



# "Zero Hunger: Unleashing the Power of Media to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals"

**Author: Dr. Riya Mukhopadhyay**

Designation of Author: Assistant Professor

Department of Journalism & Mass Communication

Jain (deemed to be) University, Bangalore, India

## Abstract

This research paper examines how the media contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger. By analyzing numerous case studies and literature, it is evident that the media has the power to unleash the potential of Zero Hunger by raising awareness, promoting behavioral change, and advocating for policy change. The key findings of this research demonstrate the power of media in fostering a culture of sustainable food use and production. Through the use of various media platforms such as television, social media, and radio, the media can raise awareness about the value of sustainable agriculture, food waste reduction, and equitable food distribution. Furthermore, this research shows how media can facilitate behavior change by emphasizing the advantages of healthy eating and motivating people to use sustainable food practices. Additionally, the media can advocate for policy change by raising awareness of government programs that aim to eradicate hunger and promote sustainable agriculture.

Key Word: Zero Hunger, Media, Sustainable Development Goals

## Introduction

Millions of people around the world are affected by the widespread issue of hunger. Despite tremendous progress in lowering the prevalence of hunger, many people still experience malnutrition and insufficient access to food. SDG 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations calls for "ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture" by the year 2030. Achieving this goal requires concerted efforts from governments, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

The role of the media in achieving SDG 2 cannot be overstated. Media, in all its forms, has a unique power to raise awareness, shape public opinion, and catalyze action on critical social issues. To achieve SDG 2, it is crucial to use the power of the media to advocate for ending hunger. It is commonly known that the media can sway public opinion and spur action on social concerns.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 and the Australian bushfires in 2019–2020, for example, were covered in the media, which highlighted how urgent it is to solve climate change. Similar to how George Floyd's death in 2020 and the numerous protests that followed it were covered in the media, they brought attention to the need for racial justice and police reform. In the context of hunger, the media has also played a critical role in raising awareness and mobilizing resources to address the issue. For instance, singer Bob Geldof arranged the 1985 Live Aid event, which featured some of the biggest musical talents in the world and raised money for famine relief in Ethiopia. More recently, social media has been used by initiatives like the UN World Food Programme's #ShareTheMeal movement to spread awareness and generate money for the battle against hunger in crisis-affected nations. However, the media can also perpetuate harmful narratives and reinforce negative stereotypes about hunger and poverty. For instance, images of starving children in Africa often dominate media coverage of hunger,

reinforcing the idea of poverty as an African problem and ignoring the fact that hunger is a global issue affecting people in developed and developing countries alike.

Notwithstanding recent improvements, hunger and malnutrition are still major problems in India. Millions of individuals have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and are now fighting to have access to nutritious food and necessities. The World Hunger Index placed India 94th out of 107 nations in 2021, indicating a serious level of hunger and malnutrition. Media has a critical role to play in addressing these issues. Media organizations in India have started several campaigns to increase awareness and aid in the fight against hunger. For instance, the 2014-launched NDTV-Dettol Banega Swasth India campaign seeks to increase public awareness of and generate funding for issues about health, sanitation, and hygiene, including malnutrition.

The Indian media was also instrumental in 2021 in drawing attention to the problems of farmers who were protesting the government's new agricultural legislation. Beginning in November 2020, the protests gained considerable coverage in both domestic and international media, bringing attention to the difficulties faced by farmers and increasing pressure on the government to solve their concerns. The media, however, also encounters difficulties in adequately addressing India's hunger and malnutrition. For instance, the media often focuses on sensational stories and political controversies, rather than on critical social issues such as hunger and poverty. Additionally, the media can perpetuate negative stereotypes and stigmatize communities affected by hunger and malnutrition. This research paper explores the potential of media in achieving SDG 2, with a specific focus on zero hunger. It examines the role of media in raising awareness, mobilizing resources, and promoting sustainable agriculture practices. The paper also examines the opportunities and problems associated with using the media's influence to achieve zero hunger.

The research paper draws on a range of sources, including academic literature, reports, case studies, etc. It also examines instances of media campaigns that have been effective in spreading the idea of ending hunger in various parts of the world. In the end, this study seeks to offer perceptions and suggestions on how to harness the power of media to end hunger and advance the realization of SDG 2. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to ongoing efforts to end hunger and promote sustainable agriculture practices for a better and more equitable world.

## Literature Review

"Zero Hunger" is one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations (UN) to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030.

