



ASSESSMENT OF MEDIA ADVOCACY AGAINST OPEN DEFECATION IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The unending practice of open defecation (OD) in some developing countries is worrisome to both development and health communication scholars worldwide. It is on record that Nigerians defecate openly. This is at variance with Sustainable Development Goal 6.2 which focuses on achieving access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and ending open defecation by 2030. The study explores media advocacy against open defecation in Ekiti and Osun States in South-west Nigeria. The study determines the contributions of media campaigns toward eradication of open defecation in the two states. It also seeks to ascertain public knowledge on media approaches to campaigns against open defecation and to find out the level of public awareness on the dangers posed by the dirty habit. Agenda Setting Theory, Development Communication Theory and the Health Belief Model constituted the theoretical frameworks. The study adopted cross-sectional research, using quantitative and qualitative research methods. The instruments employed were questionnaire and Focus Group Discussions. Three local government areas were selected from each of the senatorial districts of Ekiti and Osun States respectively with an estimated population of 3,338,998. The sample size of 400 was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula. Findings revealed that 95% of the respondents were aware that open defecation was rampant in the study areas and agreed that media advocacy was needed as part of the efforts to stop the practice. Findings also revealed that open defecation in the study areas was caused by lack of public toilets. Furthermore, the study revealed that lack of funds caused hindrance to effective use of mass media for effective advocacy against open defecation. The study concluded that to achieve an open defecation-free environment, the use of media advocacy should be intensified using the multimedia approach for effective communication with the public. The study recommends both traditional mass media and social media channels as tools for effective media advocacy to enhance behavioural change and to embrace the use of standard modern toilets to rid the society of open defecation.*

KEYWORDS: Media advocacy, behavioural change, sustainable development, media campaign, open defecation.



INTRODUCTION

Building and maintaining a healthy physical and social environment for development have been the focus of man over the years. However, some human activities and practices such as deforestation, gas flaring, open defecation and female genital mutilation are often not nature-friendly and often result in unhealthy environment. Of all the human practices that are not environmentally friendly is the anti-sanitation act known as open defecation. It is the practice of disposing human solid waste indiscriminately in the bush or dung hills all around living environments instead of using pit latrines and modern toilet facilities with water closet and underground septic tanks (Essuman, 2015). Open Defecation (OD) is the human practice of defecating outside the home. It is often done in open fields, rather than in toilets (Oyegbade, 2019). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2017), Open Defecation (OD) is the practice of defecating in open fields, waterways and open trenches without any proper disposal of human excreta. A survey conducted by UNICEF ranks Nigeria with the highest population in Africa practising open defecation (Gbadegesin & Akinola, 2020). The act constitutes a health hazard to human beings who may inadvertently make contact with such polluted water bodies either for drinking or for other domestic use, such as washing and for food preparation. Such acts are the commonest causes of cholera and other water-borne diseases prevalent in developing countries.

Buttressing the above assertion, Saleem, Burdett and Heaslip (2019) stated that open defecation is a serious environmental health hazard affecting third world countries such as India and sub-Saharan Africa. Onyeji (2019) says that Nigeria is only second to India among countries with the largest population of people who practise open defecation. Other sources even believe that Nigeria now leads in global figures of countries practising open defecation (Oyelere, 2022). The lack of awareness of the consequences of the practice among the people is another major problem. According to Water Aid, 50% of all schools in Nigeria do not have good water supply, sanitation and toilet facilities while another 50% of health care facilities lack clean water. About 88% of them lack basic sanitation (Onyeji, 2019). About half of Nigeria's population of approximately 200 million people lack basic toilet facilities in their homes. This means that about 46 million Nigerians indulge in open defecation (Oyelere, 2022; Onyeji, 2019).

Furthermore, the Federal Government has expressed concern that of the 494 million people practising open defecation globally, 46 million are Nigerians, which placed the nation among the global highest number of people involved in the act (Ameh & Njadvara, 2021). In order to address this menace, former president Muhammadu Buhari launched a national plan to eradicate the practice of open defecation by 2025 and declared a state of emergency in the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sectors of Nigeria's economy in November, 2018. He launched a national campaign tagged 'Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet' to jump-start the country's journey towards becoming Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 2025' (Duru, 2021; Onyeji, 2019; Onyedinefu, 2019).

