

**PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION IN POVERTY REDUCTION IN KENYA: A  
STUDY OF MURANG'A COUNTY**

**NJOROGE LABAN NGUMBO**

K50/69560/2013

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE  
REQUIREMENT OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

2015

**DECLARATION**

This research is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university

Signature ..... Date .....

**Laban Ngumbo Njoroge**

This research project has been submitted to the University of Nairobi as part of the fulfilment for the Award of Master of Arts in Communication Studies.

Signature ..... Date .....

**Leah Muchemi**

**Project Supervisor**

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, Henry Njoroge Ngumbo and Beth Njeri Njoroge for their unrelenting effort to provide my siblings and I with the best possible education. Their godly sacrifice is the reason for this academic achievement. I would also like to dedicate this to my sisters Muthoni Njoroge and Wanjiru Njoroge and my brother Mwangi Njoroge for their support and encouragement during this academic endeavour.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to sincerely acknowledge the support of my supervisor Leah Muchemi who has steered me throughout the process of conducting this research. Her input has helped me understand the process of research in ways that were previously unknown to me. I am forever grateful for her support.

I would also like to appreciate the support of Dr George Gathigi during the initial stages of this research in helping me understand the field of participatory communication.

This section would be incomplete without acknowledging the teaching fraternity at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication throughout my 7 years at the school at postgraduate and undergraduate level. Dr Wambui Kiai and the team has moulded me, providing world class university education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

However man makes plans, works to implement those plans but *Ngai* brings those plans for fulfilment. I am grateful to the Almighty God for the wisdom and knowledge to achieve this academic endeavour. All glory and praise to him.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

MDG- Millennium Development Goals

UN- United Nations

CDF- Constituency Development Fund

NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation

PFM- Participatory Forest Management

JFM- Joint Forest Management

CBFM- Community Based Forest Management

PAR- Participatory Action Research

MCG- Murang'a County Government

## **ABSTRACT**

The first 50 years of independence has been a period of rapid changes and progress but 33% of the citizens of Murang'a County continue to be trapped in poverty. There is need to reduce these statistics and this research sought to find out the role of participatory communication in poverty reduction in Murang'a County. The objectives of this study were to identify the communication channels used to reach out to local communities in the milk coolers project, the participation level of local communities at the implementation stage of this development projects and to establish the effects of participation on the success of poverty reduction effort. The study was guided by the participatory communication paradigm and Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory.

An exploratory research design was adopted for this study, targeting the beneficiaries of this development project. However this research studied three constituencies of the seven constituencies in the County where the project has been implemented i.e. Kiharu, Kangema and Gatanga. The study adopted cluster sampling method where the three constituencies were the desired clusters and samples were be obtained from the clusters using simple random sampling techniques depending on the population size. A sample of 400 respondents was drawn and obtained using simple random sampling methods. Data was collected using quantitative and qualitative methods and questionnaires and interviews were used as the research instruments. The data collected was integrated for analysis. Descriptive statistics were be computed for all the variables to ensure quality of data. Qualitative data was grouped into thematic areas and descriptive analysis given. The data was used to show the relationships between variables.

It emerged that a majority of the beneficiaries had relied on the radio as a communication vehicle on information about this project. Consultative meetings and interpersonal methods were also influential in reaching out to the beneficiaries. The study concluded that there was

less participation by the intended beneficiaries during the implementation of the project, adopting an anti-dialogical banking model to development. The findings indicate that a high majority of the beneficiaries did not consider the project to have been successful while very few beneficiaries considered the project was a success.

The study therefore recommends that change agents should take participatory development and participatory communication as efficient development approaches in the steps towards improving the living standards of its citizenry, encouraging involvement of the intended beneficiaries at all stages of development.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Background of the study .....	1
1.1 Poverty reduction in Kenya.....	2
1.2 Background of Murang'a County .....	4
1.3 Statement of the problem .....	6
1.4 General Objectives of the study .....	7
1.5 Specific Objectives of the study.....	8
1.6 Research questions of the study .....	8
1.7 Significance of the study.....	8
1.8 Scope and limitations .....	9
1.9 Summary of chapter .....	9
CHAPTER TWO .....	10
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	10
2.0 Introduction .....	10
2.1 Participatory communication .....	10
2.2 Poverty reduction .....	13
2.2.1 Drivers and Maintainers of Poverty.....	13
2.2.2 Poverty Reduction Strategies.....	14
2.3 Participatory approaches in community projects .....	14
2.3.1 Participatory forest management in Tanzania .....	15
2.4 The institutional challenges of participatory communication .....	16
2.5 The origin of participatory communication .....	18
2.6 Diffusion model versus participatory communication .....	23
2.7 stages of development projects .....	25
2.8 Conceptual framework .....	27
2.9 Theoretical Framework .....	28
2.9.1 Participatory Paradigm .....	28
2.9.2 Social Cognitive Theory.....	28

2.10 Summary of chapter .....	29
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	30
3.0 Introduction .....	30
3.1 Research Design .....	30
3.2 Study population .....	30
3.3 Sample size and sampling techniques .....	31
3.3.1 Sample size .....	31
3.3.2 Sampling procedures and techniques .....	31
3.4 Data collection methods .....	32
3.4.1 Questionnaires .....	32
3.4.2 Interviews .....	32
3.5 Data analysis and Presentation Methods .....	33
3.6 Ethical considerations .....	35
3.7 Summary of chapter .....	35
CHAPTER FOUR.....	36
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION .....	36
4.0 Introduction .....	36
4.1 Demographics.....	36
4.1.1 Analysis of Respondents by Gender.....	37
4.1.2 Analysis of respondents by Age.....	38
4.1.3 Level of education .....	39
4.2 Knowledge of the Milk Coolers project.....	41
4.3 Source of Information on the Project .....	42
4.4 Proposed communication vehicles .....	44
4.5 Consultation in the identification of the project.....	45
4.6 Did change agents encourage public to participate in implementation of the project ...	47
4.7 Participation in consultative meetings on the project.....	48
4.8 Kind of meeting.....	49
4.9 Whether beneficiary input was sought during implementation .....	49
4.10 Increase participation .....	51
4.11 Consider the project a success.....	53
4.12 How the beneficiaries can contribute to make the project better .....	55
CHAPTER FIVE .....	57

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
5.0 Introduction .....	57
5.2 Summary of the findings .....	57
5.2.1 Communication channels used to reach out to local communities.....	57
5.2.2 Participation of local communities at the implementation stage of development...	58
5.2.3 Role of participation on the success of poverty reduction efforts .....	59
5.3 Conclusions .....	60
5.4 Recommendations .....	61
5.4.1 Policy recommendations.....	61
5.4.2 Recommendations for further research.....	62
REFERENCES .....	63
APPENDICES .....	68
APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE .....	68
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FARMERS .....	72

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Anti-dialogical banking method .....	22
Figure 2.2: Diffusion of innovation model.....	24
Figure 2.3 Participatory development communication model .....	27
Figure 3.1: A map of Murang’a County showing wards.....	34
Figure 4.1: Gender of the respondents .....	37
Figure 4.2 Respondents level of education.....	39
Figure 4.3 Respondents’ current occupation.....	40
Figure 4.4 Knowledge on the Milk Coolers Project.....	41
Figure 4.5 Source of Information on the project.....	42
Figure 4.6 Consultation in the identification of the project.....	46
Figure 4.7: Did change agents encourage public to participate in implementation .....	47
Figure 4.8: Participation in consultative meetings on the project.....	48
Figure 4.9: Kind of meeting.....	49
Figure 4.10: Whether beneficiary input was sought during implementation .....	50
Figure 4.11: What should have been done to increase participation .....	51
Figure 4.12: Why the project did not succeed.....	54

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Background of the study**

Participation is what happens when members of a community themselves become part of the process of change. Participatory communication appreciates a dialogical approach to development rather than an anti-dialogical banking model. The notion of participatory communication stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities at all levels- international, national, local and individual (Servaes,2008 ).

Participation is- significant in any decision making for development. Participation is a principle in development with support coming from many different stakeholders: governments, donors, civil society and ordinary citizens (Tufte and Mefalopulus, 2009). In all development projects, there are change agents (the outsiders) and the local people (the beneficiaries) who come together in order to share knowledge and trust.

The emphasis of participatory communication is on the exchange of information between the outsider and the beneficiaries rather than on persuasion in the diffusion of innovation model by Everett Rogers. There is a new awareness now that no expert has the solutions to poverty in the world. All affected by poverty may have valuable information to contribute in poverty reduction and we need dialogue to draw valuable insights from all who are affected. Therefore the participation of the local people is crucial for effective and sustainable development (Mulwa, 2008)

Poverty reduction efforts in Kenya have proved less successful because those who lead them assume they have solutions to all problems and therefore do not involve the local people. Instead the participatory communication model advocates collective action and reflection by the change agents and the intended beneficiaries.

## **1.1 Poverty reduction in Kenya**

In September 2000 during a United Nations Summit in New York, world leaders presented a commitment to reduce extreme poverty. The Millennium Declaration adopted by all the members of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 represents a commitment to a more effective, results-oriented development partnership in the 21st century (World Development Indicators, 2013). Developing countries are in the race to meet the global deadline of 2015.

In Kenya the section of the population living below the poverty line increased from 52.3 per cent in 1997 to an estimated 56 per cent between 2000 and 2002, by 2005/06, it had dropped to 45.9 per cent (Kenya Economic Update, 2013). This means that during the first medium term plan of Kenya's Vision 2030, poverty rates reduced by 10.1%. According to the Kenya Economic Report (2013) given the multidimensional nature of poverty, there is no single channel of reducing macro and socio-economic performance poverty but it argues that the ultimate goal is to reduce the number of people living in poverty. However Kenya has made significant progress towards reducing poverty through interventions discussed in this paper.

Since independence, successive Kenyan governments have made efforts towards fighting poverty through development plans and projects. Kenya's first president Mzee Jomo Kenyatta identified poverty, ignorance and disease as some of the immediate needs that the new government had to attend to. The new government's poverty indicators were centred on access to land, whose possession had been taken away by colonialism.

Today Kenya's poverty rate is estimated to be in the range of between 34 and 42 per cent (Kenya Economic Update, 2013). The report identifies poverty rates as highest in the arid and semi-arid regions in the north and north east, areas which experience very little annual rainfall, and thus, low agricultural potential have acute poverty. These regions have also suffered Kenya's development imbalance since independence. The report highlights that despite the fact

that Kenya's economy has been growing at an average of 5% per annum, the effects do not trickle down to the poorest people, rather the gap between the rich and the poor keeps expanding.

Today the most used measure of poverty is the number of people living on less than 1.25 dollars a day- the extreme poor and among the poorest Kenyans, 99 out of 100 live without electricity and without a flush toilet, 80 out of 100 share a living space with two or more people, and 64 out of 100 do not have access to an improved source of water (Kenya Economic Update, 2013).. Apart from low income and material deprivation, the report identifies lack of security, power, poor health, discrimination and unstable work as other indicators of poverty in Kenya.

To tackle poverty, the government has come up with interventions that focus on revamping the economy to create an enabling environment for citizens to access basic services. Kenya Vision 2030 (2006) is a vehicle for accelerating transformation of the country into a rapidly industrializing middle-income nation by the year 2030. The vision aspires to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Kenyans, key among them eradicating extreme poverty. It is one of the interventions fronted by the government to fight poverty. Among its three pillars however the vision fails to identify the role of participatory development towards its realisation. Rather it is a top-down approach to development fronted by the government to be implemented by the beneficiaries.

The Constituency Development Fund Act (2013) however has provision for the implementation of participatory development. In article 24 (6) the law that within the first year of a new parliament and at least once every two years thereafter, the constituency development board shall convene open forum public meetings at in every ward in the constituency to deliberate on development matters in the ward and the constituency. Each ward shall come up with a list of priority projects to be submitted to board. However it can be argued that this exists

only in law because the boards at the ward and constituency levels are dominated by the elites and development needs of the ordinary people are not represented.

Further the Constitution of Kenya (2010) establishes a devolved system of government and its principles as stipulated Article 174 include recognizing the right of communities to manage their own affairs and further their own development. The constitution appreciates a participation development communication model where previously the former constitution was silent on the role of communities in spearheading their own development, propagating a top-down model where an outsider (the national government) took charge of development at all stages (research, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)

## **1.2 Background of Murang'a County**

Murang'a County is established by the First Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) as Kenya's county number 21. It is one of the five counties in Central region of the Republic of Kenya. It is bordered to the North by Nyeri, to the South by Kiambu, to the West by Nyandarua and to the East by Kirinyaga, Embu and Machakos counties. It lies between latitudes 34' South and 107' South and Longitudes 36° East and 37° 27' East. The county occupies a total area of 2,558.8Km<sup>2</sup> (Murang'a.go.ke)

The county constitutes 7 constituencies Kangema, Mathioya, Kiharu, Kigumo, Maragwa, Kandara and Gatanga (opendata.go.ke). Murang'a County has an approximate population total of 942,581 (male - 48% and female - 52%) according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2009 National Census report.

