MEDIA APPROACH TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN CHIKUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE

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Abstract
Poverty is a global phenomenon recognized by United Nations as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the anti-poverty program's initiatives adopted by different governments to tackle this menace and bring poverty to zero level still shows that more are still needed to do in other to actualize and sustain the socio-economic development of the country. This research paper critically evaluates media approach to poverty alleviation in Chikun Local Government Area. Hinged on Development Media Theory findings showed that media play great role in promoting knowledge 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 programmes. The study, recommends that all future anti-poverty programmes of the government must have provision for an adequate budget to utilize 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.

Keywords: media, sustainable development goal, poverty alleviation, Approach, programme

Introduction

Poverty alleviation refers to the efforts and strategies aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating poverty in societies. It involves various measures and actions taken by governments, organizations, and communities to improve the living conditions and well-being of individuals and families who are struggling with insufficient income, lack of basic necessities, and limited access to essential services. Poverty Alleviation is not just a goal; it's a shared mission to lift individuals, families, and entire communities out of the darkness of deprivation. As the world collectively strives towards the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, the urgency of effective poverty alleviation strategies becomes starkly evident. This study embarks on an exploration to uncover the often-overlooked interplay between communication, specifically mass media, and the broader efforts to alleviate poverty. By delving into existing literature, this paper seeks to shed light on hidden facets and contribute a unique perspective to the ongoing discourse on poverty alleviation.

In a West African landscape, Nigeria stands tall with its population and economic prowess. The year 2015 witnessed Nigeria's enthusiastic embrace of the SDGs, aligning itself with the global

endeavor to carve a path towards a sustainable future. This collective commitment, encapsulated in the 17 SDGs, resonates as a universal call to action, embodying the shared determination to combat poverty, safeguard the environment, and cultivate lasting peace and prosperity.

The perspective offered by Adejoke (2022) amplifies this vision, portraying sustainable development as a beacon of hope for an enhanced quality of life for all. This perspective not only sheds light on the significance of addressing basic needs but also emphasizes the intricate interplay between these elements. For instance, the provision of decent employment not only ensures financial stability but also empowers individuals with a sense of purpose and dignity. Access to nourishing food doesn't just satisfy hunger; it fuels productivity and supports overall health. Similarly, reliable sources of energy amplify economic opportunities and enable access to modern amenities, while secure shelter fosters a sense of security and belonging. As these facets converge, they collectively kindle the flame of an improved standard of living, igniting the potential for a more prosperous and harmonious life for all individuals and communities.

However, the intricacies of poverty defy easy categorization. A striking example emerges from Kaduna State in 2017, where the poverty rate reached a staggering 64.4 percent, laying bare the harsh reality faced by a substantial portion of the population. This stark figure reveals the extent to which economic hardship can take hold, underscoring the pressing need for comprehensive measures to uplift individuals from such circumstances. These statistics reflect not just numbers, but the lived experiences of people struggling to meet even their most basic needs. It's a reminder that behind every percentage is a story of resilience, challenge, and the urgent quest for change. This serves as a poignant reminder that the path towards poverty alleviation is riddled with complexity and requires multifaceted strategies that address the root causes and encompass the entirety of individuals' lives.

The scholarly viewpoints presented by Alase, Salam, Lamidi, and Tonuchi (2020) offer an insightful framework for understanding the intricacies of poverty. However, can their perspectives be further probed to encompass the entirety of this multifaceted issue? Are there dimensions that remain unexplored within their purview?

While Adetunji's (2020) emphasis on the interplay of psychological, economic, and cultural factors enriches the discourse on poverty,

could other dimensions equally contribute to a holistic comprehension? Might the dynamics at play vary across diverse contexts, potentially necessitating a more comprehensive exploration to truly capture the complexity?

Shifting focus to the elemental requisites of sustenance, water, and shelter as underscored by Attahiru and Haruna (2002), underscores the fundamental underpinnings of human dignity. However, does this perspective fully encompass the broader spectrum of challenges posed by poverty? Could other critical factors, such as access to education, healthcare, and social mobility, exert an equally profound influence on the experience of poverty?

