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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA 2020**THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN FIGHTING RURAL POVERTY
IN KANO, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the role of mass media in fighting rural poverty in Kano State in particular and Nigeria in general. Rural poverty is a serious phenomenon that poses a threat to economic opportunities, security and sustainable development of the rural poor. It involves land degradation caused by human-induced deforestation, agricultural and economic policies which negatively affect farming communities. Mass media play a greater role in reversing this trend in order to rescue the rural populace from the cycle of poverty, whose economic livelihood is directly dependent on land exploitation. Therefore, the paper examines role of print and electronic media in improving the lives of the rural poor. The study involved questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The sample respondents comprised of 200 staff of the media houses randomly selected. Therefore, to guide the study two hypotheses and three research questions were utilised. Similarly, the interview was conducted with five rural populace. The data collected were subjected to simple frequency count and percentage. Chi-square statistical tools were used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study show that there is a significant relationship between unemployment and rural poverty. And there is no significant difference between media programmes and government campaign on rural poverty. The findings of the study also indicate that the role of mass media is public announcement, media jingles, sensitization and enlightenment campaign.

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Keywords: Circle of poverty, Mass media, Poverty level, Rural poverty, Rural poor

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1. Introduction

Poverty is a worldwide phenomenon that affects regions, states, and the populaces in a different ways. It affects individuals in numerous depths and levels at diverse periods and stages of survival. There is no any country that is completely free from poverty. The leading dissimilarity is the magnitude and frequency of this phenomenon (Akeredolu, 2005). Countries in Latin America, South Asia and the sub-Saharan Africa presently have the highest level of poverty and therefore with the bottommost level of socioeconomic development, recurrent violence, excessive degree of discontent and low standard of living (World Bank, 1996).

Poverty is a situation where by a person or group of persons is incapable of satisfying their basic needs for instance shelter, clothing, foods, clean water supply, education, basic health care services, lack of contribution in the prevailing standard of living, self-respect and having inadequate chance of evolving their welfare to the limit of their competences (Marshal, 1998).

However, mass media plays an important role in fighting rural poverty in Nigeria by enlighten the general public on the importance of pursuing economic opportunities through the establishment of secured and sustainable rural development effort. The majority of the poor in Nigeria are living in the rural areas without opportunities for personal growth and meaningful participation in social, political and economic development of the nation (Anyawu, 2007). Members of the farming communities are negatively affected by land degradation as a result of human-induced deforestation and also due to economic policies of the government.

Therefore, based on the above explanation, the paper will look at the role of mass media in the fight against rural poverty in Rano local government, Kano State, north western Nigeria.

2. Problem Statement

The mass media (both print and electronic) was recognized worldwide as the champion of the masses, however, poverty is under-reported in the media and, when it is reported, those facing poverty particularly the rural poor are often not given the space to explain what it really means. For instance, People from the rural areas are affected by lack of employment, low level of educational attainment, lack of opportunities for participation in decision making and poor social mobility.

Therefore, the rural populace like other Nigerians requires basic necessities of life, such as protection, shelter, clothing and foods, as well as the establishment of a family. Unfortunately, today, they are confronted with problems of illiteracy, drug abuse, juvenile delinquencies, crime, prostitution, unemployment and fraudulent activities which are all associated with poverty.

3. Research Questions

The important questions that call for investigation are:

- What is the role of print and electronic media in improving the lives of the rural populace of Rano local government areas of Kano State?

- What are the causes of poverty among rural populace of Rano local government areas of Kano State?
- What is the effect of poverty among rural populace in the study area?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study includes:

- To examine role of print and electronic media in improving the lives of the rural populace of Rano local government areas of Kano State;
- To identify the causes of poverty among rural populace of Rano local government areas of Kano State;
- To find out the effect of poverty among rural populace in the study area

4.1. Hypothesis

- H01: There is a significant relationship between unemployment and rural poverty.
- H02: There is no significant difference between media programmes and government campaign on rural poverty.

5. Research Methods

The paper use mixed method as a research design. This involve data obtained through questionnaires administered to the respondents (i.e. the rural poor, both male and female in Rano local government areas of Kano state). In the same way, the face to face interview was conducted with five (5) rural poor. The researchers employed the service of the research assistants to help with the administering and collecting the questionnaires.

The researchers employ questionnaires and interview protocol as research instruments. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers and marked Rural Poverty Questionnaire (RPQ) and the questionnaire has two main sections; section one comprises of respondent's demographic information, whereas section two comprises of questions connected to the topic of research. Likewise, the interview protocol covers the demographic information in addition to the questions aimed at identifying the effect of rural poverty. Furthermore, the researchers utilized semi-structured interview and purposive sampling technique was employed for the interviewers. The target population consists of rural poor numbering five hundred. (500).

The sample size are drawn from the study population based on 5% margin error provided in Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to determine the required sample size. Therefore, the sample size of two hundred (200) respondent was utilized. The researchers used stratified random sampling method in the questionnaires administration. The validity and reliability of the research instrument comprises of validation of the instrument by the measurement and evaluation experts and the reliability co-efficient of 0.82 based on the Cronbach Alpha measures of scale reliability respectively. The data collected were subjected to simple frequency count and percentage. Chi-square statistical tools were used to test the null hypotheses. However, for the interview; the method used in analysing the data is thematic analyses.