The larger majority of locals are Kikuyus who are born here. Most of them engage in mixed farming for staple food which includes maize, beans, cabbages, sorghum, millet and cassava among others. The county has a small percentage of people from other communities including

Kamba, Meru, Embu, Luhya and Indians who are primarily involved in running small to medium-size trade businesses in major towns of the county. (Kenyainformationguide.com)

Murang'a County has about 271 health facilities which include 112 centres run by government, 125 that are privately owned and 31 run by faith based organizations. A few centres are managed by community based organizations. (Kenyainformationguide.com)

There are 739 primary schools and 271 secondary schools both public and private. Some of the top high schools in Murang'a County include Murang'a High School, Mugoiri Girls High School, Kahuhia Girls High School and Njiiris School. Murang'a University College, a constituent college of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology is the only institution of higher learning in the county offering degree programmes. However there are over 10 middle level colleges in the county, sponsored by the government and individuals. (Kenyainformationguide.com)

The County's economy is deeply rooted in agriculture as its main economic activity, practiced on small scale land holding and small scale farming. Over 60 percent of small scale farmers grow cash crops tea and coffee. Ten tea factories serve most of the farmers; Githambo, Gatunguru, Kanyenya-ini, Ngere, Njunu, Makomboki, Nduti, Gacharage, Ikumbi and Kiru. Coffee factories in the area include Kanyenyaini, Mihuti and Gathima, Kiharu coffee factories among others. Other agricultural activities that support the county's economy include dairy farming and macadamia farming. Among main farms for Macadamia is Farmnut Macadamia in Murang'a and Maragua town.

There are various financial establishments such as banks and SACCOs (Savings and Credit Cooperatives) situated in the major towns and shopping centres in the County. They include Equity Bank, Family Bank, KCB, Post Bank, Murata Sacco, Unaitas among others.

This study will focus on the milk coolers project and introduction of dairy cows project by the county government. In line with the Murang'a County growth and empowerment agenda, Governor Mwangi Wa Iria has initiated a programme that will see Murang'a farmers access the best of the dairy breeds that there is in this country at an affordable rate. So far 300 High breed dairy cows were procured and distributed to farmers. The Murang'a County governor has led and initiated this milk cooling and bulking programme for the Murang'a people. The County Government has procured 35 milk coolers. Each ward in the milk producing regions will receive a cooler to be used by the farmers' group in the area.

According to the Kenya Economic Survey (2014) Murang'a County has a poverty level of 33% and its ranks 7<sup>th</sup> among the 47 counties. This means that Murang'a County is better ranked than 40 counties in terms of poverty and is not among the poorest counties in Kenya. However Murang'a County is not the richest county in Kenya and has not eradicated poverty fully, much more remains to be done. In addition the county was chosen for this study through observation undertaken in the County during the period before the promulgation of the new constitution and in the period after the establishment of county governments.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The first 50 years of independence has been a period of rapid changes and progress but 42% of Kenyans continue to be trapped in poverty. The introduction of the county governments after the 2013 general elections meant that Murang'a county government like other 46 county governments introduced development projects as part of its constitutional mandate. However in the identification of the development needs of the people, the county government disregarded participatory communication as a likely development communication paradigm. As outsiders they under perceived rural poverty. They are attracted to and trapped in urban

cores which generate and communicate their own sort of knowledge while rural 'peripheries' are isolated and neglected (Chambers, 1983)

The beneficiaries of development projects meant to alleviate poverty are often bystanders and regarded as passive shareholders in the development process. These beneficiaries are little seen and less is the nature of their poverty understood. According to Smith (200) the lack of involvement of the beneficiaries at all stages of development often leads to poor needs assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This study looks at participatory communication and how it could be a catalyst in poverty reduction efforts in Murang'a County.

Brown (1985) posits that succeed poverty reduction efforts must bring together the change agents and the intended beneficiaries in a joint inquiry to understand their contextual realities, identify needs and implement development. This means that participatory approaches can offer a promising tool for promoting people-centred development in political and economic systems that encourage local empowerment. Lack of participation among target groups or community members in either the planning, implementation or decision making process of development initiatives is one of the main reasons for the failures of some programmes (Chambers, 1997; cited in Mefalopulos, 2003). This study will examine the relationship between participatory communication and poverty and the expected results will contribute new knowledge on the role of participatory communication in poverty reduction.

#### **1.4 General Objectives of the study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the contribution of participatory communication in poverty reduction efforts in Kenya, with a special interest in Murang'a County.

## **1.5 Specific Objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of the study were;

1. Identify the communication channels used to reach out to local communities in the milk coolers project in Murang'a County.
2. Determine the participation level of local communities at the implementation stage of the milk coolers project
3. Establish the effects of participation on the success of poverty reduction efforts.

## **1.6 Research questions of the study**

1. What communication forms are used to reach out to local communities on the milk coolers project?
2. What is the participation level of local communities at the implementation stage of the milk coolers project?
3. What are the effects of participation on the success of poverty reduction efforts?

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The study yielded valuable information that will seek to address the pertinent issues that come to the fore as a result of lack of involvement of the target groups in poverty reduction efforts.

Previous efforts by the government have ignored the capability of the poor to take control of their lives. This study will inform the efforts of change agents and influence a paradigm shift in the approach taken by both local and national governments to alleviate poverty. Often the vision of the change agents (the outsider) is blurred and they see action starting from where they are (Chambers, 1983). This study sought to change that vision of the outsider, from one distorted by top-down approach to one that is inclusive of the beneficiaries.

Therefore, it will to inform the key stakeholders in the government (National government and County government), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), local leaders and local people.

## **1.8 Scope and limitations**

The research study was carried out in Murang'a County. The study involved 340 respondents and 6 interviewees from the county. The study was carried out within a period of three months. The study examined participatory communication and poverty reduction with a special interest in the milk coolers project and therefore did not investigate other development projects meant to alleviate poverty.

This research faced limitations such as the respondents' unwillingness to cooperate, financial limitations, time did not allow for collection of detailed information on the project identification stage. Data on this stage was not be obtained that would have been significant in this study.

## **1.9 Summary of chapter**

This chapter provides a background of the problem under study, poverty reduction in Murang'a County and Kenya at large. The chapter also outlines that in all development projects, there are change agents (the outsiders) and local people (the beneficiaries) who come together in order to share knowledge and trust.

The chapter also brings out the variables under study- participatory communication and poverty reduction explaining why they are important to the study, explaining how the study will contribute towards the issue. It also provides the objectives for the study and its significance.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Introduction

According to Wiersma (1995:406), a review of the literature provides the background and context for the research problem, establishing the need for the research and indicates the level of knowledge about the area of study.

Kombo (2006) argues that literature review gives the researcher insight into what has already been done in the selected field, pinpointing its strengths and weaknesses. Understanding the previous inquiry aids the researcher to identify a significant problem which will provide new knowledge in the area under study.

#### 2.1 Participatory communication

No unanimity exists about a single definition of participation but the different scholars agree on the gist of the subject and the variations depends on the context applied. Some stakeholders define it as the mobilization of human beings to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power and economic distribution while others define it as the reach and inclusion of inputs by relevant groups in the design and implementation of a development project (Tufte & Mefalopoulos, 2009).

Therefore for people to participate they must become conscious of their own dignity and they must express themselves and have an opportunity to have their say. The Oxford English Dictionary defines participation as the act of taking part in something and in poverty reduction efforts it puts the target group at the centre of the process. They actively take part in the process.

The term 'participatory communication' is used to refer to approaches and methods which use dialogue to boost people's awareness and confidence and empower their action in realizing

development. To facilitate participation, research teams and development practitioners must consider the people they want to communicate with as partners in a development effort, and not merely as beneficiaries (Bessete, 2004)

Participatory communication is an approach based on dialogue which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment, especially for those who are most vulnerable and marginalised ( Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Participatory communication stresses the need to counter perennial tendency among those who hold power of being paternalistic and authoritarian. It therefore advocates for a more democratic approach to development where it becomes ‘development of the people, for the people and by the people.’

According to Bessete (2004) participatory communication is a planned activity, based on the one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on media and interpersonal communication, which facilitates a dialogue among different stakeholders, around a common development problem or goal, with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution, or its realization, and which supports and accompanies this initiative. The development practitioner uses a communication tool to enhance participation. Therefore the stakeholders in poverty reduction efforts i.e. community members, active community groups, local and regional authorities, NGOs, government technical services or other institutions working at the community level engage in dialogue to identify problems, make decisions and initiate action.

According to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) participatory communication is not just the exchange of information and experiences but is also the exploration and generation of new knowledge aimed at addressing situations that need to be improved. The beneficiaries are involved in the baseline survey stage to identify their needs. Instead of starting with an

innovation or a behaviour or an organization's priorities, increasingly participatory communication interventions are emphasizing the individual or family or community as the centre of the development process (Colle, 2008)

Participatory communication posits that communities should be the main protagonists of processes of social change rather than 'passive beneficiaries' of decisions made by foreign experts (Waisboard, 2008). Therefore the outsider and the beneficiaries do not just exchange information on what is to be done but they actively participate in crafting the methodology of how it should be done. The identification and assessment of the beneficiary needs involve participatory action research

According to Waisboard (2008) participatory communication proposes a 'communitarian' view that makes deliberation and participation in public affairs, rather than information-transmission (including message design and media technologies), the essential elements of communication and perceives 'development' as a transformative process at both individual and social levels through which communities become empowered. It promotes local forms of knowledge for change.

In order to share information, knowledge, trust, commitment and a right attitude in development projects, participation is very important in any decision-making process for development (Servaes, 2008)

## **2.2 Poverty reduction**

The problem of poverty and how to reduce it remains the most pressing dilemma in the international development debate. Combating poverty is seen as the prime goal of development and this make it matter more to know what poverty is. Poverty is now thought of as a kind of generalised lacking, or a state of being without some essential goods and services. Poor people are people deprived of things that they need to live a normal life (Toyte, 2007)

### **2.2.1 Drivers and Maintainers of Poverty**

With the understanding of the challenge that extreme poverty presents to society, the United Nations adopted the goal to eradicate extreme poverty and halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day. Handley et al (2009) argues that while efforts are made to reduce poverty in Sub Saharan Africa there are factors that continue to hinder that success. They refer to those factors as the socio-economic drivers and maintainers of poverty.

People everywhere face risks and vulnerabilities but poor people, especially those living in rural areas dependant on agriculture and in tropical ecologies face more than others. This is true of a large proportion of the Kenyan population like is the rest of Sub Saharan Africa. According to Handley et al (2009) there are a number of risks and vulnerabilities that drive and maintain poverty in Sub Saharan Africa, including harvest failure, market failure and volatility, conflict, and health shocks.

A different approach of discerning about the roots of poverty is to think in terms of capabilities. These, according to Sen (1999), reflect a person's freedom or ability to choose the way he or she wishes to live. These include the capacity to be free from hunger, to become educated, and to earn a decent living and as such, they are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

People trapped in persistent poverty tend to experience multiple ‘capability deprivations’ concurrently. That is, they are illiterate, have inadequate nutrition, poor human rights, and insufficient income and livelihood opportunities, which taken together drive and maintain their poverty and ensure it passes across generations (CPRC, 2004: 40).

Handley et al also posits that inequality, exclusion and adverse incorporation also contribute to poverty. Inequality, which is generally defined as the proportion of, and gaps between, the rich and the poor, can exist and contribute to poverty in a range of dimensions. Inequalities in income and other economic indicators, such as asset ownership, are often persistent, deeply rooted and typically a result of political forces that enable powerful groups to protect their wealth, and of market imperfections that make it difficult for those who have low incomes and low savings to accumulate capital. (Handley et al, 2009 p 4)

### **2.2.2 Poverty Reduction Strategies**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were articulated in September 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit. They are time bound, measurable targets for combating poverty, among other development needs such as disease, hunger, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women by 2015. They form a design agreed internationally for combating poverty and have galvanised an unprecedented level of support for meeting the needs of the world’s poorest people (United Nations, 2007a).

### **2.3 Participatory approaches in community projects**

Participatory development communication approaches have taken root in some countries and their application has yielded considerable results. These approaches have been implemented in participatory forest management in Tanzania.

### **2.3.1 Participatory forest management in Tanzania**

The PFM was introduced as an approach to managing Tanzania's forests and allowed under specific conditions local communities to benefit legally from nearby forests. Deforestation is a serious concern in Tanzania and other East African countries.

