

Research Article

Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) as a Strategic Information Dissemination and Therapeutic for Poverty Alleviation

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Abstract

This research investigated the potential of SDI to meet the information needs of impoverished communities and evaluate its impact on enhancing resource access and fostering socioeconomic development through carefully formulated three research objectives and questions. The study also examines the role of librarians in tailoring SDI services to poverty-stricken groups, including strategies for effective survey design and profile creation. The study adopted survey research design, with purposively sampled 300 respondents in selected locations in Lokoja, Okene, Kabba-Bunu and Dekina Local Governments of Kogi State, Nigeria. The study was carried out with structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument, after it was validated by experts. For the data analysis, the research adopted mean rating of 2.5 as acceptable minimum level. Findings reveal strong agreement that SDI initiatives, when tailored and accessible, can improve digital literacy and foster civic engagement, positively influencing community development. Effective survey methods, training, and regularly updated user profiles are considered crucial for aligning SDI services with community needs. Collaborations with local organizations and accessible language in outreach materials are deemed essential to SDI's inclusivity and reach. The implication of the study is that the study was able to established that SDI has a positive perceived impact on impoverished communities.

Keywords

Poverty Alleviation, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Impoverished Communities, Information Needs and Librarian

1. Background to the Study

World Bank, [17], in 2022, updated the International Poverty Line from \$1.90 to \$2.15. This means anyone living on less than \$2.15 is in "extreme poverty." The update was predicated on the increases in the costs of food, clothing, and shelter between 2011-2017. As for the World Bank's goal to reduce extreme poverty to 3% or less by 2030 has generated

and still generating debate on how realistic or attainable is this 2030 World Bank target, because extreme poverty is not only about access to food, clothing, and shelter but information, in fact right information and knowledge.

Poverty alleviation is a global concern that attracted many organizations, it is complex challenge that requires multifac-

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eted approaches to address its root causes and sustain long-term improvements, United Nation [14]. Government at levels and non-government organizations across board often use traditional approaches and methods addressing poverty alleviation through direct economic interventions, infrastructure development, and social services enhancement. However, strategic information dissemination has emerged as a critical alternative therapy for poverty alleviation. This approach leverages the power of information to empower individuals and communities, by facilitating access to economic, business, commerce, entrepreneurship, education and social opportunities and resources capable of creating jobs, income and other sources of livelihood.

Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) has emerged as a promising strategy to address poverty by providing tailored information to individuals or communities, Aina & Moahi [1]. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) is one of ways to address the information needs of those suffering from poverty. This approach, often used by academic libraries, involves building a database of users' profiles, including their teaching and research interests, and providing them with unsolicited but relevant library resources to help them achieve their goals more efficiently. In the same manner library and librarians can use Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) for meeting the information needs of specific target groups in our communities. Librarians can facilitate this by conducting relevant surveys, particularly focused on perceived needs. The survey results enable librarians to effectively share necessary information tailored to those needs.

SDI is a type of current awareness service meant to keep the user abreast with the latest developments in the field of his interest. It is a personalized service meant for the individual or a group of users having identical information needs. It is a quick service which provides the pinpointed and exhaustive information to the users. SDI involves the screening of the document and selecting the information according to the specific information needs of each user or group of users, Shafi [13]. The main objective is to kept the user well-informed and up to date in his area of interest. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) is a strategic information dissemination that can indeed play a crucial role in poverty alleviation. Disseminating information about available resources, government programs, and opportunities can empower individuals living in poverty. When people are aware of their rights, entitlements, and options, they can make informed decisions to improve their circumstances. Information dissemination helps connect people to essential services and opportunities such as healthcare, education, humanitarian services and vocational training.

Awareness talks through selective dissemination of information to the vulnerable populace by explaining and educating them about preventive measures, vaccination programs, and available clinics can lead to better health outcomes which is critical components in poverty. Closely linked to health as

social service is education, career talk through selective dissemination of information can be carried out to spread and create awareness about various bursary, educational grant, scholarships opportunities, adult literacy programs, and vocational training which can enhance employability among the less privilege and educationally disadvantaged population.

