



ARTICLE

An Exploratory Study on Communication, and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges

Ikem, U. Victor^{1†}; Akintayo, B. Johnson^{1†}

¹ Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo

[†] Authors contributed equally

* Corresponding Author: ikemvctr@gmail.com

Abstract

Poverty is a prevalent global developmental challenge recognised by the United Nations (UN) as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the desire to eradicate it is identified as goal number one (No Poverty). The challenges and setbacks to achieving poverty alleviation in Nigeria are multifaceted, including political, economic, and in some cases communication-related. Communication plays a role in promoting knowledge, social inclusion, and national development programmes. Consequently, where there is a communication gap, it is likely to result in an interruption in the attainment of poverty alleviation objectives. Nigeria is a peculiar reference case with respect to poverty prevalence. The country accounts for one of the highest numbers of poor people worldwide. Nearly half of Nigeria's 200 million population are living below the international poverty line of \$1.9 per day. This study examined the role of communication in poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Development media theory underpinned the study. The study identified media ownership structure, political concern, media bias, or lack of interest as part of the communication constraints acting as limiting poverty alleviation efforts in Nigeria. It recommends leveraging existing and new communication strategies, techniques, and approaches, beyond the traditional media, toward achieving the goal of eradicating extreme poverty by the year 2030.

Key words: *Communication, Poverty, Poverty alleviation programmes, Sustainable development, national development.*

Cite as: Ikem, V. U., Akintayo, J. B. (2022). An exploratory study on communication, and poverty alleviation in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges. *Applied Journal of Economics, Management, and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 28-39

1. Introduction

Poverty is a worldwide problem that has received several global attention in terms of policy and academic discourse. According to [Salam, Alase, Lamidi, and Tonuchi \(2020\)](#), poverty has different manifestations and dimensions. The study observed further that the manifestations and dimensions of poverty include having little or no resources or productive assets enough to guarantee a sustainable livelihood or a situation resulting in suffering malnutrition, ill-health, and hunger. It also includes poor or no access to basic education, including other essentials as well as the situation of enlarged health

risk from sickness, homelessness or poor housing choice, poor environment, and social exclusion and discrimination within the society. Poverty is also characterized by a state of total exclusion, and lack of participation in critical decision-making within the social, cultural, and complex group system which amounts to exclusion. This is similar to the definition of [Obiwuru \(2019\)](#) who described poverty as a state of lack of food, no shelter, ill and malnourished, lack of opportunity to read and go to school, experiences of an insecure future, lack of decent or no job, high child and mother mortality

rate, unhealthy drinking dirty water, lack of a voice, a state of powerlessness, with little or no freedom and a lack of opportunities to excel. Similar to this definition is the one shared by [Bradshaw \(2007\)](#) who noted that poverty "is the lack of basic necessities such as food, shelter, medical care, safety, social inclusion, and financial inclusion that are generally thought to be necessary." This definition is the basis of [Salam et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Obiwuru's \(2019\)](#) definition.

Several attempts have been made by economists, experts, and academicians to reach a consensus on how poverty can be measured. For instance, [Salam et al. \(2020\)](#) observed that there are dimensions and complexities in measuring poverty, which has generated several measures. They went further to state that Absolute Poverty Line is a measure of the aggregate resources needed to achieve a minimum level of social and economic welfare. The idea is to develop an aggregate measure of what it takes to achieve a minimal level of satisfaction with an individual's basic needs ([Gisela & Andy, 2019](#)). [Salam et al. \(2020\)](#) stated also that the absolute poverty line is a situation where the basic needs of the individuals or groups are not met. That is, individuals lack essential goods and services such as clothes, shelters, and food. United Nations (1995) defined absolute poverty as any situation that is characterized by deprivation of basic human needs of food, clothes, shelter, healthcare, education, sanitation facilities, safe drinking waters, and information. On the other hand, The Relative Poverty measure states that an individual is perceived to be poor when they found themselves in an unfavourable condition in the form of finance, and social relations related to other people in the environment. In this regard, poverty is intricately linked to the notion of inequality. This means that an individual is regarded as being poor, compared to other members of the social-economic and social status, such that a simultaneous increase in the income of all households say 10%, does not change the status of those referred to as being poor. It is so since their income relative to others did not rise. For the status of the poor to change concerning relative poverty, the income distribution must have changed ([Alkire & Robles, 2016](#)).

