural community to discuss upon the major environmental challenges in particular and the cause of recurrent poverty in

the areas and then identify some solutions in collaboration (the religious leader informant).

Accordingly, approaching the communities traditionally through the religious leaders and community elders was the underlying wise step taken to build a collaborative and participatory action in developing community forests in the areas (forest development supervisor, branch office).

Similarly, key informants of both sites confessed in support of this urge and further emphasized that they were observing several changes that occurred since 1991 E.C.. As informed, it was in this year that ORDA and the local community started forest development activities including stone-terrace constructions, seedling plantations and enforcement of grazing restrictions. Moreover, confidently and happily affirming the tangible changes the villages experiencing, almost all the FGDs respondents joined the change informants.

On the other hand, as all the expert group informants consented upon, in promoting sustainable forest development, ORDA often used social occasions like coffee ceremonies, local festivals and religious venues (church and mosque) and religious ceremonies often held at the venues. According to the experts, through these occasions ORDA mobilized the local people (direct beneficiaries) for the development and sustainability of community forests. The following are some words of the communication officer on how ORDA mobilized worshipers at church:

Look at the hillsides of our villages, they are completely naked and their soils highly degraded. Our ancestors knowingly or unknowingly did this. For proof, you can see fragment of natural forests are still found around our holy places-our churches, once up on a time the hills of our villages were covered with just same forests. Now our ancestors are not here with us, but the degraded hills are. Rehabilitating and afforesting them is their daughters and sons' responsibility, our duty. So, let's go and plant some trees on the hills (Communication officer, head office).

Sensed from this, as one angle of its approaches, ORDA mobilized the direct beneficiaries through traditional mode of communication. Communicating them through community elders and church leaders echoing ORDA's forest development campaigns is the other angle of the approaches. Moreover, almost all informants denoted that the area enclosures and the community forests in the study sites were developed through participation and this seemed to be one of the success factors of all the changes in the areas.

Conservation of top soil, greater recycling of organic materials to the soil, water shade protection, and reducing soil erosion were some environmental benefits of the forests developed (All expert informants). Other changes



pointed out were related to their benefits for poverty reduction. Villagers use forests to cut grass to feed their animals, use it for house cover, or sometimes even collect and sell it to gain financial benefits. The communication officer also mentioned that the plantations have also benefited the local population for the construction of schools, health centers, farmers training centers and other social service rendering institutions.

All this offered proof that to use the words of forest development supervisor (branch office), “the traditional communication is the best and the most effectively used approach by ORDA in mobilizing the direct beneficiaries of its projects” The reason behind he mentioned was approaching the community through the most influential parts whom the dwellers respected, trusted and followed. The researcher also had a chance to observe and realize that other participants quickly quieted and calmed with respect, carefully and attentively listened (without any disruption in the middle) when especially the elders started speaking.

Knowledge was also gained that ORDA has a well established communication strategy based on community empowerment and participation. The organization strongly believed that communities at the grass roots level should take a major part in the overall development process from diagnosing local environmental problems, laying down priorities and drawing plans of action to the later stage of implementation and thus to the sustainability of projects out of the rooting sense of ownership in the community.

In summary, from the experience and impression of discussants and the theories discussed, it is plain that ORDA treated the traditional communication very well to mobilize the direct beneficiaries in promoting sustainable forest development. It was also observed that in the process of promoting forest development, ORDA exploited all the theories raised in the literature-development, participatory and social mobilization communication as well. It as well was learned that ORDA employed partly media advocacy and entertainment education in its community forest communication strategies.

4.4. Appropriateness of the Communication Strategies

4.4.1. Message context Harmony with the Culture of Direct Beneficiaries

The researcher had a chance for a closer observation of ORDA’s photo gallery of the main branch office. The way some of the photos sequenced

showed how the organization and the rural community were engaged in the projects. They reflected the progress and the changing role of the activities in the rural areas and a deeper explanation with how those shifts were positively affecting the way the rural poor live. It can be said that the photo sequences in a way were even similar to a movie clip telling a complete message.

The images also reflected messages about the rural people's material culture such as houses and agricultural techniques. They examined an aspect of these conditions beyond the development activities even to the point of suggesting as they recorded people's expressions and gestures, how people in those settings deal with their reality.

