

An Evaluation Of Poverty Reduction Programmes And Community Development, Skyviewing Ehime-Mbano Local Government Area Of Imo State - Nigeria (2000 – 2015)

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Abstract: *The study examined poverty reduction programmes and community development in Nigeria skyviewing Ehime-Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State. The study aimed to determine whether the introduction of the National Poverty Eradication programme (NAPEP) had some impacts on the community development in the Local Government Area of Imo State. The study reviewed literature and adopted system theory as the Theoretical framework of analysis. The study which was descriptive research employed survey design as its methodology. Simple random techniques conducted in selected community in Ehime-Mbano local government Area. The primary data and chi-square (X^2) statistics were used to analyzed data and test of the hypotheses for the study. Findings from the study showed that Poverty Eradication Programmes has led to significant reduction of poverty among the populace. It was also revealed that the programme was faced with challenges ranging from corruption, ineffective communication, and weak participation of the people. Based on the findings, the study recommended that government and development agencies should strengthen the programme through more funding, monitoring and supervision, massive enlightenment, capacity building, and proactive participating approach among others.*

Keywords: Community Development, Eradication, LDC, Poverty Reduction, Poverty Line

Preliminary View

Issue of poverty has provoked concern and debates among scholars and organizations in the world today. It has become an issue of global interest. It is an epidemic affecting majority of the people in the world, including Nigeria. Poverty has economic, social, and political manifestations. The poor are materially deprived, socially alienated, and political excommunicated. (Adofullemona and Sophis, 2013).

As Ajegi (2002), rightly observed, the poverty situation in Nigeria has assumed a crisis dimension. Records from the Bureau of Statistics show that about 70% of Nigerians live below the poverty line. The data further reveal that only 50% of the population have access to safe drinking water while 38% cannot avail themselves of primary health care. It is estimated that about 70% of Nigerians consume less than 1/3 minimum protein and vitamin intake due to low purchasing power. Poverty as lack of access to basic needs, goods and services is essentially economic or consumption oriented.

According to Onibukun and Kumuyi (1996), Poverty is “a way of life characterized by low calories intake, inaccessibility to adequate health facilities, low quality education system, low life expectancy, high infant mortality, low income, unemployment and underemployment, and inaccessibility to various housing and social facilities, Sancho (1996) states that the poor are the most vulnerable and lack resources, capacity to organize themselves and unable to exercise the right to protect their situation. The poor are those who are deprived, unable and lack resources to acquire basic needs of life. They are structurally placed to be dependent. Poverty denies its victims the basic needs for human survival and they are unable to meet their social, economic and political obligations in the society.

UNDP Report (2001) agrees that poverty in Nigeria has been heightened by structural imbalance of the economy, inappropriate development agenda, debt burden and visible measures of poverty in Nigeria (Nigeria Human Development Report, 2001). The alarming rate of environmental degradation and its effect on employment and food production is also traceable to poverty in Nigeria (Kirwan, 1999:7). High employment rate, unaffordable basic education, inequality, insecurity, deprivation of fundamental human rights, freedom liberties and basic needs for human survival and crisis arising from constant agitation for the resource control are evidence of poverty in Nigeria (UNDP 1998:3)

Thus, the poor are conceived as those individuals or households in a particular society incapable of purchasing a specified basket of basic goods and services (Ajakainye and Adeyege, 2001; Gbosi, 2004). The high incidence of poverty in the country has made

poverty alleviation strategies important policy option over the years with varying results. The government realized that if the worsening poverty situation is not checked, the future of the nation would be doomed (Aku and Oladeji, 1997)

Efforts at improving the rural areas of Nigeria predated the independence of the country since 1960. The major effort made in the pre-independence according to Omale and Molem (2003), were in the area of farm settlement schemes. The aim was to bring scattered small communities together so that they could take advantage of economies of scale in farm inputs, agro services, marketing among others. These schemes recorded little or no success because those that were to be affected were not involved at the planning stages. Since then, a number of government programmes have been put in place to improve basic services, infrastructure and housing facilities for the rural population, extending access to credit, farm inputs and creating employment. These efforts can be classified into the pre-Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) era; and the democratic era.

