

**Id:** 9346

**Title:** Mobile Phone: A new mantra for challenging dominant governance practices in post conflict context

**Authors:**

Name: Steven Sam

Email: steven.sa\_@\_q.net.au

Country: AU (Australia)

Affiliation: School of Communication and Arts, University of Queensland

**Abstract:** In recent years, the capability of mobile phone to reduce information asymmetric and democratise communication process is assumed to be an integral tool for improving dominant form of bad governance that has plaque many developing countries, in particular Africa. This is built on the understanding that in the absence of communication and information delivery mechanisms, citizens are bound to remain disempowered in the sense that their capability to participate and hold their governments accountable remains extremely limited. However, to this end, the optimism surrounding the use of mobile phone to improve the relationship between governments and citizens in developing countries, in particular Africa, has not been fully translated into tangible evidence. Apart from the recent Arab upsprings mobile phone and social media activisms and the use of mobile phone to monitor election related activities in some African countries, study suggesting how mobile phone is used as a participatory communication media space for negotiating resistance against hegemony of bad governance practices in Africa context is still rare. Thus, this paper stands to contribute to this paucity in literature by focusing on the positive use of mobile in challenging the dominant culture of bad governance in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The paper argues that such an enquiry is important for understanding how ubiquitous mobile phone can serve as a new mantra for challenging such dominant power structure to reduce corruption, increase transparency and amplify citizens' voice and their participation in decision making process in Sierra Leone. The paper draws on six months ethnographic data to analysis how mobile phone is ingeniously utilised by people at the peripheral of the society to challenge repressive and coercive governance structures in Sierra Leone to bring about changes in their communities and their lives. The researcher situates this understanding within the context of participatory and community communication practices by drawing on empowerment theory based on individual attribute proposed by Naila Kabeer (1999) as a lens to understand how such change is facilitated and the meaning and implications on the livelihood options of marginalised people. The paper concludes by recommending how governments in developing countries should intervene to promote the use of mobile telephony for improving governance practices that lead to increasing their accountability, responsiveness and transparency by appropriately addressing the information and communication needs of the poor.