



## Communication Channels as Predictors of Knowledge and Participation in National Social Investment Programmes in Selected Local Government Areas in South-South, Nigeria

JOHNSON BABAFEMI AKINTAYO, VICTOR UGOCHUKWU IKEM  
MARGARET SOLO-ANAETO  
Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

**Abstract.** The National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria to tackle poverty. Ending poverty is the first of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 by the United Nations and Nigeria, as a signatory to the SDG, has at different times initiated, with little or no results, poverty alleviation initiatives. To achieve success, knowledge and participation are considered critical factors for poverty alleviation initiatives and communication channels play a role in enhancing these two factors. The extent of communication channels used (face-to-face, radio, television, newspaper, billboard, flyers/posters and online) may affect the level of success of the NSIP. The previous studies reviewed had paid no particular attention to the various communication channels used in the NSIP in South-South, Nigeria. This study, therefore, investigated the extent to which the various communication channels contributed to knowledge and participation in NSIP among residents of selected Local Government Areas in South-South, Nigeria. The study employed the survey research design. The population for the study comprised 2,371,276 residents of nine selected Local Government Areas in South-South, Nigeria. A sample size of 827 was derived using Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's formula. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for selecting respondents. A validated questionnaire was used for gathering data. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranged from 0.78 to 0.82. The response rate was 98.1%. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential (linear regression) statistics. Results showed that the respondents received information about NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives through face-to-face (86.9%), radio (83.0%), television (69.8%), newspaper (46.2%), online (25.8%),

flyers/posters (25.5%), and outdoor/billboard (16.4%). The result further revealed that the knowledge level of NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among respondents was very high extent ( $\bar{x} = 3.71$  on a scale of 4;  $SD = 1.04$ ) while the participation was low extent ( $\bar{x} = 2.26$  on a scale of 4;  $SD = 1.21$ ). The study further revealed that the communication channels had significant influence on the knowledge of ( $Adj.R^2 = 0.403$ ,  $F(2, 808) = 22.404$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and participation in ( $Adj.R^2 = 0.042$ ,  $F(2, 808) = 151.103$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives. The study concluded that knowledge of, and participation in NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives were heightened by the various communication channels. It was recommended that there should be continued use of face-to-face, radio and television to enhance knowledge and participation in the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives.

**Keywords:** Communication channels, Knowledge of NSIP, National Social Investment Programmes, Participation in NSIP, Poverty alleviation

### 1. Introduction

The portrayal of poverty as the most pervasive development problem has received several scholarly reviews (David Suttie, 2015; Ngoma, 2017; Ozoh, Metu, Stephen, & Madueke, 2020). As a global crisis with multiple dimensions, poverty, and its attendant consequences, represents one of the serious obstacles to human development according to Urama (2019). The different challenges associated with poverty can be seen in cases of social instability or social crisis, environmental degradation, illiteracy, inequality, insecurity, and instability, health crisis, and other related development problems (Oyeshola, 2007).

According to Mood and Jonsson (2016), poverty has often been described as a lack of economic resources which has serious negative and varying implications on society's development. It has been described in the view of Ngoma (2017) as having several damaging impacts on the world's most vulnerable population especially women, children, and the economically and physically disadvantaged.

As a development challenge, poverty effects are more visible in some countries and regions in the world than in others. According to Metu and Kalu (2020), poverty as a development problem is responsible for several other negative outcomes in terms of human development hindrances, especially in underdeveloped countries. Countries in Africa, Asia, and parts of South America are mostly affected by poverty with a worldwide impact seen in such cases as unemployment rates, hunger, diseases, homelessness, and crime. The term, poverty, has been described differently and its impacts are seen from varying perspectives between less developed countries and regions and more developed countries (Cobbinah, Black, & Thwaites, 2013). The reasons for these disparities in poverty rates between developed and underdeveloped countries, according to Vázquez, Panadero, Pascual, and Ordoñez (2017) can be said to result from a multiplicity of factors such as fault of world economic structure or fault of fate, nature, cultural habits, and political misconducts. However, what is evident is that countries with a genuine interest in addressing poverty often commit a huge amount of resources and effort to ensuring that there is stable economic progress, and such economic interventions are inclusive enough to reduce poverty. Chigozie (2016) posits that the problem brought about by the prevailing incidences of poverty, especially in developing and under-developed countries, has a broad and multi-dimensional impact on the lives of many people who live in poverty.

The goal to end extreme poverty by the year 2030 is the first agenda for global development as stated by the United Nations in 2015. No Poverty is goal number one of the 17 goals and is recognized as a critical item on the list of global goals described by the United Nations as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The main objective of the United Nation's SDG 1 (No Poverty) is to lift millions of people, worldwide, out of extremely poor conditions before 2030. However, there are enormous hurdles on the way to realizing this laudable Sustainable Development Goal (SDG1). This can be attributed to the multiplicity of social, environmental, political, cultural, and economic factors that keeps fuelling

poverty around the world (Safdar & Saboor, 2017; Vázquez, Panadero, Pascual & Ordoñez, 2017).