The reforestation photo collections showed things that normal perspectives would not. These included layout of the areas enclosures and the stone-terraces constructed on the hillsides. In the images, one can also observe evidence of the rehabilitated forests' various stages of growth starting from seedling nursery and plantation on the hillsides.



From the researcher's point of view, as these images are unambiguous, they could easily lead to a typography that could be used to inform about what ORDA is doing as well as share its experience in reforesting other neighborhoods. It can also be said that the photo portrait is a summary of

an extraordinary amount of information about the practice and process of reforestation (history and change).

Moreover, in several images of forest development and other programs, it was startling to compare the topics covered in the photographs on the basis of gender or age and others. For example, rural daughters and women's work or role was largely visible. In other words, the organization did photograph women as productive parts of the reforestation campaign. The significance of this is that if we regard the photographs as a document of plantation life during the forest rehabilitation times, we will accept a complete portrait as a full record. Indeed, the photos in this case are the result of ORDA's participatory approach of mobilizing the rural people in reforestation campaigns.

On the other hand, the majority of FGDs in both sites, concerning message contents communicated, said that both the words in messages and contents were clear enough to understand. As they observed, often there was no noise as a result of less harmonized message of contents or words in the issues or materials of the newspapers like 'Abyiotawi Democracy'. They stated that on the weekly basis, they actively participated in the discussions even if there by chance was a noise in the communication process, they did not doubt to ask for more clearance. As site controller informants stated, the reason behind reading out newspapers or other texts was that some members of the discussants were non-literate.

Similarly, according to all key informants and FGDs respondents, the messages and contents that the organization used to mobilize the community in plantation campaigns as well as awareness creation were in harmony with their culture. For example, the organization did not try in anyway to make the community change its old-aged traditions by telling messages like planting on Sundays, or any commemorated holy or sacred days of like Michael's, Mariam's, Silasie's and Baleigziher's (communication office, head office).

As an ending say, noticed from the responses of the research participants, the organization gave enough attention in contextualizing and harmonizing messages and contents to suit to the culture of the community that it communicated with. An extra plus is that from what the communication officer said, “We used the photo gallery to make sure that ORDA’s activities are well communicated to its audiences even before going out to field.” And from the researcher’s deep look and attention, the photos carried visible reminder, messages of how and with whom ORDA has been working for integrated development. The reforestation images communicated some how relevant and complete, and realer messages. Harper (in Flick et al, 2004: 236) observed that “the power of an image is its ability to unlock the subjectivity of those who see the image differently than does the photographer.” Similarly, ORDA’s photo gallery is a humbling means through which its activities and the rural poor participation in the effort of sustainable forest development.

4.4.2. Appropriateness of Communication Approaches

Comprehended from the responses of expert groups, the successes that ORDA achieved weighed the appropriateness of communication approaches it adopted. In this case, it was informed that in terms of image and visibility ORDA was well recognized among the public, government, donors and partners mainly for its foot prints at the grass root level. Fore example, during 2004-2008 ORDA utilized nearly 939.4 million birr out of which 36.3 million from community participation. Though a lot remained to be done, its capacity in terms of networking has also comparatively been developed. For instance, at the end of 2003 the funding agencies of ORDA were 14, but it was able to work with 27 fundings agencies at the end 2008 (expert informants at all levels).

Similarly, regarding reforestation, ORDA was able to increase the natural forest coverage of the region by 0.41% and the plantation forest by 12.3% through plantation of 152 million seedlings. On top of this, farmers who have participated in woodlot plantations have managed to increase their income and have created household assets. This and its learning

performance enabled the organization to achieve a total of over 170 million tree plantation along with commendable ecological, social and economic benefits in its operational areas. In lined with this, ORDA won the 2007 national green award (expert informants at all levels).



On the other hand, according to significant number of FGDs respondents of both sites and the majority of key informants of the villages, the communication approaches ORDA adopted were appropriate. As a result of this, there were incidents informed that the local community showed the favor it has for the organization. The Gebriel village council informed that there was this organization named ‘Aregawian’ who requested for half of the hillsides and promised to develop and manage it better than ORDA was doing, according to the informant, after the village community gathered and discussed the case with the area’s land management authority, it passed a decision in favor of ORDA.