**Media and Sustainable Development:** Media is considered an essential tool for promoting sustainable development, as it has the potential to raise awareness, influence attitudes and behaviors, and hold governments and other stakeholders accountable. Several scholars have emphasized the role of media in achieving SDGs, including Zero Hunger. For instance, Akindele and Oladokun (2021) argue that media can facilitate the dissemination of information about food security, nutrition, and agricultural practices to the public, especially in rural areas. Similarly, Arora (2021) suggests that media can be used to create a sense of urgency and mobilize public support for policies and programs aimed at reducing hunger and malnutrition.

**Role of Traditional and Social Media:** Traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers have been used for decades to disseminate information about agriculture, nutrition, and food security. However, the rise of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram has opened up new avenues for engaging with the public, especially the younger generations. Several studies have examined the role of social media in promoting sustainable development, including Zero Hunger. For instance, Islam et al. (2020) analyzed the use of Facebook and WhatsApp by smallholder farmers in Bangladesh to exchange information and share experiences about agricultural practices. They found that social media can enhance social capital, trust, and learning among farmers, leading to improved agricultural productivity and food security.

"The Role of Social Media in Food Security and Nutrition: by Thea G. van de Mortel and Ming Ching Tang (2020):" The authors highlight the potential benefits of social media, such as enhancing knowledge exchange, facilitating collaboration, and empowering marginalized communities, but also point out the challenges, such as privacy concerns and information overload.

"The Role of Media in Agriculture and Rural Development" by Umar Farouq Ahmad and Saheed Opeyemi Ayorinde (2020): This article explores the potential of media in promoting agricultural development and reducing poverty and hunger in rural areas. The authors argue that media can facilitate knowledge transfer, enhance social networks, and promote good governance, which are all essential for achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).

"Media and Communication for Development" by Thomas Tufte and Norbert Wildermuth (2017): This book provides a comprehensive overview of the role of media and communication in development, including the SDGs. The authors argue that media can contribute to achieving sustainable development by enabling participation, empowering citizens, and promoting accountability and transparency.

"Digital and Social Media for Sustainable Development" by Fergus Lyon et al. (2020): This review article examines the use of digital and social media in promoting sustainable development, including Zero Hunger. The authors identify the opportunities and challenges of using these technologies, such as enhancing transparency and participation, but also creating new forms of inequality and exclusion. They call for a more nuanced and context-specific approach to using digital and social media for sustainable development.

"Role of Media in Addressing Food Security in India" by Shruti Bhardwaj and Ravi Kiran (2019): This article examines the role of media in addressing food security in India, focusing on the coverage of food-related issues by Indian media. The authors argue that media can play an important role in raising awareness, shaping public opinion, and influencing policy-making, but also highlight the need for more accurate and credible reporting.

"Zero Hunger in India: Opportunities and Challenges for the Media" by Vartika Jain and Hiral Pandya (2020): This study analyzes the coverage of Zero Hunger in Indian media and identifies the opportunities and challenges for media in promoting the SDG 2 agenda. The authors suggest that the media can leverage its reach and influence to create awareness, mobilize public support, and promote innovative solutions to food security challenges.

"Media Framing of Food Security in India: A Content Analysis of English Language Newspapers" by Sanchita Banerjee Saxena and Rakesh Singh (2019): This article examines the framing of food security in Indian English language newspapers, focusing on the dominant narratives and themes. The authors found that the coverage of food security was limited and fragmented, with a focus on government policies and programs rather than grassroots initiatives and community-based solutions.

"Impact of Social Media on Agricultural Extension Services in India" by Priyanka Kumari and Aparajita Mukhopadhyay (2019): This study analyzes the use of social media for agricultural extension services in India, focusing on the benefits and challenges for farmers and agricultural extension workers. The authors suggest that social media can enhance information dissemination, networking, and learning among farmers, but also highlight the need for effective policies and infrastructure to support its use.

**Challenges and Opportunities:** Despite the potential benefits of media in achieving Zero Hunger, several challenges need to be addressed. One of the main challenges is the digital divide, as many rural and marginalized communities still lack access to media and information technologies. Another challenge is the quality and credibility of information disseminated through media, as misinformation and fake news can undermine public trust and create confusion. In addition, there is a need for innovative and creative approaches to engage with different audiences and address cultural and linguistic barriers.

## Research Methodology

**Research Design:** This study will employ a qualitative research design to examine the role of media in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. The research will be based on various case studies and literature, including reports and publications from reputable organizations such as the United Nations and the World Food Programme.

**Data Collection:** The study will use secondary data sources to collect data on media coverage and its impact on efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger. The data sources will include online news articles, reports, and publications from reputable organizations.

**Significance:** The findings of this study will contribute to the existing knowledge on the role of media in achieving Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. The study will provide insights into how media coverage can be harnessed to increase public awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger. The case studies and literature review will provide real-world examples of the challenges and opportunities in using media to advance efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger.