Although several programmes and initiatives have been developed and launched to combat the menace of rising poverty in Nigeria, some of which are the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001, Operation Feed the Nation programme (OFN) far back in 1979, among several others, it has remained evident today, as was the case in previous years, that most of these poverty reduction programmes never achieved their set goals (Olise & Roseline, 2019). Since Nigeria gained its independence in 1960, successive governments have regularly initiated programmes with a promise to decisively tackle poverty as a social and economic problem. Habitually, much of these efforts over these years have yielded little or near nothing as poverty rates have remained consistently on the rise (Ajulor, 2013). Regrettably, the rise in poverty rate has remained consistent despite the huge amount of resources and time invested in poverty reduction programmes by the federal government of Nigeria under both civilian and military regimes. This is in addition to the efforts of all the regional and sub-national (state) governments with accompanying multiple agencies set up to lead or champion the fight against poverty. Several studies (Eze, Okpala, & Ogbodo, 2014; Oluwasegun & Semako, 2020) have also attributed the incidence of poverty in Nigeria to the failure of educational, social, political, and economic policies. Shimeles (2014) argued that the prevalence of poverty has always not been a lack of aids, insisting rather that there is a need to improve labour and productivity. Because, as Shimeles observed, most of the previous poverty alleviation policies and programmes often do not deliver the needed results despite huge amounts of monetary implications in their implementation. In addition, Sodeinde, Ajaegbu, and Ajaegbu (2015) argued that the failure of successive administrations to continue with existing poverty alleviation initiatives has contributed to the reasons why some of the programmes failed or have not been able to realize set goals of alleviating poverty hence its prevalence. These positions expressed above, among many others, raise the fundamental question about the level of knowledge and participation of the poor in the aforementioned poverty alleviation initiatives.

Knowledge and participation are critical success factors for poverty alleviation initiatives, and communication plays a role in enhancing these two factors. Therefore, the extent of communication channels used in poverty alleviation programmes is an issue of concern. Knowledge represents the

aggregate information and understanding that exists regarding a problem or any matter of interest such as the case of poverty and poverty alleviation programmes among targeted beneficiaries. Bolisani and Bratianu (2018) described knowledge as part of physical and personal experience which is essential in providing understanding and belief. Knowledge is an important factor in development as it plays a critical role in long-term economic development, this is according to Cozzens, Gatchair, and Ordonez-matamoros (2008). To underscore the importance of knowledge, Abdelmawla (2015) noted that ignorance, which is the absence of knowledge, constitutes a major hindrance to poverty alleviation and development in general. On the other hand, participation is a crucial element in poverty alleviation initiatives. Nikkhah (2016) noted that the real meaning of participation in the real efforts of people, concerned to pool resources together to attain the objectives they have set for themselves. It also implies the active process in which the participants take initiatives and actions that are inspired by their thinking and decisions based on existing knowledge and available information leading to required action. Participation as a concept has received several scholarly mentions in literature within the context of development practice (Chavis & Wandersman, 1987; Nikkhah, 2016, Yang, Tock, & Hospital, 2016). Within the context of this study, participation involves the engagement and partaking in or the act of being involved in the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives.

Often the poor are said to be marginalized in both the communication process and in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes, which is described by Aminu and Onimisi (2014) as a top-bottom approach instead of a bottom-up approach. Lack of knowledge and non-participation is the topmost factors which have been identified as hindrances to poverty alleviation (Aminu & Onimisi, 2014; Mchombu, Mchombu, & Centre, 2014; Osei-kufuor & Koomson, 2014).

To address the prevailing poverty crisis across Nigeria, the federal government of Nigeria in 2016 launched the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP). The NSIP is a set of poverty alleviation and social investment initiatives meant to tackle the existing poverty emergency in Nigeria. The launch of the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) follows several previous attempts at poverty alleviation through several other programmes initiated by previous regimes, all have not achieved much with regard to the goal of reducing poverty in Nigeria (Olise & Roseline, 2019). The NSIP is an

initiative sponsored by the federal government of Nigeria and implemented across the six geopolitical regions and is a portfolio of poverty alleviation initiatives which includes the following; (1) The N-Power Programme (Skill Acquisition/Job Creation) (2) The Government Enterprise and Empowerment programmes (GEEP) 3) the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (CCTP) and 4) the Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP). All of these poverty alleviation initiatives are aimed at improving the living standards and well-being of citizens.

The NSIP launched and deployed several communication campaigns via multiple communication channels to the public. Information about the poverty alleviation initiatives were conveyed through major national newspapers and magazine advertising and announcements in addition to several face to face and interpersonal engagements through workshops, public seminars and events. The various activities of the NSIP were also communicated through social media platforms especially on Facebook with the name 'Social Investment Programme Nigeria'. The various communication campaigns by NSIP were designed to create awareness and knowledge about its poverty alleviation initiatives, to enhance the knowledge of the country's citizenry on the benefits of the NSIP initiatives and to encourage participation in the various poverty alleviation initiatives.