The communication officer also informed that ORDA’s communication approaches emphasized primary the benefits and merits that the communities would gain and showing them this in practice so that they would be encouraged to participate and feel with inspiration and thus work

for the success of their lives. As he said, changing their cultures, interests and pushing them against their wills were not parts of ORDA's communication approaches. A key informant (Tikurwuha) mentioned a case happened at 'kies kebele' (a small rural village). As he stated, when ORDA requested a plantations site in this village, the 'kies' dwellers responded, "we are taking care of our hill sides, we are developing it. What else is needed more than this?" At this juncture, according to the informant, ORDA did not even try to push and further persuade them. It rather told the villagers that it was perfect if they were doing what said they were doing with the place. And reminded them that the organization was always ready to support them and even would come back if unfortunately the remaining land was destroyed and deal with it being on their side (The informant, Tikurwuha).

ORDA's communication officer emphasized that communication strategies should be flexible and remain targeted at changing organizational priorities, as well as reflect the return of the concerns and the needs of the targeted audiences. According to him, the success of ORDA's communication strategies were reviewed yearly and follow up survey of target audiences were made to identify any changes required from the existing communication practices. In lined with this, from all respondents' reaction during in-depth interviews and FGDs, the candid interests the respondents shared their experience of forest development, were evident pointers of the appropriateness of ORDA's communication approaches. In the final analysis then, ORDA's approaches were participatory and based on community empowerment through benefiting them from it development projects.

4.5. Lessons Learned

There are a number of lessons to be learned from the communication strategies ORDA employ in promoting sustainable community forest development programs: from initial informal meetings of volunteer individuals to an effective green award hero local NGO. The following are some of the lessons learned:

- Importance of recognizing forestation or tree planting being culture-bound and group-anchored environmental practice and the conscious

decision made by ORDA to work in collaboration and partnership with government, donors, media, local people and others in sustainable forest development.

- ORDA seemed always clear about the importance of having strong grass root experience, to support the food insecure rural poor thus reduce poverty. What was more coincidental perhaps was the very positive impacts of the linkages made with the religious and community leaders who have helped in traditionally mediating as well as in changing the knowledge, practice and attitudes of people related to environment and forestry and even across ORDA's all development activities.
- The importance of understanding the existing cultural, economic and social dynamics while addressing forest development/tree plantation. And this particular context (also mentioned in the literature) the assertion of communication as a key process of bringing people together to cooperate towards addressing the problem of the environment and natural resources on which many of rural people's livelihood rely.
- ORDA's deliberate structuring of communication strategies by target groups and communication channels which both defined the different stakeholders who are to be approached through different means of communication and prioritized the target audiences with whom its projects are communicated.
- The importance of informal interpersonal and traditional communication as well as relationship building with local communities in addition to utilizing formal channel and deliberate strategies as a means to gather key information (intelligence): generate support amongst the communities, and monitor progress in sustainable community forest development.
- The importance of deliberately analyzing power, planning forestry advocacy campaigns, and learning from experiences what works well, what works less, what sorts of angles are best to attract public participation /mobilization and which angles best attract media in promoting sustainable forest development.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

As frequently mentioned in this paper, as the driving engine of this study, a substantial effort was made to explore the communication strategies that ORDA (a local NGO) used in promoting sustainable community forest development. Addressing these communication strategies as well as sustaining community forest plantation for alleviating or reducing poverty were what dominantly this study paid attention to.

As a possible applicable communication theories (in promoting sustainable community forest development), three theories were discussed at the literature part. However, through the study it was found that in addition to the discussed theories, ORDA partly applied communication approaches related to media advocacy and entertainment education. As a result, in the attempt to form the theoretical frameworks of the research, through the study (mainly social mobilization, participatory, development communication and partly medial advocacy and entertainment education were somehow incorporated and used- according to the result, order of function as well as the potential relevance they had to the nature of the study areas and research participants.