During the SAP era, government only showed concern for poverty reduction indirectly through the launching of many programmes. These programmes had positive effects on poverty reduction although the target population for some of the programmes were not specified explicitly as poor people or communities (Ogwumike, 1995). The programmes included the River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP), the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), the Rural Banking Programme (RBP) and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) set up in 1976 among others. However, most of them could not be sustained as many of them failed due to diversion from the original focus, lack of political will and commitment, policy instability and insufficient involvement of the beneficiaries in these programmes (Anyanwu, 2004)

During the SAP era (1986-1998), conscious policies were made. The severe economic crisis in Nigeria in the early 1980s worsened the quality of life of most Nigerian. The government made determined effort to check the crisis through the adoption of SAP. According to Anyanwu (2004), the implementation of this policy further worsened the living conditions of many Nigerians especially the poor who were the most vulnerable group. Consequently, the government designed and implemented many poverty alleviation programmes between 1986 and 1998 such as the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Better Life Programme (BLP) set up to enhance the quality of life of rural women among other objectives.

Based on available evidence, Ogwumike (1998), concluded that the BLP made tremendous impact with regard to poverty alleviation. However, the success of the programmes was short-lived. Other programmes included were the People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN); Community Banks (CB); Family Support Programme (FSP); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP); National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA); the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and the Strategic Grains Reserves Programmes (SGRP) among others. All these were established by different administration in the country to address various manifestation of poverty such as unemployment, lack of access to credit and rural gender dimension of poverty (NPC, 2004).

With the democratic institution in 1999, measures were adopted to streamline poverty-related institutions, review past poverty alleviation programmes and harmonized sectoral effects. Major factors hindering the success of government efforts to reduce the level of poverty were identified among others to include poor co-ordination, absence of comprehensive policy framework, excessive political interference, ineffective target of the poor, leakage of benefits of unintended beneficiaries, overlapping functions which led to institutional rivalry and conflicts among others (Ogwumike, 1998; 2002 and Egbare, 1997). The review resulted into a more focus anti-poverty programme - National Poverty Alleviation Programme by the Obasanjo administration which was transformed into National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

This research is set to evaluate poverty reduction programmes and community development, sky-viewing Ehime-Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State Nigeria between the years 2000 – 2015.

Scope:

Ehime Mbano is one of the largest Local Government Areas in Imo State, Nigeria with 204,340 people in 2015. Ehime Mbano Local Government Area Geo Political is in Okigwe(Imo North) senatorial zone that was carved out of the former Mbano L.G.A. in 1989 with its headquarters at Umuezeala. It is made up of these major clans namely Ehime, Umueze (Umueze I and Umueze II), Agbaja /Umukabia, Akanu/Umuezeala (Umunakanu and Umuezeala), Umualumaku/Umuihim, Nneato Ugwumezi (Umunumo and Nzerem/Ikpem) and Nsu (Ikpe Nsu, Ihite Nsu, Umuakagu Nsu and Umuezeala Nsu) with 29 Autonomous communities. Bounded at the North by Onuimo and at the South by Ahiazu Mbaise and from the East and West by Ihitte/Uboma and Isiala Mbano/Onuimo/Okigwe L.G.As.

The following health centres exist in different wards and communities within the Ehime Mbano L.G.A to cater for the health & welfare of the people. In Agbaja ward, Agbaja community there is Agbaja Health Post; In Nsu B ward one health centre at

Umuezeala Nsu community precisely at Mgbam Health Post Umuezeala Nsu Health Center; At Nsu A ward in Umuduru/Umuopara community there is Umuduru Umuopara Health Centre. The others are 4 Nzerem/Ikpem ward Nzerem Health Centre; Umuakagu Health Centre at Umuakagu community; Umualumaku/Umuhihim Health Centre at Umualumaku; Umueleke Health Centre at Umueleke; Umueze I Health Centre and Umuhihim Health Post at Umueze I; Umueze II Health Centre/Duruegwelwe Health Centre Okwe Owerre; Isi Ehime Health Post at Umueze Ama, Umuezeala Owerre Health Post; Osuru Health Centre and Umukabia Health Post at Umukabia, Umunakanu Health post and Umugolo Health Post at Umunakanu community, Umunumo Ibeafor Health Centre at Umunumo Ibeafor community and Umunumo Basic Health Post

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this research work:

H₀: The impact of Poverty Eradication Programme on Ehime Mbano Local Government Area is independent (is not associated with) of the packages introduced and implemented.

