



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN CROSS RIVER STATE NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

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(Received 17 May 2023, Revision Accepted 21 June 2023)

ABSTRACT

The study examined the contributions of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) towards poverty reduction in Cross River State North Senatorial District, Nigeria. Hypothetically, the study stated that there is no significant relationship between UNDP infrastructural development, economic empowerment and poverty alleviation. Survey research design was adopted for this study. Data for testing the hypotheses were generated using a 15-item questionnaire entitled "United Nations Development Programmes and Poverty Alleviation Questionnaire" (UNDPFAQ). Data were collected from 764 respondents in two local government areas, through simple random sampling techniques. The generated data were statistically tested using One-way ANOVA. The test of hypotheses revealed that there is significant relationship between UNDP infrastructural development (motorable roads, energy generation, and water supply) and poverty alleviation. UNDP economic empowerment (agricultural loan, credit facilities, provision of fertilizers) significantly relate to poverty alleviation. It was concluded that United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) are important instrument for tackling poverty in Cross River North senatorial district. The study recommended that: poverty reduction strategy in Nigeria should focus more on educating the poor through capacity building, training, and skill acquisition. Economic policies of government should be geared towards job creation. In addition, special attention should be given to the needs of the marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the population including women towards their empowerment and self-sufficiency.

KEYWORDS: UNDP, infrastructural development, economic empowerment, Nigeria, social welfare services, poverty alleviation, well-being, sustainable development, & socio-economic

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the concern of government, non-government organisations, humanitarian organisations, and international donor agencies is the reduction of poverty as captured in the Millennium Development Goals (Okpa, 2022).

The need to improve the living standard of people by dropping the high rate of poverty and check insecurity explains the rationale behind the actions of most international donor agencies. Enhancing human well-being through poverty reduction is the first goal in United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDGs), since

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more than one billion people live on less than US\$1 per day (United Nations, 2002; Anam, Okpa, Wilson, Ikpeme, Ofem, Okon, Obeten, Eshiotse, Akongi, Opoh, 2022). The poor are those individuals who lack access to essential socio-cultural and economic means, essential to enjoy minimum level of satisfaction, and to guarantee socio-economic reproduction (World Bank, 2000; Eshiotse, Wilson, Bukie, Undelikwo, Abang, Odinka, Uyang, Ofem, Bisong, Jeremiah, & Okpa, 2023). The poor exist in every part of the world making poverty a global issue, which affects individuals irrespective of their race, continents, or nations. It is a condition that is said to exist when the people lack the means to satisfy their needs (Ebingha, Eni, & Okpa, 2019). The Central Bank of Nigeria (1999) described poverty as a state, where an individual is not able to cater adequately for his or her basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter, and is unable to meet social, and economic obligation, lack gainful employment skills, assets, and self-esteem, and has limited access to social, and economic infrastructure such as education, health, portable water, and sanitation, and consequently has limited chance to enhance his or her capabilities (Agba, Okpa, & Ogar, 2020). The poor according to World Bank (1990), United Nations (1995) Omang, Okpa & Okoi, (2022) are financially incapacitated, lack access to adequate productive resources enough to ensure sustainable livelihood, lack access to good food and suffer severely from malnutrition, ill health, and illiteracy. The poor also lack access to other essential services, like good homes, and safe environment. They are socially discriminated and excluded from the scheme of things. The Poor do not participate in decision making in civil, social and cultural life.

Poverty is widespread in both rural and urban areas in Nigeria. The rural areas, however, record a higher incidence, depth and severity of poverty than the urban areas. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2007) records shows that more than half of rural households are 'absolutely poor' while the proportion is much lower in the urban areas (Ofem, Okpa, & Joshua, 2021). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) attributed the high incidence of poverty in the rural areas to their dependence on low-productivity agriculture, lack of access to opportunities and poor social and economic infrastructure. Poverty remains endemic in