To this end, several poverty alleviation measures have been suggested by academicians and adopted by professionals. While few studies have examined the challenges and prospects of poverty alleviation in Nigeria ([Taiwo and Agwu, 2016](#)), the role of communication in poverty alleviation programmes has largely been ignored in the literature. Communication is an important element of any society as it provides a binding force and is an enabler of social cohesion. [Akinfeleye \(2003\)](#) opined that the relevance and significance of the mass media, and by extension, communication in any society is to the extent to which it can efficiently provide useful information that is necessary for the actual and efficient running of the affairs

of such society, whether as it regards the dissemination of information on government development programmes or in respect of providing adequate information to enhance citizens' knowledge and participation in government programmes. Given that information about poverty alleviation programmes must be communicated to all stakeholders otherwise its objectives must be defeated, the mass media becomes an important tool in the hand poverty alleviation programmes implementers. Thus, the study examines the challenges and prospects of communication as a veritable tool for the success of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the development media theory. It is a theory promoted by Dennis [McQuail](#) which advocates for the media to be an agent of development instead of an antagonistic tool against the government. The theory accepts that within a developing nation's context, the media and by extension, the role of communication should be to foster development and create a paradigm for social integration that will allow for different sections of a developing society to harmoniously tackle development issues such as poverty. According to [Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto \(2010\)](#), development media theory posits that the media must be focused on enhancing national development. It holds the view that the most important role of communication in any society was to ensure the attainment of development goals by acting as a support for the government and not an enemy. This theory advocates that while the freedom of the press is essential for nation-building, independent media and news reporting should be complemented with the objectives of promoting national economic, political, and social development ([Ugangu, 2012](#)).

The Development Media theory encapsulates the view that the media should act as a catalyst that promotes good and positive news about government developmental policies rather than being always critical of government policies ([Mosharafa, 2015](#)). The theory holds the view that in developing countries, there is a need for certain restrictions on the media by directing their focus toward the promotion of the developmental goals and programmes of the government ([Rahib, 2012](#)). Such developmental programmes could be poverty alleviation, health education campaigns, and agricultural development programmes, among others. The theory, therefore, promotes media freedom under a certain desirable condition that favours the country ([Mosharafa, 2015](#)). It further requires that most institutions with political terrains should facilitate political, economic, and social development. At the heart of media, development theory is the need for nation-building objectives to override every other objective and, therefore, advocates proper alignment of media houses into strategic partners

that promote government programmes and policies within the social-cultural settings (Mosharafa, 2015).

One of the criticisms against the Development Media theory is that the theory appears as an updated version of the totalitarian theory of the press that advocates the media's surrender of its power of independence to the state. As such, critics noted that the media should never surrender its freedom to the government even if it means the government programmes and policies failing (Rahib, 2012). It is argued that there can never be meaningful development in the first place if there is no freedom of the press as no one will be able to criticize wrong government policies. Such a government will never be held accountable for its actions. Within the context of poverty alleviation, and the role of communication, the development media theory suggests that the media system be supportive of the efforts to eradicate poverty as the media is a fundamental institution in national development.

3. Causes of Poverty in Nigeria

Many factors have been identified as responsible for widespread poverty in Nigeria and elsewhere. Few of these causes, as identified by Ibietan, Chidozie, and Ujara (2014) include poor access to the goods and services market, poor education system leading to a poor state of mind, lack of access to employment opportunities, lack of physical capital, and assets, poor human capital investment and development, weak implementation of poverty alleviation programmes and natural disasters such drought, floods, and war. Salam et al. (2020) on the other hand identified the causes of poverty to include poor and faulty economic foundation, weak infrastructure development in the rural areas leading to rural-urban migration, ineffective economic development plans, and negative attitudes toward work, culture, and heritage. Their assertion is similar to those factors identified by UNDP (2016) as the major cause of poverty in Africa, including but not limited to low productivity due to lack of adequate skilled manpower, corruption, and faulty institutional framework that encourages the mass accumulation of wealth by few privilege individuals, distortion in the labour market that introduces various forms of rigidities and difficult criteria for accessing employment, discrimination along the lines of religion, ethnicity, sex, age.

Other factors identified include income inequality and lack of equilibrium in wealth distribution, environmental degradation leading to loss of natural resources (oil spillage), poor economic management and policy discontinuity, and corruption. Obiewuru (2019) noted that corruption in Nigeria has assumed a high dimension and has become difficult to correct. To Igbuzor (2004), poverty is mostly caused by such factors as 'lack of education, ignorance, unemployment,

insecurity of life & property, persistent inflation, poor economic management, high incidence of diseases, huge foreign debt, environmental degradation, huge family size, and low access to employment opportunities. Similarly, there is a growing interest and scholarly efforts in linking causes of poverty to failure of governance and the environment. In espousing the argument relating poverty to the environment, Gisela and Andy (2019) asserted that United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had established that poverty is partly caused by bad environmental behaviours as a result of heavy dependence on natural resources and exposure to natural environmental disasters (e.g. flood and drought). Like the environmental factor, governance has also gained prominence in poverty measures and discussion. It is the view of Alkire and Robles (2016) that good governance is necessary to tackle poverty.