According to the Federal Government of Nigeria and the UNICEF (2016), the health hazards emanating from open defecation can be judged from the fact that one gram of faeces of a person can contain 10,000,000 viruses, 1,000,000 bacteria, 1,000 parasite cysts and 100 parasite eggs and pathogens. When left in the open, these are carried by flies, fluid (water), finger and field (the famous four of the F-Diagram of disease transmission) and infect another person through the faecal-oral route. Hookworm, which enters the body through exposed feet, has a direct link



with open defecation. It is therefore clear that OD also poses environmental, health and economic problems to Nigeria and its citizens. It exposes children and adults to critical health problems like diarrhoea and cholera which can lead to untimely deaths (Onyedinefu, 2019). Thus, OD has devastating consequences for public health. According to UNICEF, faecal contamination of the environment and poor hygiene practices remain a leading cause of child mortality, morbidity, under-nutrition and stunting across the world (Independent Newspaper, 2022). Therefore, the country is one huge field where people defecate without shame and without consideration of the impact on the health hazards of their action. In many rural communities, people still build houses without providing toilets or latrines where waste can be emptied without others coming in contact with it. In the urban centres, the issue is pervasive. In many of our so-called modern cities, many people have their bathrooms and toilets outdoors.

However, apart from the health hazards associated with open defecation, it also constitutes a negative social stigma on Nigeria, which is touted as the Giant of Africa (Onyedinefu, 2019).

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), many approaches introduced to eliminate open defecation have all failed to attain a sustainable latrine usage, which has led to Nigeria becoming one of the countries with the lowest level of access to adequate sanitation (UNICEF 2018). To achieve an open defecation free (ODF) society, Islam (2016) stated that stakeholders should continue to step up sensitization and media advocacy in rural areas on the need to key into the total eradication of open defecation, to forestall breakout of diseases. Efforts by the government, NGOs and international agencies to provide toilet facilities for communities have not yielded tangible results because providing infrastructure does not ensure its usage especially when there are culturally ingrained behavioural barriers, attitudes and practices as well as inadequate sensitisation and media advocacy towards these modern facilities (Routray et al., 2015). This unsanitary practice has gradually penetrated and is increasing in the urban areas due to growing population without adequate provision of sanitation facilities. To meet the 2025 target, Nigeria needs to build two million toilets every year from 2019 to 2025 (Onyeji, 2019). The cost effect of such provision is quite high, so an alternative is the creation of awareness on the knowledge and dangers of open defecation practice and its adverse effects on the populace. Thus, the "clean Nigeria campaign" is a media effort to end open defecation (Duru, 2021). In other words, employing media advocacy using different communication tools to campaign against open defecation is targeted to all Nigerians as a means to end the awful practice by 2025.

Advocacy involves the deployment of the mass media and other communication channels to influence policy and structural issues (USAID, 2013). Advocacy is one of the three key Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) strategies used to raise resources as well as political and social leadership commitment to improved development actions and goals. Advocacy is very important in the introduction of new innovations in society. In curbing the practice, the Nigerian government has continuously launched media campaigns since 2018 to ensure the attainment of Open Defecation Free Environment by 2025. The results of these efforts are evident in the gradual but slow eradication of open defecation in the country. To this effect, Unah (2019) observed that out of a total of 774 local government areas in the country, only 13 have been certified as being free of open defecation so far.

Media advocacy is defined as the strategic use of mass media to advance public policy initiatives. Media advocacy is rooted in community advocacy and has as its goal the promotion of healthy public policies. It can be differentiated from traditional mass media strategies in a



number of ways. Media advocacy shifts the focus from the personal to the social, from the individual to the political, and from the behaviour or practice to the policy or environment (Wallack, L., 1994). The purpose of media advocacy is to promote public health goals by using the media to strategically apply pressure for policy change. It provides a framework for moving the public health discussion from a primary focus on the health behaviour of individuals to the behaviour of the policymakers whose decisions structure the environment in which people act. It addresses the power gap rather than just the information gap. Media advocacy focuses on public policy rather than personal behaviour (Wallack, 1994; Dorfman, 2014). It helps to influence decision makers through the media outlets that matter to them, such as newspapers, radio, television, newsletters, journals, magazines, and even the newer social media such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. Media advocacy is not about getting your name or your organization's name into the press. It is about getting your issue into the press in a way that provokes new or different thinking. And it is about getting that issue into the press that is read, watched, and listened to by the target decision makers (Fresina & Pickles 2013).