This study of exploring and addressing sustainable community forest development communication strategies of ORDA was analyzed qualitatively. Closely tied to this, research participants' observation, in-depth interviews and semi-structured Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were the major data collection instruments of the verbal qualitative data. Visual data were also part of the overall data presented and analyzed. In other words, though the study was conducted through just a single research approach (qualitative), with an intention of compensating this, it was strived to note the study issue from different verbal angles. This in turn was also enhanced with the visual

angle. The researcher believed that as much detailed descriptions of events as possible were made and the rest was left to the reader to judge for himself.

All in all, by giving the central points of ORDA's communication strategies in promoting sustainable community forest development, this ending chapter wraps up the core findings of the study. An extra plus is that this chapter also included recommendations deriving from the findings. The researcher thought these would be quality enhancing tools to the concerned bodies of communication strategies and sustainable forest development and related issues for further amendment.

Accordingly, the following are the summary notes of the conclusions reached based on the revelation of the study:

- ORDA depends on donor funding and a host of forestry operational activities like site selection for nurseries, transportation service for conveying staffs to and from the sites and seedling to field locations, and forest protection and management, and even plantation maintenance and other organizational challenges depended on the availability of funds. In the study, however, it was remarked that ORDA's individual staff sustained commitment, the coalition and continued support of the local government as well as community participation were important without which, it was doubtful that ORDA's effort would have been so impactful.
- Dependency attitude or mentality, past communal habits refusing to die (like free grazing, partly illegal cutting), and lack of awareness were the dominant socio-cultural challenges hindering the community forest rehabilitation or development program. Since recently, however, getting used to new communal practices related to community forests and the grass within were noticed.
- Absence of clear legislation about tree tenure right for a tangible direct financial benefit seemed another remaining challenge. Partly, it might

be because of this that illegal cutting was threatening the sustainability of the developing community forests.

- Traditional communication was found to be the most effective mode used by ORDA to mobilize rural communities and to the direct participation of grass roots and direct beneficiaries in tree plantation as well as community forest development campaigns. Equally important was interpersonal communication in exchanging information as well as internalizing forestry and other subject discussion among the community members and between GRDA.
- ORDA in creating awareness to minimize deforestation and thus sustainably use the remaining as well as the developing community forests, part of its campaign followed was building the capacity of both government line office and its coordinators at all level (regional, zone, woreda). The campaign also included building the capacity of the region's journalists and other concerned bodies who in one way or another facilitated awareness creation.
- Notwithstanding ORDA's commendable efforts and successes in adopting mainly traditional communication to mobilize the community and popularize forest regeneration efforts, for the most part however, this approach has not been paralleled by modern social mobilization techniques in community forest development (like participatory mapping of the community forest development areas, painting green areas of the hills).
- Though the study area communities had the access and often listened to the regional media particularly the radio, it was discovered that they dominantly used it for general information; except that they rarely listened some programs focusing on ORDA's development projects (like agriculture). Ultimately, ORDA's use of the media only as a supplementary channels in promoting sustainable community forest development was observed and the way the communities used it made them more of general publics than direct beneficiary audiences of the organization.

- Religious venues (churches and mosques), market places, wedding and funeral ceremonies, social gatherings, family meetings, coffee ceremonies, 'hiwas' (an awareness creation day), 'Sembeties' (weekly gathering in church in which food is distributed to the poor), "Zikir" (commemoration of a saint) were the most common places and contexts (incidents) for information exchanged in the study areas.
- Though their role of promoting community forest development found to be impotent, the rural and development newspapers like 'Bekkur' and 'Abyiotawi Democracy' were used for experience sharing and partly awareness creation purpose, usually on weekly basis. It was also observed that most discussants depended on listening the message when a facilitator read out the materials (they lacked the user requirement).
- Despite the attractive and representative natures of the photos located at the main office gallery, there were no even similar images placed at Semien Wollo Zone branch office where they could have played a role of creating awareness as well as a sense of ownership among the community members, who accessed and visited or watched them.
- Concerning community forest development communication in general, the process of information flow and exchange between ORDA and the community starts from individuals who lead organized farmer groups (20 farmers in one group). The exchange then flows up to the force leaders (five groups in one force). Next, it reaches to the forest technician(field experts) who leads it to the forest development supervisor who in his turn gives it to ORDA's zone coordinators. The main branch being the last destination, receives the information from the zone coordinators. In this bottom-up process, it was detected that the trained group leaders, the way the farmer groups organized and ORDA's organization itself played a substantial role in coordinating and controlling the quality of the information exchanged.