## Findings

The study found that media coverage plays a crucial role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. The media can increase public awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger by



highlighting the challenges, successes, and opportunities in this area. The study identified several factors that influence media coverage of Zero Hunger, including political, economic, and social factors.

For Example: In India, media coverage played a significant role in raising awareness and support for the National Food Security Act, of 2013. The act aimed to provide subsidized food grains to two-thirds of India's population, ensuring food security for millions of people. Media coverage of the issue highlighted the challenges faced by millions of Indians who were suffering from malnutrition and hunger, creating public pressure on the government to act. In 2016, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) partnered with Snapchat to create a global campaign called "ShareTheMeal" to fight global hunger. The campaign used Snapchat's unique features to encourage young people to donate to the WFP's efforts to provide meals to hungry children around the world. The campaign received significant media coverage, reaching millions of people globally and raising awareness of the issue of hunger.

How media coverage can be harnessed to increase public awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger:

- **Collaboration with Media Outlets:** The collaboration between the WFP and Snapchat is an excellent example of how partnerships with media outlets can increase public awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger. Organizations working to achieve Zero Hunger should collaborate with media outlets to create engaging content that can raise awareness of the issue.
- **Storytelling:** The study found that media coverage that uses storytelling to convey the impact of hunger on individuals and communities can be a powerful tool to increase public awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger. Journalists and media outlets should highlight the human stories behind hunger to engage the public and create empathy for those affected.
- **Social Media:** Social media platforms are powerful tools to reach a global audience, and organizations working toward achieving Zero Hunger can use these platforms to create engaging content and reach a broader audience. Social media campaigns like the "ShareTheMeal" campaign can create a viral effect, increasing awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger.
- **TV Programming:** TV programs and documentaries that highlight the issue of hunger and its impact on communities can create awareness and inspire action. For example, the TV program "Hunger in America" aired on NBC in 2018, highlighting the issue of hunger in the US and the work being done to address it.
- **Print Media:** Print media such as newspapers and magazines can also play a vital role in increasing public awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger. For instance, the New York Times "Hunger at Home" series, which ran in 2020, highlighted the issue of hunger in the US during the COVID-19 pandemic and provided insights into how communities were addressing the issue.
- **Celebrity Endorsements:** Celebrity endorsements can also be a powerful tool in raising awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger. For example, the United Nations World Food Programme's partnership with celebrities like David Beckham and Priyanka Chopra has helped to raise awareness of the issue of hunger globally.
- **Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns:** Advocacy and awareness campaigns such as the "Zero Hunger Challenge" launched by the UN in 2012 can create a sense of urgency around the issue of hunger and mobilize public support for efforts to address it. The campaign used social media and other channels to encourage individuals and organizations to take action to achieve Zero Hunger.
- **Food Banks:** Local and national media coverage of food banks and their efforts to address hunger can help to raise awareness of the issue and encourage donations and volunteerism. For example, the Feeding America network of food banks has received significant media coverage in the US, helping to increase public awareness and support for their efforts to alleviate hunger.
- **Social Media Challenges:** Social media challenges, such as the "Rice Bucket Challenge" that originated in India in 2014, can create a sense of community and encourage people to take action to address hunger. The challenge involved sharing a picture of oneself donating a bucket of rice to someone in need, and it quickly went viral on social media, raising awareness of the issue of hunger in India and inspiring others to take action.
- **Mobile Apps:** Mobile apps that enable individuals to donate to organizations working to address hunger can be a powerful tool in raising awareness and support for efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger. For example, the ShareTheMeal app launched by the United Nations World Food Programme allows users to donate as little as \$0.50 to provide a meal to a hungry child.
- **Community Events:** Community events, such as food drives and hunger walks, can create a sense of community and encourage individuals to take action to address hunger. Local media coverage of these events

can help to raise awareness of the issue and inspire others to get involved. For example, the Walk to End Hunger event in Minnesota has received significant media coverage, helping to raise awareness of the issue of hunger in the state and encouraging donations and volunteerism.

Some real-world examples of the challenges and opportunities in using media to advance efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger:

a. Challenge: Limited access to media in developing countries

Many developing countries lack access to traditional forms of media such as newspapers, television, and radio. This limits the reach of media campaigns aimed at raising awareness about hunger and its impact on communities.

Opportunity: Social media

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are becoming increasingly popular in developing countries. These platforms can be used to share information about hunger and its impact on communities, and to engage with audiences in real time.

b. Challenge: Limited funding for media campaigns

Media campaigns can be expensive, and funding for such campaigns is often limited.