H₁: The impact of Poverty Eradication Programme on Ehime Mbano Local Government Area is not independent (is associated with) of the packages introduced and implemented.

Community Development

According to United Nations cited Aguocha (1992), community development is a process whereby the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities; to integrate the communities into the life of the nation and to enable them contribute fully to national progress.

Nkama (1985) advanced three definitions of community development as follows:

- (1) A movement designed to promote better living condition for the whole community with the active participation or initiative of the community.
- (2) The process by which the efforts of the people themselves were united with those of the government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.
- (3) A process of bringing and maintain a progressively more effective adjustment between social welfare resources and social welfare needs within a geographical area of functional field. He concluded that the overriding objective of community development is to provide better living conditions for the entire community either by the initiative of the people themselves or through some catalysts which might be government or voluntary agencies.

According to Community Development Foundation (UK) cited in Olughu (2014), "Community development is a structured intervention that gives communities greater control over the conditions that affect life". This does not solve all the problems faced by a local community, but it does not build up confidence to tackle such problems as effectively as any local action can. Community development works at the level of local groups and organizations rather than with individuals or families. Osim (2015), noted therefore that "in the process of community development members of the community as actors are active. Community development cannot take place if there is no participation by all members of the community. It follows therefore that community development cannot be achieved without mass participation".

Community development is best used to describe those approaches which use a mix of informal education, collective action and organizational development and focus on cultivating social justice, mutual aid, local networks and communal coherence. Sandar (1958), cited in Okoro and Agoha (2006), considers the term community development as having derived its surname from economic development as the paternal parent and its first name from community organization as the maternal parent. Thus inferring that community development can be regarded as a method or process of tackling the problem of community organization in order to bring about economic development.

Community development practice has risen from variety of sources and settings. Its root can be traced to the social reform movement in Britain and North America in the later half of the 18th century. Community development principles were formulated and applied in the third world development efforts following decolonization. Community organization as it can be called was used in deprived or underdeveloped urban and rural settings in North America (Smith, 1979) community development is a set of approaches undertaken by individuals, informal groups and community groups to identify and articulate their needs and to take practical collective action to address them (Community Development Foundation, 2017).

Community development is a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participants and fullest possible reliance upon the community's initiatives (United Nations, 1984). Community development practice has arisen from variety of sources and settings. Its roots can be traced to the social reform movement in Britain and North America in the later half of the 18th century. Community development principles were formulated and applied in

the third world development efforts following decolonization. Community organization, as it can be called, was used in deprived or under-developed urban and rural settings in North America (Smith, 1979). Community development is a set of approaches undertaken by individuals, informal groups and organizations. The role of community development is to support people and community groups to identify and articulate their needs, and to take practical collective action to address them (Community Development Foundation, 2017).

Community development was a response to the perceived disintegration of society due to rapid technological changes, economic dislocations, disruption in traditional family and community structures and the extension of government and commercial services into personal and family life, with negative impacts on personal effectiveness and community tie (Carey, 1995). Community development is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual relationship which is of great benefit to the entire society. Any community that is not developing will suffer a lot. Communities should strive to strengthen itself through development. Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritizing the actions of communities, and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It strengthens the capacity of people as active citizens through their community groups, organizations and networks; and the capacity of institutions and agencies (public, private and non-governmental) to work in dialogue with citizens to shape and determine change in their communities. It plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. It has a set of core values/ social principles covering human rights, social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity; and a specific skills and knowledge base. Good community development is action that helps people to recognize and develop their ability and potential and organize themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share. It supports the establishment of strong communities that control and use assets to promote social justice and help improve the quality of community life. It also enables community and public agencies to work together to improve the quality of government.

Community development therefore emphasizes from the following definitions:

- Community self help.
- Community's felt needs
- The community as an integrated whole and
- Technical assistance (Okoro and Agoha, 2006).

