



# THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARIAN IN COMMUNICATION OF RESEARCHES AND POLICIES FOR EFFECTIVE POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The study dwelt on the role of the Librarian in communicating researches and policies for effective poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The study sought to ascertain the relationship between communication of research to policy makers and poverty alleviation. It also described the relationship between communication of poverty alleviation programmes to end users and poverty alleviation. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study and data were obtained through the use of questionnaires from a sample of sixty five (65) respondents which consisted of Librarians from University libraries and the public library in Anambra State. Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to analysis the data and it was found that communication of research to policy makers and communication of policies to end users have a strong positive relationship with poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The study thus recommended among other things that Librarian should improve on their communication skills and also strive to modernised and intensify their efforts in communicating researches from scholars on poverty alleviation to the government and other policy makers and also communicate government policies and programmes on poverty alleviation to the end users who happened to be the poor masses.*

**KEYWORDS:** Librarian, Communication of Research, Communication of Policies, Poverty Alleviation

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a complex phenomenon that has been defined from various perspectives. The World Bank identified four perspectives. The first perspective is whether individuals in society have enough resources to meet their needs, second is inequality in distribution of income across the population, third is consumption patterns between different groups in society, and finally is vulnerability which refers to risk of falling back into poverty (World Bank, 2001). Another definition from FAO defined poverty as the lack of, or the inability to achieve socially acceptable standard of living (FAO 2006). Poverty however can also be a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. This means that the income level from employment is so low that basic human needs can't be met. Poverty-stricken people and families might go without proper housing, clean water, healthy food, and medical attention. Each nation may have its own threshold that determines how many of its people are living in poverty. Statistically, in Nigeria, between 1960 and 1980, the poverty level

was about 28% of the population; by 1996 it rose alarmingly to about 66% of the population (Aliju, 2001). According to the United Nation Development Program Human Development Report (2008-2009) which combined such components as; level of inequality, life expectancy at birth, standard of living and access to knowledge, and education, access poverty rate between 2004 and 2009, discovered that the rate increased from 43% to 49%. This showed that despite its vast resources, Nigeria ranks among the 25 poorest countries of the world (Hussaini, 2014).

The causes of poverty in Africa as identified by (Mills, 2010) primarily states that African leaders choose to make Africa poor. On the broad theme of poor leadership and weak policies, Mills identifies the following specific reasons on why Africa is poor: Over reliance on primary commodities exports because of wide fluctuations in prices; Low productivity among people in all sectors because of poor health, low skills levels and inefficient land use; Rich natural resources which are mostly used to enrich elites leading to corrupt practices and diverting development focus; Leadership problems



including lack of democracy and culture of patronage and big men chieftain style of ruling and hostile attitude of many governments towards the private sector, except where they benefit directly, among others. This assertions can be said to be true for Nigeria.

Nations however have put up various measures to alleviate poverty. Poverty alleviation is meant to increase resource levels of poor individuals in society. In some cases, however, it is a matter of reducing gross inequality in society. In Nigeria, many poverty alleviation programmes have come and gone since independence such as the Agricultural Development project (ADP) in 1973, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976, the Green Revolution in 1979, and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of 1986. The Structural Adjustment Programme was a very large programme that contained other programmes such as, Better Life Program (BLP), Community Banks Program, Family Support programs (FSP) and Family Economic Advancement Program (FEAP), and establishments of various bodies such as Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN). In the recent times we have heard of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), SURE-P by the Jonathan's administration and N-Power which is the most recent of them all, all geared towards alleviating poverty in Nigeria.

However, despite these various programmes, Nigeria still ranks among the 25 poorest countries of the world (Hussaini, 2014). Many researchers have therefore called for increased in knowledge sharing and effective communication of research as a bail-out to poverty. The World Bank (1998) and Asia Development Bank (2011) have both noted that all human development is based on the acquisition, dissemination and use of knowledge. Poverty eradication, therefore, would also be one area which would benefit tremendously benefit from access to relevant and appropriate information (FAO, 2006). Therefore this study seeks to assess and ascertain the role of librarians in effective communication of research for poverty alleviation.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to ascertain the role of librarians in effective communication of research for poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to ascertain:

1. The relationship between communication of research to policy-makers and poverty alleviation in Nigeria
2. The relationship between communication of government policies/programmes to end users and poverty alleviation in Nigeria