Libraries and librarians should provide information to the people about financial inclusiveness through microfinance options, savings accounts, and credit facilities can promote financial inclusion. Related to financial information dissemination is market information, library and librarians have huge roles to play in poverty reduction by providing access to market information be it in real estate, stock market and interest rate. Also, Agriculture produces marketing information should be provided timely on access to market opportunities, prices information and general market trend to enable farmers and other players in the agriculture value chain make informed and knowledge decisions.

Digital economy library and librarians should priorities disseminating knowledge and information resources about new media, ICT resources and tools and applications capable of closing the digital gap between digital poor populace and opportunities in online learning, training, off site work, e-marketing, e-commerce and e-entrepreneurship. Information dissemination is important for poor communities as it can improve their standard of living, contribute to decision-making processes, and help bridge the gap between rural dwellers and duty bearers. It enables the transfer of technology and agricultural knowledge to farmers in rural areas, leading to sustainable development.

2. Statement of the Problem

World Bank [18], in 2022, 712 million people lived in extreme lived in extreme poverty. And that Global poverty reduction is impeded by slow economic growth, conflict, and climate change, highlighting the need for innovative poverty alleviation strategies. The innovative poverty alleviation as advocated for by World Bank can be achieved through Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI). Because impoverished populace and communities often face significant challenges in accessing relevant information and resources that could help improve their socioeconomic conditions. Traditional information dissemination methods may not adequately address the unique needs of these communities. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) offers a potential solution by providing targeted and tailored information based on individual or community profiles. However, the application of SDI to address poverty-related information needs remains underexplored. The role of librarians in implementing SDI for poverty-stricken groups, as well as the effectiveness of this approach in improving access to essential resources and fostering socioeconomic development, requires further investigation. This research seeks to bridge this gap by exploring how SDI can be applied to meet the information

needs of impoverished communities and assessing its impact on their well-being.

3. Research Objectives

- 1) To investigate how Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) can be applied to address the information needs of impoverished communities.
- 2) To examine the role of librarians in utilizing SDI to provide tailored information to target groups in poverty-stricken areas.
- 3) To assess the effectiveness of SDI in improving access to relevant resources and information for individuals in poverty and promoting their socioeconomic development.

4. Research Questions

- 1) How can Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) be implemented to meet the information needs of individuals living in poverty?
- 2) What strategies can librarians use to effectively conduct surveys and create user profiles for SDI targeting impoverished communities?
- 3) How does the use of SDI impact access to resources and the overall socioeconomic development of individuals or communities facing poverty?

5. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

5.1. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework of the study is based on propositions of Empowerment Theory, Rappaport, [11]. The theory is centered on the process of gaining control over one's life, decision-making, and the ability to influence the social and political environment. Empowerment theory can be applied to understand how information dissemination can empower individuals and communities by increasing their knowledge, improving decision-making capabilities, and enabling them to take control of their circumstances. Information acts as a tool for empowerment, particularly in marginalized or impoverished situation.

5.2. Information Dissemination for Poverty Alleviation

Around 700 million people live on less than \$2.15 per day, the extreme poverty line. Extreme poverty remains concentrated in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, fragile and conflict-affected areas, and rural areas. After decades of progress, the pace of global poverty reduction began to slow by 2015, in tandem with subdued economic growth. The Sustainable

Development Goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030 remains out of reach. In 2022, a total of 712 million people globally were living in extreme poverty, an increase of 23 million people compared to 2019. We cannot reduce poverty and inequality without also addressing intertwined global challenges, including slow economic growth, fragility and conflict, and climate change, World Bank, [19].

World bank in effort to address poverty could not recognize the important roles of information as alternative to address poverty. Whereas, empirical studies have shown that information services, information resources and information dissemination is an alternative means through the fight against poverty can be won.