As it is in the case with other development challenges related to poverty alleviation, communication has always played a crucial role in terms of creating knowledge about the problem, and in galvanizing citizens to take shared action (participate) towards solving or ameliorating the development challenge (Gambo, 2018). More so, the relevance of the communication channels adopted has often contributed to the success of the development programme or initiative as Odoom (2020) argued that communication can be used to promote people's participation in development activities. Poor communication, which can result in insufficient knowledge among target audience, has often been identified as a major problem capable of negatively affecting efforts to achieve poverty reduction and solve other related development issues (Odoom, 2020). Hovaland (2013) argued that often the poor are marginalized both in economic processes in society and also in the information and communication ecosystem. This view highlights a situation in which the poor have been frequently ignored or disregarded in the societal communication value chain. And most often the right information

eludes the poor thereby adding to the difficulty with helping them out of poverty. This agrees with the views held by Khuhawar, Jianqiu, Farkhunda and Ye (2014).

Adekoya and Ajilore (2012) identified communication as a vital tool for national development in any society. In their opinion, communication and by extension the effectiveness of communication channels are part of the essential ingredients required for achieving national development goals. Communication channels are essential in development planning and implementation of programmes especially as it has to do with knowledge provision and encouraging participation in poverty alleviation initiatives and other similar development-oriented programmes (Sharma, Baskota, Timalsina, Oli, & Adhikari, 2021).

Since the reality has been embraced on the need to eradicate poverty in Nigeria through the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) poverty alleviation initiatives, the implementer which is the National Social Investment Office (NSIO) employed the use of different communication channels to driving the campaign by encouraging residents of the South-South and other regions to get involved in the initiatives. The fundamental concern of this study therefore, was to provide useful answers to thought-provoking questions relating to the effectiveness of the communication channels used by (NSIP) in relation to broadening knowledge of targeted participants in the South-South, and if such knowledge impacted residents' participation in the initiatives.

From the review of extant works of literature, the agenda-setting theory, cultivation theory, and development media theory were the theoretical anchor for this study. The agenda-setting theory popularized by McCombs and Shaw (1972) maintains that the mass media play significant role in how societal issues gain public attention. This was built on the assertion of Walter Lippman, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the mass media shape the public view and general perception through image projecting (Lei, Hong, & McCombs, 2012; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The cultivation theory explains the power of television in influencing viewers' moral and social values. It maintained that television also has the ability to influence the viewers' perception of life through painting a symbolic picture of the environment, pictorial storytelling, portraits of the cultural norms, cultivation of the value system, gradual altering of religion, social norms, and culture (Mosharafa, 2015). The theory explains how

television viewers tend to believe that the picture created about the world through television programming reflects the actual picture of the world. In its own right, the development media theory advocates that while the freedom of the press is essential for nation-building, independent media and news reporting should be complemented with objectives of promoting national economic, political, and social development (Ugangu, 2012). Developmental media theory summarises 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).

On the basis of the foregoing, the study tested the following hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance:

H<sub>01</sub>: Communication channels has no significant influence on the knowledge of NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-South, Nigerian

H<sub>02</sub>: Communication channels has no significant influence on participation in NSIP poverty alleviation programmes among residents of South-South, Nigeria

## 2. Research Materials and Methodology

The study setting was the South-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria where the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) has been launched. The study employed the survey research design. The population for the study comprised 2,371,276 residents of nine local government areas of three purposively selected states of Akwa Ibom, Delta and Rivers. A sample size of 827 was derived using Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's formula. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for selecting respondents. A validated pretested questionnaire was used for gathering data. The researcher employed content and construct validity to assess the instrument's ability to measure the extent to which statements in the questionnaire intend to measure. Copies of the questionnaire were administered using trained assistants and data was collected between January and March 2022. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients ranged from 0.78 to 0.82. The reliability for each variable was determined at a starting point of 0.7 and above (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (linear regression). Mean and standard deviation are the descriptive techniques adopted while linear regressions was the inferential statistical tool used in testing hypotheses in this study. Inferential statistics

were used to determine the effect of predictors on the criterion value. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Babcock University Health Research Ethics Committee (BUHREC). For this study, knowledge represents the degree of verifiable, reliable, and actionable information respondents have about the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives through any of the identified communication channels. It also represents the ability of the respondents to interpret such information within the context of poverty and poverty alleviation issues as it concerns their skills, access to finance, job, free cash payments, and improvement in living conditions while participation is being involved in and benefiting from any of the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives which are 1) Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), 2) N-Power Job Creation Programme, and 3) Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) initiatives.