Advocacy is a strategy by which groups or individuals attempt to bring about social or organizational change on behalf of a particular health goal, programme, interest, or population (Green, O'Conner, French, Grimshaw, Spike, King, 2010). Media advocacy adopts a participatory approach that emphasizes on the need of communities to gain control and power to transform their environments. Media advocacy is the strategic use of mass media to advance public policy initiatives. It is rooted in community advocacy and has as its goal in the promotion of healthy public policies. It can be differentiated from traditional mass media strategies in a number of ways.

Nigeria is among the nations in the world with the highest number of people practicing open defecation (OD) estimated at over 46 million people (Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, 2016). The practice has become a menace in Nigeria, challenging both the health and social lives of the populace. In the urban centres, the issue is pervasive (*This Day* Newspaper, 2022:1). From the above report of *This Day* newspaper, it is no gainsaying that Nigeria was declared 'world capital in open defecation' by the World Health Organisation and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (WHO/UNICEF). This calls for the creation of extensive media awareness and knowledge on the health consequences of the practice of OD. This study purposively selected two states in the South-west of the country—Ekiti and Osun states respectively for data collection to examine the roles of media advocacy in creating awareness and knowledge on the dangers of Open Defecation. The study employed different communication tools intended to strike a success in curbing the cultural essence of the practice in both states.

As at December 2019, Ekiti State was leading in open defecation in the South-west, with a reported figure of over 1.4 million residents (Babalola, 2019). It means two out of three residents in Ekiti State engage in OD. In proffering a solution to the menace of open defecation, Babalola suggested that, "There should be proper sensitization of the public on the negative effects of open defecation on communal hygiene and safety. This can either be through print and audio-visual media or other effective communication channels to reach as many people as possible." While advocacy as a concept in general has been studied in different areas of human endeavour, there is still a gap in the assessment of the effectiveness of media advocacy campaigns on behavioural change of Nigerians as far as OD is concerned. Although social science studies have shown generally that the media is an effective tool in behavioural change in public health matters, not much has been done to assess media advocacy for the eradication



of OD in Nigeria. Hence, media advocacy against Open Defecation in Nigeria remains a fertile ground for academic research. This research work was therefore intended to fill the knowledge gap not only for academics but also for media practitioners in the country.

The cross-sectional research design was used for this study. The study also used a mixed method for data gathering. The quantitative method elicited data using questionnaires from community members, while the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was adopted for gathering qualitative data from health officials in the study areas from Ekiti and Osun states respectively.

Table 1: Awareness of media campaigns against open defecation in Ekiti and Osun States

Awareness of media campaign against open defecation in Ekiti and Osun States	SA	A	U	D	SD
I am aware that open defecation is rampant in the state	538 (70.2%)	190 (24.8%)	6 (0.8%)	12 (1.6%)	20 (2.6%)
There is need to embrace every effort to stop open defecation in the state	388 (50.7%)	348 (45.4%)	20 (2.6%)	4 (0.5)	6 (0.8)
Media advocacy is needed as part of the efforts to stop open defecation in the state	490 (64.0%)	234 (30.5%)	16 (2.1%)	4 (0.5)	22 (2.9)
The role of media in the campaign against open defecation is critical in the state	194 (25.3%)	234 (30.5%)	90 (11.7%)	226 (29.5%)	22 (2.9%)
Embarking on media advocacy would ultimately result in stoppage of open defecation in the state	390 (50.9%)	250 (32.6%)	86 (11.2%)	32 (4.2%)	8 (1.0%)
The use of media helps to appeal to the psyche of resident of the state to stop open defecation	250 (32.6%)	414 (54.0%)	86 (11.2%)	12 (1.6%)	4 (0.5%)
The media advocacy is a veritable medium in engaging relevant stakeholders to ensure stoppage of open defecation in the state	266 (34.7%)	324 (42.3%)	98 (12.8%)	70 (9.1%)	8 (1.0%)
Media advocacy ensures participation of residents in the campaign against open defecation in the state	280 (36.6%)	384 (50.1%)	68 (8.9%)	28 (3.7%)	6 (0.8%)