## 1.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. **HO:** There is no relationship between communication of research to policy-makers and poverty alleviation
2. **HO:** There is no relationship between communication of government policies/programmes to end users and poverty alleviation

## 2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

### 2.1.1 Concept of Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation is a process by which people's economic status is improved through government or non-governmental intervention (Adebayo, 2017). Some policies however have been put in place by government and some non-governmental organisation to help alleviate poverty. These policies are those programmes which aim at enhancing the standard of living of the poor in the society. In Nigeria, most of the poverty alleviation initiatives are entrenched in entrepreneurship but have suffered several challenges leading to their failure. Some of the schemes included Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Small and medium enterprise (SME), Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS), National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), The National Directorate of Employment (NDC), National Poverty Eradication Programme(NAPEP), Better Life Programme for Rural Woman, Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme(FEAP), SUREP. Despite all the programmes introduced by various governments in Nigeria, poverty still persists.

According to Adebayo (2017), many of these aforementioned programmes were well packaged, well intended and thought out strategies to resolve youth unemployment and alleviate poverty in Nigeria. With these beautiful policies and programmes there implementation leave much to be desired. Adebayo (2017) further posited that, as at December 2016, unemployment has soared to 13.9 percent as at the third quarter and quantitatively implying almost 11.2 million Nigeria who want to work could not find one. This was confirmed by the Bureau of Statistics indicates that 60.9 percent of Nigerians were living in absolute poverty. It equally means that most of the people are living on less than \$1 (dollar) a day.

The failure of the government to alleviate poverty in Nigeria seems to indicate that poverty is a very difficult task. Okoye & Eze (2010), averred that efforts by various Nigerian Governments to cushion the effects and reduce rate of poverty in the country have failed as a result of dishonesty, cheating, and excessive pursuit of material things (wealth) by the



few Nigerians who are either in power or within the corridors of power at the expense of human dignity.

### 2.1.2 The Librarian and Poverty Alleviation

Librarians have the necessary weapon and tools to eradicate poverty. With the current built capacity of libraries and their services combined with innovative information delivery and development strategies, Librarians through adoption of more community based approaches, can eradicate poverty systematically and totally. Librarian can empower communities through their maximum participation to identify their information needs, cooperation with other agencies, and incorporation of indigenous knowledge resources of communities, local information delivery and providing reading and practical resources can reduce poverty and deprivation (Mchombu, 2007). However, much more is desired to be done to build the necessary muscle to tackle and curb poverty.

Marx (2016) averred that Librarians can develop and initiate innovative library based programs aimed at addressing, informing and supporting the poverty alleviation programmes of the Government and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), The roles librarians could play in these poverty alleviation programs cannot be over emphasized, in other words, poverty alleviation programs can only succeed when people are duly informed. They play a crucial role in ensuring that people in communities receive information not only about the anti-poverty programs but also about the way and manner in which such programs affect their lives.

Stilwell (2014), asserted that Librarians could design outreach programs, which can be realized through the organizations of workshops, seminars, use of Mobile buses like the University of South Africa (UNISA) Library buses, or mobile vans, public displays and exhibitions, stating that such arrangements can have a positive impact on rural and urban economic and social transformation and prosperity. Abubakar (2013), reported an example in South Africa where the Kwazulu-Natal Public Library used a 'wheelie Wagon' containing 500 books to provide services to different points. Nigerian Librarians could emulate such a project to curb ignorance and poverty literally. Marx (2016) stated that Librarians could create special collections for the poverty alleviation programs to be displayed in the library, and readers from the community could be directed to the collections. He further stated that they could also formulate Library and Information entrepreneurship program and schemes with the aim of educating and informing people especially rural communities of the relevant and required poverty eradication practices, entrepreneurial skills and productivity like saving practices, collective

bargaining powers through formation of Saving and Credit Cooperatives and unionized markets or Associations. Abubakar (2013) stipulated that this could likely minimize the rate of poverty and too much dependency on government, emphasising that libraries should in addition serve as centres for entrepreneurship training.

Librarian are better positioned to provide space from career training to equip the communities with career development skills. The provision of infrastructural support through Internet and ICTs Librarians act as a back bone for research initiatives which trigger invention and innovations thus creating jobs through ideas acquired from the Internet, research findings, articles, you tube videos or podcasts (Marx, 2016). The basic access to Information can only be realized when there is unlimited and free access to information and Librarians are best positioned to facilitate it. With the relevant ICTs and Internet infrastructure as well as space, Ignorance and illiteracy as a cause of or aspect of poverty can fully be combated (Marx, 2016). The role of librarians therefore is to facilitate Information literacy which is the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand (Jain & Saraf, 2013). They further stated that information literacy therefore requires lifelong learning, but for poor people there is need to develop the community system and public library system.