Community development address issues of power and inequality and help competing community voices to be heard. It also creates communities that are more resilient to stress preventing tensions from spilling into unrest (Community Development Foundation, 2017). Community development is effective if the public have access to the relevant and diverse information for their activities. Effort must be made to give access to knowledge and information by non-literate who constitute the majority of rural dwellers (Ainas, 1985).

There are myriads of factors that affect community development. There is phenomenal corruption at the level of politics and governance in Nigeria. The political class is unimaginably corrupt as well as the public democracy which is also corrupt and ineffective in service delivery. In other words, there is national question to be addressed which has recently visibly manifested in the entire life wire of this nation. Despite Nigeria's resources, development has been negated by poor leadership, corruption and attendant poverty incidence (Achebe, 1983).

Achonwa (2000) identifies leadership tussles as the bane of community development. The quest for leadership position usually expose communities to conflict which usually polarize the communities thereby making development at that level a phantom tale. Agents of community development include the youths, health workers, teachers, women, age grade societies, the church, Community Based Organization (CBO), among others. The local government helps in the coordination of the activities and functions of physical planning. The first focuses on local autonomy while the second depends on the coordination of state activities (Ikelegbe, 2005).

Okoro and Agoha (2006) identifies the following objectives of community development:

- a) To provide for themselves those amenities necessary for improved condition of life such as good roads, market stalls, culverts, bridges and community halls.
- b) The establishment of cooperative organizations.
- c) The establishment of educational institutions for the benefit of the younger generations.
- d) Provision of health care facilities,
- e) Provision of good drinking water,
- f) Mobilizing the people's and government resources for grassroots development,
- g) Helping to realize gradual growth for national development,
- h) Creating that enthusiasm among people to be active in community affairs.

A need exists to better recognize the benefits and opportunities presented through youth involvement in community development. If youths are included in programmes to meet needs and empower communities, they can become lifelong participants and take a sense of ownership in development efforts (Nitzberg, 2005). It has been identified that youths must be fully engaged and involved in change efforts at the community level if they are to learn to function as effective members of the society. Health workers contribute to health projects and ensure that the health sector of the community is functional. Where public health institutions are weak, community health workers will help to manage and improve efficiency and quality service. Community health centres can be built. Many health professionals have seen community participation as mainly “contributing” to health projects, that is, the community assists the health professionals with contribution of labour, materials, or money but only rarely with ideas. In both contributing and the consulting modes, communities are regarded mainly as beneficiaries of assistance. When communities are involved in managing as well, the three concepts become synergetic, community members, in partnership with other health workers, are able to use their heads and their voices as well as their hands in the development and operation of facilities and services they can generally call their own (Murthy and Klugman, 2004).

Teachers are the people who are teaching children and imparting knowledge upon them in their most impressionable years. Teachers teach children and help them to develop their knowledge so that they can go on in life and be responsible and productive members of the society (Fewcett, 1999). Women have always played a vital role in community development as individuals or collectively as a group. The role of women in community development can be recognized in our society and can never be over emphasized. The role of women in the community should not be neglected because they are the bedrock of any solid and lasting development in the community (Olughu, 2014).

According to Osim (2015), “it is pertinent that communities must deliberately and consciously plan for the development of women as a first and major resource for the overall development of the community. The women could still perform better if given more chance, especially in the area of decision making. Communities must also bear women in mind while planning for infrastructural development such as transportation facilities like roads, motor parks, water for consumption, agricultural purposes, schools, electricity, housing, vocational centers among others. Development is determined by one’s level of education, good health, social welfare services at his disposal, food security, employment, access to information, all of which will motivate the woman to contribute her knowledge and resources for the overall development of the community.

According to Chukwuee (1988), women come together to build various projects in the communities. They award scholarships to children, participate actively in the political administration of the communities and in the proper up-bringing of their children. While deliberating on this, Ewah (1984) joyfully told her audience that the role of women in community development is multi-dimensional. She stressed that as mothers, they are responsible for nursing and bringing up the children within accepted value systems; as wives they comfort the men and give them the necessary support for maintain the family; as home makers they run the day-to-day affairs of the home and manage the family resources; still as daughters, they have been proved to be the greatest at old age.