Source: *Field survey, 2022*

Table 1 shows that a total of 95.2% of the respondents were aware of the existence of media advocacy for the eradication of open defecation and were equally aware of the health hazards of OD in Ekiti and Osun States. As the larger percentage of the respondents who knew about the menace, they believed that OD was rampant in the two states. Majority of the respondents (95.4%) agreed that consistent media campaign advocacy would go a long way to stop open defecation in the two states. A total of 94% of the respondents agreed that media advocacy had a positive impact on the eradication of open defecation, while 77% of the respondents agreed that media advocacy is a veritable medium in engaging relevant stakeholders to ensure the stoppage or complete eradication of open defecation in the two states. Media advocacy is not limited to mere news reports but getting the policymakers to do the needful in formulating specific policies to stop the menace. Thus, media advocacy is the strategic use of mass media



to advance public policy initiatives. It is rooted in community advocacy and has as its goal the promotion of healthy public policies. It can be differentiated from traditional mass media strategies in a number of ways.

Data gathered in the two states of South-west Nigeria therefore confirms the views of Wakefield (2014) who said that ordinary mass media campaigns are widely used to expose high proportions of large populations to messages through routine uses of existing media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, but that such messages are generally passive. According to him, such campaigns are frequently competing with factors, such as pervasive product marketing, powerful social norms, and behaviours driven by addiction or habit. Media advocacy on the other hand is not only focusing on media campaigns in traditional media; it goes beyond mere news reporting emphasising total policy turn around and regular and durable plans and programmes to have behavioural change of the masses to adopt a new and positive ideas with emphasis on better environmental factors and conducive healthy living by the people. For this reason, it is noted that another 77.7% agreed that media advocacy is a veritable medium in engaging relevant stakeholders to ensure stoppage of open defecation in the states. Finally, 86.6% agreed that media advocacy ensures participation of residents in the campaign against open defecation in the two states.

Table 2: Public compliance to media advocacy on open defecation in the study areas

Level of compliance to advocated best practices towards the prevention of open defecation in Ekiti and Osun States	SA	A	U	D	SD
I am aware of media campaigns against open defecation in my State	246 (32.1%)	519 (45.2%)	32 (4.2%)	92 (12.0%)	50 (6.5%)
The media campaigns against open defecation through various media channels in the state is an on-going programme	250 (32.6%)	290 (37.9%)	122 (15.9%)	88 (11.5%)	16 (2.1%)
Various media channels are being used in the campaigns against open defecation in the state	198 (25.8%)	342 (44.6%)	134 (17.5%)	82 (10.7%)	10 (1.3%)
The media channels used for media campaigns in the state are adequate to bring about reduction of open defecation	122 (15.9%)	182 (23.8%)	134 (17.5%)	232 (30.3%)	96 (12.5%)
The media channels in use for media campaigns against open defecation has a wide coverage in reaching residents of the state	116 (15.1%)	192 (25.1%)	98 (12.8%)	318 (41.5%)	42 (5.5%)
The right approach is being used in the campaign against open defecation in the state	136 (17.8%)	266 (34.7%)	250 (32.6%)	74 (9.7%)	40 (5.2%)
The use of social media is a viable channel to campaign against open defecation	286 (37.3%)	250 (32.6%)	64 (8.4%)	110 (14.4%)	56 (7.3%)

Source: *Field survey, 2022*



Table 2 shows that 78.4% of the respondents were aware and knowledgeable about the messages of the media campaigns. In the same vein, another 67% of them were aware that the media campaigns were still ongoing as at the time of data collection for the studies.

Also, a total of 40% of the respondents agreed that the media channels used for media campaigns in the two states were adequate to bring about reduction of open defecation; a simple majority of 42.5% disagreed, meaning that there is room to improve on the number of the various media outlets being used for media advocacy against open defecation in the states. Similarly, 47% of the respondents were of the opinion that the media outlets being used for the campaign against open defecation did not have enough wider coverage to check the practice of OD in the states. Equally, about the approach being used in the campaign against open defecation in the state, 58.5% agreed that the media approach was adequate enough to campaign against OD in the states. Finally, 69.3% were positively disposed to the use of social media to campaign against OD. This implies that a higher percentage of the respondents agreed that social media was a viable option of media advocacy against open defecation in Ekiti and Osun States.