### 3. Results

From the eight hundred and twenty-seven (827) copies of a structured questionnaire distributed, a total of eight hundred and eleven (811) were validated for data analysis, resulting in 98.1% response rate. This result begins with the analysis of respondents' socio-demographic attributes, followed by the analysis of research questions, test of hypotheses, and discussion of findings. Male residents of South-south Nigeria constituted the majority of participants in this study (59.8%). The result also indicated that majority of participants (27.9%) are in the middle age categorised as youthful

(18-27 years; 25.0%) and (28-37 years; 23.5%). Furthermore, many of the respondents (47.2%) were residents of Rivers state while those residing in Akwa-Ibom state ranked lowest (26.0%). The result implied that participants in the study were adults who are eligible to participate in the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives.

### Communication Channels for Information Dissemination about National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) Poverty Alleviation Initiatives in Nigeria

Result from Table 1 reveal that South-south residents were informed about the National Social Investment Programmes' (NSIP) poverty alleviation initiatives (N-Power, GEEP and CCTP) via multiple communication channels. Of these channels, face to face method, through town hall meetings and public seminars, was the means by which majority of the respondents (n=705; 86.9%) were exposed to NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives. Through this channel of communication, residents were able to listen and interact with officials and coordinators of the programmes to ascertain detailed information about the objectives of the various initiatives as well as how they can participate and benefit maximally from what is on offer through each subset of the programme. Radio (n=673; 83.8%) and television (n=566; 69.8%) were the two other communication channels through which South-south residents were informed about the National Social Investment Programmes' (NSIP) poverty alleviation initiatives while advertisements on billboard was the least (n=133, 16.4%).

**Table 1:** Communication Channels of Information

Communication Channels	Yes Freq=n (%)	No Freq=n (%)
<b>Radio</b>	673(83.0)	138(17.0)
<b>Television</b>	566(69.8)	245(30.2)
<b>Newspaper</b>	375(46.2)	436(53.8)
<b>Outdoor/Billboard</b>	133(16.4)	678(83.6)
<b>Flyer/Poster</b>	207(25.5)	604(74.5)
<b>Face-to-face</b>	705(86.9)	106(13.1)
<b>Online (Internet)</b>	209(25.8)	602(74.2)
<b>Others (Please Specify)</b>	-	-

*Source: Field Survey 2022*

### Extent of Usage of Communication Channels for Information Sharing about NSIP Poverty Alleviation Initiatives

Communication channels (radio, newspapers, television, billboard, face to face, online) were utilised at varying degrees for information sharing about each of the three NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives (Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), N-Power (Job Creation) Programme and Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (CCTP)). For the three poverty alleviation initiatives, radio was the channel being used the most to a very high extent compared to the other communication channels. Table 2 presents the details.

**Table 2:** Extent to which Communication Channels Were Used

Items	VHE Freq. (%)	HE Freq. (%)	LE Freq. (%)	VLE Freq. (%)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (SD)
<b>Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP)</b>					<b>3.60</b>	<b>0.93</b>
Newspapers were used to share information about GEEP	204 (25.2)	397 (49.9)	107 (13.2)	103 (12.6)	3.55	1.02
Information about GEEP was usually broadcast on television.	215 (26.5)	401 (49.4)	119 (14.7)	76 (9.4)	3.51	1.04
Information about GEEP was usually broadcast on radio.	253 (31.2)	465 (57.3)	55 (6.8)	38 (4.7)	3.89	0.89
Billboards were used to share information about GEEP	79 (9.7)	251 (30.9)	373 (46.0)	108 (13.3)	2.19	0.95
New/Online Social Media were used to share information about GEEP	109 (13.4)	207 (25.5)	299 (36.9)	196 (24.2)	3.08	0.80
Flyers and Posters were used to share information about GEEP	231 (28.5)	235 (29.0)	207 (25.5)	138 (17.0)	3.59	0.86
Information about GEEP was shared during town hall meetings and public seminars.	315 (38.8)	329 (40.6)	113 (13.9)	54 (6.5)	3.92	0.85
<b>N-Power (Job Creation) Programme</b>					<b>3.53</b>	<b>1.10</b>
Newspapers were used to share information about N-Power programme.	219 (27.0)	388 (47.8)	105 (12.9)	99 (12.2)	3.82	1.08
Information about N-Power job creation was usually broadcast via television.	205 (25.3)	379 (46.4)	110 (13.6)	117 (14.4)	3.57	1.09
Information about N-Power job creation was broadcast via radio.	289 (35.6)	315 (38.8)	109 (13.4)	98 (12.1)	3.99	1.07
Billboards were used to share information about N-Power.	101 (12.4)	197 (24.3)	396 (48.8)	117 (14.4)	2.18	1.11
New/Online Social Media were used to share information about N-Power.	113 (13.9)	218 (28.9)	298 (36.7)	182 (22.4)	2.32	1.08
Flyers and Posters were used to share information about N-Power programme.	207 (25.5)	313 (38.6)	187 (23.0)	104 (12.8)	3.67	1.13
Information about N-Power job creation was shared during town hall meetings and public seminars.	295 (36.4)	289 (35.6)	119 (14.7)	108 (13.3)	3.89	1.18
<b>Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (CCTP)</b>					<b>3.51</b>	<b>0.95</b>
Newspapers were used to share information about CCTP	215 (26.5)	299 (36.9)	196 (24.2)	101 (12.4)	3.60	1.07
Television was used to broadcast information about CCTP	190 (23.4)	327 (40.3)	191 (23.5)	103 (12.7)	3.35	0.88
Radio was used to broadcast information about CCTP	257 (31.7)	296 (36.5)	203 (25.0)	55 (6.8)	3.98	0.97
Billboards were used to share information about CCTP	197 (24.3)	188 (23.2)	296 (36.5)	130 (16.0)	2.16	1.14
New/Online Social Media were used to share information about CCTP	155 (19.1)	285 (35.1)	228 (28.1)	143 (17.6)	2.06	0.92
Flyers and Posters were used to share information about CCTP	199 (24.5)	305 (37.6)	105 (12.9)	202 (24.9)	3.60	1.00
Information about CCTP was shared during town hall meetings and public seminars.	291 (35.8)	288 (35.5)	119 (14.7)	113 (13.9)	3.85	1.15
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>					<b>3.59</b>	<b>0.95</b>