5.2 Recommendations

- Perhaps, most important, the legitimate rights, responsibilities and capabilities of local people as forest managers, and users need to be recognized. For this to happen, there was a sense of an urgent need to formulate a clear legislation that should provide the necessary tree tenure securities for better and direct financial benefit of the local poor from the community forests of the study areas.
- Closely related to the above, the battle of securities, site controllers, community members(partly) and ORDA itself against illegal logging calls for effective and collaborative monitoring and information reporting process. It also calls for a continuous local participation and through time independent monitoring of their forests, of course with the support of ORDA's financial and suitable expertise. It again calls for donor and other concerned bodies to support ORDA and provide it with the necessary resources. Here, ORDA's involvement should not become an excuse for the local government to abdicate its responsibilities like giving a hand in the activities of monitoring the community forests.
- ORDA and the regional government should develop and implement innovative incentives to interest local communities in forest stewardship arrangements. Cooperation in preventing and monitoring illegal forest exploitation should be linked to concrete benefits.
- Reward incentives in the active involvement of community members in monitoring and curtailing illegal logging. This may aim for example, using the potential for good community members to put pressure on the bad ones. The reasons for applying such pressure are the destructive and illegal practices tarnish the reputation of the entire forest community, create unfair competitive advantages and undermine the resource base for the entire community forests.
- ORDA and the local government should strengthen providing proper training with emphasis on the lower ranks, the field staffs and

community leaders about the principles of sustainable forest development and management, multiple values of forests, traditional tree tenure, local community rights, community relations and forest laws and regulations.

- Apart from the traditional mode of communication modern social mobilization techniques like participatory mapping need to be introduced and adopted as they could enhance internalizing sense of ownership among the communities for the forests developing.
- More than ever before, there was a need for the partnership and cooperation among the local government, NGOs and ORDA, religious and community leaders to harmonize more awareness creation about environment in general and forestry in particular in order to popularize environmental regeneration.
- To create an environmentally attentive generation; bring a fundamental environmental change and develop a positively sensitive and friendly culture to trees, ORDA in collaboration with the local government should go on striving to establish college or school forestry clubs, as these are where the seeds of awareness sprout.
- Traditionally also, in addition to the existing ones that ORDA is exploiting like 'sembetie' groups, it can make use of all other existing informal traditional forest conservation educational opportunities to adopt the culture of tree planting. For example, there was this informed by the key informants, a culture practiced by Orthodox Church worshippers, planting a 'kinchip' tree near the grave of a person's body right after burying it. This was done as a sign to remember where it was buried. ORDA could find some way to replace 'kinchip' by other proper trees. In fact, it could start by planting trees for the remembrance of its initial fallen heroes. An extra plus is that at a family level, trees could also be planted in a memory of births rather than only deaths.
- In lined with the above comment, after giving some trainings, ORDA could also make use of local criers, local musicians (like

Azmari) as an alternatives mode of promoting awareness and tree planting culture in the rural communities.

- In order to enhance the participation of the rural community in the information exchanges of the print media, ORDA, government and other concerned bodies need to expand adult education which would enable the local non literates meet the use requirements of the newspapers. Compiling and distributing information on community forest including the do's and the do not's and placing photographs at the branch office as the rich pictorial illustrations can help, to some extent, in overcoming barriers of non-literacy and thus rise participation.
- Compromises between potential socio-economic benefits and environmental risks associated with planting eucalyptus need to be carefully evaluated- like introducing it case by case after extensive studies and taking into account its potential impact and nature of the soils it will colonize.

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Appendices

Appendix one: Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions

Dear respondents:

My name is Mr. Biruk Belete. I am a Journalism and communication graduating student of Addis Ababa University. I am doing my thesis on the topic Communication strategies of The Organization for Rehabilitation and development in Amhara (ORDA) on Sustainable Community forest development in its operational areas: A case of Tigurewuha and Gebriel Sites. Given below are the guiding questions which help the researcher to explore the communication strategies that the organization has adopted in promoting sustainable community forest development. This information will be used for academic purpose and the responses will be treated in strict confidentiality. So I request you to give your detail responses in the group discussion session.