Nigeria despite the introduction of several anti-poverty programmes by successive governments such as NAPEP, NDE etc. According to statistics, the incidence of poverty has significantly increased in Nigeria since 1980 (Okpa, Ilupeju, & Eshiotse, 2020). Ogar (2016); Ukwai and Okpa, (2017) observed that the poverty in Cross River North senatorial district is significantly high as access to housing, good food, portable drinking water and adequate sanitation posed a serious problem to the people. Healthcare facilities are inadequate to cater for the health needs of the people, thus leading to sudden and avoidable death. Many primary and secondary schools are sorrowful state as the rate of illiteracy is relatively high. According to Chukwu (2012); Ogar (2016), Ebingha, Eni, and Okpa, (2019) physical infrastructure (such as roads, portable water, and electricity) and social services (such as education, health, recreation, and security) are not adequately provided. Mortality rate is still high, women still engage in hard labour to fend for their children and complement the family income. This situation according to Ukwai, Okpa, Adewoyin, Angioha, and Udom, (2017) has resulted in high rate of urbanization, high rate of crime, uncontrolled penchant for violence and aggression, illiteracy, unemployment, inequality, hopelessness, loss of trust in government, high rates of infant and maternal mortalities, low life expectancy as well as low standard of living.

Successive Nigerian governments have sought to address the challenges posed by poverty by focusing on rural development, such as improving the access of farmers and rural producers to credit, and encouraging the development of small and medium-scale enterprises (Fan, & Thorat, 1999; Odey, Agba, & Kina, 2019). These interventions were intended to reduce poverty in the country, but their designs and implementations were faulty. While some lacked focus, others had unrealistic targets, which failed to put into consideration technical capacities and budgetary limitations. In addition, the targeted beneficiaries had either very limited or no participation in the planning and implementation of these interventions. Because some of these intervention programmes lacked focus, they ventured into too many activities and became unsustainable (Bamboye, 2007; Peter, Okpa, & Okoi, 2020). In the light of the above observations, this study sought to investigate the contributions of UNDP towards the reduction of

poverty in Cross River North senatorial district, Nigeria. To address the problem of this study, the following research questions were asked: What is the relationship between UNDP infrastructural development projects (motorable roads, energy generation, and water supply) and poverty alleviation in Cross River North senatorial district? Has the UNDP economic empowerment programme (agricultural loan, credit facilities, provision of fertilizer) alleviated poverty in Cross River North senatorial district? The main objective of this study is to examine the contributions of United Nation Development Programmes towards poverty alleviation in Cross River North senatorial district, Nigeria. The following research hypotheses were tested:

- (i) There is no significant relationship between UNDP infrastructural development (motorable road, energy generation, water) and poverty alleviation (income level, access to education, health and improved social status).
- (ii) UNDP economic empowerment programme (agricultural loan, credit facilities, provision of fertilizers) does not significantly relate to poverty alleviation (income level, access to education, health and improved social status).

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Infrastructural facilities (motorable roads, energy generation, water supply) and poverty alleviation

Infrastructural amenities play a crucial role in the development of any human economy and in poverty reduction. United Nations (2011) reported that infrastructure amenities are remarkable in poverty reduction, economic development, and job creation for the unemployed especially in developing nations of the world. Similarly, Ale, Abisuwa, Olagunagba, and Ijarotimi (2011) assert that the availability of essential infrastructures is a precondition for evolving economies to kindle economic advancement and achieve economic strengthen and poverty reduction through sustained and diversification of the economy. Calderon (2009) and Egbetokun (2009) observed that the provision of infrastructures is part of integrated strategy which leads to the development of various fields of life such as agriculture, education, health, nutrition, electrification, water supply and cooperatives simultaneously. Bamboye (2007) pointed out that individuals are poor because they do not have

access to infrastructural services that could improve the quality of their life. In the same vein, (Perkins & Luiz, 2005; Omang, Okpa, Okoi, & Iniama, 2020) remarked that where infrastructures are put in place, level of agricultural productivity will be increased and if otherwise citizens will suffer, particularly the rural poor, thus economic renewal and societal welfare become worse and halted. Therefore, a strategy to reduce abject poverty needs to incorporate policies to develop both production and welfare-oriented infrastructures in order to improve poor people's productive capacity and quality of life (Okoi, Ogar, Ubi, Ubi, & Okpa, 2022).