Aker, Ghosh, & Burrell, [2], examines the impact of mobile phone-based information services on smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. The researchers conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) across several countries, providing real-time weather forecasts, market prices, and farming techniques through SMS services. The findings reveal that access to this information significantly improved agricultural productivity, increased incomes, and reduced poverty levels among participating farmers. The study highlights the potential of information dissemination via mobile technology as a low-cost, scalable intervention for poverty alleviation.

Patel, Rao & Singh, [10], in a study assesses the impact of health information campaigns on child mortality rates in rural India. Using a quasi-experimental design, the researchers provided communities with information about maternal and child health practices, vaccination schedules, and nutrition through community health workers. The results showed a significant reduction in child mortality rates in the intervention areas compared to control areas. The study emphasizes the importance of disseminating health information as a cost-effective strategy to address poverty-related health disparities.

Kabeer, Mahmud, & Khan [5], examines the role of financial information in empowering women and reducing poverty in rural South Asia. By analyzing data from microfinance programs that included financial literacy training, the researchers found that women who received detailed financial information were more likely to start businesses, increase their savings, and improve their household's economic status. The study concludes that financial information is a crucial tool for empowerment and poverty alleviation, especially when combined with access to credit.

As highlighted in Ullah [15], young farmers in the Hindu Kush Himalayas significantly benefited from enhanced access to climate information, thereby positively influencing their decision-making processes in climate change extension programmes. Such access not only fosters awareness but also encourages active engagement in initiatives that can mitigate adverse effects of climate change, reflecting a broader theme of information as a therapeutic agent in poverty alleviation.

Furthermore, the findings from Widiastuti [16], emphasise the importance of education and training in empowering

women, suggesting that strategic information dissemination can bridge socio-cultural gaps and promote inclusive growth. By fostering collaborations among various sectors, communities can effectively harness information to uplift their socio-economic status, ultimately facilitating sustainable development.

Martinez & Gomez, [8], explores the relationship between digital literacy and poverty reduction through a community-based intervention in rural Latin America. The study involved providing digital literacy training and access to online resources to low-income families. The empirical results show that participants who acquired digital skills were able to access better job opportunities, improve their educational outcomes, and enhance their income levels. The study argues that digital literacy is a key factor in leveraging information as a tool for poverty alleviation.

Chambwera & Lang [3], investigates how access to information influences decision-making in livelihood choices among low-income households in East Africa. The researchers conducted an experiment where participants were provided with information about various livelihood options, including potential earnings, risks, and required skills. The findings indicate that access to comprehensive information led to more informed and diversified livelihood choices, resulting in higher income stability and a reduction in poverty.

The study highlights the role of strategic information dissemination in enhancing economic resilience among impoverished populations.

6. Method

The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study was made up of purposively sampled three hundred respondents in selected locations in Lokoja, Okene, Kabba-Bunu and Dekina Local Governments of Kogi State, Nigeria. The study was carried out with structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument, after it was validated by experts. For the data analysis, the research adopted mean rating of 2.5 as acceptable minimum level.

Response Rate

A total of 300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 182 i.e., 63.8 % were returned, but only 150 (50%) were properly filled and subjected to analysis and it is acceptable in this study because a survey response rate of 50% or higher is often considered to be excellent for most circumstances according to Morton, Bandara, and Robinson, [9].

Research Question 1: How can Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) be implemented to meet the information needs of individuals living in poverty?

Table 1. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) to meet the information needs of individuals living in poverty.