Table 3: Themes for focused group discussions participants at Ekiti and Osun States

FGD Themes	Categories of Discourse
Theme 1: Public awareness of media campaigns approaches against open defecation practice in the study areas of Ekiti and Osun States	Awareness was created from media campaigns using local radio and television stations, billboards, word-of-mouth, posters, etc.
Theme 2: Awareness created by public health workers	
Public awareness on the dangers posed by practising open defecation	Health dangers of open defecation Social stigma of open defecation Environmental dangers of open defecation
Theme 3: Factors hindering media advocacy as a tool against open defecation	Lack of basic infrastructure – electricity, public and private toilets and water; poor attitudes of some government health workers

Theme 1: Public Awareness of Media Campaigns Approaches Against Open Defecation

This theme explored the public awareness of the open defecation practice through different media campaigns. Two categories of issues were used, awareness created from media campaign tools and public health workers.

At Ekiti State, participants in various communities were asked if they ever monitored radio and television jingles and social media campaigns against open defecation in their environment. Participants affirmed media communication tools used for advocacy against Open Defecation as a threat to healthy living. They affirmed that awareness was created through media



campaigns in local radio and television stations, billboards, word-of-mouth, posters, social media, etc.

Equally at Osun State, participants were asked what specific media platforms they learnt about open defecation. Some participants answered that they heard messages from radio campaigns against open defecation and the need to keep the environment clean. The majority of the participants also mentioned intervention of public health workers.

Participants in the two states affirmed that Government Sanitary Inspectors (*Wole-Wole*) also came around once in a while, to sensitize the community members on keeping their environment clean, and often enforced sanitation rules by giving penalties to law breakers. They said that during the monthly national environmental sanitation day, residents usually came out to clean their environments, due to the sensitization by the local radio and television stations and the fact that offenders were arrested, punished and sanctioned. In the two states, participants also mentioned the mediated sponsored programmes occasionally on radio to educate listeners on the dangers of open defecation. They also confirmed that they had watched sensitization programmes on television where health officials explained the various diseases that could be spread through open defecation.

Participants at the FGD in Ekiti State responded that “Government radio and television stations always condemned the practice of open defecation in their areas, stating that during the monthly national environmental sanitation days, inhabitants were warned not to pour thrash in the drainages especially when it was raining.” They also maintained that sanitation officials usually went around to arrest erring members of the communities caught defecating in water ways.

A health officer and community leader at Ado-Ekiti, capital of Ekiti State, affirmed that the efforts of mass media complemented the initiatives of the Ministry of Environment where they campaigned from house to house with flyers, pamphlets and handbills condemning open defecation. They commended the efforts of the various media organisations at Ado-Ekiti and appealed to them to intensify their campaigns to completely eradicate the bad habit in the state capital. They however complained that the media should cover more aggressively rural areas of Ikere and Ikole which are rather far from Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital.

One of the landlords at Osogbo, the Osun State capital, was of the opinion that people still defecated indiscriminately in open places instead of using toilets in their homes. He condemned the idea and called on the government to take more drastic measures to punish erring members of the society in the state.

Theme 2: Focus on Awareness Created by Public Health Workers

This theme addressed public awareness created by health workers in the two states under focus. It is perceived that knowledge on the consequences of open defecation will dissuade open-defecators from the practice. In Osun State, many of the participants said that their knowledge of dangers of open defecation came from public health workers to complement radio and television campaigns. In response, a Community Nurse said she and her colleagues often sensitised residents at Osogbo, the state capital, on the dangers of open defecation. She affirmed that they regularly went around to sensitise residents about the health hazards associated with OD. They produced flyers and posters with messages printed in local languages to discourage the act. In Ekiti State, a Community Health Nurse from Ikole-Ekiti noted that in the course of undergoing treatment for diarrhoea, she advised the community members to seek other means



of water supply because of the consequences of water contamination by open defecation practice in the area. Confirming the above assertion, another participant responded that most general public health centres pasted posters of open defecation practice showing its consequences. A female participant stated that after seeing people defecating close to a nearby river, she had to warn members of the community to desist from using the water from the river for their household water supply.