One of the earlier attempts to investigate the role of infrastructure in development processes was Aschauer (1989). This study concluded that core infrastructure such as streetlights, highways, airports, etc., contributes more to productivity than other forms of infrastructure. Following Aschauer's work, several studies have been carried out to unravel the link between infrastructure facilities and poverty reduction. Following this line of research, Fan, Hazell, and Thorat (1999) estimated the effect of public expenditure on levels of rural poverty across Indian states. In this study, the authors distinguished between expenditure on rural education, targeted rural development, public health, irrigation, power generation, agricultural research and development, and rural roads. They found that agricultural, rural roads, rural education, and targeted rural development all have negative and statistically significant effects on rural poverty. Of these, spending on agricultural and rural roads has by far the largest impact on both growth and poverty.

Canning and Bennathan (2000) compared the relative impact of infrastructure investment in electricity generation and paved roads in 52 and 41 countries, respectively. These authors found that (1) the return to investment on electricity generation is likely to be higher in low-income countries; (2) the return on investment from paved roads is likely to be higher in middle-income countries due to the low costs of road construction in these countries relative to low-/high-income countries; and (3) both types of infrastructure generate less return on investment when not combined with human capital interventions. The study showed that the rate of return to infrastructure investment may vary depending on the income level of the country and

the type of infrastructure. The study also suggested that infrastructure in isolation has limited impacts on economic growth and that there should be a mixture of physical and human capital investment to maximize the return. Jerome and Ariyo (2004) explored the impact of infrastructural reforms (that is, implementation of privatization and liberalization in telecommunications and private investment in infrastructure) on poverty reduction. The study found that infrastructure reforms and privatization in Africa have been carried out without considering the needs of the poor and without meeting the policy preconditions that are indispensable for their effectiveness. The consequence of this is that infrastructure privatization, rather than having a positive impact, has negatively affected the poor in Africa. The authors argued that the goals of infrastructure reforms can only be achieved if such reforms are undertaken in the context of appropriate market and regulatory frameworks. The review of literature revealed that while several studies have been carried out to examine the relationship between infrastructure and poverty in developed countries, while in developing country like Nigeria effort towards this direction is significantly low. Given the dearth of empirical facts on this issue in Nigeria, the present study becomes justifiable since it will provide necessary insight into the role of infrastructure in poverty reduction and also shed light on the question of which type of infrastructural investment is more effective in poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Economic empowerment (agricultural loan, credit facilities, provision of fertilizer) alleviate poverty

Empowerment is a process through which individuals gain control over matters that concern them most. It is also, a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives (Page & Czuba, 1999; as cited in Nabavi, 2009). Economic empowerment refers to economic security of oneself (Irobi, 2008). Ere (2001) as cited in Nkpoyen and Bassey (2012) stressed that the promotion of local cooperative societies and empowerment geared towards poverty reduction in rural areas is very important. Ere argued that local cooperative societies could be regarded as voluntary organizations of persons with a common interest, formed and operated along democratic lines for the purpose

of supplying services at minimum cost to its members who contribute both capital and business. Similarly, Girigiri (2000) reported that a significant association exists between provision of credit facilities and poverty reduction in rural areas. The provision of credit facilities helps individuals out of their economic predicaments. Okaba (2005) noted that provision of credit facilities has tremendously reduced poverty among rural dwellers as demonstrated by improved living standard of rural dwellers. Access to credit facilities in recent times have become one of the most efficient vehicles for the effective mobilization of rural productive resources and accelerated rural transformation.

According to Taga (2013), one effective way of reducing poverty is to make members of the society productive by giving them economic empowerment. The empowerment of individuals creates a sense of responsibility and promotes participatory development in the society. Empowerment of people and their participation in the society can be achieved by connecting the individuals with different social institutions (e.g., education, economic, political). This goal can be achieved with the development and promotion of social capital, that is, activation of individual's capacities for empowerment. Empowerment of an individual may further activate ones hidden capacities and thereby making him/her a productive member of the society (Taga, 2013). Existing literature indicates a correlation between micro-lending and empowerment for poverty alleviation through enhancement of financial capital (Nkpoyen & Bassey, 2012). There is also an association between micro-lending and empowerment (Ndubi, 2008). According to Vosantakumari and Sharma (2010), empowerment is one of the development purposes to which micro-lending can be put. Through micro-lending programmes, women have become empowered to make choices that have resulted in increased recognition of their productive roles and by extension poverty reduction (Ahmed, et al., 2004; Bayes, 2005; Sosibo, 1999, as cited in Nkpoyen & Bassey, 2012).