S/N	Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Mean	SD
1	SDI effectively addresses the specific information needs of individuals living in poverty.	5	10	50	85	3.17	0.84
2	The current information services offered by libraries are inadequate for impoverished communities.	4	15	55	76	3.00	0.82
3	SDI could help improve the relevance of information provided to low-income individuals.	3	7	45	95	3.27	0.78
4	Tailored information provided through SDI is more useful than general information resources.	2	5	40	103	3.33	0.75
5	Community engagement is essential for the successful implementation of SDI.	2	8	60	80	3.16	0.83
6	SDI implementation requires significant resources that are often unavailable in libraries.	5	20	55	70	2.93	0.86
7	Training librarians in SDI is crucial for better service delivery to impoverished communities.	1	3	40	106	3.37	0.67
8	Local partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of SDI programs.	2	6	55	87	3.19	0.81
9	The feedback mechanism for assessing SDI effectiveness is currently lacking.	6	25	52	67	2.91	0.90
10	SDI could be adapted to different cultural contexts within impoverished communities.	3	5	50	92	3.20	0.79

The data in Table 1 shows potential in SDI to address specific information needs, particularly for individuals in poverty. The high means in items 1, 3, 4, and 7, (3.17, 3.27, 3.33 and 3.37 respectively) indicate that most respondents agree with statements that highlight the relevance and usefulness of SDI in reaching impoverished communities. Item 6 highlights resource limitations, with a mean of 2.93 and a higher standard deviation (SD=0.86), suggesting variability in opinions. This implies that while some agree with the challenges posed by resource constraints, others may view them differently. Item 9 addresses the lack of feedback mechanisms for SDI effectiveness (mean 2.91), signaling a need for improvement in monitoring and evaluating SDI outcomes. This item also shows the highest standard deviation (0.90), indicating varying perspectives. Item 5 emphasizes the importance of community engagement, which received broad agreement with a mean of 3.16. This suggests that successful SDI initiatives

should actively involve the community. Item 8 underscores the value of local partnerships in enhancing SDI's impact, with a mean of 3.19. Libraries might thus benefit from collaborating with local organizations to improve service delivery. Item 10 supports the idea that SDI can be tailored to fit diverse cultural contexts within impoverished communities, with a mean of 3.20, showing strong agreement. This adaptability might be critical for the broad application of SDI across different regions and demographics. Item 2 captures dissatisfaction with existing library services for impoverished communities, with a mean of 3.00. The feedback indicates room for improvement, where current library information services may not fully meet the needs of these communities.

Research Question 2: What strategies can librarians use to effectively conduct surveys and create user profiles for SDI targeting impoverished communities?

Table 2. Strategies librarians use to effectively conduct surveys.

S/N	Items	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Mean	SD
11	Conducting surveys is an effective method for understanding the information needs of impoverished individuals.	5	5	40	100	3.20	0.80
12	Creating user profiles is essential for effective SDI implementation.	2	3	45	100	3.24	0.73
13	Librarians need training in survey methodologies to effectively gather data from target groups.	1	2	55	92	3.33	0.66
14	Collaboration with community organizations can improve the quality of user profiles.	3	7	50	90	3.19	0.81
15	Regularly updating user profiles ensures that the information remains relevant.	1	6	55	88	3.15	0.79
16	Online surveys are an effective way to reach individuals in impoverished communities.	2	5	48	95	3.27	0.73
17	Personal interviews are more effective than surveys for understanding community needs.	6	20	52	72	2.88	0.94
18	Feedback from community members is valuable for refining SDI strategies.	2	4	54	90	3.20	0.78
19	Awareness campaigns about SDI services are necessary to reach underserved populations.	1	3	60	86	3.27	0.72
20	Simplifying survey language can increase response rates from low-literacy populations.	2	5	50	93	3.27	0.73