4. An Examination of Poverty Alleviation efforts in Nigeria

Poverty alleviation programmes or poverty reduction strategies are generally policy frameworks developed to systematically reduce the causes of poverty through investment in education, empowerment, and information sharing. The various levels of government (Federal, State, and Local Government) and Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs) in Nigeria, in collaboration with the various international organizations, have at various times developed various policies and programmes to address the poverty situation in Nigeria. The first set of policies in the 1970s-1980s was focused on increasing farm products as a way to increase aggregate consumption, raise income for rural dwellers, ensure food security, and reduce poverty prevalence in the country. Tonuchi and Onyebuchi (2019) referred to government poverty policies during this period as 'income-generating or income augmenting programmes.' Among the popular poverty alleviation programmes that era included the "National Accelerated Food Production project (NAFP)" which was introduced in 1972. The purpose of the policy was to boost agricultural output by educating the farmers on agricultural best practices and eradicate the incidence of extreme poverty among the farmers (Ibietan, Chidozie, & Ujara, 2014). The programmes were not adequately funded and monitored, which Adamu and Ibrahim (2016) noted, is the biggest challenge of the policy.

The "Directorate for Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI)" was equally introduced to improve the development of the rural areas in 1986. Taiwo and Agwu (2016) noted that DFRRI was formed for community development and social mobilization, community self-help projects, adult education, home economics, rural development, data collection and analysis, and the provision of rural housing and

infrastructures. Other poverty alleviation programmes introduced within these periods include the "Better Life Programme (BLP)" introduced in 1987, and aimed at improving rural women's development through skill acquisition, better healthcare access, among others (Yunusa, 2012; Salam et al., 2020). In 1989, the People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN) was launched targeting rural dwellers and less privileged in the country. As such, it aimed at mobilizing savings and providing credit facilities to rural dwellers.

In the wake of civilian rule in 1999, several poverty alleviation programmes were designed as an empowerment scheme through job creation, training, and development in skills acquisition, capacity building, and improving social life through social incentives programmes, among others. The then government of President Olusegun Obasanjo who was elected president in 1999, one of the core policies was targeted at poverty reduction in the country; this led to the introduction of 'National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), as a measure of eradicating extreme poverty in the country (Taiwo and Agwu, 2016; Suleiman, 2019). The NAPEP activities were grouped under four categories; "Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS), and Natural Resources Development and Conservative Scheme (NRDCS)." National Policy on Integrated Rural Development (NPIRD) was introduced in 2003. Similarly, in 2004, the "National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)" was introduced. NEEDS' major goals were "Wealth creation, Employment generation, Poverty reduction, and Value reorientation" (Ibietan, Chidozie, & Ujara, 2014; Gangas, 2017; Obiwuru, 2019).

In 2012, the "Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SureP)" was introduced. The programme covers women and youth empowerment schemes. Its major aim was to reduce the effect of subsidy removal on women and youths and improve their well-being through job creation and entrepreneurship training. One of the Sure-P divisions is the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) which aimed at providing the unemployed graduates with job apprenticeships aimed at equipping the youths with the right skills, experiences, and opportunities that will make them employable in society (Ibietan, et al., 2014; Obiwuru, 2019; Salam et al., 2020). Another major policy targeting youth unemployment and poverty alleviation is the N-Power Scheme (N-Ps) which has engaged and trained over 1,000,000 graduates. The programme classifies graduates into N-Agro (focusing on developing youths in agriculture practice), N-Teach (focusing on training graduates in the teaching profession), and N-Health (training graduates on health management), among others.

5. Challenges of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria

Ajakaiye (2003) noted that poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria are often brilliant at conception, but their implementation is every other thing except being effective. The author further argued that most poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria are either vague in scope due to poor conception, identification, and planning, or that they are designed to fail from the start as they are often designed to compensate for political alliance. The programmes are also hazily conceived without any plan for proper implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, thereby leaving the programmes at the hand of some agents or body that uses the programmes to settle their families, cronies, and lovers leading to the programme failure (Aliyu, 2002; Oshewolo, 2010).