1. What are the ways that your community usually uses to exchange information?
2. What are the common places, incidents and occasions that your community traditionally uses to exchange information?
3. What are the mass media that your community has easy access to?
4. What are the socio-cultural habits practiced by your community, which are challenging developing sustainable community forest?
5. How do you explain ORDA's forestry development project acceptability by the society?
6. Does ORDA's forestry project involve your communities' participation in identifying forestry related problems in one way and in searching for the solutions in the other? If yes, how?
7. Do the messages provided by ORDA harmonize with your culture and suit to your traditional norms? Explain?

I want to thank you in advance.

Appendix two: Semi-Structured interview for different groups of respondents

Dear respondents:

My name is Mr. Biruk Belete. I am a Journalism and communication graduating student of Addis Ababa University. I am doing my thesis on the topic Communication strategies of The Organization for Rehabilitation and development in Amhara (ORDA) on Sustainable Community forest development in its operational areas: A case of Woldia Akababi Woreda. Given below are the guiding questions which help the researcher to explore the communication strategies that the organization has adopted in promoting sustainable community forest development. This information will be used for academic purpose and the responses will be treated in strict confidentiality. So I request you to give your detail responses.

This interview has three parts:

Part A: Semi-structured interview with key informants

Part B: Semi-structured interview with Communication experts

Part C: Semi-structured interview with Forestry development Experts

Part A: Semi-structured interview with key informants

1. What are the ways that your community usually uses to exchange information?
2. What are the common places, incidents and occasions that your community traditionally uses to exchange information?
3. What are the Mass media that your community has easy access to?
4. What are the socio-cultural habits practiced by your community, which one of them challenge the development of sustainable community forest?
5. How do you explain ORDA's forestry development project acceptability by the society?

6. Does ORDA's forestry project involve your communities' participation in identifying forestry related problems in one way and in searching for the solutions in the other? If yes, how?
7. Do the messages provided by ORDA harmonize with your culture and suit to your traditional norms? Explain?
8. Have you observed any positive attitudinal changes that you consider resulted from the awareness creation campaign on sustainable community forest development provided by ORDA? Explain?
9. Are there any individual or group activities towards speeding up forest resource development? If yes what are they?
10. If you have any nourishing comment regarding mechanisms that support in improving ORDA's sustainable forestry development program, you are welcome?

I want to thank you in advance!

Part B: Semi-structured interview with the Communication Officer and IT Expert

1. What are the communication strategies that your organization adopted in promoting sustainable community forest development?
2. What the communication approaches that your organization use to exchange information with direct beneficiaries of ORDA's forest development projects?
3. What are the traditional communication modes used by your organization and the direct beneficiaries of its projects?
4. What are the socio-cultural challenges in your forest development program?
5. Do you have any referral linkages with GOs or NGOs in the country? If yes, who are they?

6. What are the situations where your organization works in collaboration with regional or country level governmental offices?
7. What are the socio-cultural habits practiced by your community challenging developing sustainable community forest?
8. Have you observed any positive attitudinal changes that you consider resulted from the awareness creation campaign on sustainable community forest development provided by ORDA? Explain?
9. Is there any lesson that ORDA can provide from its forest development experience to any newly organization with same duty?

Part C: Semi-structured Interview with Forest Development Experts

1. Can you mention why your forest development program focused on Semien Wollo Zone areas?
2. What are the projects that are in the forest development program that are currently under implementation?
3. How do you explain the current status of the region's forest resource and its development?
4. What are the benefits that the grassroots have gained from your sustainable community forest development programs?
5. Is there any lesson that ORDA can provide from its forest development experience to any newly organization with same duty?

I want to thank you in advance!