Source: Field Survey 2022

KEY: VHE=Very High Extent, HE=High Extent, LE=Low Extent, VLE=Very Low Extent;\*\*\*Decision Rule: if mean is  $\leq 1.49$  = Very Low Extent,  $1.5 - 2.49$  = Low Extent,  $2.5 - 3.49$  = High Extent,  $3.5 - 4.0$  = Very High Extent\*\*\*

The result in Table 2 shows that communication channels were used in sharing information on NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives to very high extent ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.59) on a 4-points scale. The measurement parameters indicate that information on Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) was spread to a very high extent ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.60) using various communication channels with radio being used most to a very high extent ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.89). For N-Power (Job Creation) Programme, the communication channels were also used to a very high extent ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.59); and radio ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.99) was the most used to a very high extent. Additionally, for Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (CCTP), information was shared to a very high extent ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.51) through various communication channels; and radio ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.98) was the channel respondents indicated as being used the most to a very high extent. Since the federal government was clear that the goal of the National Social Investment Programmes were to mobilize the masses out of poverty, it is only logical that multiple communication channels were utilised as discovered from this study. And this is used to engage as many individuals as possible so as to motivate them to participate and benefit from any of the initiatives under the NSIP.

**Knowledge Level of NSIP Poverty Alleviation Initiatives among Residents of South-South, Nigeria**

Findings show that respondents had a high knowledge level of the NSIP’s poverty alleviation initiatives (  $\bar{x}$ = 3.71; SD=1.04). Table 3 presents the knowledge level residents of South-South have of each of the three poverty alleviation initiatives.

**Table 3:** Level of Knowledge about NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives in Nigeria

Items	VHE Freq. (%)	HE Freq. (%)	LE Freq. (%)	VLE Freq. (%)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (SD)
I know that the N-power programme provides employment and skills training for youths	77 (9.5)	185 (22.8)	401 (49.4)	214 (26.4)	2.57	1.03
I am aware that participants in the N-Power (Job Creation) programme are paid NGN30’000 stipends monthly	211 (26.0)	280 (35.5)	155 (19.1)	165 (20.3)	3.66	0.92
I have knowledge that through GEEP programme government offers interest-free loan of NGN10’000 to NGN 300’000 to applicants	207 (25.5)	279 (34.4)	167 (20.6)	158 (19.5)	3.74	0.99
I know the GEEP offers financial support to traders	218 (26.8)	379 (46.7)	139 (17.1)	75 (9.2)	3.78	0.93
I know of many traders who benefited from GEEP programme	107 (13.2)	176 (21.7)	309 (38.1)	219 (27.0)	2.45	0.97
I know that through the CCTP, participants are offered ₦5’000 bi-monthly stipend	267 (32.9)	311 (38.3)	101 (12.4)	132 (16.3)	3.91	1.10
I am aware that anyone who applies and qualifies, can get the benefit from CCTP	201 (24.8)	387 (47.7)	105 (12.9)	118 (14.5)	3.96	0.96
I am familiar that through CCTP, funds are transferred to the needy	113 (13.9)	231 (26.3)	430 (53.0)	37 (4.5)	2.49	1.11
<b>Average Overall Mean</b>					<b>3.71</b>	<b>1.04</b>

*Source:* Field Survey 2022

**KEY:** VHE=Very High Extent, HE=High Extent, LE=Low Extent, VLE=Very Low Extent;\*\*\*Decision Rule: if mean is  $\leq 1.49$  = Very Low Extent, 1.5 – 2.49 = Low Extent, 2.5 – 3.49 = High Extent, 3.5 – 4.0 = Very High Extent\*\*\*

**Participation in NSIP Poverty Alleviation Initiatives among Residents of South-South, Nigeria**

Respondents reported a low level of participation ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.26; SD=1.21) in NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives. For government enterprise empowerment programme (GEEP), participation was  $\bar{x}$ = 2.35, participation in N-Power job creation programme was  $\bar{x}$ = 2.34, while for conditional cash transfer programme (CCTP), participation was  $\bar{x}$ = 2.24.