Libraries can partner with government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to curb poverty. Mchombu (2007) asserted that partnership arrangements with NGOs and government departments are an important way for libraries to make most of opportunities to promote literacy, fight poverty and develop communities. Libraries could act as grant partners with agencies like World Bank, United Nations, and other development partners to mobilize, solicit and coordinate funding for literacy programs, learning centres, and exhibitions places, among others. Libraries still could act as government agents of development through dissemination of government based information, plans, strategies and policies for poverty eradication. While exploring the role of NGOs in knowledge and Information transfer, Abubakar, (2013) found that NGOs mainly transfer knowledge on credits, awareness building, health and nutrition, agriculture, income generating, environmental issues, etc. If libraries link with development agencies, partners and other range of organization, they could help to acquire and utilize the widest possible range of development information and literacy materials which could be used to fight and end poverty through information literacy (Marx 2016).



## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework adopted for this study was the Stage Theory Model of Information Processing Theory. This theory proposed by Atkinson & Shiffrin in 1968 holds that a human mind processes information via application of logical rules and strategies. They stated that for a problem to be solved, critical information about it must be encoded and together with whatever useful prior knowledge already stored, this information will then be used in coming up with a strategy to deal with the problem. The Stage Model Theory holds that storage of information occurs in three stages namely: sensory memory, short term memory and long term memory. For information to transition into short term memory, Huitt (2003) gives two conditions that must be satisfied. One is that the information must have an interesting feature and secondly, it must activate a known pattern. Information that gets into the short term or working memory lasts between 15 to 20 seconds and if repeated severally later, it will last up to a limited time of 20 minutes. The second shortcoming of this memory is that information can only be processed in units of between 3 and 7 at a time in what is called 'chunking' (Miller, 1956).

Information that has been chunked is then pushed to the long term memory where it can be stored for many years. As information is stored in this memory, Huitt, (2003) mentions that it can be organized into several structures like declarative memory which has semantic and episodic memories. Semantic memory includes principles, and different strategies employed in problem solving or learning while episodic memory information is that which forms personal experiences and stories. Further, information can be organized into procedural memory that deals with how things are done and also into images.

Through this theory, how information communicated to policy makers and the poor mass (end-users) in Nigeria are able to retain the poverty alleviation programmes and lessons given to them through the different channels can be explained. The level of complexity of poverty alleviation programmes relayed to the poor masses, whether there is any frame of reference and the familiarity of the language used may affect the way the poor masses may store and ultimately retrieve the information for application.

## 2.3 REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Obayelu & Ogunlade (2006) descriptively analysed the effect of the use of ICT for gender empowerment and sustainable poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The study described the roles that ICTs have played in the lives of the poor and the ones yet untapped in Nigeria, and how ICTs can assist women

in addressing the chronic issues of widespread poverty. The result of the study using Likert rank order scale showed unemployment, income inequality, polygamy, business failure, sickness and environmental degradation as the main causes of poverty in Nigeria and sustainable poverty alleviation is unlikely to be achieved without the proper use of ICT. Using ICTs to support poverty reduction was found to be possible, practical and affordable if Nigerian government acknowledges its role as a major employer and user of ICT beginning with a development commitment that targets poverty alleviation. In addition, the development and access to social networks through low-cost ICTs, telecentres will enhance timely access to accurate and reliable information by the poor. The study also found that ICTs will not only empower the gender but sustain poverty alleviation programmes which in time past have failed in Nigeria through provision of new and enhanced opportunities for participation in the process of self-determination, economic, social, educational and cultural advancement and employment beyond the scope of traditional institutions and any forms of governance.