Two approaches to PFM were adopted where villagers could declare and gazette forest areas on village land as 'Village Land Forest Reserves.' The villagers took full management responsibility, setting and enforcing rules and regulations over the forest management and use, including the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs). However according to Robinson and Maganga (2009) the PFM approaches did not deliver the expected results. The level of awareness and information among the stakeholders was different and the intended beneficiaries did not own the project despite the benefits it portended for them.

The other approach joint forest management (JFM) regarded the management of local and national forest reserves where villagers enter agreements with the forest division and are given right to collect forest resources such as timber and firewood. Common concerns among stakeholders were that the importance of forest products for rural livelihoods were not sufficiently understood and so poverty could increase without officials realizing, that forest regulations are not sufficiently clear concerning the involvement of villagers in forest activities; that communication among regional, district, and ward officials is not sufficient; that guidelines are not clear; and that there is a limited capacity of partners to negotiate in JFM because of a lack of knowledge and rights (Robinson & Maganga, 2009)

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, United Republic of Tanzania (2008) if communities are to be fully protected and empowered to manage forests for their own benefits, there is also a need to ensure that PFM processes comply with the legal requirements set out in the law. Other concerns were the lack of real enforcement on the ground, despite often well drawn out plans; limited resources for participatory activities; the lack of willingness

of some stakeholders to share information fully and release power to villagers; and frustration with the long delays in the implementation of JFM and CBFM programmes (Robinson & Maganga, 2009).

## **2.4 The institutional challenges of participatory communication**

According to Waisboard (2008) the aid system has adapted an instrumental notion of participation as a means to achieve predetermined ends. He adds that participation has become a meaningless and bland term, a decorative piece in a system that continues to keep states, agencies, and experts in control. This means that application of participatory communication is non-existent and this compromises the development since communication is an ingredient without which development in economic fronts would be hard to achieve (Moemeka, 1994)

What was once a subversive position that aimed to turn development upside down, participation has become part of the discursive disguise of ‘developmentalism,’ a mere rhetorical piece in the service of neo-liberalism and policies imposed upon communities around the world (Cornwall, 2007 as quoted in Waisboard 2008). Participatory communication should be enveloped at all stages of the projects but Waisboard identifies that Participatory action research (PAR) and similar methodologies that foreground community knowledge are circumstantially used, but they are rarely the starting point.

Even when participatory approaches are adopted in problem solution the identification of the problem is often done by the expatriates, the solution already imagined and the involvement of the beneficiaries is often done to legitimise the participatory nature of the efforts. According to Bill Cooke and Uma Khotari (2001 as cited in Waisboard 2008) programs are hardly subjected to the ‘tyranny of participation,’ instead they follow pre-established goals decided at the national, regional, and/or global levels such as improving tuberculosis control or reducing child mortality.

David Mosse's (2005) reflections on the obstacles for integrating participation in a rural development project in India offer a useful point of comparison to understand the institutional limitations for participatory communication. Even when key parties were committed to making participation central, turning it into a concrete action was fraught with problems. Participation was viewed as a too time-consuming approach that required intensive use of human resources. Officials were doubtful about a participatory approach given the limited scale of the program and the difficulty for replicating it in other communities. Therefore participatory communication face the problem of unpredictability.

Institutional imperatives are responsible for why essential participatory ideas, namely local knowledge and decision-making, are rarely at the forefront of development initiatives. A system of bureaucratic procedures that rewards institutional efficiency weakens community empowerment, and reduces participation to publicity copy (Waisboard, 2008: p509). The emphasis according to Waisboard is more on the informational communication as opposed to participatory communication in development agencies.

According to Uphoff (1985) participation plays a weaker role in the centrality of local knowledge in determining problems, identifying solutions, and assessing results. Communities, rather than experts or other external agents, should determine challenges and decide appropriate courses of action to tackle problems through dialogue and critical thinking but this is not often the case. Uphoff argues that this being the first stage of participation, it is often bypassed by development change agents who assume to know the contextual reality of the beneficiaries.

Available evidence suggests that development programs are more likely to feature active communities involved in the implementation of activities rather than assessing problems and solutions or making decisions about goals (Holland & Blackburn, 1998). Communities have a central role in making decisions about the goals and the direction of programs and actions. If

decisions are left to agencies and their cadres of professionals, programs and actions are disconnected from the actual motivations and expectations of communities.

## **2.5 The origin of participatory communication**

Its origin owes to the works and inspiration of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) in which he projected a view that poor and exploited people can and should be enabled to conduct their own analysis of their own reality (Chambers ,1992)

The participatory communication approach has dominated the field of development communication since the 1970s, when Paulo Freire, proposed the replacement of the pedagogical system with a more liberating type of communication that would contain more dialogue and would be more receiver-centred and more conscious of social structure (Muturi & Mwangi, 2009)

### **2.5.1 The pedagogy of the oppressed**

In the mid-1970s, Paulo Freire proposed the replacement of the pedagogical system of learning with a more emancipating type of communication that would contain more dialogue and would be more receiver-centred and more conscious of social structure, different from other top-down approaches (Freire 1970).

He argued that dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish the world named- between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied. For dialogue to take place, those who right to speak has been denied must first reclaim it. Freire idea of society is based on the idea of dialectical materialism where there is an oppressor class and the oppressed class, his main concern being with the state of consciousness of the oppressed class.

Oppression involves imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the one person into one that conforms to the consciousness of the other. However during the first stages of the struggle, the oppressed tends to become oppressors. Dialogue is the key to successful emancipation of the oppressed and this means that projects should not be a preserve of the affluent instead all the stakeholders should participate in the process. Without dialogue, the dominant ideologies neglect the world view of the beneficiaries.

Citing Paulo Friere, De Melo (1979 as quoted in Gumicio-Dagron 2006) says that every democratic experience is made feasible as a work of society by the very hands of its people i.e with the participation of its people. The essence of development thus lies in people's participation, in their power to decide and choose.

For people to participate, they must become conscious of their own dignity. This in turn means that they must express themselves and be given the opportunity to have their say, based on the individual reality that infuses each person's life (Gumicio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006). Therefore the pedagogy of the oppressed seeks to answer the core problem of communication. It is part of the struggle of man for his own humanization. For this reason it is a pedagogy forged with man and not for man De Melo (1979).

Participation thus cannot exist without dialogue and according to Freire (1970) dialogue cannot exist if certain conditions are not met. In the absence of a profound love for the world and for the people, there will be domination of one group of people over another group and since dialogue is founded on the principle of love, there can be no real participation without love. "If I do not love the world- if I do not love life-if I do not love people- I cannot enter into dialogue."

Dialogue can also not exist without humility. The naming of the world, through which people constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of ignorance. Dialogue as an encounter of

those addressed to the common task of learning and acting is broken if the parties lack humility (Freire, 1970)

Without faith in humankind, dialogue cannot exist. In this case the stakeholders must have faith in each other's power to make and remake their world. In his pedagogy, Freire sought to counter an already existing approach to education and creating understanding between the teacher and the student. The anti-dialogical banking method saw the teacher as having full autonomy over the subject. This means that the teacher would depending on their discretion deposit the knowledge they held on the students from time to time. In this method there was less dialogue and the participation of the students in the advancement of knowledge was curtailed.

This method of learning adopted a top-down approach to education that assumed that the teacher knew what was best for the student and there was little or no dialogue between the stakeholders in the naming of the world. The students are merely perceive receivers of education. To counter this, Freire proposed a new model that he called the problem-posing method. Freire proposes that the themes of an education for the rural poor in South America be ones from their own experience and that they be trained in critical reflection on their own experience.

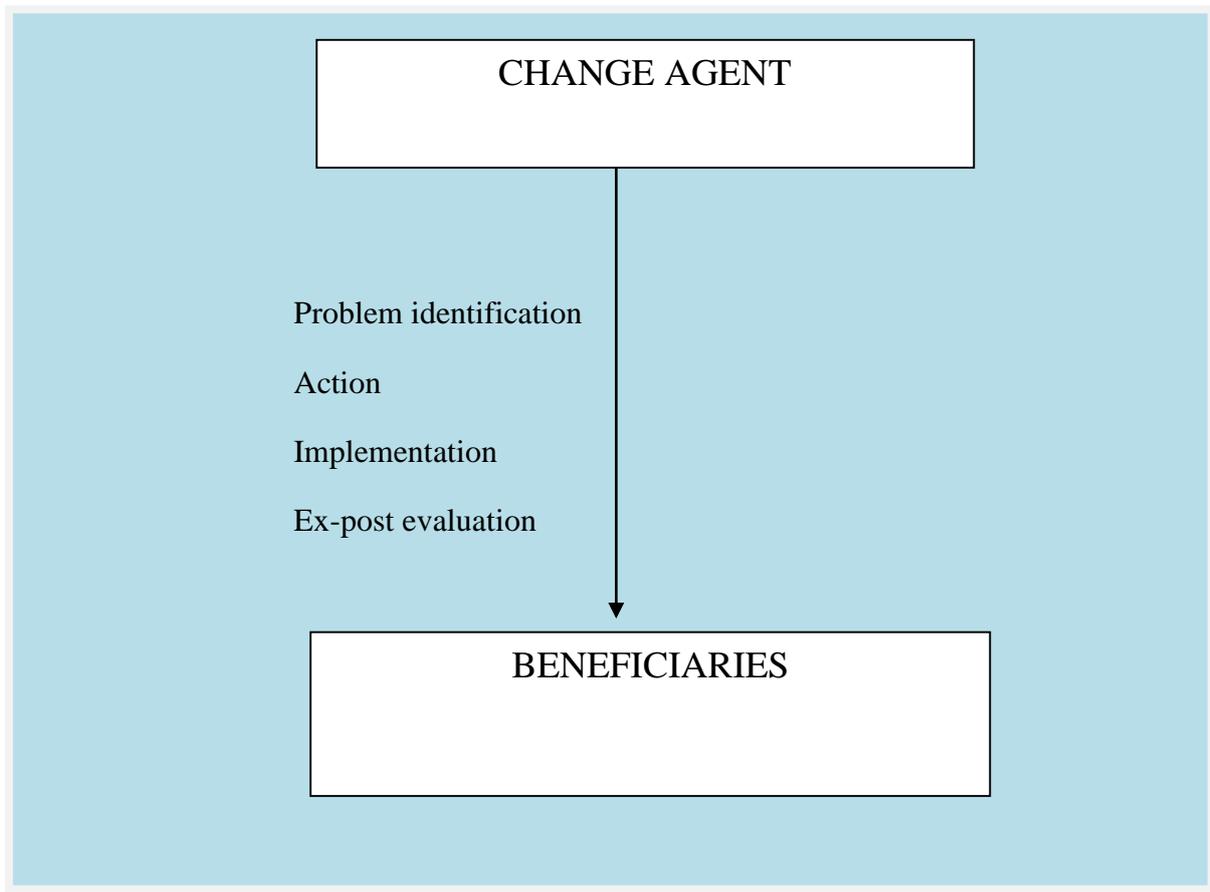
Freire sees clearly how the teacher in a banking system assumes that the students know nothing and projects an absolute ignorance onto others. He describes the modern teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his existence (Freire 1970). The new model proposes that it is not always the case that the teacher knows and the student does not. It proposes a situation where the student and the teacher approach a problem together.

Freire's new model has influenced participatory communication discourse and the idea of participation pegged on the fact that both the outsider and the intended beneficiary must

approach a problem together. The change agent must enter into dialogue with the beneficiary instead of adopting a purely top-down approach. They should be able to bring the community members to express their points of view and listen to others, and to build consensus around a course of action. This demands the ability to listen, to be aware of the participants' viewpoints and to be in a position to bring them to share information and views. (Bessete, 2004)

The ideas of Paulo Freire have influenced the development communication discourse over the years and provided knowledge for the central themes of participatory communication. Where Freire sees dialogue as important in helping the student and the teacher understand their world, development communication scholars sees dialogue as imperative in identifying the needs off the poor.

**Figure 2.1: Anti-dialogical banking method**



*Source: Researcher (2015)*

## **2.6 Diffusion model versus participatory communication**

Participatory communication and diffusion of innovation are the two dominant development communication paradigms but they propose different approaches to development. The end for both is the same, to see the adoption of a new innovation or bring change in society, they differ in the means.

While participatory communication proposes a more pragmatic approach where the people are at the centre of their own development, the diffusion of innovation theory adopts a top down approach where opinion leaders as early adopters receive the information from the innovator (change agent) and pass the same message to the other members of the community.

Everett Rodgers (2003) proposed a model that looked at the process that occurs as people adopt a new idea, product, practice, philosophy, and so on. He called the model diffusion of innovation theory, arguing that that in most cases, an initial few are open to the new idea and adopt its use. As these early innovators 'spread the word' more and more people become open to it which leads to the development of a critical mass (Kaminski, 2011). Over time, the innovative idea or product becomes diffused amongst the population until a saturation point is achieved. According to Rodgers (2003) a common problem for many individuals and organizations is how to speed up the rate of diffusion of an innovation.