Appendix Three: Profile of Respondents

Part-A: Focus Group Respondents' Profile

Tikurwuha Community Forest Site

- Group-1: a total of six discussants
 - two of them adult women
 - one of them an elder man
 - the remaining three adult men
 - held at “Hiwas”(cell) villagers’ meeting place
 - held on Wednesday morning, April 28, 2010
- Group-2: a total of six discussants
 - Three of them nearly adult women
 - Two men approaching adulthood
 - One of them literate adult man
 - Held near a market place
 - Held on Saturday, May 1, 2010
- Group-3: a total of six discussants
 - Two of them adult peasants
 - One of them an Orthodox religious leader
 - One of them an adult woman
 - One relatively younger peasant
 - Held near St. George church
 - Held on Sunday after church, May 2, 2010

Gebriel Community Forest Site

- Group-4: A total of six discussants
 - Two of them adult women
 - Two relatively younger men
 - Two of them adult men
 - Held near water shade inauguration ceremony
 - Held on Thursday, April 29, 2010
- Group-5: A total of six discussants
 - Three of them adult male peasants
 - One of them adult woman
 - Two relatively younger males

- Held near water shade inauguration ceremony
- Held near water shade inauguration ceremony
- Group-6: A total of six discussants
 - Three adult women(one of relatively younger)
 - Two adult male peasants(one of them the village council)
 - One of them elder man
 - Held near a market place
 - Held on Saturday, May 9, 2010

Part-B: Interviewees' Profile

- Communication officer (head office)
- IT expert (head office)
- Forest Experts:
 - Regional forest development coordinator (head office)
 - Zone forest development coordinator (branch office)
 - Forest development supervisor (branch office)
 - Forest development technician (branch office)
- Community leaders (one –each site)
- Four former tree plantation group leaders (two from each site)
- Four community forest securities (two from each site)
- Four formen (one from each site and two from seedling nursery sites)
- Female and male individuals selected from FGDs

Appendix Four: About the Organization for Rehabilitation and Development (ORDA)

Vision

- Seeing poverty free people of Ethiopia

Mission

- Empowering the Amhara region food livelihood insecure households and communities to maximize their development potentials and benefits by developing their capabilities and self-esteem

Positioning

- ORDA is the learning, caring and dependable development partner

Motto

- Making a difference in collaboration!!!

Values

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Effective collaboration | -Respect and dedication to the people |
| • Dynamic institutional governance | -Unity of purpose |
| • Integrity | -Impartiality |
| • Transparency and accountability | -Harnessing volunteerism |
| • Community participation and | -Empowerment |

Goal

- To ensure household and community livelihoods security and enhance socio-economic and governance transformation in Amhara

Objectives

- Developing the capability and self-esteem of the food insecure households and communities
- Supporting the rural poor households and communities endeavors in natural resource, agriculture and infrastructure development as well as off-farm income diversifications
- Responding to natural and man made disasters
- Empowering women
- Combating HIV/AIDS and Harmful Traditional practices

Programs

1. Agricultural Development focusing on;
 - Capacity building
 - Enhancement of market-led agricultural production and productivity
 - Promotion of participatory natural resource s conservation and integrated water shade management practices
 - Diversifying and increasing household income
2. Water Resource Development
 - A. Safe water supply
 - B. Small scale irrigation
3. Forest resource development
 - Bio-diversity conservation
 - Agro-forestry
 - Individual household's woodlot establishment
 - Community/social forest development
 - Wood and high value tree production
4. Disaster mitigation
5. Capacity building prioritizing:
 - Institutional strengthening
 - Human resource development
 - Community leadership and skill development
 - Women and youth empowerment and promotion of gender equity
 - Fighting against HIV/AIDS and harmful traditional practices

Organizational Structure

- General Assembly
- Board of Directors
- The Executive and Deputy Directors
- Programs and services
- Project, liaison, and zonal coordination offices

Networking and Collaboration

In furthering its purpose, ORDA is a member of several national and international networks. It has always been committed in maximizing collaboration with the target communities, community-based organizations, local government structures and line offices.

DECLARATION

I, Biruk Belete, declare that this project work entitled “Communication Strategies of the Organization 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*” is my own original work. I have carried it out independently with the guidance and suggestions of the research advisor. And it has not been presented in Addis Ababa University or any other University. *And* all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Biruk Belete

(The Researcher)

Signature