**Table 4:** Level of Participation in NSIP Poverty Alleviation Initiatives

Items	VHL Freq. (%)	HL Freq. (%)	LL Freq. (%)	VLL Freq. (%)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation (SD)
I participated in Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP)	120 (14.8)	117 (14.2)	435 (53.6)	139 (17.1)	2.35	0.94
I participated in N-Power (Job Creation) Programme	105 (12.9)	113 (13.9)	478 (58.9)	115 (14.2)	2.34	0.92
I participated in government’s Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (CCTP)	-	89 (11.0)	597 (73.6)	125 (15.4)	2.24	1.06
Participation in GEEP helped me to get interest-free loans for my business	-	101 (12.4)	611 (75.3)	99 (12.2)	2.25	1.37
Participation in CCTP helped me to get free money to support my family for food, accommodation, medicare, and education	-	59 (7.3)	639 (78.8)	113 (13.9)	2.10	1.26
Participation in N-Power helped me to acquire more skills for job opportunities	107 (13.2)	101 (12.4)	571 (70.4)	32 (3.9)	2.35	1.20
I got employment through my participation in N-Power	-	-	451 (55.6)	360 (44.4)	1.00	1.22
I applied but could not secure participation in N-Power	117 (14.4)	389 (48.0)	135 (16.6)	170 (21.0)	2.52	1.27
I was not convinced that the poverty alleviation initiatives is true so I did not participate in any of them	276 (34.0)	291 (35.9)	113 (13.9)	131 (16.2)	3.63	1.41
<b>Average Overall Mean</b>					<b>2.26</b>	<b>1.21</b>

*Source:* Field Survey 2022

**KEY:** VHL=Very High Level, HL=High Level, LL=Low Level, VLL=Very Low Level;\*\*\*Decision Rule: if mean is  $\leq 1.49$  = Very Low Level,  $1.5 - 2.49$  = Low Level,  $2.5 - 3.49$  = High Level,  $3.5 - 4.0$  = Very High Level\*\*\*

Furthermore, items in the scale indicate that the government enterprise empowerment programme (GEEP) only helped a few participants acquire interest free loans for business start-ups ( $\bar{x}= 2.25$ ), and that participating in CCTP did not help many to get free money to support family for food, medicare, and education ( $\bar{x}= 2.10$ ). Similarly, participation in N-Power job creation programme was very low ( $\bar{x}= 2.35$ ) among residents of South-south, Nigeria because it did not help many acquire more skills for job opportunities, while the level of those who got employment opportunities through participating in N-Power programme was also very low ( $\bar{x}= 1.00$ ). This was the case because those who applied but could not secure participation in N-Power ( $\bar{x}= 2.52$ ) and those who were not convinced that the poverty alleviation initiatives is true and as a result did not participate in any of them ( $\bar{x}= 4.47$ ) were both high.

From the result, it can be established that although residents of South-south Nigeria had a high level of knowledge of NSIP’s three poverty alleviation initiatives (GEEP, N-Power, and CCTP), they did not participate very well and adequately in these poverty alleviation initiatives. What this also implies is that many of them were not able to benefit from the provisions made by government through these schemes, which could have improved their living conditions. This is rather worrisome considering the huge amount of resources been spent in implementation of these schemes. The government have continuously maintained that large sums of money in have been spent in carrying out these poverty alleviation programmes in various parts of Nigeria including the South-south region.

**4. Analysis and Presentation of Research Hypotheses**

**Decision Rule**

The pre-set level of significance for this study is 0.05. The hypotheses presumed that there was no significant influence between the variables under consideration. If the P-value which indicates the significance or the probability value exceeded the pre-set level of significance ( $P > 0.05$ ), the hypothesis stated in the null form was accepted, however, if the P-value was less than or equal to 0.05 ( $P \leq 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis one ( $H_{01}$ ): Communication channels will not significantly influence the knowledge of NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-South, Nigeria

**Table 7:** ANOVA & Model Summary Testing Significant Influence of communication channels on knowledge of NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-South, Nigeria

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5332.613	2	3003.007	22.404	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	12177.705	808	20.106		
	Total	17501.318	810			
R=.411		R Square= .407		Adj. R Square=.403		
Coefficients						
Construct	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	11.091	2.203		1.210	0.000	
Communication channels	0.093	.411	0.047	1.004	0.003	

Dependent Variable: Knowledge of NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives  
(Field Survey, 2022) Note:  $\beta$ = Standardized Coefficient, significant at 0.05