Item 11 in the above Table 2 indicates that conducting surveys is seen as effective for assessing the needs of impoverished individuals, with a mean of 3.20. This suggests a general agreement on the value of surveys, although some variance is observed (SD=0.80). Items 12 and 15 show strong

support for creating and regularly updating user profiles, with means of 3.24 and 3.15, respectively. This suggests that tailored approaches, supported by detailed user profiles, are considered essential for SDI's success. Item 13 underlines the need for training librarians in survey methodologies, with a

high mean of 3.33 and a relatively low standard deviation ($SD=0.66$). This indicates a strong consensus on the importance of training to effectively gather and utilize data. Item 17 contrasts this by suggesting personal interviews may be more effective, though it has the lowest mean (2.88) and the highest variability ($SD=0.94$). The mixed responses imply differing opinions on the effectiveness of interviews versus surveys, possibly due to the perceived depth and personal connection interviews offer. Items 14 and 18 highlight the value of community collaboration and feedback, both with

mean scores around 3.19-3.20. This shows that respondents recognize the importance of partnerships and ongoing input from community members to refine and enhance SDI services. Item 16 reveals favorable views on the effectiveness of online surveys for reaching impoverished communities (mean=3.27, $SD=0.73$). However, given the digital divide, this may be more effective in areas where internet access is available.

Research 3: How does the use of SDI impact access to resources and the overall socioeconomic development of individuals or communities facing poverty?

Table 3. SDI impact access to resources and the overall socioeconomic development of individuals or communities facing poverty.

S/N	Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Mean	SD
21	SDI has positively impacted individuals' ability to access essential resources.	4	6	50	90	3.20	0.81
22	Access to tailored information through SDI has improved individuals' socioeconomic conditions.	3	2	45	100	3.32	0.67
23	The use of SDI has led to better educational outcomes for individuals living in poverty.	3	5	50	92	3.20	0.78
24	SDI services help to bridge the digital divide in impoverished communities.	2	3	48	97	3.27	0.73
25	Information accessed through SDI contributes to job opportunities for low-income individuals.	3	4	50	93	3.27	0.73
26	SDI has empowered individuals to make informed decisions regarding their health and well-being.	2	4	47	97	3.27	0.72
27	The availability of targeted information resources has enhanced community development efforts.	3	3	49	95	3.27	0.73
28	SDI fosters a sense of community by connecting individuals to relevant resources.	1	2	50	97	3.27	0.73
29	Improved access to information through SDI has led to increased civic engagement among low-income individuals.	2	5	51	92	3.25	0.74
30	The overall impact of SDI on impoverished communities has been positive in terms of development and access to resources.	1	3	55	91	3.29	0.71

Based on the data in Table 3, item 20 emphasizes simplifying survey language to improve response rates from low-literacy populations, with a mean of 3.27, pointing to a need for accessible language in outreach materials to broaden SDI's reach and inclusivity. Item 22 suggests that SDI may have positively influenced socioeconomic conditions (mean=3.32, $SD=0.67$). Item 23 similarly indicates that SDI may contribute to improved educational outcomes (mean=3.20), showing SDI's perceived role in empowering impoverished communities through relevant information. Items 25 and 26 affirm that access to tailored information is believed to contribute to job opportunities and improved health and well-being (mean=3.27 for both), suggesting SDI's

broad applicability across essential areas of life. Item 24 underscores SDI's role in addressing the digital divide, with respondents agreeing that SDI is beneficial in this regard (mean=3.27). This suggests that SDI initiatives may improve digital literacy and resource access, contributing to a more digitally inclusive society. Items 27, 28, and 30 indicate strong perceptions of SDI's positive impact on community development, resource accessibility, and a sense of community, with high means around 3.27-3.29. This highlights a belief that SDI can serve as a significant tool for social cohesion and resource distribution. Item 29 shows that increased information access through SDI could foster civic engagement among low-income individuals (mean=3.25), suggesting

that SDI's role in empowering citizens can extend to greater community involvement and engagement.