Theme 3: Factors Hindering Media Advocacy in Both States

The study focused on exploring factors hindering media advocacy on open defecation in South-west Nigeria. The result from the study agreed with the study conducted by Oghide (2019) which asserted that one prevalent challenge to ending open defecation was not just erecting sanitation structures or providing clean and safe toilets but changing people's behaviour from choosing farm fields, railways, motor parks, stadium, highways, streets, roads, playgrounds, bushes, forests and waterways instead of using the toilets. Many rural participants, for instance, who defecate in the open, do not see anything bad in it, not necessarily because they do not have access to latrines but because of deep-rooted cultural practices. They affirmed that they frown at the use of latrines because they were unaware of the consequences.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings in the study areas of the two states in South-west Nigeria revealed that 95% of the respondents agreed that open defecation is a menace. Similarly, 95% of the respondents agreed that media advocacy is needed as part of the efforts to stop open defecation. This agrees with the submissions of Green, O'Connor, French, Grimshaw, Spike and King (2010) which said that: Advocacy is a strategy by which groups or individuals attempt to bring about social behavioural or organizational change on behalf of a particular health goal, programme, interest, or population. Thus, it is clear that the majority of the respondents are aware of the campaign against open defecation. They agreed that there is a need to continuously organize campaigns against open defecation on the various media platforms because of the fact that there appears to be a high degree of ignorance on the consequences of the practice on the health of the populace. Proper and convincing knowledge is what usually leads to behavioural change. Equally, a change in opinion is believed to lead to a corresponding change in the attitude and behaviour of people. This is also corroborated by Wakefield (2014) that mass media campaigns are widely used to expose high proportions of large populations to messages through routine uses of existing popular media. It is also in line with the Agenda Setting Theory of McCombs and Donald Shaw which describes the ability of the news media to influence the salient topics on the public agenda. By covering OD frequently in the study areas, the audience will regard it as very important. Since open defecation has a lot to do with human attitude and behavior, Shaw (1979) opined that attitudes and behaviour are usually governed by cognitions – what a person knows, thinks, and believes. Hence, the agenda-setting function of the mass media implies a potentially massive influence whose full dimensions and consequences have been investigated and appreciated in this study.

The public uses these salient cues from the media to organize their own agendas and decide which issues are most important for discourse. Over time, the issues emphasized in news reports become the issues regarded as most important among the public. The agenda setting



theory of the news media becomes, to a considerable degree, the agenda of the general public. In other words, the news media set the public agenda, placing an issue or topic on the public domain for discussion so that it becomes the focus of public attention and thought, and, possibly, action. This tallies with the initial stage in the formation of public opinion (McCombs, 2004). This submission by McCombs was justified by 95% of the respondents that agreed that media advocacy is needed to stop open defecation in Ekiti and Osun States in South-west Nigeria under focus in this study.

Also, the findings revealed that a total of 55.8% of the respondents agreed that the role of media in the campaign against OD is critical in the two states. The findings show that 83% of respondents agreed that embarking on media advocacy would ultimately result in the stoppage of open defecation. Nkanunye and Obiechina (2017) observed that changing an already existing behaviour is very difficult but, with effective communication and application of effective media campaign strategies, behavioural change could be achieved. Supporting the effect of behavioural change, many of the FGD respondents are of the opinion that with effective media advocacy, positive results can be achieved concerning open defecation. Also, it is clear from the responses that the use of media can also help to appeal to the psyche of residents to stop open defecation. Other findings of the research revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that media advocacy helps to ensure participation of residents in the campaign against open defecation. This can be linked to Dorfman and Krasnow (2014), two researchers who asserted that media advocacy helped people to understand the importance of news coverage, the need to participate actively in shaping such coverage, and the methods for doing so effectively.