Table 7 indicate that communication channels had a positive significant influence on the knowledge of NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-south, Nigeria ( $F_{(2, 808)}= 22.404$ ,  $Adj. R^2= 0.403$ ,  $P \leq 0.05$ ). Explanation from the result further reveals that communication channels of NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives significantly influenced South-south residents’ knowledge of the schemes capable of fostering participation among them ( $\beta= 0.093$ ,  $R= 0.411$ ,  $T= 1.004$ ,  $P \leq 0.05$ ). The common understanding from literature and communication practice is that knowledge of a phenomenon can be enhanced through communication channels that seek to broaden

people’s understanding of the concept in question. Analysis of results from this study supports that notion as it indicate that communication explained up to 40.3 per cent ( $Adj. R^2 = 0.403$ ) variation of influence on knowledge of NSIP poverty alleviation schemes among residents in South-south, Nigeria. Consequent upon this result, the null hypothesis that effective communication channels will not significantly influence the knowledge of NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-south, Nigeria was rejected and restated accordingly.

Hypothesis Two ( $H_02$ ): Communication channels will not significantly influence participation in NSIP poverty alleviation programmes among residents of South-South, Nigeria

**Table 8:** ANOVA & Model Summary Testing Significant Influence of Effective Communication on Participation in NSIP Poverty Alleviation Schemes among Residents of South-South, Nigeria.

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	11311.011	2	4310.339	151.103	0.007
Residual	7335.052	808	21.250		
Total	18646.063	810			

R=.073	R Square= .042	Adj. R Square= .042
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Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	R		
(Constant)	15.021	2.131		7.302	0.000
Communication	0.033	.013	0.040	1.058	0.002

Dependent Variable: Participation in NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives  
(Field Survey, 2022) Note:  $\beta$ = Standardized Coefficient, significant at 0.05

Results in Table 4.3.2 reveals the analysis on influence of communication channels on participation in NSIP poverty alleviation programmes and depicts that communication channels ( $F_{(2, 808)} = 151.103$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = 0.042$ ,  $P \leq 0.05$ ) had an influence on participation in NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among South-south residents, and can account for only 4.2 per cent ( $Adj. R^2 = .042$ ) of variation in poverty alleviation programme participation among residents. Results of further analysis in the coefficient Table 4.3.2 showed that communication channels ( $\beta = 0.033$ ,  $R = 0.040$ ,  $T = 1.058$ ,  $P \leq 0.05$ ) had influence on participation, implying that continuous use of communication channels will likely lead to increase in participation in the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected that: communication channels will not significantly influence participation in NSIP poverty alleviation programmes among residents of South-South, Nigeria. This implies that having full knowledge of various poverty alleviation programmes through the communication channels will result in participation in the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-south Nigeria.

### 5. Discussion of findings

Findings showed that majority of the respondents got to know about the specific programmes under the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) poverty alleviation initiatives, the GEEP, N-Power and CCT, to a very high extent through the various communication channels used. In specific terms, the overall knowledge of the NSIP poverty alleviation programmes shows a very high extent with knowledge about the Conditional cash transfer (CCT) and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) ranking the highest. To buttress the importance of knowledge, Fombad (2018) studied knowledge management for poverty eradication, the study location was South Africa. The study was focused on analysing poverty issues and investigating some of the key contributions that knowledge management can make in the eradication of poverty, and the findings revealed that investment in knowledge management can enhance poverty alleviation efforts and result in improvement in living standards hence knowledge is an important precondition for solving the poverty problem. The study highlighted the importance and relevance of

knowledge management in poverty alleviation using proven communication and knowledge-sharing tools and channels such as the internet. This result from this current study which examined knowledge level of south-south residents on NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives infers that the knowledge of South-south residents was enhanced through face-to-face, radio, television, newspaper, billboard, poster/ flyer and online which were used as communication channels to share information about NSIP, and that continued usage of these channels in disseminating information of the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives had enabled the NSIP programme owners to reach target beneficiaries with sufficient knowledge about the programme.

The result showed that several communication channels such as face-to-face, radio, television, newspaper, billboard, flyers/posters and online were deployed for the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives and the communication channels enabled respondents gain adequate knowledge about the NSIP initiatives. Overall, the result showed that face-to-face through town hall meetings and public seminars was the most used, followed by radio, television and newspaper were the most beneficial communication channels. The finding corroborates that of Happer and Philo (2013) who in their study of how communication channels aid the construction of social belief, averred that communication channels (mass media) play a central role in informing the public about what happens and events happening around the world, particularly in those areas in which audiences do not possess direct knowledge or experience. In aligning with their finding, and within the context of this current study, it can be deduced that without the role played by the various communication channels, especially face-to-face and radio, many residents of South-south, Nigeria might not have received information concerning NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives hence will be unaware of the likely benefits that they might gain from the poverty alleviation initiatives being promoted by the government with the aim being to reduce poverty rates.