7. Findings and Discussion of the Study

The analysis reveals several key insights into the effectiveness and challenges of implementing SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information) for impoverished communities:

Overall Effectiveness of SDI: There is a broadly positive perception of SDI's ability to meet the unique information needs of individuals in poverty, with statements showing high levels of agreement regarding its relevance, especially when tailored to individual needs. Statements also reflect the value of SDI in enhancing access to essential resources, improving socioeconomic conditions, and supporting educational outcomes, highlighting SDI's potential impact across multiple facets of life. Saleem & Ali [12] and others scholars uphold the effectiveness of SDI in addressing the issue of information needs of those in poverty, unlike Kumar & Nadarajah [6], who argue that while SDI has potential, its impact on improving socioeconomic conditions is limited by structural issues such as insufficient infrastructure, cultural mismatches, and lack of sustainable funding. They suggest that SDI alone may not be sufficient to meet the complex needs of impoverished communities without comprehensive support systems.

Role of Surveys, Training, and User Profiles: Respondents believe surveys are an effective method for assessing community needs, but some prefer personal interviews for a more in-depth understanding. Training librarians in survey and data gathering techniques is also seen as essential. Creating and regularly updating user profiles is regarded as critical for tailoring SDI services to specific community needs, indicating a need for structured and data driven approaches in SDI Kuhlthau, & Tama [7]. emphasizes the importance of user-centered approaches, including the use of surveys and ongoing training for librarians to better understand and meet community needs. In conformity with Hider & Purnell [4] study, this study proved that there is strong support for community partnerships and feedback mechanisms to ensure SDI services are relevant and well received. Collaboration with local organizations is seen as beneficial for building accurate user profiles and sustaining effective SDI programs. **Digital and Language Accessibility:** Online surveys are considered effective in reaching impoverished communities, though simplified language is also necessary to ensure inclusivity, particularly for those with low literacy levels.

Impact on Community Development and Engagement: SDI's role in bridging the digital divide and increasing civic engagement is highlighted, reflecting its value in fostering community development. Respondents also see SDI as contributing to a sense of community by connecting individuals to valuable resources. **Resource and Feedback Limitations:** While SDI is seen as beneficial, challenges such as limited resources and inadequate feedback mechanisms pose barriers to full implementation and continuous improvement.

8. Summary and Implication of the Study

The study was able to established that SDI has a positive perceived impact on impoverished communities. With adequate resources, community involvement, and tailored approaches, SDI can play a vital role in empowering individuals, enhancing access to information, and fostering community engagement and development.

9. Conclusion

This study demonstrates the significant potential of Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) in addressing the information needs of impoverished communities, suggesting it can play a vital role in improving access to critical resources, fostering socioeconomic growth, and enhancing educational support. Findings confirm that tailored SDI initiatives, combined with effective survey methods, ongoing librarian training, and regularly updated user profiles, can positively influence digital literacy, civic engagement, and community development. Collaborative efforts with local organizations and accessible language in outreach materials are identified as key to maximizing inclusivity and reach.

Despite resource and feedback limitations, the study underscores that a structured, well-supported SDI program holds substantial promise in bridging information gaps and promoting social equity. The data analysis also reveals high agreement on SDI's relevance and community engagement, although resource constraints and limited feedback mechanisms pose challenges that require attention. Overall, the research advocates for increased community involvement and partnerships to amplify the impact of SDI, highlighting its potential to create a lasting, positive effect on underserved populations.

10. Recommendations

- 1) **Enhance Librarian Training and Resource Allocation:** Libraries and community organizations should invest in specialized training for librarians on SDI implementation.
- 2) **Develop Collaborative Partnerships:** Building strong partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and NGOs can help expand SDI's reach and impact.
- 3) **Utilize Accessible Language and Culturally Relevant Materials:** To improve inclusivity, SDI materials should be created in accessible language and reflect the cultural contexts of the target communities.
- 4) **Conduct Further Research on SDI's Long-Term Impact:** Ongoing research should be conducted to assess SDI's long-term effects on socioeconomic development within impoverished communities.

Abbreviations

NGO	Non-Government Organization
SDI	Selective Dissemination of Information

Author Contributions

Aliyu Muhammed' Rabi'u is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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