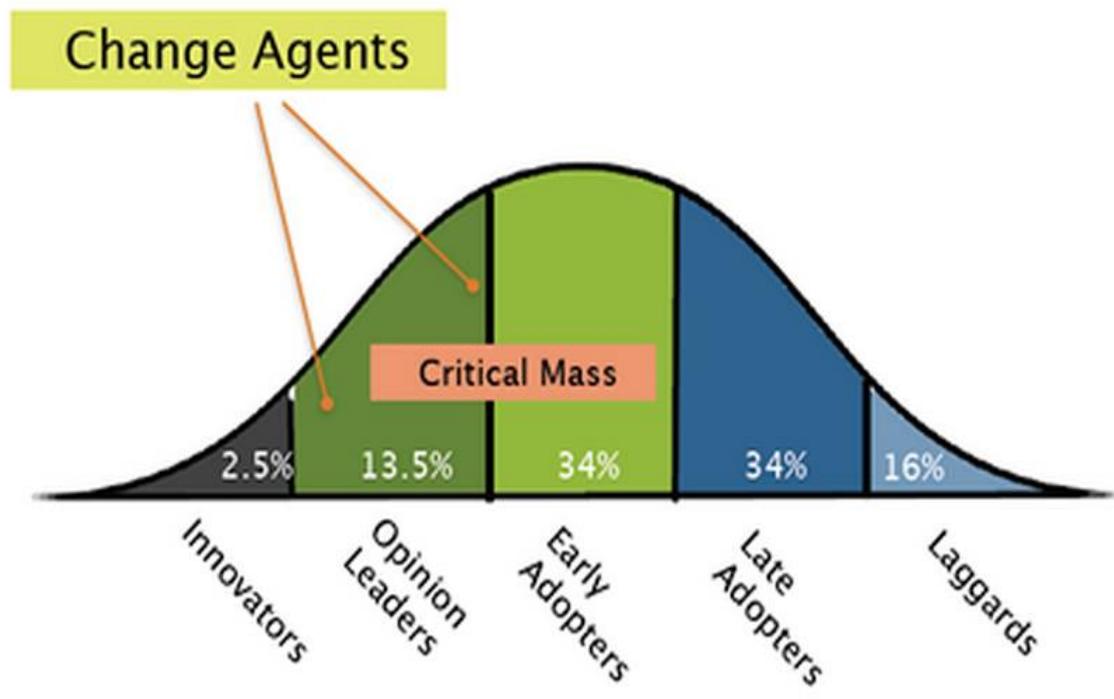
Newer perspectives on development communication claim that this is still a limited view of development communication. They argue that this diffusion model is a vertical or one-way perspective on communication, and that active involvement in the process of the communication itself will accelerate development (Servaes, 2008)

Unlike the diffusion of innovation, participatory communication stresses that the point of departure of development initiatives must be the community. According to Servaes (2008) it is

at the community level that the problems of living conditions are discussed, and interactions with other communities are elicited.

The diffusion model and the participatory communication model have stood out over time as the two main approaches of communication for development. The diffusion model aimed at solving problems due to a lack of knowledge and information. Change is thus driven by the change agents and provides little room for the involvement of the beneficiaries. Despite being the dominant paradigm in the 1940s and 1950s, the diffusion of innovation model and the communication model it adopts has since been replaced by the participatory communication model that appreciates horizontal communication as opposed to downward communication for development.

**Figure 2.2: Diffusion of innovation model**



*Source: worldhistoryreview.org*

## **2.7 stages of development projects**

According to the European Commission (2004) a project is a series of activities aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined time-period and with a defined budget. In the development process, projects are undertaken with the objective of meeting developmental needs. They undergo through various stages to realize the objectives.

The way in which projects are planned and carried out follows a sequence beginning with an agreed strategy, which leads to an idea for a specific action, oriented to-wards achieving a set of objectives, which then is formulated, implemented, and evaluated with a view to improving the strategy and further action (Particip, 2002). Adopting a participatory communication approach the initial stage of the development project involve identification of the needs of the beneficiaries. This is achieved through the dialogic process between the stakeholders.

The project cycle provides a structure to ensure that stakeholders are consulted and relevant information is available, so that informed decisions can be made at key stages in the life of a project. The generic project cycle has six stages; programming, identification, appraisal, financing, implementation and evaluation. (Particip, 2002).

During the Programming phase, the situation is analysed to identify problems, constraints and opportunities which co-operation could address. This involves a review of socio-economic indicators, and of national and donor priorities. The purpose is to identify the main objectives and to provide a relevant and feasible programming frame-work within which projects can be identified and prepared.

During the Identification phase established by the Country Strategy Paper (2002), the stress is on analysis of relevance of project ideas, which includes an analysis of the stakeholders and of the likely target groups and beneficiaries (who they are: women and men from different socio-

economic groups; assessment of their potentials) and of the situation, including an analysis of the problems they face, and the identification of options to address these problems.

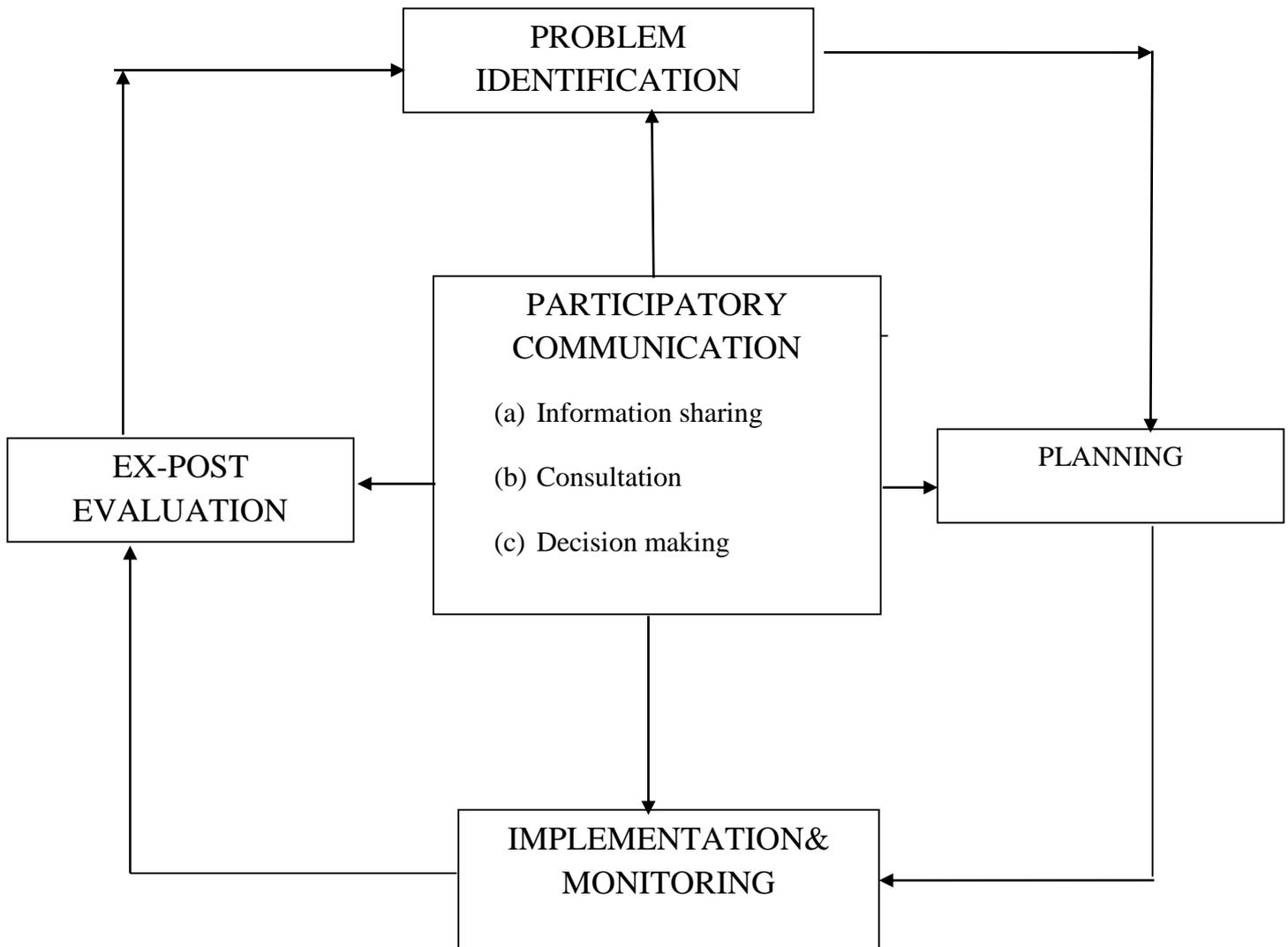
During the Appraisal phase relevant project ideas are developed into project plans. The particular stress should be on feasibility and sustainability and quality of the suggested intervention. Beneficiaries and other stakeholders participate in the detailed specification of the project idea that is then assessed for its feasibility (whether it is likely to succeed) and sustainability (whether it is likely to generate long-term benefits)

Once a project has been planned and financial support been secured, implementation can start. The agreed resources are used to achieve the Project Purpose and to contribute to the wider, Overall Objectives. This usually involves contracts for studies, technical assistance, works or supplies. Progress is assessed to enable adjustment to changing circumstances.

Evaluation is an assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors

## 2.8 Conceptual framework

Figure 2.3 Participatory development communication model



Source: Researcher (2015)

The figure above explain the relationship between the two variables under study. Development projects go through a cycle before they achieve their intended objectives. The process involves problem identification, planning, implementation and monitoring and ex-post evaluation. Participatory communication is the glue that holds all these stages together to ensure success and sustainability of the project.

## **2.9 Theoretical Framework**

This study will be guided by two theories, participatory paradigm and the Social Cognitive Theory.

### **2.9.1 Participatory Paradigm**

The participatory paradigm of development stems from the dependency theorists who were looking for a new way to development. The model sought to counter earlier beliefs in the diffusion of innovations model developed by Everett Rodgers. It emphasizes the empowerment, cultural reality and multidimensionality in the approaches of development (Servaes, 2008).

The model is also founded on empowerment and participation and posits that development cannot be approached from a linear perspective. This paradigm views the beneficiaries of development as active participants in the attainment of their development goals while previous paradigms viewed them as passive. This approach is grounded in a two way dialogic mode but it also incorporates the monologic approaches and methods (Mefalopulos, 2008) Within this approach, participatory communication becomes the essential tool, as it offers away to tap into the knowledge of citizens and participants in the change process.

### **2.9.2 Social Cognitive Theory**

The Social Cognitive Theory of Albert Bandura posits that people learn from each other through observing, imitating and modelling others while being guided by their proactive, self-regulating, self-organizing and self-reflective nature (Bandura, 2009). This theory is a behavioural change theory and argues that people observe actions and adopt those actions if they result in the desired behaviour. In the present study it can be argued that the beneficiaries learn from the actions of the change agents through their interaction in the needs assessment and implementation and in their interaction with other intended beneficiaries, they adopt those practices they deem highly productive.

According to Bandura the perceived or real rewards and punishments attracted by an action taken by a few people will serve as a detriment or motivation for others. In the present study, the involvement of a few dairy farmers at the needs assessment and implementation stages of the projects will influence others positively into taking part in the participatory action.

## **2.10 Summary of chapter**

This chapter provides a review of literature on the area of participatory communication and poverty reduction. It traces the origin of the participatory communication discourse to Paulo Freire in his writings on the pedagogy of the oppressed and the critical praxis. The chapter also reviews literature on the participatory approaches in community projects and the institutional challenges of participatory communication. Participatory communication and diffusion model as the two dominant development communication paradigms, the chapter makes contrast between the two. The chapter also contains a review of literature on poverty reduction, the stages of development projects and also provides a conceptual framework.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The chapter is concerned with the research methodology to be employed during the research. The chapter details the research design including the methods of data collection that were used and sampling method used to select the participants of the research. It also specifies the data presentation methods and research instruments used. Therefore, the methodology employed aimed to collect and analyze data that would clearly reflect the relationship between the two variables (participatory communication and poverty reduction)

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study employed an exploratory research design to examine the research problem and offer understanding into it without necessarily providing solutions to the research problem. However this design was chosen because it would lead to the discovery of new knowledge and allow for free flow of information, providing room for further inquiry. According to Kothari (2004) the research procedure in exploratory research design is flexible and allows for amendment of aspects of the study due to the likelihood of discovering new aspects of the phenomena under study.

#### **3.2 Study population**

The study targeted the beneficiaries of this development project within Murang'a County. The citizens targeted were both male and female above the age of 18 years who currently engage in dairy farming activities in Murang'a County.