Empowerment is a process that increases the capacity of the disempowered to act on their own behalf and to analyse and understand their problems, to recognise their ability to act on their own behalf and increase their power and control over the resources necessary for sustainable and

dignified life (Muro, 1994; Misana, 1995). Micro-credit is very important in creating access to productive capital for the poor to enable them move out of poverty (Magugui, *et al.*, 2014). The major contribution of micro-credit facilities to a developing economy like that of Nigeria is its role in promoting entrepreneurship development in the nation. One of the successes of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is the reduction of unemployment and poverty alleviation (Osunde & Mayowa, 2012). The provision of micro-credit has been regarded as an important tool for raising the income of rural population, mainly by mobilizing resources for more productive uses. This uses include the establishment of relationships with individuals and agencies for the purpose of harnessing market information and acquiring business skills (Shane & Cable, 2002; Iheduru, 2002; Bhagavatula, *et al.*, 2010) for the establishment of small/micro enterprises.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study opted for the survey research design. This design according to Kerlinger and Lee (2000) is directed towards determining the nature of situation that exists at the time of investigation. The survey design was adopted for this study because of its relative importance in the collection of accurate information from respondents at relatively low cost and greater efficiency. The study was carried out in Cross River North senatorial district, Nigeria. Cross River North senatorial district lies roughly between latitudes 5 degree 32 and 4 degree 50 and 9 degree 28 east. The area is bounded in the east by Republic of Cameroun and Boki Local Government Area, and on south by Ikom and Boki Local Government areas, on the west by Ebonyi and North; Benue State. An international boundary from the east separates the area from the Republic of Cameroun. For administrative convenience, the Cross River North senatorial district is divided into five local government areas, namely: Yala, Ogoja, Bekwarra, Obudu and Obanliku (Adinya & Awoke, 2008). The people of Cross River North senatorial district depend largely on natural water sources for all their water-related activities as piped water supply is limited and grossly inadequate. Health services in the area require a lot of improvement. Level of hygiene in the rural communities is

generally poor (Arene, Ibanga, & Asor, 1999). It is against this backdrop that UNDP intervention in the provision of infrastructural facilities such as portable water, motor-able roads as well as empowering youths and women through credit facilities, agricultural loans among others is a step at the right direction. The target population of this study comprised all youths, market women, artisan, farmers and fishermen (Males and Females) from the five Local Government Areas in Cross River North senatorial district. The total population in the targeted research area was 760,734 people. The distribution of the population shows that Yala has 211,557 people, Ogoja has 171,574 people, Bekwarra has 105,822 people, Obanliku has 110,324 people, and Obudu 161,457 people. The gross total of the study population is 760,734 (NPC, 2006). The researcher believes that this population are in a better position to supply reliable information on the contributions of United Nation Development Programmes (UNDP) towards Poverty Alleviation in the study area. The sample for the study was purposively selected from two Local Government Areas in Cross River North senatorial district who are beneficiary of UNDP.

Two methods of sampling were adopted namely, stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Stratified sampling technique was adopted in the stratification of Local Government Areas into different strata and the selection of respondents based on projects executed in their area by UNDP. This sampling technique reduced sampling error as it enabled the researcher to identify and consider the heterogeneous characteristics of the population while drawing the sample. The simple random sampling technique, on the other hand, was adopted to give all the elements equal opportunity of being sampled for the study without any bias. Cross River North senatorial district was stratified into five (5) Local Government Areas. Each Local Government Area was a stratum. Respondents in each local government area that has benefitted from UNDP projects were selected through simple random sampling. The sample for this study was made up of seven hundred and sixty-four (764) respondents randomly drawn from the two selected Local Government Area that has benefitted from UNDP projects. The two local government areas are Ogoja and Yala. A breakdown of this sample indicates that three hundred and eighty-two (382) subjects were