Opportunity: Partnerships

Partnerships between media organizations, non-profit organizations, and governments can help to reduce the cost of media campaigns. For example, a non-profit organization might partner with a media organization to produce a television or radio program on the issue of hunger.

c. Challenge: Limited engagement with target audiences

Media campaigns are only effective if they reach and engage their target audiences.

Opportunity: Creative and compelling content

Media campaigns that use creative and compelling content are more likely to engage their target audiences. For example, a video that tells the story of a community impacted by hunger may be more effective than a traditional news article.

d. Challenge: Misinformation and disinformation

Misinformation and disinformation can spread quickly on social media, undermining the efforts of media campaigns.

Opportunity: Fact-checking and verification

Fact-checking and verification can help to counter misinformation and disinformation. Media organizations can work with non-profit organizations and governments to ensure that accurate information about hunger is disseminated through media channels.

e. Challenge: Limited coverage of local issues

Media campaigns often focus on national or international issues, overlooking the local context of hunger.

Opportunity: Local partnerships

Partnerships between media organizations and local communities can help to ensure that local issues are covered in media campaigns. For example, a radio program might feature interviews with local farmers and food producers to highlight the challenges they face in addressing hunger in their communities.

f. Challenge: Language barriers

In multilingual communities, language barriers can limit the reach of media campaigns and prevent people from accessing important information about hunger.

Opportunity: Multilingual media campaigns

Media campaigns that are available in multiple languages can help to overcome language barriers and ensure that information about hunger is accessible to all members of a community.

g. Challenge: Lack of diversity in media representation

The lack of diversity in media representation can perpetuate stereotypes and limit the effectiveness of media campaigns in addressing hunger.

Opportunity: Diverse representation

Media organizations can work to ensure that their campaigns feature diverse voices and perspectives. For example, they can collaborate with local community organizations to identify individuals from different backgrounds who can speak to the unique challenges of addressing hunger in their communities.

h. Challenge: Limited focus on the root causes of hunger

Media campaigns often focus on the symptoms of hunger, such as food shortages or malnutrition, without addressing the root causes of the issue.

Opportunity: Addressing root causes

Media campaigns can help to raise awareness about the underlying causes of hunger, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. They can also advocate for policy changes that address these root causes and promote sustainable food systems.

i. Challenge: Limited engagement with decision-makers

Media campaigns may not be effective if they fail to engage decision-makers such as government officials, policymakers, and corporate leaders.

Opportunity: Advocacy and Engagement

Media campaigns can serve as a platform for advocacy and engagement with decision-makers. For example, they can feature interviews with policymakers or corporate leaders who are taking action to address hunger, or they can encourage audiences to contact their elected representatives to demand policy changes.

j. Challenge: Limited follow-up and impact evaluation

Media campaigns may have limited impact if they are not followed up with further action or evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

Opportunity: Follow-up and impact evaluation

Media organizations can work with non-profit organizations and government agencies to ensure that media campaigns are followed up with concrete actions and evaluated to determine their impact. This can help to ensure that media campaigns are not just raising awareness, but also driving real change in communities affected by hunger.

## Conclusion

Media can be a powerful tool for advancing efforts toward achieving Zero Hunger, but it also presents challenges such as limited access to media in developing countries, limited funding for media campaigns, and misinformation and disinformation. However, by leveraging opportunities such as social media, partnerships, creative content, fact-checking, and local partnerships, media organizations can help to raise awareness about hunger and advocate for policy changes that address the root causes of the issue.

Future research can play a critical role in developing effective media strategies for addressing hunger. By investigating the impact of social media, partnerships, diverse representation, and follow-up actions, researchers can identify best practices and improve the effectiveness of media campaigns. Additionally, research on the effectiveness of media campaigns in addressing the root causes of hunger and engaging decision-makers and policymakers can help to ensure that media campaigns are not just raising awareness, but also driving real change in communities affected by hunger.

The media has an important role to play in the fight against hunger. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities presented by the media, we can work towards achieving Zero Hunger and ensuring that everyone has access to nutritious and sustainable food.

### Recommendations for future research

- Study the impact of social media on raising awareness about hunger in developing countries, particularly among marginalized communities.
- Investigate the effectiveness of partnerships between media organizations, non-profit organizations, and governments in reducing the cost of media campaigns and reaching target audiences.
- Conduct research on the most effective types of content for engaging target audiences on the issue of hunger, particularly in the context of social media.
- Examine the role of fact-checking and verification in countering misinformation and disinformation about hunger in media campaigns.
- Explore the impact of local partnerships between media organizations and communities on the effectiveness of media campaigns in addressing hunger.
- Investigate the impact of diverse representation in media campaigns on addressing stereotypes and promoting effective policies to address hunger.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of media campaigns in addressing the root causes of hunger, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change.
- Investigate the impact of media campaigns on decision-makers and policymakers, and their willingness to take action to address hunger.
- Study the effectiveness of follow-up actions and impact evaluation in ensuring that media campaigns drive real change in communities affected by hunger.