According to the 2009 census the county has a total population of 942,581. However this research studied three constituencies of the seven constituencies in the County where the project has been implemented. The three constituencies are Kangema, Kiharu and Gatanga with

a combined population of 421,661 according to the census. Including different positions in the target population will ensure that the researcher gets varied views that would help achieve objective data.

### **3.3 Sample size and sampling techniques**

#### **3.3.1 Sample size**

According to Kombo (2006) a sample is a finite part of a statistical population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. These characteristics are studied to gain information about the whole.

To obtain the desired sample size, this study adopted a model proposed by Yamani in Keyton (2001). The formula used is

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
 When  $n$  is the sample size,  $N$  is the population size,  $e$  is the degree of tolerable error and 1 is constant

Using this formula therefore and allowing 5% error margin, the study sample was

$$n = \frac{421661}{1 + 421661(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 400$$

#### **3.3.2 Sampling procedures and techniques**

Probability sampling techniques were used in this study. According to Kombo (2006) the use of this sampling method gives all units in the study population an equal chance of selection in the sample. The study adopted cluster sampling method where the three constituencies were the desired clusters and samples were obtained from the clusters using simple random sampling techniques depending on the population size.

This means that using this technique, there were 172 respondents from Kiharu constituency, 73 from Kangema constituency and 155 from Gatanga.

### **3.4 Data collection methods**

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The questionnaires had both close ended and open ended questions. Primary data was collected by administering questionnaires to the respondents and conducting interviews with farmers. Data collection for the study was primarily fieldwork. The chief data collection techniques were questionnaires and interviews.

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaires**

The use of questionnaire to get response from the beneficiaries aims to get standard response across the board. All the beneficiaries responded to the same questions and the data obtained was subjected to the statistical process to come up with a comprehensive finding. The questionnaires were be in English with a Kiswahili translation for respondents who may be unfamiliar with the English language.

The questionnaires were designed in a way that the researcher would get response that would cover all the variables identified in the conceptual framework. Questionnaires were easy to administer within the target population. Data collected using structured questionnaires is also easily analysed (Denscombe, 2007:35). The questions were structured to be able to get quantitative data that was be used to answer research questions and fulfil the objectives and aims of the research. The questionnaires were be dropped and later picked from the respondents while some were administered physically with the aid of a research assistant.

#### **3.4.2 Interviews**

The use of interviews helped obtain detailed information about the project from both large scale and small scale farmers in the county. The interviews were semi-structured and therefore used an interview guide. Interview method, as argued by Strauss & Corbin (1990), enables striking

a rapport with the participants thereby enabling the researcher easily win their trust. This is necessary for the interviewees to freely express themselves and capture the desired information. To direct the interview, an interview schedule was used. According to Kothari (2004) an interview schedule is a list of questions that are asked in the interview process. Six farmers were interviewed for about 30 minutes each, where field notes were taken to capture the participant's views.

### **3.5 Data analysis and Presentation Methods**

The research used questionnaires and interviews as the methods for data collection. The data collected was integrated for analysis. After administering the questionnaires the researcher intends to code and have the information converted into numerical codes for statistical analysis. A computer software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics will be computed for all the variables to ensure quality of data. These statistics were used to show the relationships between variables. The effectiveness of the analysis of the data also determines how the interpretation of the results would be accurate. Walliman (2011) states that whenever faulty analytical instruments and methods are used in a research, the interpretation of the results is also expected to be wrong making the whole process invalid. According to Creswell (2002), qualitative research dwells more on the intangible factors that emanates from human activity

Murang'a County:Gini Coefficient by Ward

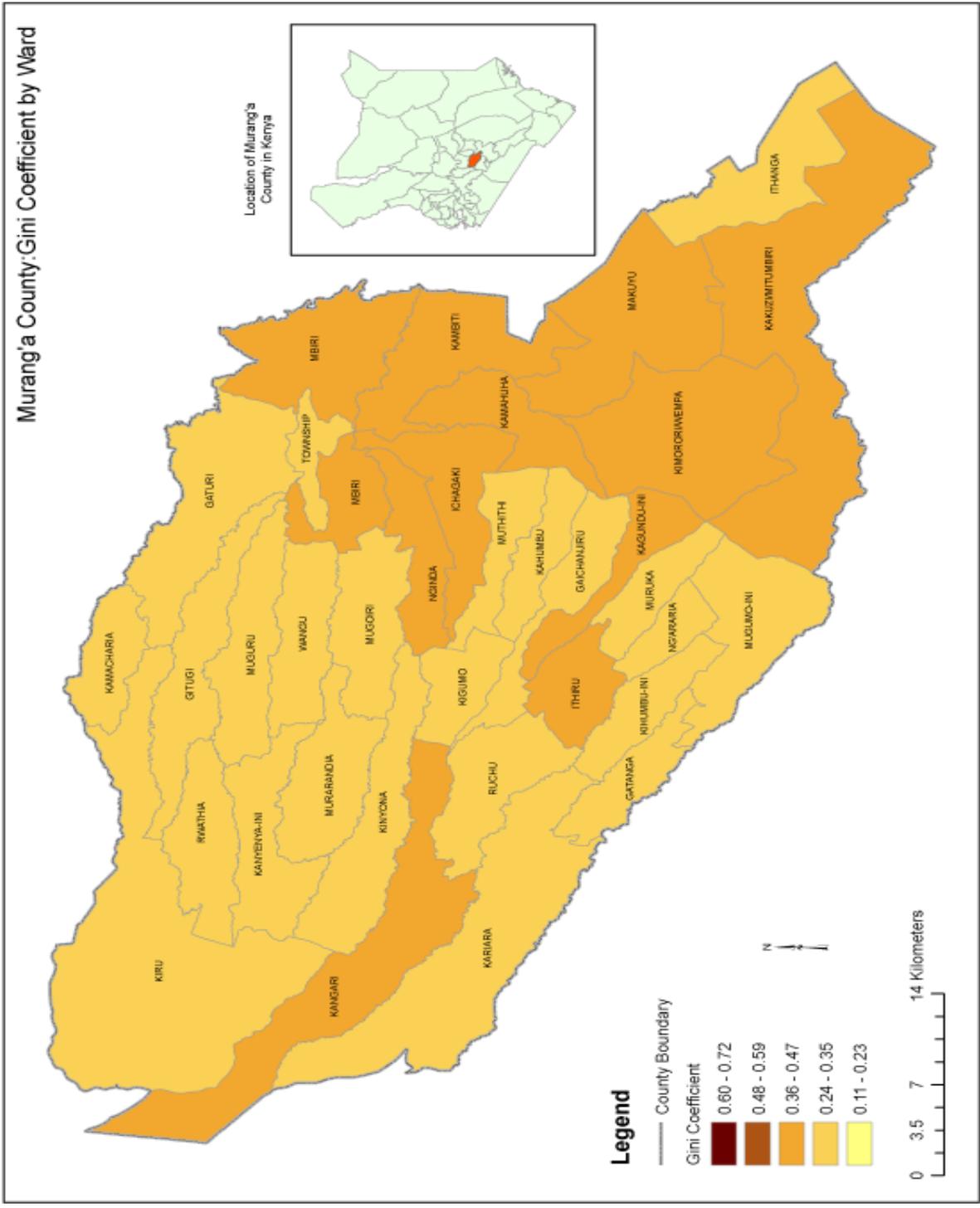


Figure 3.1: A map of Murang'a County showing wards Source (Murang'a.go.ke)

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Since the research is conducted in Kenya and its findings intends to contribute to the study of human behaviours, the researcher requested for a formal letter from the University of Nairobi, administration to facilitate data collection process. The identity of the participants will not be revealed and before questionnaires were administered, the consent of the participant was requested.

### **3.7 Summary of chapter**

This chapter elaborates on how the research was carried out. It sets out the method and strategy that were used to make sure that the data collected was valid and help in answering all the research questions laid down and meeting the research objectives and aims. From the onset, it was defined that the research to be carried out was primary. The research used questionnaires and interviews as the main tools to collect data from the beneficiaries. Finally the chapter discussed the research tools to be used and explain the significance of the tool and more so its effectiveness to this particular study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The purpose of this research was to find out the contribution of participatory communication in poverty reduction efforts in Kenya with an interest in the milk coolers project, an initiative of the Murang'a County government. The interpretations made in this chapter and the discussions made are in relation with the objectives of the study.

The research was conducted on a sample of 400 respondents and six interviewees from Murang'a County who are the intended beneficiaries of the poverty reduction efforts and to whom questionnaires were administered. The statistics analysed were used to show the relationships between variables. Out of the 400 questionnaires, 340 questionnaires were duly filled and this represents a response rate of 85%.

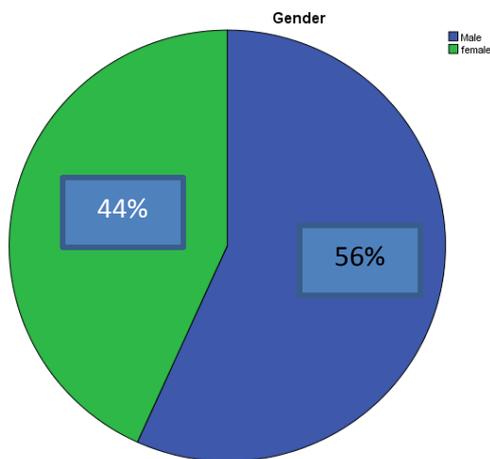
#### **4.1 Demographics**

The following is the presentation of demographic data collected using the questionnaires from the field.

### 4.1.1 Analysis of Respondents by Gender

Of the 340 respondents the study sought to ascertain information in regards to their gender. From the findings, the figure below reveals that 56% of the respondents were male while 44% were female.

**Figure 4.1: Gender of the respondents**



*Source: Researcher 2015*

They were more male respondent compared to females meaning that the number of male beneficiaries of the project in Murang'a County was slightly higher compared to their female counterparts.

#### 4.1.2 Analysis of respondents by Age

The study sought to find out the respondent's age distribution and the questionnaire required the respondents to fill in their age category. Table 4.1 indicates the distribution of the respondents by age

**Table 4.1 Analysis of the Respondents by Age**

YEARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
18-24	23	7
25-30	24	7
31-40	48	14
41-50	126	37
51-60	85	25
60 and above	34	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100</b>

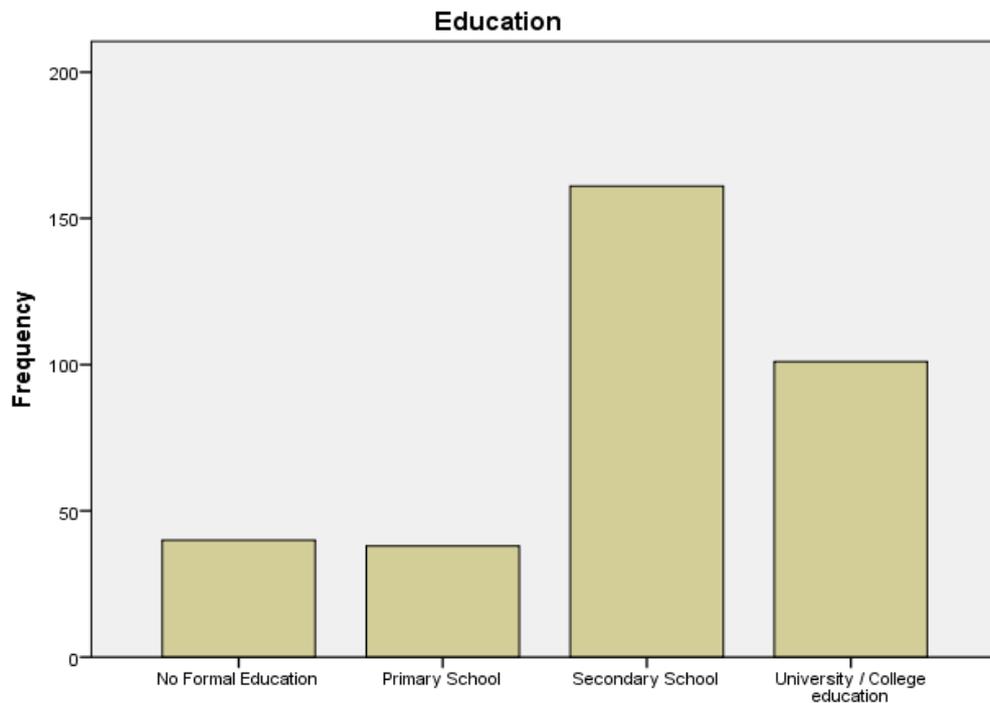
*Source: Researcher 2015*

From the table above, the majority of the respondents 37% were between the age category of 41-50. This represents 126 out of the total 340 respondents. 25% of the respondents are aged between 51 and 60 while 10% are aged 60 and above. 48 respondents were aged between 31 and 40 which represents 14%. The above findings indicate that the majority of the beneficiaries of the project are between the ages of 41 and 50.