selected from Ogoja, and the remaining three hundred and eighty-two (382), were selected from Yala. Survey Monkey Sample Size calculator was adopted in determining the sample size. The total population of 211,557 (Yala) and 171,574 (Ogoja) respectively was inputted into the calculator at a confidence level of 95 per cent and at a margin error of 5 per cent, the result displayed the needed sample of 382 for each of the local government selected for the study. The questionnaire was adopted as main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consists of 30 items, and it entitled "Questionnaire on UNDP projects and poverty alleviation (QUNDPPA)". The questionnaire was divided into two main units. Section A, elicited information on the respondent's personal demography such as sex, age, marital status, educational level, level of experience, and place of residence. Section B, consists of 23 items designed to measure UNDP projects and poverty alleviation; each require the respondent to indicate the frequency of their responses on a four-point Likert-scale – Strongly Agree [SA], Agree [A], Disagree [D], Strongly Disagree [SD] scale. Data collected was properly checked to make sure all items in each of the questionnaire is responded to, this exercise was successful as all administered questionnaire were retrieved and used for the data analysis. Thereafter, responses were edited, coded and analysed using appropriate statistical methods. Frequency distribution, simple percentages and one ANOVA analysis procedure was employed. The analysis was presented hypothesis by hypothesis, testing each at 0.05 level of significance.

Data presentation

The responses to the questionnaire in respect to gender revealed that majority 51.3 percent (N = 392) were male while only 48.6 percent (N = 372) were female. From these findings, it showed that male constitute majority of the study population as they are more in number than female respondent. The responses to the questionnaire in respect to age revealed that majority 26.0 percent (N =199) were between 20-24 years, respondents below 20 years were 19.8 percent (N = 151), respondents in the group of those between the ages of 25-29 years above were 18.8 percent (N = 144) respondent those from 30-34 were 18.5 (N=141), respondent from 34-39 were 13.7 percent (N=105) while those from 40

years above numbered 3.1 percent (N=24) respectively. This finding or result implied that respondent from age 21-24 years had a higher percentage than other category of respondent in this variable. The distribution of respondent with level of education shows the majority of the respondent 39.3 per cent (N=300) had GCE/SSCE/NECO, 25.3 per cent (N=194) had NCE/OND as their academic qualification, 23.0 per cent (N=179) had FSLC as the highest academic qualification, 10.9 per cent (N=83) had B.Sc/HND equivalence as their highest qualification while 1.4 per cent (N=11) had master's degree and above. This implied that, the study area is dominated by school sat (SSCE) than any other description. The distribution of respondents by occupational description shows that majority of the respondents 36.3 per cent (N=277) were farmers, 19.1 per cent (N=146) were caterers, 14.7 per cent (N=112) were fisher men, 11.5 per cent (N=88) engages in other productivity activities 7.7 per cent (N=59) were civil servant, 6.5 per cent (N=50) were student while 4.2 per cent (N=32) were into sewing. The spread of respondents in terms of marital status shows that majority 50.4 per cent (N= 385) were married, 44.5 percent (N =340) were single, 3.4 per cent (N=26) were widows, .8 per cent (N=6) were separated, .9 per cent (N=7) were divorced while 0 percent (N = 0) belong to the widowers group. This means that married couples constitute the highest number of respondents in this category than other group.

Data analysis

Hypothesis one

The result in table 2 revealed that among the three categorizations of infrastructural facilities (motorable roads, water and energy generation), the calculated F-ratio of 3.829 is statistically insignificant when compared with the critical F-ratio of 3.046 at 2 degree of freedom. This means that the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant United Nations Development Programmes in infrastructural facilities (motorable roads, water and energy generation) and poverty alleviation in Cross River North senatorial district, is still retained till a post hoc test is performed. It then follows that since there is significant group difference Post hoc test was performed to check were the difference lies, the result for the post hoc test for mean differences is presented in the table 2. The relationship of this

categorization, motorable roads, water and energy generation varies. From this result, it shows that significant f-values are obtained between each pair of groups. In other word, communities with good motorable roads have a higher mean score of poverty alleviation than

communities with pipe born water who in turn have higher mean score of poverty reduction than those with energy generation (16.12 ≥ 15.47 ≥ 15.99) respectively. Between this categorization, the calculated f-value (139, -.517 .517^z -139) at 0.05 level of significance. From this result, there is influence of infrastructural facilities and poverty alleviation in all these categorisations.