Several factors have been identified in the literature as the leading challenges or cause of the failure of the several poverty alleviation programmes that have earlier been developed. These include but are not limited to corruption, lack of programmes awareness by the public, politicization, nepotism, and over-centralization or over decentralization, poor management, and poor coordination of the different stakeholders. Others include poor planning and design, poor or lackadaisical implementation, ineffective monitoring mechanism set in place, weak infrastructural development, poor governance, and many more (Adedayo, 2018; Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012; Ojo, 2008; Ajakaiye, 2003). Some of the earlier studies that have investigated the issues will be discussed in this section. Yanusa (2012) believed that bad governance, corruption, political favouritism, poor decentralization of the programmes to agencies, poor implementation of the programme, low productivity, unemployment, and debt burden are the leading cause of poverty alleviation programmes failure in Nigeria. Ugoh and Ukpere (2009) noted that in addition to normal structural factors like high unemployment, low productivity, and weak exchange rate, the key cause of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria could be linked to the politicians who mostly see the programmes as avenues to settle the political supporters instead of the general public. The author notes that most poverty alleviation programmes are beautifully designed and initiated by technical experts but are hijacked by politicians to the detriment of the masses.

Some other researchers believed beyond the poor commitment of the politicians to see the poverty alleviation programmes succeed, other major factors contributing to its failure is due to government's failure to formulate policies that target certain macroeconomic objectives that will lead to economic growth coupled with infrastructural decay at large (Oshewolo, 2010; Ugoh & Ukpere, 2009; Oladeji & Abiola, 2000). Earlier studies attribute poverty alleviation programmes' failure to both

technical and structural issues like poor policy formulation, poor policy implementation, poor monitoring, poor public awareness, and poor infrastructural development. The structural factors earlier studies attribute to policy failure include high unemployment, high inflation rate, exchange rate, depreciation, structural adjustment programmes, poor funding, among others (Aliyu, 2002; Oladeji & Abiola, 2000; Owasa, 2000).

Similarly, Yanusa (2012) identified six major causes of failure of government poverty alleviation programmes including a lack of target audience confidence in government poverty intervention programmes that are as a result of previous experiences, the politicization of poverty alleviation programmes to the detriment of the poor, poor policy formulation, and not involving or sampling the opinion of the target audience in policy formulation, poor or no awareness of the various government alleviation programmes in Nigeria, the corrupt attitude of the programme coordinators, poor commitment from the government on poverty alleviation programmes, lack of adequate consultation by the government before setting the policy. Their findings are similar to some of the factors adduced by Salam et al (2020) as the leading cause of poverty elevation amidst poverty alleviation programmes in the country. The leading factors they identified include poor mobilization of the target audience because of the programme implementer's intention, lack of commitment by the government agencies involved in the implementation of the programmes, politicization of the poverty alleviation programmes, poor monitoring, and evaluation of the programme, programmes being used as a tool to settle political supporters, poor coordination of the programmes, among others.

The above findings are also similar to the assertion of Obinwuru (2019) when the author identified poor targeting of the poor and vulnerable in the system, failure to focus on the vulnerable and poor when setting the policy, policy discontinuity or inconsistency, politicization, and corruption of the poverty alleviation programmes, poor governance, nepotism, and structural issues within the political scene. In all of the issues identified as responsible for failure of the various poverty alleviation programmes to achieve maximum success, communication and poor awareness of the various poverty alleviation programmes features as an important element worthy of consideration. Therefore, it can be deduced from these various reasons that the failure of or the inadequate utilisation of communication process, tools and strategies have been contributory factor to the prevalence of poverty.

6. Communication and Media in Poverty Alleviation, Campaigns, and Knowledge

Communication through mass media facilitates the success of poverty alleviation programmes. To a large extent, communication has aided the achievement of the objectives of poverty alleviation programmes through creating awareness, knowledge and soliciting stakeholders' support and participation in poverty alleviation programmes, and utilizing the most effective mass media outlet to reach the poor, especially the rural dwellers Hovland (2003). This is despite all the identified challenges of communication in poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria.

To further understand the role of media in poverty alleviation programmes, few authors have made efforts to examine the issue empirically. For instance, Aderogba (2012) investigated media preference for poverty alleviation programmes and general awareness of three selected poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. Their findings reveal that above 70 percent were aware of the investigated programme, while only 13 percent were not aware of any of the programmes. What the study failed to explain is which is the best medium of creating awareness about government poverty alleviation and fails to explain the participation rate of the respondents in the various government poverty alleviation programmes investigated. However, the study was able to establish that the participation of communication and media in poverty alleviation initiatives will most likely increase the level of awareness about the poverty alleviation initiative and in that regard heighten awareness of the danger of prevalence of poverty.