### 4.1.3 Level of education

Further the study sought to find out the respondents level of education and the respondents filled in their highest level of education as represented in the figure below.

**Figure 4.2 Respondents level of education**



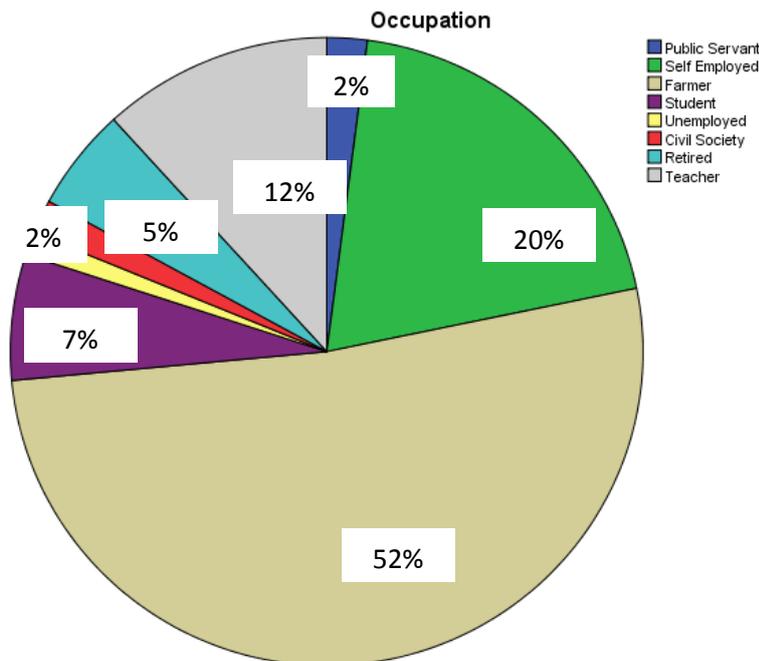
*Source: Researcher 2015*

From the findings 48% of respondents has secondary school education, 30% of the respondents has university/college education and 11% indicated they had primary school education while 12% of the respondents indicated they had no formal education. The findings indicate that nearly half of the beneficiaries 48% had achieved a minimum of secondary education. This means that in addition to those that had attained university/college education, 78% of all respondents had minimum O level education.

#### 4.1.4 Respondents' occupation

In order to understand the respondents' occupation, the respondents were asked to indicate their current occupation.

**Figure 4.3 Respondents' current occupation**



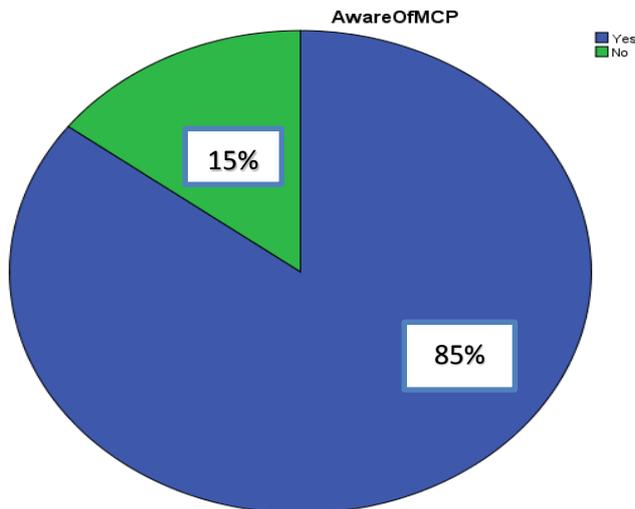
*Source: Researcher 2015*

From the findings above, 52% of the respondents indicated that they were farmers however there are other beneficiaries whose engaged in other activities apart from farming, 20% indicated they were private business people, 12% of the respondents indicated they were teachers, 7% were students, 5% were retired civil servants, 2% were civil servants, 2% were members of the civil society while 1% of the respondents were unemployed. There were provisions in the questionnaire to indicate any other occupation save for those provided but there were no returns on different occupations. This means that the majority of the beneficiaries of the project were full time farmers, represented by 176 of the total 340 respondents.

## 4.2 Knowledge of the Milk Coolers project

The study sought to find out whether the respondents were aware of the project that had been initiated and implemented by the Murang'a County government.

**Figure 4.4 Knowledge on the Milk Coolers Project**



*Source: Researcher 2015*

From the findings above, it emerged that 85% of the respondents were aware of this project representing 290 respondents of the total 340. However 15% of the respondents had no prior knowledge of the existence of the project, this represents 50 of the total 340 respondents. From the findings it is clear that there was an awareness of the project among its intended beneficiaries.

When the same question was asked during the interview with prominent farmers in dairy farming, the responses were affirmative that they had knowledge of this project even if most observed that they did not have detailed information about it and had received scanty details through the media.

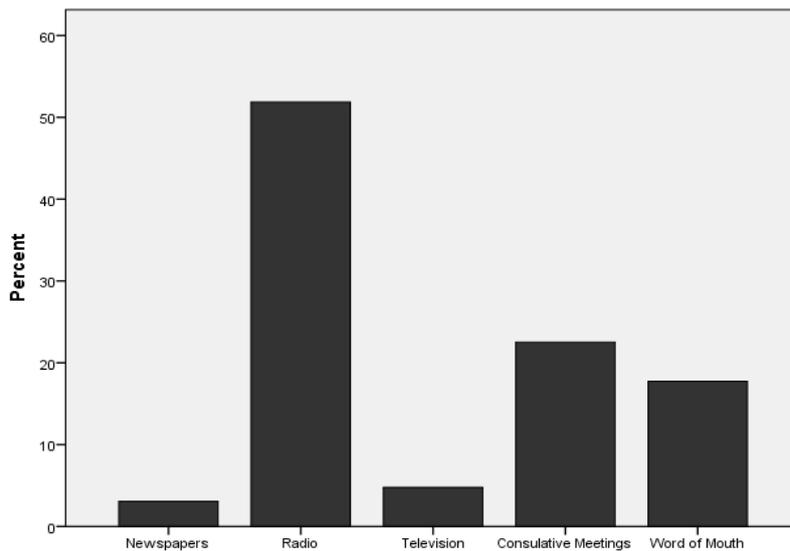
These findings augurs well with the arguments advanced by Gumicio-Dagron (2006) that for people to participate they must become conscious of their own dignity. This means that they must be able to express themselves and be given an opportunity to have their say, based on the

individual reality that infuses each person’s life. In shaping their own reality, beneficiaries of development must become conscious of the world around them.

### 4.3 Source of Information on the Project

The study further sought to find out which communication vehicles had been used to reach out to the beneficiaries on this project. This information was obtained from 85% of the respondents who indicated that they were aware of the project. The figure below indicates the sources of information

**Figure 4.5 Source of Information on the project**



*Source: Researcher 2015*

From the findings it emerged that a majority of the respondents had obtained information about the project from the radio i.e. 152 of the total 293 who were knowledgeable about the project, representing 52%. There were only 9 respondents who had obtained information about the project from the newspapers representing 3%. 23% of the respondents indicated that they had received information about the project through consultative meetings with the change agents. This augurs well with the arguments advanced by Oriakhi & Okoedo –Okojie (2013) on the preference of sources of information. They point out that sources that are easily accessible,

cheap and user friendly are preferred. The radio is a cheap media channel to acquire and maintain and according to the findings of Oriare (2010) that a majority of Kenyans 90% listen to the radio.

However the arguments of Sarvaes (2008) differ with the dominant use of the radio as communication vehicle in participatory development approaches. He argues that in development communication must be integrated with a number of other efforts so as to nurture new behaviour in people. Once motivated with information and awareness about a new practice, people need to learn and master new skills to enable them to apply it. The radio presents a top-down approach unlike other interpersonal efforts such as the word of mouth and consultative meetings. The communication approaches proposed by Sarvaes conform to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which holds that people learn through modelling and imitation (Bandura, 1971)

#### 4.4 Proposed communication vehicles

The study sought to find out from beneficiaries who had no information about the project on what communication vehicle the change agent would have used to reach out to them. The findings are presented in the table below.

**Table 4.2 Proposed communication vehicles**

Communication vehicle	Frequency	Valid Percent
Radio	21	48
Television	6	13
Consultative meetings	14	30
Billboards	4	9
Public service announcements	2	4
Total	47	100.0

*Source: Researcher 2015*

This question was presented to respondents who had no prior information on the project, representing 15% of the respondents. As presented in the table above, 48% chose the radio as a likely communication vehicle to be used by the change agent to reach out to them while a further 30% wanted to have consultative meetings with change agents. 2 respondents wanted to get information on the project through public service announcements while 4 respondents opted for billboards.

When the prominent farmers were asked whether they felt that the channels used to reach out to the intended beneficiaries were sufficient, they reported that there was need to adopt channels that were more inclusive and interactive as opposed to just messages on the media.

*Q3: Do you think the channels used to reach out to the farmers were sufficient and what do you think should have been done to enhance reach?*

A1: I have heard about this coolers on the radio but we have not had a chance to meet the people in charge of this project to educate us more on how they are supposed to benefit us

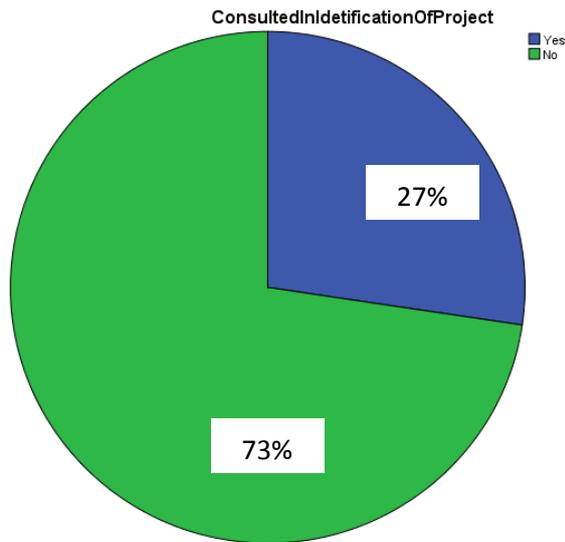
A2: I think it would be best if they had agricultural officers like they have in tea and coffee, to come to the grassroots and tell us how we will benefit from this project. If we have to take our milk to the coolers, it must be a better option than what we have now. I sell my own milk to small scale consumers in the nearby towns, I have to be convinced why I should stop selling to them and take to the cooler.

These findings however differs with Blanchet-Cohen (2014) who observes that aside from creating awareness and interest among citizens, organizations focused on giving voice to citizens' problems and solutions, proposing for more interactive communication forms rather than the top-down methods.

#### **4.5 Consultation in the identification of the project**

In order to find out if the intended change agents had perceived the beneficiaries as equals in the development process as is premise in the participatory communication paradigm, the respondents were asked to indicate of they had been consulted in the identification of the project. The findings of the stud are presented in the figure below.