In amalgamating these perspectives, is there a risk of oversimplification? Could nuances potentially evade capture when attempting to amalgamate the multifaceted nature of poverty into a singular narrative? Might a more constructive approach involve facilitating a dialogue among these viewpoints to collectively construct a more comprehensive understanding of poverty's many dimensions?

As we grapple with these inquiries, it becomes evident that the landscape of poverty is a complex tapestry. While these scholarly viewpoints provide valuable insights, they simultaneously encourage a spirit of critical engagement and inquiry, urging us to challenge preconceptions, refine our understanding, and actively seek to comprehend the entirety of poverty's intricacies.

The landscape of poverty measurement is far from simple; it's a maze of metrics and methodologies, each offering a different facet of the challenge. Salam et al. (2020) introduce the concepts of relative and absolute poverty lines, offering distinct lenses through which to assess poverty.

The United Nations' notion of absolute poverty (1995) portrays unmet basic human needs as the foundation of poverty. This portrayal is further accentuated by Saheed et al. (2020), shedding light on the paradoxical coexistence of abundance and deprivation in countries like Nigeria.

Yet, amidst these scholarly dialogues, one gap becomes apparent – the role of communication in poverty alleviation. While literature delves into root causes and strategies, the communication dimension remains largely unexplored.

In the chorus of discussions on poverty, the role of communication, especially through mass media, remains largely unspoken. Akinfeleye (2003) underscores the media's role in disseminating

crucial information for effective governance and citizen engagement.

This paper takes a step further by focusing on media's role in Kaduna's Chikun Local Government Area. This prompts a reconsideration of media's potential to amplify the impact of poverty alleviation efforts.

The amalgamation of these insights reveals a gap in scholarly understanding – the convergence of communication and poverty alleviation. This study seeks to shed light on media's latent potential, revealing its capacity to reshape narratives and amplify the impact of poverty alleviation endeavors.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is based on media effects theories, specifically the Development Media Theory proposed by Dennis McQuail. This theory suggests that the media should play a role in promoting national development rather than being antagonistic towards the government. In the context of developing nations, the media's purpose should be to foster development and social integration, allowing different sections of society to address issues like poverty together.

According to Anaeto (2010), the Development Media Theory emphasizes that the media's main role is to support the government in achieving development goals, rather than being a critic. While freedom of the press is important, the theory advocates for media outlets to align with national economic, political, and social development objectives (Ugangu, 2012).

In essence, the Development Media Theory suggests that the media should act as a catalyst for positive news about the government's developmental policies, rather than solely being critical. It acknowledges the need for some restrictions on media in developing countries to focus on promoting government's developmental programs, including poverty alleviation, health education campaigns, and agricultural development initiatives (Rahib, 2012).

The Development Media Theory advocates for media freedom within certain favorable conditions that benefit the country. It emphasizes that various institutions, including those in the political domain, should contribute to political, economic, and social development. The central idea of this theory is to prioritize nation-building objectives above all else, making media outlets strategic partners that promote government programs and policies within the social-cultural context.

This theory is relevant to this study because it focuses on using the media to prioritize coverage of areas that directly impact people's lives, such as poverty. In other words, the media content should be driven by development goals and centered on the socio-economic and political aspects of people's lives. In the context of poverty alleviation and communication's role, the development media theory suggests that the media should actively support efforts to eradicate poverty as it plays a crucial role in the country's progress and growth.