Ukpai (1987) while supporting the women group in her study on the role of women in community development with particular reference to Bendel Local Government Area expressly said that these three projects namely: Akwanu Item Town Hall built by Ego Dinohia Women Group; Umuokwe Umuhu Civic Centre (a two-storey) built by Umuokwe Women Group and Umuimenyi Technical Workshop (5 classroom Blocks) by Nkpa Women Group were all initiated by Women Groups in three communities in the Bendel Local Government Area. She stated further that Home Economics is a type of Women Programme in Community development in Bendel Local Government Area. According to her, emphasis is placed on the acquisition of basic skills in cookery, sewing. Knitting, ornamentation and child-care. These programmes are important as far as community development is concerned because the women acquire a lot of knowledge and skills which they use to look after their families and contribute to wards community development projects.

The role of age grades in community development is essential (Olughu, 2014). According to Agwu (2013), the Izubudo Age Grade in Amasiri, Afikpo North L.G.A of Ebonyi State has helped in the development of their community. The age grade Ezeke (Amasiri) also known as “Rise and Shine Age Grade” built a standard modern 6-classroom block, a modern Principals Office with toilet and stuffed them with tables and desks, which was the spring base for the Ekuma Ubaghala Memorial Secondary School, a school named after the founder of the community (Amasiri). Community Based Organizations (CBO’s) have also done much in building communities. Grade Foundation (nd) seeks and encourages CBO’s to seek grants from local and international bodies for basic life-support programmes and projects like pit latrines, fabricated processing machines, care support to orphans and vulnerable children and encourage rural women/youths cooperative societies in rural communities to access loans.

System Theory

The System Theory is adopted for this study. A system according to Bertalanffy (1968) is a set of elements standing in interaction. In other words group of things which have something in common. This includes any grouping with any sort of relationship. There can be smaller systems (sub-systems) such as Ehime-Mbano L.G.A. within other larger systems such as Imo State at the state level and Nigeria at the national level. The poverty reduction programmes in Ehime-Mbano L.G.A is viewed as taking place within a system (Imo State) which in turn exists within the larger Nigeria system. Thus, Ehime-Mbano can be seen as sub-system, one of a number of L.G.As which together comprises an even greater (Imo State) system, which is the region or territory in which it is located.

Each system is defined by some sort of boundary - a boundary can be thought of as an imaginary line which determines what is inside and what is outside of a system. The boundary around any system can be said to be either "open or closed system. A closed system is one which is completely sealed off from its environment by its boundary. However, there are relatively few completely closed systems in today's world. All "organic" systems, a term which includes human beings and their communities, are open systems. That is, each has a boundary which is open to some extent and which makes it possible for energy or influence (various forms, such as information or goods) to pass into and out of its system (Tamas, 2000).

In the community, one of the factors determining the "openness" of the system boundary between the community and the outer world would be the ease of communication. If there were roads, or television and telephone links which permitted free exchange of goods and information across the boundary between the village and the rest of the worlds, that system boundary could be said to be very open. If, on the other hand, there were loss ease of communication, if there were roads, or the phone system did not work, the boundary could be said to be relatively closed.

The same openness would apply if the people were cooperative and worked together in harmony: they would share things across their boundaries. If there were tensions in the community, however, and people did not communicate and share things easily with each other, boundaries would be relatively closed. A lack of trust in a community, for example, would contribute to making boundaries seem "close" (Tamas, 2000:3).

The various things which pass across the boundaries of systems can be called energy of influence. There are different forms of this influence. A human being requires physical energy in the form of food in order to survive. There also other forms of influence which can be termed social power or psychological energy. This "energy", which is often in the form of information, is usually the main product of human relationships, and is a necessary elements in the functioning of social systems. There are usually various kinds of social energy, and different people in a community hold varying amounts of these types of power. Some energy is able to help communities progress, while other forms can be unhelpful. Understanding how to help communities gain access to and control beneficiary types of energy is one of the main aims of community work (Tamas, 2000).