**Figure 4.6 Consultation in the identification of the project**



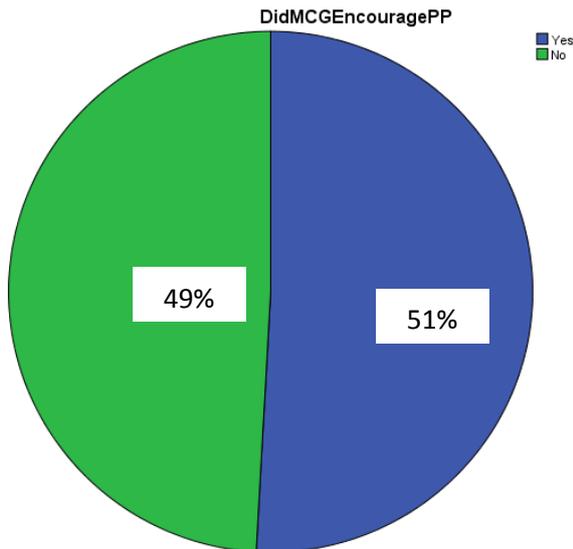
*Source: Researcher 2015*

The findings above indicates that 73% of the respondents were not consulted in the identification of the project while 27% were consulted. This means that whereas a significant number of respondents were consulted, the change agents did not consider consulting the intended beneficiaries as a prerequisite in the success of the project. Those who participated indicated that they took part in public forums and consultative meetings with the change agents. Jihandra (2014) argues that development approaches developed with little understanding of local contexts may yield no incentive to participate

#### 4.6 Did change agents encourage public to participate in implementation of the project

Apart from finding out if the beneficiaries were consulted in the identification of the project, the study sought to find out if the respondents took part in the implementation of the project and if they did, how did they take part. The findings are presented in the figure below

**Figure 4.7: Did change agents encourage public to participate in implementation**



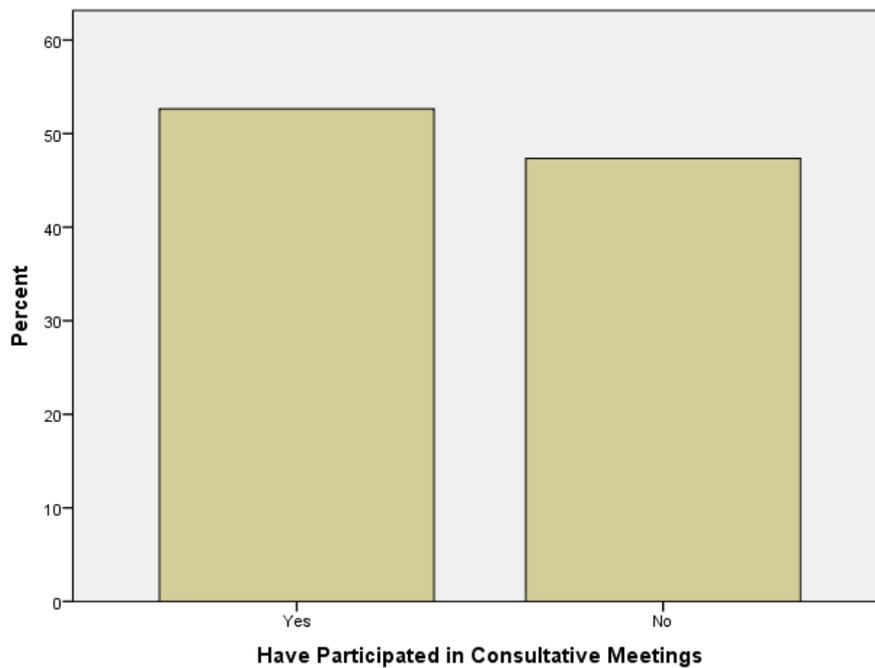
*Source: Researcher 2015*

A total of 51% of the respondents indicated that the change agent (Murang'a County Government) encouraged the public to participate in the implementation of the project while 49% of the respondents indicated that the change agent did not encourage the beneficiaries to take part in the implementation of the project. Those who said that the beneficiaries were encouraged to take part in the implementation cited that this was done through the provision of incentives to the beneficiaries. The change agent provided free Napier grass (fodder), public forums where free training was offered to the beneficiaries as well as provision of free services.

#### 4.7 Participation in consultative meetings on the project

On the question of whether the respondents had participated in consultative meetings before, during and after the implementation of the project, 53% of the respondents said they had participated in consultative meetings on this project. The findings are represented in the figure below.

**Figure 4.8: Participation in consultative meetings on the project**



*Source: Researcher 2015*

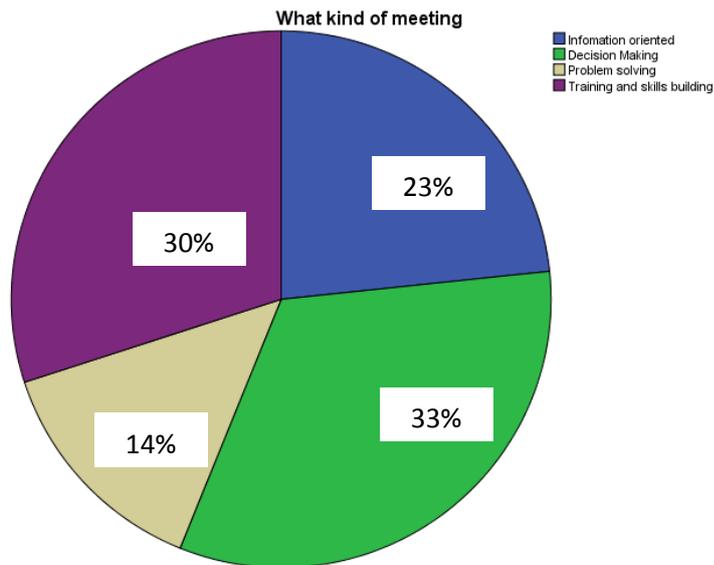
The findings indicate that 52.6%, representing 179 of the total 340 respondents, said they had participated in consultative meetings with the change agents on this project while 47.4% of the respondents said they had not participated in the consultative meetings.

Conversely from the interviews conducted the farmers indicated that they had not participated in the identification of the project. They observed that they came to know of the project during its implementation when it was announced on the media, noting that they were later involved only to ‘rubber stamp’ the operations of the county government.

#### 4.8 Kind of meeting

The study further sought to find out from the respondents who indicated they had participated in consultative meetings with the change agents on what kind of meetings they were. The findings are presented in the figure below

**Figure 4.9: Kind of meeting**



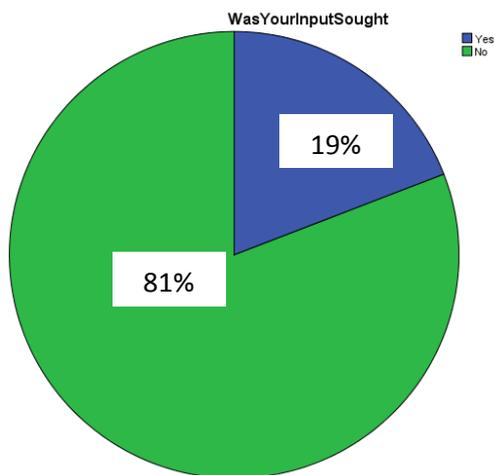
*Source: Researcher 2015*

The above findings were obtained from the 179 respondents who indicated that they had participated in consultative meetings on the project. 33% of them, which represents 59 respondents, said took part in decision making meetings, 30% took part in training and skill building and 23% took part in information oriented meetings while 14%, representing 25 respondents took part in problem solving meetings.

#### 4.9 Whether beneficiary input was sought during implementation

On the question of whether the beneficiaries took part in the implementation of the project, the study kindly requested the respondents to indicate if their input had been sought during implementation. Participatory communication as a development paradigm advocates for the beneficiaries to actively take part in the implementation of the project. The findings are presented in the figure below

**Figure 4:10: Whether beneficiary input was sought during implementation**



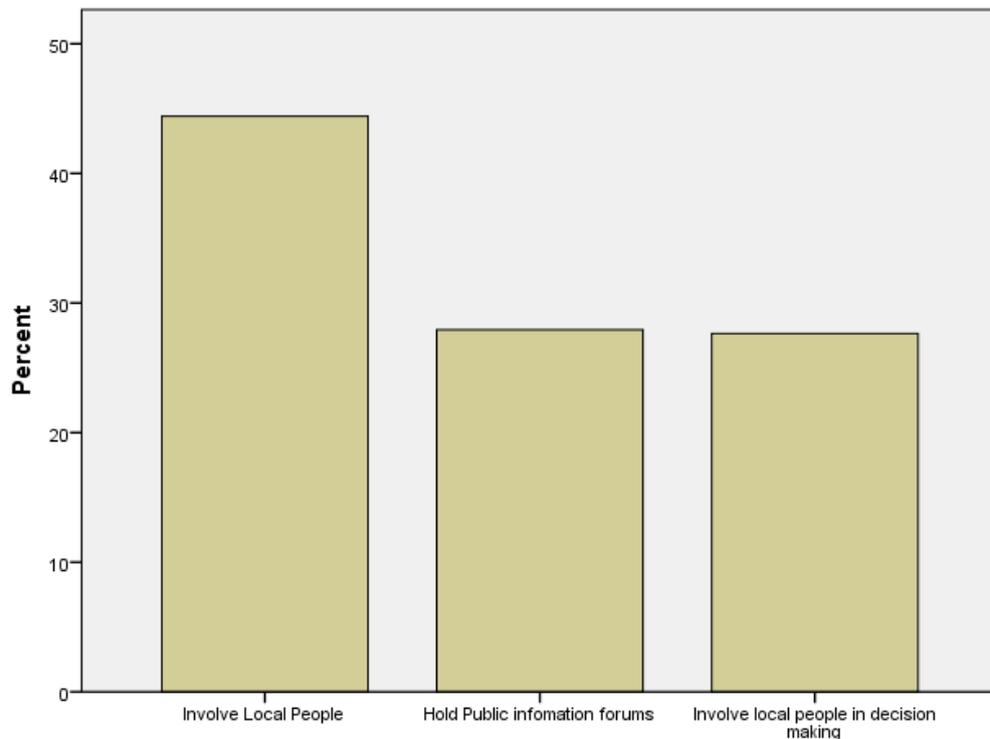
*Source: Researcher 2015*

This study observed that 81% of the respondents indicated that they had not been involved in the implementation of the project, representing 275 of the total 340 respondents. 19% of the respondents indicated that they had been involved during the implementation of the project.

This can be interpreted to mean that there was less participation by the intended beneficiary during the implementation of the project, adopting an anti-dialogical banking model to development. In a community, participation can help promote improvements in efficiency, accountability and transparency of resource allocation and development (Fung and Wright, 2001). Chambers (1983) observes that participation is the key to genuine and sustainable poverty alleviation, as increased participation can enhance ownership and commitment among the 'local and poor' people.

#### 4.10 Increase participation

The study further sought to find out what the respondents thought should have been done to increase the participation of the intended beneficiaries. The findings are presented in the figure below



**Figure 4.11: What should have been done to increase participation**

The study found that 44% of the respondents indicated that the change agent should have involved the local people at the implementation of the project, 28% indicated that the change agent should have held public information forums with the beneficiaries while 27% indicated that the change agents should involve the local people in decision making.

From the interviews, all the interviewees confirmed that there was less participation among the beneficiaries of this project and there was need for the change agent to do more to increase participation. The question was posed to them and this is how some responded in verbatim

*Q6: In your opinion what do you think should have been done to increase participation of the people during the implementation of this project?*

A1: Let me tell you, the main reason why this project has not achieved what it should have is because we the people were not involved from the beginning. In my opinion, I think the county government should have called us farmers to a meeting and ask us what we feel about such a project because we were meant to benefit from it. We have seen other farmers in areas such as tea called to meetings in the factory where they discuss issues that concern them. It would have been important for us to get involved before they started implementing this project.

A2: Good leaders talk to their people and get their feelings on various issues that affect them. We are not seeing the same with this county government which we unanimously voted into office. They cannot be making plans without our knowledge yet those plans are supposed to benefit us. Our views as the citizens is also important and they should involve us when they are making such decisions.

A3: As farmers we have a lot of information about agriculture even if we do not have many university degrees. We ought to be the ones running this project. We should be involved more.

In making a case for participation, Eversole (2012) argues that meaningful participation requires that community members, the main actors in the development process, become participants in their own right, while the community leader plays an important role in stimulating interest in participation

#### 4.11 Consider the project a success

The study sought to establish whether the respondents perceived the project to have been a success depending on their previous responses. On this question, 8% of the respondents considered the project to have been successful while a majority 92% considered the project to have been unsuccessful as indicated in the table below.

**Consider Milk Coolers Project Success**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	27	7.9	7.9	7.9
	No	313	92.1	92.1	100.0
	Total	340	100.0	100.0	

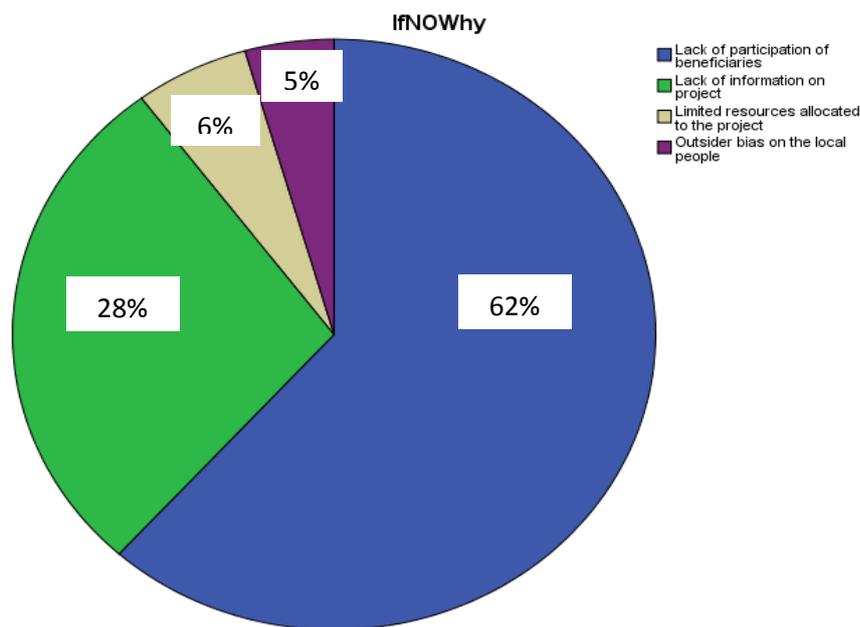
**Table 4.3: Consider the project a success**

Conversely these sentiments were shared during the face to face interviews with both the large scale and small scale farmers. They observed that this project had not reached its optimum despite the fact that the plants were working. They also pointed out why they felt the project had not reached its optimum, the findings of which are presented below.