Ochuokpa (2017) investigated broadcast media coverage of selected poverty reduction programmes, and their impact on the audience in North Central Nigeria. Agenda setting theory, development media theory, and social marketing theory guided the study. Mixed method approach was used with content analysis and survey adopted. Coding sheets and questionnaires were instruments for data collection. Findings from the study showed that broadcast media in North Central Nigeria were involved in the coverage of the selected poverty reduction programmes, and that audiences in North Central Nigeria were aware of broadcast media coverage of poverty reduction programmes. Further findings from the study also revealed that broadcast media messages on poverty reduction programmes have not substantially impacted the audience in North Central Nigeria as the majority of the respondents did not believe the broadcast media messages on poverty reduction programmes. The reason is that most of the respondents considered those messages to be political propaganda. Furthermore, the study showed that the respondents worried that the broadcast time allowed for poverty reduction messages was not sufficient while adequate priority should have been given to news placement. The study concluded that broadcast media in North Central Nigeria have only succeeded in exposing the audience to the existence of

the selected poverty reduction programmes. This has therefore not translated to adequate participation in poverty alleviation initiatives by residents of North Central Nigeria. It recommended that broadcast media in North Central Nigeria should show more commitment to the coverage of poverty reduction programmes by increasing the frequency of coverage. Also by giving prominence to the placement of poverty reduction programmes. It further suggested that broadcast media operators should not allow political influence to affect professional judgments with regard to poverty alleviation broadcast programmes.

Hopkins, Kim, and Kim (2017) observed that citizens' economic perception can shape their economic and political behaviors. These authors' view raises a fundamental question about the source of such citizens' economic perception which, invariably, is through exposure to the mass media exposure and effects of media agenda-setting. In the case of poverty and effort to alleviate its impacts, it is within the context that mass media presentation of poverty alleviation programs and messages, sponsored by the government, can have significant implications on how citizens, and in this case, residents of the South-south region interpret and understand poverty alleviations programmes of the federal government. To address the prevalent poverty crisis, the federal government has often initiated poverty alleviation policies and programmes, which are conveyed through the mass media, intending to galvanize concerned and affected citizens into taking action by way of participation in these poverty alleviation programmes. These poverty alleviation mass media campaigns are an integral part of the poverty alleviation programmes. The federal government has always made efforts in the planning process to utilize several mass media platforms, especially the broadcast media such as radio, and television, because of their ability to reach wider audiences mostly rural and their flexibility in terms of language and style for the benefit of most rural residents who are predominantly poor.

Hibah, Yoshita, Kahraman, Lyndal, Amjad, and Ahmed (2017) examined the "role of the media in promoting strategies for poverty eradication." The study relied on both secondary and primary sources to collect relevant data for the analysis. It was uncovered that the media could play an important role in poverty eradication programmes by effectively mobilizing poverty eradication stakeholders, enriching the public with the knowledge of poverty alleviation programmes available. It was also discovered that effective mass media reporting on poverty and poverty alleviation would attract international communities in pulling efforts to eradicate poverty in countries like Nigeria and India. It was also discovered that one of the reasons for the failure of most poverty alleviation programmes in developing countries is poor awareness of the programmes. The authors, therefore, argued that policymakers should partner with the mass media, particularly the community and local radio

stations, to get their development programmes message across to their target audience.

Particularly, **Owolabi and O'Neill's (2014)** study on the role of mass media and governance in poverty reduction reveals that most of the media reports lacked developmental content and were largely focused on political issues, including religious disputes and tribal disputes. The author noted that given the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria and the root cause of most societal issues like crime, tribal conflict, violence, agitations, religious crisis, poor education, poor healthcare, among others, it ought to be given special attention in reporting. But instead of discussing issues that will make poverty alleviation programmes more effective, policy implementers transparency and accountability, creating awareness about the programmes, serving as watchdogs on the programmes, among others, the media often focus on trivia things like entertainment, politics, advertisement, and promotion, among others.

This was similar to the assertion made by **Raufu (2011)** when the author argued that among the reason for the failure of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria, poor policy implementation and monitoring mostly arising from low support from mass media to investigate the performance of such programmes. The author argued further that regardless of how great a policy might be, without adequate support from the media to mobilize stakeholders' support for the programme, it will ultimately fail. Some previous and popular poverty alleviation programmes like NAPEP, NEEDS, SEEDs, People's Bank, among others, failed because of low or no support from the media to mobilize all the relevant stakeholders to participate in the programmes for poor and rural dwellers (**Adesola, 2019; Raufu, 2011**). **Adesola (2019)** argued that proper information dissemination through the mass media does not just serve as a check and balance on the programme implementers but also creates a conducive environment for the stakeholders to work together towards achieving the objective of the programme.