System theory also emphasizes entropy. The term entropy has been used to describe a force or tendency which is present in all systems. All systems tend to "run down", and progress to a stage of reduced coherence and eventually completely random order. They tend to consume all the energy which they have available and eventually stop functioning or "fall apart". For instance, in organic systems which receive insufficient food: they die and their bodies eventually decompose. The tendency toward entropy in organic or social systems ought to be constantly countered through the generation or exchange of energy or influence across boundaries from one system to another. This reverse tendency, which has been described as "negative entropy" maintains or increases the order or harmony within these systems. Examples of energy or influence which can act as negative entropy are food, affection, education, medicine, or anything else which helps sustain or improve the circumstances and unity of the members of a community. On the other hand, forms of energy which can be destructive to the well-being and harmony of social systems, and as such tend toward disunity and disorder, are oppression, injustice, violence, back-biting, malnutrition, poverty, and other forces which prevent people from working together in harmony to achieve mutually-acceptable goals for their collective betterment (Tamas, 2000).

In large social systems such as communities, where there can be sometimes be an abundance of entropy-related forces such as disunity, poverty or injustice, it is often difficult to maintain the highly-ordered forms of cooperation and social cohesiveness which are needed to foster harmony or well-being among the people. Without constant efforts, such communities can become unpleasant places to live; one of the task of community development is to help communities find ways of reducing or countering the tendency toward entropy which exists in all systems.

Another important concept of interest in a system theory is that of "Homeostasis" or dynamic balance. Homeostasis is a term which is used to describe a condition inside a system. It is a "steady state" or a "dynamic balance" which occurs within a system when its internal and external conditions stay essentially the same from one day to the next. The concept of homeostasis thus includes reference to the passage of time: a system will progress through time in a state of balance if it can continue to gain access

to the resources it needs to keep itself in that condition. Thus, if there is a desire to make a change in a system, there is need to alter its “steady state” by modifying some of the conditions in that system. Subsequently, anything which alters the energy flow within or between parts of a system will bring about changes. For example, a community which has high levels of disunity and backbiting among sub-groups can be changed by giving influential members of each sub-group an important task to do which requires them to collaborate with their counterparts in other sub-groups. Working on this common task might change attitudes and the type of communication between groups and foster a system wide shift from conflict to cooperation.

Hypotheses:

H₀: The impact of the National Poverty Eradication Programmes on Ehime-Mbano LGA is independent of (is not associated with) of the packages introduced and implemented.

H₁: The impact of the National Poverty Eradication Programmes on Ehime-Mbano LGA is not independent of (is associated with) the packages introduced and implemented.

Substituting with the Formular

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O_1 - E_1)^2}{E_1}$$

Cal X ²	Tab X ²
26.3	50.999

The result shows that:

The calculated X² = 26.3

The Tabulated (Tab X²) = 50.999

Hence,

A + x = 0.05, V = 18, Cal X² = 26.3, Tab X² = 50.999

Decision Rule

Accept H₀ if the Cal X² < Tab X²

Conclusion: Since the Cal X² (26.3) is less than the Tab X² (50.999), we therefore accept the null hypothesis H₀ and conclude that the impact of the National Poverty Eradication Programme on Ehime-Mbano L.G.A. is independent of (is not associated with) the packages introduced and implemented.

Chi-Square Test of Independence (Association)

Cross tabulation of the factors militating against the effective implementation of poverty eradication programmes and their percentage impact on poverty eradication in Ehime-Mbano LGA of Imo State

	What is the percentage impact rate of the poverty eradication programme in Ehime-Mbano GA of Imo State?				Total
	Between 70%-100%	Between 50%-70%	Between 30%-50%	Below 30%	
What are the factors militating against the effective implementation of poverty eradication programmes in Oru East LGA of Imo state?	6	33	118	40	197
	3.1	36.7	112.2	45.0	197.0
	0	38	99	47	184

	2.9	34.3	104.8	42.0	184.0
Total	6	71	217	87	381
	6.0	71.0	217.0	87.0	381.0

Test of Hypothesis:

H_0 : The rate of the impact of the poverty eradication programmes is not affected by the factors militating against the effective implementation of the programmes.

H_1 : The rate of the impact of the poverty eradication programmes is affected by the factors militating against the effective implementation of the programmes.