This can be interpreted to mean that the beneficiaries did not perceive the project to have been successful. As proposed by Tosun (2000), the more engagement there is in the process, the more self-reliance/ less dependence on others. For poverty reduction efforts to succeed, they ought to be participatory, stakeholders are expected to engage in dialogue to foster analysis, knowledge sharing, and exchange of perspectives to reach a consensus about the future of the community (Green and Haines, 2007).

The study further sought to find out from those who indicated “NO” why they thought the project was not successful and it was observed that 62% of the respondents said that it was because the beneficiaries had not been involved in the project. 28% of the respondents said they had little information about the project, 6% indicated there were limited resources allocated to the project while 5% said there was outsider bias on the local people. The findings are represented in the figure below.

**Figure 4.12: Why the project did not succeed**



**Source: Researcher 2015**

*Q7: Do you consider this project a success and if not why do you think this project failed?*

*A1:* Listen to me Sir, it is not possible for us to consider this project a success yet it was imposed on us. I personally do not consider this project a success because it has not impacted on me as a dairy farmer yet it was meant to benefit me. I am disappointed that those who brought about this project did not see the need to consult me. They failed in doing so and most of us farmers never owned this project. It is their project and that is why we do not consider it important to take our milk to their coolers. We preserve our milk the same way we did before the county

government came into place and sell it to small scale consumers, hotels and schools the same way we have been doing.

A2: I cannot say that we have benefited much from this project because it has not really helped us. There was very little information about it and I think that is where they began to fail. It was conceived in the boardrooms in the towns and they considered us farmers very foolish to have any knowledge on this. Even when they began implementing it, we were never involved. We only saw them come to talk to us when some of the plants had been completed and they wanted us to take our milk to them. They did not even offer a better alternative to what we had earlier and therefore we did not see the need for the project. How can I take my milk to the cooler and earn less than what I learn from selling my milk locally? I am a farmer who is in business, I need to make profits not losses.

#### **4.12 How the beneficiaries can contribute to make the project better**

In order to identify the missing gaps in participatory development that could have captured or failed to capture, the study kindly requested the respondents to indicate how the beneficiaries could contribute to make the project better. A majority of the respondents proposed the training and building of skills among the beneficiaries to aid them take leading positions in the poverty reduction projects.

The above sentiments were shared by farmers who were interviewed. They observed that once the farmers needed to have the necessary skills to enable them take active part in the implementation of such development projects. They indicated that this could only happen if the change agents held training forums to equip them with the necessary know how to take part in such projects.

These approaches borrow from those advanced by Gaventa (2004). He talks about different spaces of participation such as ‘closed spaces’ where key decisions are taken behind closed

doors; 'invited spaces' where people are invited to participate by governments, which can assume a routinized form over years, and finally 'created spaces' that people come to occupy by their own effort, through mobilisation. Seen in this light, most participatory planning sites could be described as 'invited spaces'

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings from the research with respect to the objectives of the study, what these findings imply and gives recommendations for further research. This chapter is structured into summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and area for further research.

#### **5.2 Summary of the findings**

##### **5.2.1 Communication channels used to reach out to local communities**

From the finding of this study, several key things can be deduced in relation to this research question. It is evident that majority of the beneficiaries of the Milk Coolers Project are not without information on the project. Majority of the beneficiaries had information about the project and had received the information from a variety of communication forms.

It emerged that a majority of the beneficiaries had relied on the radio as a communication vehicle on information about this project. This finding is in line with previous research by Oriare (2010) that a majority of Kenyans 90% listen to the radio. The radio thus became a successful tool in reaching out to the intended beneficiaries on information about the project. This means that the radio has a major role in reaching out to the majority of Kenyans on matters of national significance, development being among them.

Participatory communication however does not envision a communication paradigm where the intended beneficiaries of development would be receivers of top-down communication but promotes horizontal communication between the change agents and the beneficiaries as

opposed to a banking model to development. Consultative meetings were also influential in reaching out to the beneficiaries. Interpersonal face to face communication methods that adopted the word of mouth were also used in reaching out to intended beneficiaries.

Among those who said they had no prior information about the project, a majority like those who had information proposed the radio as a likely communication channel to reach out to them on the project but this does not discard the place of consultative meetings between the stakeholders.

This study thus found out that the radio, consultative meetings and interpersonal methods were the communication methods used to reach out to local communities

### **5.2.2 Participation of local communities at the implementation stage of development**

The participatory development paradigm proposes a view of development where the beneficiary takes an active role throughout the development cycle. It proposes that the beneficiary and the change agent join hands in participatory action research in identifying the development needs and the implementation of the project to foster sustainability. This study found out that a majority of the beneficiaries had not been consulted in the identification of the project. This explains why majority of the beneficiaries had received information about the project through channels that propagate a banking model of development. Whereas a significant number of respondents were encouraged to participate, the change agents did not consider consulting the intended beneficiaries as a prerequisite in the success of the project. Those who participated indicated that they took part in public forums and consultative meetings with the change agents. The study also found out that the change agent (Murang'a County Government) did not sufficiently encourage the public to participate in the implementation of the project.

A majority of the respondents indicated that they had not been involved in the implementation of the project. This can be interpreted to mean that there was less participation by the intended beneficiary during the implementation of the project, adopting an anti-dialogical banking model to development. In answering this research question, the study therefore observes that the beneficiary input during the project implementation was minimal, meaning that during the implementation, the project did not adopt participatory development methods.

### **5.2.3 Role of participation on the success of poverty reduction efforts**

The participatory development paradigm pegs the success of development initiatives on the role of the beneficiary throughout the project. This study observed that the beneficiaries were not involved in the ex-ante evaluation of the project but were passive receivers of information on the project. The findings indicate that a high majority of the beneficiaries did not consider the project to have been successful while very few beneficiaries considered the project was a success. The findings indicate that the majority said that they did not consider the project because the beneficiaries had not been involved in the project. It also emerged that there was little information about the project as well as outsider bias on the local people. These findings proves true the basic postulates of the participatory development paradigm as advanced by Chambers (1980) that poverty reduction efforts must enhance increased participation which also enhances ownership and commitment among the 'local and poor' people.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

This study purposed to establish how participatory communication could be used to reduce poverty in Kenya hence improving the living standards of the people. To this end, the discourse of the conclusions are grounded on the results of this case so as to leave room for unfounded information or unconfirmed data.

The study concludes that a majority of the beneficiaries of this project had information about the study but they had received information through communication vehicles that promoted the banking model view of development (Freire, 1970). This means that efforts in identifying this project as a development need for the people of Murang'a County did not involve the target groups and the change agent adopted an outside bias, perceiving to understand the contextual reality of the local people without involving them in the identification of their development needs.

The study also concludes that the involvement of the beneficiaries during the implementation stage of the project was very low and whereas majority of the respondents felt that through holding meetings with the people, the change agent had encouraged them to take part during the implementation, the change agent created no avenue for the local people to participate during the implementation phase of the project. Like in other phases of the project, during implementation, the beneficiaries were mere by standers, perceive receivers of development and this could have devastating consequences on the sustainability of the project.

The study further concludes that efforts should be put in place to ensure that the people take centre stage in the identification of development needs and implementation. Change agents in the county and throughout Kenya should now adopt a new approach to development where all stakeholders play an equal role and where outsider bias by the change agents are discarded.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations are made as follows.

### **5.4.1 Policy recommendations**

First the County government should take participatory development and participatory communication as efficient development approaches in the steps towards improving the living standards of its citizenry. Lack of participation of the intended beneficiaries was the main reason why the majority of the intended beneficiaries did not consider the project to have been successful. Therefore the county government, rather than just send out information on development projects through the mass media, should create a platform where the views of the citizenry are heard in the identification of development needs. Further they should conduct a needs assessment survey of the development needs in the county to establish what development needs are more pressing to the people and require urgent attention.

Save for encouraging the beneficiaries to take part in needs identification, the study further recommends that the change agent should involve the local people in project implementation. The change agents should hold public information forums with the people that are information oriented and decision making and where solutions to problems that affect the people are crafted. There should be more training and skill building of the intended beneficiaries to ensure that the people can run any development project even after the change agent has left to foster sustainability.

Lack of information on the project and outsider bias on the local people were cited as reasons why the project did not succeed. To this end it is recommended that the county government should have a communication policy that details the engagement between the change agent and the beneficiaries in terms of the communication, crafting of messages/information and a horizontal communication approach among all stakeholders.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations for further research**

This study was limited to the contribution of participatory communication in poverty reduction efforts in the area of study and as such there are many other factors that may aid in the reduction of poverty in other areas of the republic that may not have been captured in the study area. This study was conducted during a period of three months and did not capture the different variables of the project during the project identification stage (ex-ante evaluation). Therefore it is recommended that a long term qualitative study be carried out in this area to capture those variables.

The study focused on one poverty reduction effort, the Milk Coolers Project, and the findings of the study may not be sufficient to make a case for all poverty reduction efforts in the county and in the country. Therefore further research is required in other poverty reduction efforts to explain the place of participatory communication in poverty reduction.

The study noted that the radio formed the bulk of information sources for most beneficiaries while consultative meetings and the word of mouth were less popular. The study recommends that further inquiry be conducted to on how consultative meetings and new communication technologies can be used to improve information flow among beneficiaries of development projects in rural Kenya.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

#### PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION IN POVERTY REDUCTION IN KENYA: A STUDY OF MURANG'A COUNTY

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I Njoroge Laban Ngumbo, a Masters student at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi, conducting a research on the subject indicated above. The primary aim of this research is to determine the contribution of participatory communication in poverty reduction efforts in Kenya, a study of Murang'a County

The information given herein will be treated with strict confidentiality. The identity of the respondent and all matters connected with it are confidential. Kindly do not write your name on the questionnaire.

**Please note;**

- Please attempt to answer all questions.
- There is no **right** or **wrong** answer therefore be as spontaneous as possible.

1. Gender

Male ( )      Female ( )

2. Age range

18 to 24 years      ( )  
25 to 31 years      ( )  
25 to 30 years      ( )  
31 to 40 years      ( )  
41 to 50 years      ( )  
51 to 60 years      ( )  
60 and above      ( )

3. What is your highest level of education?

No formal education      ( )  
Primary school      ( )  
Secondary school      ( )  
University/College education ( )

Any other specify

4. What is your current occupation?

- Public servant ( )
- Self-employed  
Private business ( )
- Farmer ( )
- Student ( )
- Unemployed ( )
- civil society ( )
- Retired ( )
- Teacher ( )

Other, Specify\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you aware of the Milk Coolers plants by the Murang'a County government?

Yes ( )

No ( )

6. If YES how did you get information about the Milk Coolers? (If NO skip this question)

- Newspapers ( )
- Radio ( )
- Television ( )
- Consultative meetings ( )
- Billboards ( )

7. If NO how do you think the County Government could have reached out to local people on this project?

- i. Newspapers ( )
- ii. Radio ( )
- iii. Television ( )
- iv. Consultative meetings ( )
- v. Billboards ( )

vi. Public service announcements ( )

8. Were you consulted in the identification of this project?

Yes ( )

No ( )

9. If YES how did you participate?

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10. Did the Murang'a County Government encourage the public to participate in implementation of the Milk Coolers project?

Yes ( )

No ( )

11. If YES what did MCG do to encourage public participation?

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12. Have you ever participated in a consultative meeting in Murang'a County?

Yes ( )

No ( )

13. What kind of meeting was it?

- Information oriented
- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Training and Skills building

14. Was your input sought during implementation of the Milk Coolers Project?

Yes ( )

No ( )

15. In your opinion do what do you think the Murang'a County government should have done to increase participation in the implementation of this project?

- a) Involve the local people at the project implementation
- b) Hold public information forums with the people
- c) Involve locals in decision making

16. Do you consider the Milk Coolers Project a success?

Yes ( )

No ( )

17. If NO why?

- a) Lack of participation of the intended beneficiaries
- b) Lack of information on the project
- c) Limited resources allocated to the project
- d) Outsider bias on the local people

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

## **APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FARMERS**

1. Briefly share with me what your knowledge of the Milk Coolers project being implemented by the Murang'a County government
2. How did you come to know about this project?
3. Do you think the channels used to reach out to the farmers were sufficient and what do you think should have been done to enhance reach?
4. How did you as a farmer participate in the identification of this project?
5. What do you think the County Government did to encourage the participation of the people of Murang'a in this project?
6. In your opinion what do you think should have been done to increase participation of the people during the implementation of this project?
7. Do you consider this project a success and if not why do you think this project failed?
8. How do you think the public can contribute to make the project better?