Chikaire et al (2015) examined the role ICTs play in poverty reduction among small and medium scale (SMS) farmers in Imo State, Nigeria. Data were collected from 170 (SMS) farmers in Imo State using well-structured questionnaire. Analysis of data collected was done using percentages and mean presented in tabular forms. It was seen from results that 38.2% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 51-60 years. Majority (43.5%) attended secondary school, 48% have put in 11-20 years in farming, while 71.7% have a farm size 0.25-1.5 hectares. ICT devices used include radio, mobile phones, television, among others. On frequency of use of ICT devices, radio is the most frequently used as indicated on a daily basis. They also use telephone, magazines and newspapers. The study found that ICTs play veritable roles such as increasing access to education, health information, and information on diseases/pest outbreak, market information employment generation, and credit opportunities among other. The study also found that social amenities be provided by government so that small and medium scale farmers will have unlimited access to other modern ICT facilities.

Hussaini (2014) examined the various government policies targeted towards poverty alleviation in Nigeria with a view to, come up with policy recommendations for effective and efficient implementation of such policies. Exploration into the literature revealed that governments in power often sought to introduce their own policy and in the process, any other policy inherited from successors are either abandoned absolutely or rendered impotent. The therefore concluded that there is lack of succession planning and some governments even





watch their baby program dying prematurely to give birth to another with different orientation and strategic focus and as such the paper recommended that all programs centred towards poverty alleviation should henceforth be harmonized under the same umbrella, and each unit being accountable and responsible for their actions.

Okpokwasili (2019) assessed the library and information science programme and poverty alleviation in South-South Zone of Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 325 library and information science lecturers. The entire population was selected by purposive sampling techniques, because the population was not too large. Structured questionnaire with 19 items was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined by the use of split-half method using spearman rank order of correlation, while the coefficient was further computed using the Spearman Brown's Prophecy to be 0.84. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research question, while t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that computer soft-ware development skills and computer maintenance skills are highly possessed by students to alleviate poverty in South-South, Zone of Nigeria. It was recommended amongst others that curriculum planners should incorporate computer soft-ware development skills and computer maintenance skills perceived by lecturers into library and information programme both at the tertiary and secondary level of education.

Ugulu & Oghuvwu (2015) examined the impact of the library and information in promoting national security in Nigeria. The study discussed the concept of library and information, national security as well as the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The paper also showed how the library and information can contribute effectively in the fight against terrorism, insurgent, youth restiveness, kidnapping and bad government through proper and effective collection and dissemination of information at the right time, mobilizing the citizenry through civic education, information literacy programme. The paper concluded that library and information has a social responsibility in national security and recommended that government should provide more funds to overcome the challenges, comply with the implementation of freedom of information policy so that the citizen would get the right information about their nation at the right time and in right format.

Adekoya (2018) examined the relationship between some elements of human capital development and poverty alleviation in Nigeria, from 1995-2017. It investigated the causal relationship

between the human capital development explicitly measured on health and education and its impact on poverty alleviation measured by per capita income over the period of time stated. The study used Granger causality test through a vector error correction mechanism (VECM), to determine whether the elements of education and health care of any precedence or effect(s) on per capita income. The result indicated that there is no causality either uni-directional or bi-directional between government expenditure on education and health, infant mortality, gross enrolment ratio and per capita income but cases of uni-directional causality existed for literacy rate, life expectancy, and per capita income. The study therefore, suggested that the federal government should ensure that it invests more in education and health as they are essential factors that can help in alleviating poverty.

Ugwoke (2011) examined the role of the public libraries in helping to actualize the United Nations' Development Goals in Nigeria. The exploratory approach was adopted for this study. The role of public libraries in achieving the millennium development goals in Nigeria and need for adequate funding were discussed. The major finding of the paper was that public libraries in Nigeria do not occupy befitting buildings neither do they have requisite resources, services and personnel because of poor funding. From the findings noted that unless public libraries, are properly funded, their services would not be exciting and there would be no innovation. The study therefore recommended that public libraries in Nigeria are expected to follow their counterparts in developing and advanced counties where library services are available on streets and internet services are free in the millennium development goals

### 3.1 METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. It was considered appropriate for the study as only a proportion of the population was studied and the findings was then generalized to the entire population. The study was carried out in higher institutions libraries and public libraries and the population of the study was comprised of the librarians in these higher institutions totally Sixty-five (65). The whole population was taken as sample size of the study because it is finite and can be comfortably managed by the researcher. Questionnaire was the instrument adopted for data collection. The data generated were presented, described and interpreted using percentages. The hypotheses for the study were analysed using correlation model and with the aid SPSS.