Nigam and Paliwal (2011) identified three basic ways in which media can improve the performance of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria and elsewhere. The first way is through garnering adequate knowledge about the programme before sharing any information about the programme. Equipping oneself with adequate knowledge about the programme will make the media person be able to dig further into the performance of the programme and provide transparency, accountability, and feedback for the programme. The second way is through more utilization of radio broadcasting when trying to reach the poor. **Adesola (2019)** noted that more than 60 per cent of the poor live in rural areas, and only radio can effectively be used to reach them. Success story and more discussion on the various poverty alleviation programmes enrolled out. **Nigam and Paliwal** are of the view that the more people are being made aware of a programme, the

more they are likely to be enrolled in the programme. Also, the more success story of previous poverty alleviation programmes, the more the masses will be convinced about the programme, and the more the others will want to get involved in the programme (Seidu, Alhassan, & Abdul-Malik, 2011; Nwaolikpe, 2018).

7. Challenges of media involvement in poverty alleviation programmes

Several factors have been identified in the literature as the leading cause of the low participation of the media and by extension the lack of participation of communication stakeholders in poverty alleviation programmes in terms of awareness and knowledge creation in Nigeria and elsewhere. These are some of the identified challenges to the involvement of the media in the poverty alleviation campaign. Top on the list is Political barriers and constraints. In most developing countries such as in the case of Nigeria, most big media houses including radio stations are owned by the politicians and directly or indirectly influence the participation of the media houses in government policies including that of poverty alleviation programmes. Singh and Chudasama (2020), and Effiong and Robson (2020) all noted that most local radio stations in developing countries like Nigeria are owned by political authorities. While in principle, the media house is independent of political pressure and dictates from the political authorities; in reality, these radio houses are controlled by the political authority directly or indirectly.

Hibah et al. (2017), commenting on the issue of political influence on mass media participation in poverty alleviation programmes argued that state-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), in theory, is free from political control but in reality, lacks such freedom. The authors noted further that several newspapers and radio stations in Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda are mostly owned fully or in parts by the politicians or their allies, which makes it difficult for the radio station to engage in poverty alleviation programmes objectively for fear of criticizing their boss policies. In Nigeria majority of the television house, newspapers, radio houses, especially those covering the rural areas, are owned by politicians or their cronies, which makes it difficult for the media to criticize certain policies and programmes of the government publicly and make a mess of the different poverty alleviation programmes embarked in the country (Aderogba, 2012; Suleiman, 2019; Effiong & Robson 2020).

Hibah et al. (2017) noted that media houses owned by politicians are often used by the politicians to propagate their agendas and narrative about any developmental projects, which reduces the public trust in media houses in protecting the interest of the common man. Nigam and

Paliwal (2011) are of the view that political patronage of the media house erodes public trust in the media house prompting most people to rarely turn to media house like television, newspaper, and radio to get credible news and information but rather resort to social media for their information. Again, the victimization of journalist reporting failed developmental projects of the politicians are often a soft target by a political hoodlum who feels threatened by the exposure of their evil deeds by the media. Such attacks on the media have contributed to why most media houses have ventured more into entertainment and other issues rather than political discussion or poverty alleviation programmes in the country.

Financial and other resource constraints is also a key factor as it requires huge resources to investigate, monitor, and evaluate poverty alleviation programmes. It takes even more financial resources to mobilize all the necessary support from the different stakeholders involves in the poverty alleviation programme to discuss and participate in the programme. Hibah et al (2017) clearly stated that in most African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, and Zambia, most of the media houses not owned by the politicians are still struggling for survival and lack the required resources to gather all the information necessary most times to provoke discussion on some of the developmental issues in the country

Other factors identified in literature are Time constraints, pay, and editor interest (Nigam & Paliwal, 2011; Nwaolikpe, 2018). For instance, Hibah, et al. (2017) noted that it takes a reporter who is interested in developmental issues like poverty alleviation and healthcare development to provide the required time to investigate the issue. Again, the extent to which a reporter is motivated, the more likely s/he might invest their time to investigate developmental or any other time-consuming issues. And other factor is described as official Hurdles where Officials are not willing to give out adequate data and information regarding a particular developmental project explain why most journalists shy away from some of the developmental projects like poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria and most other developing countries.