An Overview of Poverty Alleviation Efforts in Kaduna State

Program	**Year of Formation**	**Scope of Intervention**
Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)	1970s	Agricultural improvement, education, poverty eradication
National Accelerated Food Production project (NAFPP)	1972	Food production enhancement, rural development
Directorate for Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI)	1986	Rural development, community mobilization
Better Life Programme (BLP)	1987	Women's empowerment, skill development, healthcare
People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN)	1989	Savings promotion, credit facilities for underprivileged
National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)	Late 1990s	Extreme poverty reduction, youth empowerment, rural development
National Policy on Integrated Rural Development (NPIRD)	2003	Comprehensive rural development strategy

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)	2004	Wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction
Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (Sure-P)	2012	Women and youth empowerment, job creation, entrepreneurship
N-Power Scheme (N-Ps)	Ongoing	Youth employment, skills training, poverty reduction

Operation Feed the Nation (OFN): Introduced during the 1970s, OFN aimed to improve agricultural output, educate farmers, and eradicate extreme poverty. However, bureaucratic control and issues like fertilizer distribution hampered its effectiveness.

National Accelerated Food Production project (NAFPP): Launched in 1972, NAFPP focused on food production and rural development. Inadequate funding and monitoring posed challenges to its success.

Directorate for Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI): Established in 1986, DFRRI aimed to enhance rural development and community engagement, but faced funding and implementation issues.

Better Life Programme (BLP): BLP, initiated in 1987, aimed to empower rural women through skill development and improved healthcare.

People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN): Established in 1989, PBN promoted savings and offered credit facilities to rural and underprivileged individuals.

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP): Launched in the late 1990s, NAPEP targeted extreme poverty reduction, youth empowerment, and rural development through various schemes.

National Policy on Integrated Rural Development (NPIRD): Introduced in 2003, NPIRD aimed to comprehensively address rural development challenges.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS): Launched in 2004, NEEDS aimed at wealth creation, employment generation, and poverty reduction.

Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (Sure-P): Introduced in 2012, Sure-P focused on empowering women and youth through job creation and entrepreneurship.

N-Power Scheme (N-Ps): An ongoing initiative, N-Ps aims to provide youth with employment opportunities and skills training.

These programs collectively signify Nigeria's commitment to poverty alleviation through multifaceted strategies. However, challenges such as bureaucratic control, funding issues, and implementation bottlenecks have often constrained their impact. The historical context and specific objectives of each program provide valuable insights into Nigeria's evolving approach to tackling poverty and fostering sustainable development.

Evidence of Media Approach to Achieving Poverty Alleviation in Kaduna

Using mass media as a tool to spread information is crucial for the success of poverty alleviation programs. It plays a significant role in raising awareness, knowledge, and support for these initiatives, particularly in rural communities. Despite challenges in effectively communicating about poverty alleviation in Nigeria, the media remains a potent instrument for this purpose (Hovland, 2003). However, the role of media in poverty alleviation warrants further exploration.

Aderogba's (2012) study in Nigeria found that more than 70 percent of people were aware of poverty alleviation programs, while only 13 percent lacked awareness. This study highlights the potential of media in increasing awareness and emphasizing the urgency of addressing poverty. Nevertheless, does the study's focus on awareness effectively capture the broader impact of media on poverty alleviation efforts? Could there be other dimensions of media influence, such as influencing policy decisions or fostering community engagement?

Similarly, Satjir's (2017) research in Sri Lanka indicates that media, particularly television, can contribute to reducing rural poverty by involving communities and leveraging their skills. However, does this insight align with Nigeria's context and media landscape? Could the effectiveness of media in poverty alleviation differ across countries due to varying media access, infrastructure, and societal factors?

Joseph's (2008) study on poverty portrayal in the media in the UK raises questions about the representation of poverty globally. The

study reveals that media coverage of poverty lacked depth and failed to amplify the voices of those experiencing it. Does this observation resonate with the Nigerian media landscape, and does it underscore the need for media to not only raise awareness but also provide a platform for marginalized voices?

Ochuokpa's (2017) examination of broadcast media's coverage of poverty reduction programs in North Central Nigeria unveils concerns about impact and limited airtime. The study's findings prompt us to reflect on the role of media beyond just coverage. Could media be more effective in promoting participation and behavioral change? Does the study's emphasis on political influence highlight the need for media independence and ethical reporting?