Table 2: Result of One-way Anova test of the influence of extent of infrastructural facilities on poverty alleviation

| View of infrastructural facilities | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|------------|
| Motorable roads | 256 | 16.12 | 3.176 | .195 |
| Portable drinking water | 254 | 15.47 | 2.876 | .167 |
| Energy generation | 204 | 15.99 | 2.739 | .192 |
| Total | 764 | 15.83 | 2.960 | .107 |

| | Sum of Squares | of Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-------|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 66.598 | 2 | 33.299 | 3.829 | .022 |
| Within Groups | 6617.291 | 761 | 8.696 | | |
| Total | 6683.889 | 763 | | | |

* P ≤ 0.05 F_{2, 761} = 3.046

Scheffé post hoc test of the influence of infrastructural facilities on poverty alleviation

| (I)infrastructural facility | (J) infrastructural facility | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| Motorable road | Portable drinking water | .657 | .250 | .009 |
| | Energy generation | .139 | .275 | .612 |
| Portable drinking water | Motorable road | -.657 | .250 | .009 |
| | Energy generation | -.517* | .269 | .054 |
| Energy generation | Motorable road | -.139 | .275 | .612 |
| | Portable drinking water | .517* | .269 | .054 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Hypothesis two

The result in the table 3 below revealed that among the three categorisations of economic empowerment (agricultural loan, credit facilities and provision of fertilizers), the calculated F ratio of 397 is statistically significant when compared with the critical F-ratio of 3.046 at 2 degree of freedom. This mean that the null hypothesis

which states that, United Nations Development Programmes in economic empowerment (agricultural loan, credit facilities and provision of fertilizers) does not significantly relates to poverty alleviation in Cross River North senatorial district, is still retained till a post hoc test is performed. It then follows that since there is significant group difference, post-hoc test was performed to check were the difference lies, the result for the post hoc-test for mean differences is presented in the table 3

Table 3: Result of One-way Anova test of the influence of economic empowerment programmes on poverty alleviation

| Economic empowerment programme | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|------------|------|
| Agricultural loans | 303 | 13.42 | 2.365 | .136 | |
| Credit facilities | 315 | 16.72 | 1.236 | .070 | |
| Provision fertilizer | 146 | 18.93 | 2.753 | .228 | |
| Total | 764 | 15.83 | 2.960 | .107 | |
| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 3415.389 | 2 | 1707.694 | 397.600 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 3268.500 | 761 | 4.295 | | |
| Total | 6683.889 | 763 | | | |

* $P \geq 0.05$ $F_{2, 761} = 3.046$

Discussion of findings**Infrastructural facilities (motor-able roads, energy generation, water supply) and poverty alleviation**

The result of the statistical analysis of hypothesis one revealed a significant relationship between infrastructural facilities and poverty alleviation in Cross River North senatorial district, Nigeria. The study revealed that the provision of Infrastructural facilities by UNDP has significantly improved the living standard of rural dwellers in Cross River North senatorial district. It showed that construction of motor-able roads by the above-mentioned international donor agency has enhanced the well-being of the people. Also, the findings of this study indicated that UNDP water supply project has address the challenge of accessing clean drinking water supply in both rural and urban centres in selected communities in Cross River North senatorial district.

Furthermore, it shows that access to power supply encourages small and medium scale enterprise, consequently improving the well-being of the people.