8. Conclusion

From the extant literatures reviewed, it is evident to deduce that the prospect of attaining equitable national development is hinged on the level of success recorded in poverty reduction. Therefore, to attain a sufficient level of development, the problem of poverty must be tackled without any limitation and should be placed above every other intervening issue. Political influence, editorial interests, lack of motivation, and poor remunerations among other factors are found to be responsible for the inadequate performance of the media and communication in addressing poverty prevalence in Nigeria. This is aside

from the other factors which are not communication-related. This study agrees with the views held by several authors that communication remains a strong tool for attaining national development and therefore advocates for the adoption of a multiplicity of communication channels and media strategies to increase awareness and draw public attention to critical poverty alleviation programmes so as to enhance participation in these programmes. It will benefit the country nothing if the government continues to invest a huge amount of the national budget on poverty programmes without corresponding results in reducing poverty. Within the framework of poverty alleviation, the Development Media Theory should be strongly adopted as the basis for media participation in poverty reduction.

9. Recommendations

This study, therefore, recommends that all future poverty reduction programmes of the government must have provision for an adequate budget to utilise the rural media and communication strategies including face-to-face and radio to publicize these programmes so that no one among the poor will be excluded. This is to ensure even and accelerated national development that will help ameliorate and curb existing crises brought about by poverty such as insecurity and its likes. Because of the limitation brought by media ownership, it is important for policy actors and implementers of poverty alleviation programmes to adopt the new media such as social media and new media tools which are usually independent and free from institutional and political influences. The policy implementers must also pay attention to group communication through corporative societies, age grade, religious groups, and gender-peer-based social groups.

References

- Adamu, B., & Ibrahim, I. A. (2016). Poverty alleviation in Nigeria: An assessment of government policies. *Academics World 46th International Conference 29th -30th September. Dubai, UAE.*
- Adedayo, B. (2018). Nigeria overtakes India in extreme poverty ranking. Retrieved from CNN: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/26/africa/nigeria-overtakes-india-extreme-poverty-intl/index.html>
- Aderogba, A. (2012). Media preference for an effective dissemination of poverty alleviation Programmes in Nigeria's semi-urban setting: Iwo town in perspective. *International Journal of Current Research*, 4(3), 166-172.
- Adesola, A. A. (2019). The role of media in financial literacy and poverty eradication in Nigeria. *Journalist Fellowship Paper*, 1-18.
- Aiyedogbon, J. O., & Ohwofasa, B. O. (2012). Poverty and youth unemployment in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(20), 269-274.
- Ajakaiye, O. (2003). Public service and the challenges of managing poverty eradication in Nigeria" a paper presented AT THE June 18, 2003 at NICON HILTON H. The 2003 Retreat for Permanent Secretaries and Directors in the Federal Civil Service of the Federation. Lagos: Nigeria Federal Civil Service.
- Akinfeleye R. A. (2003). *Fourth Estate of the Realm or Fourth Estate of the Wreck, Imperatives of Social Responsibility of the Press*. An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Lagos (Wednesday, 14th May).
- Aliyu, A. (2002). Re-structuring of the poverty alleviation activities of 116 the federal government of Nigeria. Abuja.: National Poverty Eradication Programme.
- Alkire, S., & Robles, G. (2016). Measuring multidimensional poverty: Dashboards, union identification, and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). *OPHI Research in Progress 46a: Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford*.
- Anaeto, S. G., Solo-Anaeto, M., & Tejumaiye, J. A. (2009). *Newspaper and magazine: management, production, marketing*. Ibadan: Stirling - Horden Publishers Ltd.
- Bradshaw, Ted. (2007). *Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development*. *Community Development*, 38, 7-25. 10.1080/15575330709490182.
- Effiong, A., & Robson, I. e. (2020). Assessment of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Ongoing Programme awareness campaigns on Corona Virus in Nigeria. *Electronic Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(1), 130-141.
- Gangas, S. (2017). Relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction in Nigeria. *Pyrex Journal of Business and Finance Management Research*, 3(2), 34-56.
- Gisela, R. A., & Andy, S. (2019). Who are the world's Poor? A new profile of Global Multimentional Poverty. Working Paper 499: Center for Global Development. Retrieved from <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/who-are-worlds-poor-new-profile-global-multidimensional-poverty.pdf>
- Hibah, H., Yoshita, S., Kahraman, H., Lyndal, R., Amjad, A., & Ahmed, F. (2017). The role of the media in promoting strategies for poverty eradication. Strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- Hopkins, D. J., Kim, E., & Kim, S. (2017). Does newspaper coverage influence or reflect public perceptions of the economy? <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017737900>
- Hovland, Ingie (2003) 'Communication of Research for Poverty Reduction: A Literature Review' ODI Working Paper 227, London: ODI (www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/WP227.pdf).
- Ibietan, J., Chidozie, F., & Ujara, E. (2014). Poverty alleviation and the efficacy of development assistance models in Nigeria: An appraisal. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, 1(5), 1-8.
- Igbuzor, O. (2004). Poverty eradication and public policy in Nigeria: Alternative poverty reduction strategy for Nigeria. Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development.
- McQuail, D. (1987). (2nd ed.). *Sage Publications, Inc*.
- Mosharafa, E. (2015). All you need to know about the cultivation theory. *Global Journal of Human Social Science, Acts and Humanity*, 15(8), 22-37.
- Nigam, B. S., & Paliwal, M. B. (2011). Role of media in alleviation of poverty in India. *IMS Manthan*, VI(2). Retrieved from <http://www.publishingindia.com/GetBrochure.aspx?query=UERGQnJvY2h1cmVzfC8xMDIxLnBkZnwwMTAyMS5wZGY=>
- Nwaolike, O. N. (2018). The mass media and national development: The case of 'baby factory activities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)*, 7(1), 71-84.