Hopkins, Kim, and Kim's (2017) research delves into the nexus between media, public opinion, and economic perceptions. This prompts us to question the influence of media on shaping public attitudes towards poverty alleviation. Are media portrayals instrumental in shaping public sentiment and policy support, and if so, how can media contribute more effectively to fostering a positive environment for poverty reduction initiatives?

Hibah et al.'s (2017) study examines the media's potential to engage people and countries in the fight against poverty. This finding raises the question of how media can bridge national and international efforts in poverty alleviation. Could effective media coverage not only enhance local engagement but also facilitate global collaboration and resource allocation?

Owolabi and O'Neill's (2014) assessment of media reporting on poverty reduction in Nigeria highlights a divergence between media priorities and societal needs. The study underscores the media's responsibility in driving social change. Does this emphasize the role of media as a catalyst for policy advocacy, accountability, and constructive societal discourse?

Nigam and Paliwal's (2011) identification of key strategies for media engagement in poverty alleviation warrants contemplation. Their suggestions prompt us to assess the depth of media involvement and its potential for making a meaningful impact. Could the media serve as a conduit for knowledge dissemination, community outreach, and inspiration, ultimately fostering a transformative change in poverty alleviation efforts?

In essence, the interplay between media and poverty alleviation presents a multi-dimensional landscape that extends beyond mere awareness. Interrogating these scholarly observations not only enriches our understanding but also underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of media's role in addressing poverty and promoting sustainable development.

Concluding Thought

The literature underscores the urgency for policymakers to recognize the pivotal role of the media in combating poverty, particularly within Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The media serves as a conduit for enhancing public comprehension of economic, social, and environmental dimensions critical for sustainable development. Moreover, it provides a platform for individuals with lived experiences of poverty to voice their perspectives and concerns, fostering a sense of inclusivity and reaching a broader audience.

This study carries profound conceptual and theoretical implications for our understanding of media's role in poverty alleviation. By spotlighting the significance of media in shaping perceptions and engendering public participation, the paper extends the discourse on the multifaceted dimensions of poverty reduction. The application of the Development Media Theory as a guiding framework underscores the need for strategic alignment between media communication and poverty eradication efforts. This implication enriches our theoretical comprehension of how media can catalyze social change and sustainable development, contributing to a more holistic understanding of poverty alleviation dynamics.

Comparatively, this study's findings converge with prior research that highlights the media's potential to raise awareness and mobilize communities towards poverty alleviation. However, a distinctive feature of this study is its specific focus on the Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. This geographical specificity provides localized insights into the challenges and opportunities that characterize poverty reduction efforts within this context. Moreover, while previous studies have emphasized media's role in awareness generation, this study delves deeper into the obstacles hindering media effectiveness, offering practical recommendations to overcome these barriers. In doing so, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing a nuanced understanding of the interplay between media, poverty alleviation,

and sustainable development, and offering actionable insights tailored to the local landscape of Chikun Local Government Area.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. While awareness is important, the role of media should go beyond just spreading information. Poverty alleviation efforts should consider leveraging various media platforms, such as television, radio, newspapers, and digital media, to engage audiences through different formats like documentaries, interviews, and feature stories. This diversity can help capture different segments of the population.
2. Rather than surface-level coverage, media should delve deeper into the complexities of poverty, exploring the root causes, systemic challenges, and potential solutions.
3. Media can act as a watchdog by holding policymakers and government agencies accountable for their commitments to poverty alleviation.
4. Media organizations should collaborate closely with local NGOs, community leaders, and development agencies to ensure that their coverage aligns with the actual needs and priorities of the communities they are aiming to serve.
5. Researchers should conduct case studies on the impact of media campaigns on poverty alleviation, or develop new methods for measuring the effectiveness of media interventions.
6. Policymakers should partner with media organizations to produce and air public service announcements, or create government-funded media outlets that focus on poverty alleviation.
7. Communities should produce their own media content, or participate in existing media projects. They can also use social media to raise awareness of their issues and build support for their cause.

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