### References

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2021). The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2021: Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition, and affordable healthy diets for all. Rome, Italy: FAO.
- Geldof, B. (1985). Do they know it's Christmas? [Recorded by Band Aid]. London, UK: Mercury Records.
- Global Hunger Index. (2021). India. Retrieved from <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/india.html>
- Hueso, A., & Bell, S. (2016). The role of the media in ending malnutrition: Moving the agenda forward. London, UK: Overseas Development Institute.
- Lopez, A. (2020, June 4). The media has a crucial role to play in the fight for racial justice. Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/angelicalavito/2020/06/04/the-media-has-a-crucial-role-to-play-in-the-fight-for-racial-justice/?sh=6c826214b7e8>
- NDTV. (2021). Banega swasth India. Retrieved from <https://swachhindia.ndtv.com/>
- UN World Food Programme. (2021). #ShareTheMeal. Retrieved from <https://sharethemeal.org/>
- Akindele, R. A., & Oladokun, O. O. (2021). Role of media in achieving sustainable development goals in Africa: the case of SDG 2 (zero hunger). *Journal of Agribusiness and Rural Development*, 59(2), 163-175.
- Arora, A. (2021). Using media for promoting sustainable development goals. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 3(1), 79-82.
- Ahmad, U. F., & Ayorinde, S. O. (2020). The role of media in agriculture and rural development. *Journal of Agribusiness and Rural Development*, 57(3), 267-277.
- Banerjee Saxena, S., & Singh, R. (2019). Media framing of food security in India: a content analysis of English language newspapers. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 11(2), 50-66.
- Bhardwaj, S., & Kiran, R. (2019). Role of media in addressing food security in India. *International Journal of Agricultural and Statistical Sciences*, 15(1), 141-152.
- Islam, M. S., Asaduzzaman, M., & Roy, B. C. (2020). Exploring the use of Facebook and WhatsApp in knowledge sharing among smallholder farmers in Bangladesh. *Information Development*, 36(2), 193-204.
- Jain, V., & Pandya, H. (2020). Zero hunger in India: opportunities and challenges for the media. *Media Watch*, 11(3), 481-493.
- Kumari, P., & Mukhopadhyay, A. (2019). Impact of social media on agricultural extension services in India. *Journal of Extension Education*, 31(3), 1-10.



- Lyon, F., Abebe, T., Barrientos, A., Behuria, P., & Valdivia, W. (2020). Digital and social media for sustainable development: a review of applications, opportunities and challenges. *International Development Planning Review*, 42(3), 247-267.
- Tufte, T., & Wildermuth, N. (2017). *Media and communication for development: a handbook for planning and action*. Routledge.
- Van de Mortel, T. G., & Tang, M. C. (2020). The role of social media in food security and nutrition. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 52(9), 937-943.
- Barrett, C. B., & Alston, J. M. (Eds.). (2021). *Food Security and Sociopolitical Stability*.
- Mughal, M. J., & Ali, Z. (2020). Media and Sustainable Development: A Critical Review. *Sustainability*, 12(19), 8087.
- Atarah, L. (2019). The Role of Media in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *Media and Communication*, 7(3), 56-64.
- Kopsky, C. (2019). How Media Can Help Achieve Sustainable Development Goals. World Bank. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/03/12/how-media-can-help-achieve-sustainable-development-goals>
- Ofosu-Kusi, Y., & Botwe, B. (2018). Media and the Fight Against Hunger: Lessons Learned from Ghana. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/3/i8626en/I8626EN.pdf>
- Ekine, A., & Adelaja, A. (2017). The Role of Media in Addressing Hunger and Malnutrition in Developing Countries. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 12(2), 156-170.
- Putra, A., & Putra, N. (2016). Using the Media to Promote the Sustainable Development Goals: Lessons Learned from Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 26(1), 1-15.
- Servaes, J., & Malikhao, P. (2015). *Communication for Development and Social Change*.
- Shekhar, S., & Verma, S. (2014). The Role of Media in Promoting Food Security in India. International Food Policy Research Institute. Retrieved from <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/128940/filename/128151.pdf>
- Okeowo, M. M., & Bammek, O. F. (2013). Using Mass Media to Promote Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 6(11), 75-86.