- Ochuokpa, Patience (2017). Broadcast media coverage of selected poverty reduction programmes and their impact on the audience in North Central Nigeria. An Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria
- Obiwuru, C. R. (2019). Poverty elevation amidst poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Economic Review*, 54-60.
- Ojo, E. (2008). Imperatives of sustaining democratic values: Challenges of sustainable democracy in Nigeria. Ibadan: John Archers Publishers Limited.
- Oladeji, I., & Abiola, G. (2000). Poverty alleviation with economic growth strategy: prospects and challenges in contemporary Nigeria. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 15(2).
- Oshewolo, S. (2010). Galloping poverty in Nigeria: an appraisal of the government's interventionist Policies. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12(6), 520-550.
- Owasa, L. (2000). Constraints on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. *Political Science Review. Official Journal of Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin, Nigeria*, 1(1), 56-80.
- Owolabi, T. O., & O'Neill, E. (2014). Mass Media, Governance and Poverty Reduction Strategy in Nigeria: A Role Evaluation. . 2014; 17(1): *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 62-74.
- Rahib, R. (2012). Media development theory. Retrieved from <http://rahib-raza.blogspot.com/2012/10/media-development-theory.html>
- Raufu, G. (2011). Mass media and the society: Issue and perspectives. London: Kagor International.
- Salam, G., Alase, G., Lamidi, S., & Tonuchi, E. J. (2020). poverty alleviation, unemployment, economic development in Nigeria: Are there any nexus. *International Journal of Finance, Insurance and Risk Management*, 10(4), 1-10.
- Seidu, A.-h., Alhassan, A., & Abdulai, A.-M. (2011). The role of community radio in livelihood improvement: The case of Simli radio. *The Journal of Field Actions Field Science Reports*, 5(1), 1-8.
- Seidu, A.-h. , Alhassan, A., & Abdul-Malik, A. (2011). The role of community radio in livelihood improvement: The case of Simli radio. *Field Actions Science Reports*.
- Singh, P. K., & Chudasama, H. (2020). Evaluating poverty alleviation strategies in a developing country. *PLoS ONE*, 15(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0227176>
- Suleiman, J., & Ojomo, O. (2019). The Political Economy of News Reporting and Poverty in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal ESJ*, 15, 213-231. doi:10.19044/esj.2019.v15n22p213
- Taiwo, J. N., & Agwu, M. E. (2016). Problems and prospects of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 46, 18-30.
- Tonuchi, J. E., & Onyebuchi, N. A. (2019). Economic diversification in Nigeria: The role of agriculture and manufacturing sector. *International Journal of Research in Electronics and Computer Engineering*, 7(3), 916-919.
- Ugangu, C. (2012). Normative media theory and the rethinking of the role of the Kenyan media in a changing social economic context. University of South Africa.
- Ugoh, S., & Ukpere, W. (2009). Appraising the trend of policy on poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria with emphasis on a National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP). *African Journal of Business Management*, 3(12), 847-854.
- UNDP. (2016). An assessment of the status of human security and human development in Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria/en/home/library/poverty/national-human-development-report-2016.html>
- Yunusa, R. J. (2012). The factors that influence the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria. Oxford, Ohio: Miami University. Retrieved from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=miami1345229662&disposition=inline