Decision Rule: We shall reject H_0 if the p-value less than the alpha (α), otherwise we will not. $\alpha = 0.05$.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	P-Value
Pearson Chi-Square	8.145	3	0.043
Likelihood Ratio	10.456	3	0.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.097	1	0.295
N of Valid Cases	381		

Summation

Since the p-value (0.000) of the Pearson Chi-Square in the table above is less than the alpha ($\alpha = 0.05$), we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the rate of the impact of the poverty eradication programmes is affected by the factors militating against the effective implementation of the programmes.

Findings

This research work examined extensively poverty eradication programmes and community development in Ehime-Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria, a case study of selected communities. After due presentation and analysis of the various data gathered in the course of the study, the work revealed that poverty situation prior to the introduction of poverty eradication programmes was serious and critical in the area.

The study also identified that people in the area could not appropriately benefit from the poverty alleviation programme due to poor communication and lack of participation in the exercise. However, the study identified that the introduction of poverty eradication programmes have significantly led to reduction in poverty among the people in Ehime-Mbano LGA.

As regards the challenges militating against poverty eradication in Ehime-Mbano LGA, the study identified corruption, political interference and poor administration as among the affecting factors. The study identified that inadequate funds to the programme and other measures need to be given adequate attention to enhance operations and sustainability.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it is therefore concluded that: Corruption is the highest common factor militating against implementation of poverty eradication programme in Ehime-Mbano and Poverty condition in LGA prior to the introduction of poverty eradication programmes was serious and critical.

Recommendations

- In spite of the findings from the study which indicated that the poverty programmes in Ehime-Mbano LGA led to significant reduction in poverty among the people of the LGA, however given the challenge of the rising level of poverty which expected

to increase by 70% in rural areas (poverty, 2015), this level of significance based on perception of selected respondents is a far cry from the real poverty situation on ground. Therefore, there is need for the government to double its efforts by expanding the targeted number of beneficiaries of the programme so as to reach more people in the rural areas such as Ehime-Mbano LGA if the successes of poverty eradication could be meaningful to the people at the grassroots.

- In line with the above recommendation, there is need to give enormous priority to poverty eradication programmes by voting more funds for the programmes so as to reach more beneficiaries in the rural communities. This is very important since the bulk of the poverty eradication programmes are economic empowerment programmes that are capable of raising self-sustaining small and medium scale industries, which could apart from reducing the poverty level, create employment opportunities, increase the GDP, increase per head as well as spark of development and industrialization.
- To this end, there should be proper and effective synergy and mutual support between the federal and state agencies for a synchronized poverty eradication programmes for maximum results rather than fragmental approach that yields minimal results.
- Based on the findings that people in Ehime-Mbano LGA could not appropriately identify the poverty eradication programmes available in the LGA due to perceived ineffective communication and participation of the people, there is need for the relevant state and federal poverty reduction agencies to carryout massive rural enlightenment campaigns to enlighten the people on the existence and benefits of poverty eradication programmes. Besides, the people should be aggressively mobilized to participate in these programmes through participatory needs assessment programmes, focus group discussions, radio and television jingles, public address system such as mass rallies with vans, through announcement in the churches, and use of local town criers, by so doing people will be fully aware of the intricacies of the programmes and also participate effectively as partners in progress.
- Corruption was identified as the biggest problem militating against poverty eradication programmes; one way of preventing diversion of funds is for the agencies to capture the actual target number and persons that are beneficiaries of these programmes through collection of statistics during the initial interface with the people via town hall meetings, focus group discussions, and needs assessment programmes in the community. By so doing, there would be no room for bloating the number of beneficiaries per community that would warrant surplus for embezzlement.

Similarly, the various anti-corruption agencies should not just focus on embezzlement of state funds, but their search light should also beam on poverty eradication programmes to ensure accountability and transparency in the system.

Furthermore, the courts should be made more responsive to anticorruption cases in terms of quick dispensation of justice and fairness in handling such cases. These measures will go a long way in minimizing the problems militating against poverty eradication programmes in Ehime-Mbano L.G.A in particular and Nigeria at large

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