## 4.1 ANALYSIS OF DATA

### Hypothesis One

#### Correlations

		POLICYUSERS	POVERTY
POLICYUSERS	Pearson Correlation	1	.915**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	260	260
POVERTY	Pearson Correlation	.915**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	260	260

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the correlation result, communication of research on poverty alleviation to policy makers has a strong positive correlation of .915 with poverty alleviation

**DECISION:** Since the computed correlation coefficient  $r$  .915 is greater than the critical  $r$  value

.765 for two-tailed test at 0.01 level of significance, we therefore reject the null hypothesis, meaning that, there is a significant relationship between communication of research on poverty alleviation to policy makers and poverty alleviation

### Hypothesis Two

#### Correlations

		POVERTY	ENDUSER
POVERTY	Pearson Correlation	1	.821**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	260	260
ENDUSER	Pearson Correlation	.821**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	260	260

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the correlation result, communication of policies on poverty alleviation to end users has a strong positive correlation of .821 with poverty alleviation

**DECISION:** Since the computed correlation coefficient  $r$  .821 is greater than the critical  $r$  value .765 for two-tailed test at 0.01 level of significance, we therefore reject the null hypothesis, meaning that, there is a significant relationship between communication of policies on poverty alleviation to end users and poverty alleviation

## 4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Poverty is endemic, however lack of communication to the poor massive makes it abject. Lack of communication has been seen as a factor that inhibits poverty alleviation. There are so many scholarly publications on poverty alleviation but because they aren't duly communicated to the policy makers (government), such researches remain moribund and poverty persist. In some situations

where the researches are communicated to the government and poverty alleviation policies and programmes formulated, if such policies and programmes aren't communicated to the end users (poor masses), poverty alleviation won't be complete. Investigating the role of the Librarian in communication of research and policies for effective poverty alleviation in Nigeria, the study established a positive significant relationship between communication of research to policy-makers and poverty alleviation. Strengthening the librarians' communication skills in order to get the target group right, get the format right, get the timing right, will be useful in communicating researches to policy makes for poverty alleviation. Close collaboration between librarians and policy-makers, having an appropriate platform from which to communicate; a platform of broad engagement such as public campaign and support of research networks, especially electronic and/or regional networks will



also be effective in communication of research to policy makers for poverty alleviation.

The study also revealed a positive significant relationship between communication of government policies/programmes to end users and poverty alleviation. Improving the existing ways of communication, and possibilities for new ways of communication through Information and Communication Technology (ICTs), participative communication, community mapping for the purpose of communication and favourable political environment (local laws and beliefs) can make communication of research by Librarians to the poor masses more effective.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The government of Nigeria has in various tenures formulated policies and initiated programmes aimed at alleviating poverty in the country. Failure of these policies and programmes to accomplish its intended result has been blamed on corruption. However this research has shown that if researches and information regarding poverty alleviation are communicated to the government duly, it will play a significant role in assisting them formulate policies and initiate programmes. These policies and programmes went on their own automatically alleviate poverty if the beneficiaries of such programmes are not duly communicated about the policies. This research therefore concluded by asserting that it is the role of the librarians to bridge these gap by enhancing their communication skills in other to appropriately communicate researches to policy makers and policies to end users.

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**APPENDIX**

A	Communication of research to policy makers	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	Strengthening the librarians' communication skills in order to get the target group right, get the format right, get the timing right, will be useful in communicating researches to policy makes for poverty alleviation?					
2.	Close collaboration between librarians and policy-makers will make communication of research effective					
3.	Having an appropriate platform from which to communicate; a platform of broad engagement Such as public campaign is more likely to be effective for communicating researches for poverty alleviation.					
4.	Support of research networks, especially electronic and/or regional networks will be effective in communication of research for poverty alleviation					
	<b>Mean score:</b>					
B	Communication of research to end users					
1	Improving the existing ways of communicating, and possibilities for new ways of communicating through Information and Communication Technology (ICTs).					
2	Librarians can promote participative communication for empowerment of the poor masses					
3	Favourable political environment (local laws and beliefs) can make communication of research by Librarians to the poor masses more effective					
4	Community mapping can be an effective tool in communication of policies and programmes to the poor masses					
	<b>Mean score:</b>					
C	Poverty Alleviation					
	Poverty is endemic, however it can still be alleviated?					
	The various past and present government programmes on poverty alleviation cannot address the problem of poverty in Nigeria without effective communication of researches to policy makers and communication of policies to end users who are the masses					