In one of the interview sessions, a community leader posits that:

UNDP has donated electricity transformers and generating sets to some communities in Cross River North senatorial district who are in dare need of electricity. The provision of this critical infrastructure has improved the well-being of rural dwellers in those community. Today so many small-scale businesses have been established. These businesses include beer parlours, laundry, shoe making, hair dressing and barbing salon

Responding to the relationship between Infrastructural facilities (motor-able roads, energy generation, water supply) and poverty alleviation, a youth leader from Yala noted that:

The provision of roads has enabled transportation of farm products from rural areas to major markets in other communities. We experience ease of transportation today because of our good road. UNDP has opened access roads in my community. This has transformed the landscape of my community. This development has help to reduce poverty in my community

Another respondent puts it thus:

UNDP has initiated water projects in my community and other nearby communities that lack access to portable water. This has helped my people to meet their needs for portable water. Boreholes have been drilled in different community by UNDP, this has reduced the water problem of water scarcity and difficulties associated in assessing it. We are no longer afraid of being infected by water borne diseases. Today, our standard of living has improved.

Economic empowerment (agricultural loan, credit facilities, provision of fertilizer) alleviate poverty

From the result of hypothesis two, the study shows a significant relationship between economic empowerment and poverty alleviation in selected communities in Cross River North senatorial district, Nigeria. The study revealed that the provision of agricultural loan to farmers in selected communities in Cross River North senatorial district by UNDP has enhanced their socio-economic status. It shows that economic empowerment is a powerful economic development enabler and an important tool in alleviating rural poverty. The study further indicates that economic empowerment enables the poor to increase their household income, build assets and reduce their vulnerability to daily life crises. It also bolsters investment in children's education; improve nutrition and utilization of appropriate healthcare services as well as planning for the future. This finding is in accordance with the works of Girigiri (2000), Okaba (2005), Taga (2013). Girigiri (2000) reported that a significant association exists between promotion of local cooperative societies and empowerment for poverty reduction. The finding agrees with Okaba (2005) noted that local cooperative societies have tremendously assisted the rural dwellers empowerment for poverty reduction as indicated by improved living standard of rural dwellers. He posits that cooperatives in recent times have become one of

the most efficient vehicles for the effective mobilization of rural productive resources and accelerated rural transformation.

A community leader, while supporting the position of this study, provided an explanation that:

UNDP has done much for rural people in my community by helping them to improve their socio-economic conditions. Young people who are without skills have been provided with skills in their different areas of interest.

An excerpt from the view of a participant was summarized thus:

UNDP has empowered both young people and women with micro-credit, which has boast small business in my area

Another participant that was interviewed noted this thus

We have been assisted by UNDP in different ways. Those of us without jobs were provided with means of survivor. They have provided fishing nets, farming equipment, and grants to artisans in my community. This have improved the well-being of my people.

Another respondent added as follows:

The agency has provided loans to farmers, fertilizer and farming equipment to rural farmers. They have partner with farmers in the area of training, storage and marketing of farm product.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the contributions of United Nation Development Programmes towards poverty alleviation in Cross River North senatorial district, Nigeria. Emphasis was on the relationship between infrastructural facilities (motor-able road, energy generation, and water supply), economic empowerment (agricultural loan, credit facilities, provision of fertilizers) and poverty alleviation. After extensive statistical analysis of each of the formulated hypotheses, the following conclusions were arrived at. There is a significant relationship between United Nation Development Programmes in infrastructural facilities (motorable road, energy generation, water supply) and poverty alleviation. The study revealed that the provision of Infrastructural facilities by UNDP has significantly improved the living standard of rural dwellers in Cross River North senatorial district. Furthermore, it shows that access to power supply encourages small and medium scale enterprise, consequently improving the well-being

of the people. United Nation Development Programmes in economic empowerment (agricultural loan, credit facilities, provision of fertilizers) significantly relate to poverty alleviation. The study revealed that the provision of agricultural loan to farmers in selected communities in Cross River North senatorial district by UNDP has enhanced their socio-economic status. It also shows that economic empowerment is a powerful economic development enabler and an important tool in alleviating rural poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) Investment in infrastructure that directly enhances productive capacities (such as water supply, energy supply, and motor-able roads) can have a high economic return through increased agricultural output. Roads and other infrastructures should be extended to geographically remote areas.
- (ii) Special attention should be given to the needs of the marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the population including women towards their empowerment and self-sufficiency.
- (iii) There is need for the formation of social development departments to disburse social grants like old age, pensions, grants for child support, disability un-employment grants etc

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