Massa (2016) identified channels of communication as a part of the most essential elements of the entire communication effort. The author noted that unless the right channel is utilized in communicating important information to an audience, relevant information may not be excellently communicated to the extent that it will elicit the expected responses. The implication of this finding suggests that adoption of the right communication channels can enable disseminate of rightly information that can benefit the

society. The findings also supports the observations of other authors who studied communication channels and poverty alleviation such as Oba, Imran, and Ahmad (2020) who investigated the effectiveness of communication channels on the promotion of agricultural policy to curb poverty, Fernando and Mora-Rivera (2021) who investigated the impact of internet access on poverty reduction and Yang, L., Lu, H., Wang, S. et al. (2021) who studied mobile internet use and multidimensional poverty using evidences from the household survey in rural China.

Furthermore, findings in this study agrees with some previous studies (Lunenburg, 2010; Massa, 2016) that communication channels are used in disseminating relevant information and sharing ideas to the appropriate audience and when maximally utilised may lead to the intended outcome. Keyton (2017) identified face-to-face communication through town hall meetings and public seminars as a communication channel that possesses both formal and informal characteristics. This position agrees with the findings of Oba, Imran, and Ahmad (2020) and Ngumbo, Ndeti, and Muchemi (2017) that suggested the use of face-to-face communication as channel of communication for government development projects is beneficial in better understanding of the message. This study also revealed that use of multiple channels can be beneficial, as supported by findings from previous other studies conducted by Obirize, (2012) which investigated the use of rural broadcasting in reducing poverty in the south-east, Nigeria and found that use of rural broadcasting to reduce poverty has not yielded many positive results. It suggested the use of multiple channels, beyond just broadcast channels (radio and television) and to include billboard, online and importantly face-to-face which enhance the opportunities of participatory communication.

Regarding participation, the results from this study revealed that the extent of participation in NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-south, Nigeria is low extent. The finding is indicative of the fact that respondents in this study did not participate very highly during the implementation of NSIP poverty alleviation schemes. Respondents who were not convinced that the poverty alleviation initiatives is true so did not participate in any of them (GEEP, N-Power and CCT) were high. This shows that trust factor played a role in non-participation. This can be traced to previous similar poverty alleviation programmes which have been implemented without evidence to the improvement to the life of the people who were to benefit from them. This also shows that people do not

always have faith in government promises and programmes because of previous experiences. Those who said they participated in the Government Enterprise and Empowerment programmes (GEEP) and the N-Power job creation programme were more than those who participated or benefited from the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT). It further showed that although communication channels used were able to enhance knowledge of the NSIP (GEEP, N-Power, and CCT) poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-south, it failed to drive participation highly among respondents. This result corroborates those of Ajakaiye (2003), Ojo (2008), Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2012) and Adedayo (2018) who noted low masses participation in previous poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria resulting in the failure recorded during their implementation. According to these past studies, reasons such as lack of trust, politicization, nepotism, over-centralization or over decentralization, poor management, poor coordination of the different stakeholders, poor planning and design, poor or lackadaisical implementation, ineffective monitoring mechanism set in place, weak infrastructural development, poor governance, among other factors resulted in participation apathy among the populace. This lack of participation is responsible for a high percentage of citizens who still wallow in abject poverty despite myriads of poverty alleviation programmes implemented by successive governments.

## 6. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate communication channels, knowledge and participation in the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-south, Nigeria. As guide for the study, five research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated. Communication channels used in sharing information on National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) on poverty alleviation include face-to-face, radio, television, newspaper, billboards and poster/flyers. These communication channels were used to a very high extent and the channel through which most respondents received information is face-to-face. Respondents' knowledge of poverty alleviation schemes was high. Findings showed that participation in NSIP poverty alleviation schemes was low among respondents. Residents of South-south Nigeria participated lowly in GEEP, CCTP and N-power programmes. Communication channels had a significant positive influence on the knowledge of the various NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives among residents of South-south.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on findings from this study, the following recommendations are made:

Firstly, there is need to sustain communication channels such as face-to-face and radio so that knowledge level about the NSIP can be continued. Considering that many rural dwellers are the targets of poverty alleviation programmes, development agents should concentrate more on using such channels, especially face-to-face contacts to enable them reach more people and convince them to participate fully.

The government, through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management should intensify efforts to address the difficulties in participation in the various NSIP poverty alleviation programmes – GEEP, N-Power and CCT. This can be done by simplifying and reducing the steps involved in the process of participation and by ensuring that proper mechanism are put in place to enable future programmes get to the grassroots and benefit the poorest of the poor in different parts of the country. Since the success of poverty alleviation programmes is tied to the level of people's participation in them, government must find a way to remove doubts and sufficiently convince the masses of their intention to help them out of poverty.

Also, The NSIP planners and relevant agencies should give wider publicity to further simplify the participation process and publicize beneficiaries' details, using all the communication channels, to encourage more participation in the NSIP poverty alleviation initiatives. Failure to participate in poverty alleviation programmes as seen in this study could also imply that not all the right people who should know about the programmes did have knowledge of it. Government should ensure that information about future programmes are given wider publicity through other communication channels such as religious bodies, market groups, artisans associations and cooperative societies, this will encourage many others to participate.

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