6. Findings

The findings of the study are based on the data collected from the respondents. However, the two null hypotheses were tested using Chi-square statistical tools below:

The chi-square distribution is expressed symbolically thus:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

X^2 = Chi- Square, \sum = Summation Symbol, O = Observed Frequency or Actual Frequency, E = Expected Frequency or Mean Frequency

The **Table 01** below indicates frequencies and percentage distribution of respondents on the relationship between unemployment and rural poverty. Out of 217 respondents, 196 (90%) of the respondents believe that there is a durable relationship between unemployment and rural poverty. While of the 217 respondents, 21 (10%) of them indicate no relationship between unemployment and rural poverty.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents on relationship between unemployment and rural poverty

Relationship between Unemployment and Rural Poverty	Frequency	Percentage
Strong Relationships	196	90
Non-Relationship	21	10
Total	217	100%

For the purpose of validating analysis of the result, the chi-square statistic was used to test the Null Hypothesis (H_0) as follows:

Calculated $X^2 = 32$

H_1 : There is no significant relationship between unemployment and rural poverty.

Degree of Freedom (df) = K - 1, (where K = no. of rows) = 4 - 1 = 3

The level of significance = 0.05

Critical $X^2 = 7.815$

Therefore, calculated chi-square is greater than Critical chi-square (Calculated $X^2 > \text{Critical } X^2$)

Hence: Null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is accepted thus: There is a significant relationship between unemployment and rural poverty.

Information from the Table 02 reveals that out of the 217 respondents, 55 (25%) of the respondents agreed that the difference exist between media programmes and government campaign on rural poverty. However, 162 (75%) respondents believed that there is no significant difference between media programmes and government campaign on rural poverty.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents of the significant difference between rural poverty and land degradation

Difference between Media Programmes and Government Campaign	Frequency	Percentage
Differences exist	55	25
No differences	162	75
Total	217	100%

In validating the analysis of the result, chi- square was used to test the Null Hypothesis (H_0) as follows:

Calculated $X^2 = 4.21$

H_0 : There are no significant difference between media programmes and government campaign on rural poverty.

Degree of Freedom (df) = $K - 1$, (where K = no. of rows) = $3 - 1 = 2$

The level of significance = 0.05

Critical $X^2 = 5.991$

Therefore, calculated chi-square is less than the critical chi-square (Calculated $X^2 \leq$ Critical X^2)

Hence: Null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. Therefore: There are no significant difference between media programmes and government campaign on rural poverty.

Furthermore, based on the analysis of the results. The opinions of the respondents were presented as follows:

6.1. The role of print and electronic media in improving the lives of the rural populace:

The opinions of the respondents on the role of print and electronic media in improving the lives of the rural populace are presented. The themes that emerged includes: public announcement, media jingles, sensitization and enlightenment campaign.

The study revealed that public announcement by the electronic media plays a greater role in in fighting rural poverty in Nigeria. A lot of media announcements are aimed at educating the general public particularly the rural poor through provision of information on how to improve their lives by becoming self-reliant as a means of fighting poverty. One of the respondents added that:

“The media play a major role in developing public understanding of economic, social, and environmental issues... As a local farmer in my village, I used to tune in to some radio stations in Kano, where I enjoyed educative programmes on entrepreneurship in addition to my farming profession. Kudos to these media houses for improving my life and the life of my family members.”

Similarly, respondents believe that media jingles used by the government and private organizations assist in fighting rural poverty in the country. This involves the use of one or more advertising slogans in radio and television stations in order to educate and advance the economic activities of the rural populace. One of the respondents confirmed that:

“The media plays a central role in informing the public about global, national and local events. Many short songs in our local languages are used as jingles to appropriately advertise the government or NGO’s agenda on the rural poor. This is a positive step towards rural development.”

In the same direction, respondents believe that sensitization and enlightenment campaign is another role played by the media to improve the lives of the rural poor. The campaign aimed at creating awareness and social mobilization among the rural populace as confirm by one of the respondents.

“The local media houses in the country create awareness on the importance of fighting poverty to a minimum level... they inform a wide range of audiences on poverty reduction issues. Media houses also provide an inclusive platform and open forum to share the views and concerns of people living in vulnerable situations.”

6.2. Summary of Findings

Arising from discussion and analysis of data collected through respondents, the following findings were made:

(1) A sustains media campaign cause change in National Policy regarding rural poverty. This situation has raised public awareness and caused national debate.

(2) There is a direct relationship between poverty and unemployment. Unemployment leads to poverty and in turns poverty leads to unemployment. Unemployment is a sign of poverty it leads to financial crisis, hunger, dejection, indebtedness etc. An unemployed person has no means to earn money and cannot fulfil his own and his family’s basic needs and has no means to create income earning assets

(3) Rural poverty is often a product of poor infrastructure that delays development and mobility

(4) Natural disasters cause poverty. Poor people often lose their assets on which their survival depends whenever disaster strike. At the same time, their limited resources, lack of access to education and health services can increase their exposure to risks.

7. Conclusion

The role of mass media in fighting rural poverty cannot be overemphasized. It was argued that mass media activities in Nigerian has been seriously neglected especially in the rural areas many years back. The viewpoint of the mass media in Nigeria has strictly continued to be city based. The reports and the write ups of the journalists in difference mass media houses, pay their attention to urban dwellers and neglect the rural areas. The difficulties of life, the grievance and the tribulations of the rural areas are rarely reported.

Perhaps, majority of the mass media outlets who resided in the urban areas today believed that their primary task is to satisfy their urban colleagues. Similarly, many urban reporters are more concerned about what is happenings in the city rather than the rural problems associated with issues and development of the rural dwellers.

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