Furthermore, this study revealed that 77.3% of the respondents are aware of media campaigns against open defecation in the states. This implies that the awareness level of respondents agree with the results of the research by Alom et al. (2020). Thus, to achieve a high level of awareness, there is a need to be conscious of the media channels used and the frequency of these channels in sending out adequate messages. On this basis, 70.4% of the respondents agreed that there are various media channels used in the campaign against Open Defecation in Ekiti and Osun States of Nigeria. This agrees with Kevin et al. (2020) whose study confirmed the use of leaflets, posters and signboards; opinion leaders, town criers and health workers' mouth-to-mouth campaigns; and radio, television and newspaper as media channels in the campaign against open defecation.

However, considering the adequacy of the channels used for media campaigns to bring about reduction of open defecation in the two states in South-west Nigeria, findings show that only 39.7% of the respondents agreed that there were adequate media channels, while 42.8% disagreed. This implies that media campaigns can be more successful with more media channels. The result corroborates the submission of Ngwu (2017) who maintained that advocacy strategy can be used in the campaign against open defecation in rural Nigeria through available mass media channels (indigenous or modern mass media) to canvass support from the government, policymakers, international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Adum et al. (2019) from their study discovered that students got messages for the campaign against open defecation via word of mouth, television, radio, posters and some writings on some walls.

In terms of how wide the coverage of the campaigns against open defecation is, the findings revealed that 40.2% of the respondents agreed that the coverage was wide, while a simple



majority of 47% disagreed that the coverage was wide enough. This indicates that the media coverage against open defecation is still relatively not widespread enough in South-west Nigeria. The importance of media campaigns cannot be overemphasized. Adhikari et al. (2021) maintained that campaigns, combined with high levels of enforcement and the introduction of sanctions for not constructing and using toilets, have played a role in decreasing open defecation rates. The campaigns aim to educate, sensitise and encourage the target audiences to change their behaviour to making use of a toilet as an automatic and positive behaviour as well as a social norm.

Furthermore, the study revealed that 88.3% of the respondents agreed that there are factors hampering the effective application of the media as a tool for advocacy against open defecation; 87% of the respondents agreed that epileptic supply of electricity was a major hindrance to the effective use of the media as a tool for advocacy against open defecation. Findings agree with the view of Walton (2018), who stated that energy has a role to play in achieving universal access to clean water and sanitation. The linkages between water and energy are increasingly recognised across businesses, governments and the public, and have been a major area of analysis in the World Energy Outlook. Thinking about water and energy in an integrated way is essential if the world is to reach the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on water: to ensure available and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, the findings of the study revealed that 94% of the respondents agreed that lack of support and inadequate participation by stakeholder groups and residents can negatively affect the effectiveness of media advocacy campaigns against open defecation in the states. This is in line with the study by Purnaweni (2018), which states that a successful open defecation free (ODF) programme needs active participation of the local dwellers in addition to the responsibilities of the government as the public service provider, especially in health service, one of the most important services it provides beside education service. Agba (2019) exposed the constraints to effective utilisation of Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) interventions in managing open defecation to include lack of its inclusion in government policies and inadequate funding of SBCC interventions that can trigger behavioural change of individuals and communities. This study thus advocates that state governments through the local government chairmen should construct decent public toilet facilities in various communities of the states, and at strategic locations to communicate in more concrete terms the need to reject open defecation and embrace the use of toilets. This should be followed by providing a framework for punitive measures to discourage individuals and communities from engaging in open defecation. This should be backed up with laws which must be enforced by appropriate agencies.

Furthermore, there must be aggressive publicity by government and non-governmental agencies for full actualization of Open Defecation Free (ODF) society in Nigeria as a whole. In advocating against open defecation, Ekiti and Osun States can replicate India's ODF campaign model by massively engaging little children. In an effort to discourage open defecation, UNICEF India has launched a campaign called 'Take Poo to the Loo' where the idea creates awareness among children and the youths, who will then reach out and spread the message of the harmful effects of open defecation using digital means via social media. State



governments should partner with stakeholders, primary and secondary school pupils and their teachers in the rural areas to “catch them young in the campaign against open defecation.” To this effect, laws must be enforced by the regulatory agencies to prosecute any household whose members are found defecating openly. A combination of orthodox and mass media tools at the grassroots levels and the setting up of strong sanitation policies as well as a monitoring team to rid Nigeria of open defecation is highly recommended.

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