

EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMME IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the extent of involvement of participants in the National Poverty Eradication Programme in Cross River State, Nigeria. Data for the study were collected from 75 randomly selected respondents in the study area. Findings revealed that that majority of the participants were highly involved in the following sub-programme, keke NAPEP, Garbage truck and farm tractors, rural transportation, rural water primary health care, farmers empowerment, environmental protection and community enlightenment and sensitization. Poverty alleviation strategy should start with the identification of the poor and their characteristics; they should be given a chance to contribute their quota in alleviating poverty. For the programme to be sustained and its objectives realized, the following suggestion should be pertinent. There should be a mechanism to assist the NAPEP graduates in securing jobs or settling down independently on their job should be put into consideration, with the aid of the Ministry of Employment. Adequate facilities and equipments should be provided at the various training centers in order to make the participation worthwhile to the participants.

Key words: extent of involvement, participants, poverty eradication

INTRODUCTION

In Cross River State and most parts of Nigeria, it is estimated that a large proportion of the population is living below subsistence levels but some ad hoc programmes are established to help eradicate the poverty, which include the People Empowerment Programme Initiative (PEPI); the Calabar Urban Development Authority (CUDA) and the Roll Back Malaria Programme (Otu 2004). In any case, irrespective of the grammatical twist, the Cross River State People Empowerment Programme Initiative (PEPI), is an intermediate step to eradicate poverty by recreating value to capital, rather than spending capital. The foundation of the CRS PEPI is the initiative of their Excellency Mrs Onari Duke (wife of the CRS governor). "PEPI's target is to reach at least 2000 primary beneficiaries before 2010". At the moment, PEPI activates have effectively covered to local government areas. (Clement 2005). When the Calabar Urban Development Authority (CUDA) was established by the state government its major focus mainly though was the planning beautification, sanitation and to maintain the aesthetics of the capital city and are still confined to that conception and perception. But CUDA does more than just this, the CUDA is a conspicuous and principal partner in the battle against poverty in the state. The authority has remained a major employer of labour during this period of scarcity of jobs. The authority has totally encountered 893 skilled and unskilled manpower into the seven major functional departments. (Eleganz 2005).

One of the federal government sustainable development programme is the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). In order to achieve its objective, NAPEP has designed the following schemes: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) which is targeted at helping address the problem of Unemployment among the Youth of

Nigeria; Capacity Enhancement Scheme (CES) which is designed for people who have basic skills, but need additional resources to avoid poverty and ensure wealth creation. Through CES, beneficiaries are provided with credit information and tools/equipment that may be needed for their trade, occupation or business; Community Enlightenment and Sensitization Scheme (COMESS) which is a collection of programmes that employs various media to take the message of modest public support for self- help and active participation in poverty reduction and wealth creation activities to communities, using Radio and Television programmes, information brochure, workshops/ seminars and mobile video units; Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS) is designed to promote projects that improve the social and personal well- being of Nigerians; Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS) deals with the provision of potable and irrigation water, transport (rural and Urban), rural energy and power supply; National Resource Development and conservation scheme (NRDCS).

The NAPEP activities have been condensed into four multisectoral schemes with varying programmes as follows. The Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES); Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme(RIDS); Social Welfare service scheme (SOWESS) and Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS) (NAPEC 2001). Youth Empowerment scheme is subdivided into: Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP) designed to enable youths acquire skills especially for the school leavers and illiterate unemployed youths; Technical Entrepreneurial Development Programme (TEDP) for unemployed young graduates of tertiary institution; Managed Attachment Programme (MAP) designed for unemployed young graduates of tertiary institutions who have undergone the mandatory NYSC; Credit Delivery Programme (CDP) targeting all the skilled unemployed youth who require empowerment to set up a scaled business of their choice in production or service provision. Rural infrastructural development scheme has the following programmes; Rural Transportation Programme (RTP) for provision, expansion and maintenance of all season road network; Rural Energy Programme (REP) for the provision of energy for both industrial and domestic needs; Rural Water Programme (RWP) which is for the provision of adequate potable water; Rural Communication Programme (RCP) for provision of need communication facilities. Social Welfare Service Scheme has programmes like: Special Education Programme (SEP) to provide informal literacy and education opportunities; Primary Health Care Programme (PHP) for the provision of the primary healthcare; Farmers Empowerment Programme (FCP) provides farmer with input and marketing facilities/ opportunities; Other Social Services Programme (OSSP) provides services like markets, parks, toilets, recreation facilities etc. Natural Resources Development and Conservation Schemes uses programmes like Agriculture Resources Programme (ARP) for effective development and management of agricultural resources; Water Resources Programme (WRP) for effective development and management of water resources; Solid Minerals Resources Programme (SMRP) which helps and ensure for the effective development and management of solid minerals; Environment Protection Programme (EPP) for sustained exploitation of Natural resources while ensuring minimum pollution, general protection of the environment.

Some other activities used also as a tool for poverty eradication are: Programme for the Capitalization of assets of the poor (P-CAP) which is designed to enhance the ability of poorer Nigerians to access commercial funds, by legalizing and standardizing

their assets. It will also seek to address other business and market challenges that face poorer Nigerians. The Warm Heart Campaign is a partner project designed to help NAPEP and other government agencies reach those in extreme poverty, the so-called poorest of the poor. This segment of the typically has no access to basic necessities like food, shelter, clothing and water. The project would involve wide ranging collaboration with interested organizations and individuals to bring immediate relief to those involved and provide a sustainable solution to their plight. The Niger Fund is also a partner programme designed to help NAPEP and other government agencies mobilize resources for viable and sustainable poverty reduction policies.

Several attempts have been made by various governments in the past at empowering and improving the standard of living of the general populace. In spite of all these effort, poverty still continues to haunt a greater percentage of the population, thereby leaving rural dwellers in the greater percentage, the reason for such being that most of the present and past poverty alleviation policies such as Operation Feed The Nation (OFN 1976, green Revolution 1980), National Directorate of Employment (NDE 1986), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Family Support Programme (FSP, formally Better Life Programme BLP), Peoples Bank, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Oil Minerals Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC now the NDDC), Mass Transit Programme (MTP), Agricultural Development Project (ADP), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS) are not successful because the center point, the people supposed to benefit do not have required education to make them function properly.

Nigeria has the largest population in the sub-saharah Africa and is among the countries with the highest population growth rate in the World. From 64.7 million people in 1989, Nigerian's population increases to 96.2 million in 1994 and is projected at about 120 million in 2002 (FOS, 2000). In Cross River State, and most parts of Nigeria, it is estimated that a large proportion of the population is living below subsistence levels, in other worlds, they are poor. Since the establishment of NAPEP by the federal government efforts have been made to empower as many individuals as possible, yet the level of participation of the participants of the programme is very uncertain. This is why this study ascertains the extent to which participants were involved in the National Poverty Alleviation programme (NAPEP) in Cross River State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Cross River State is made up of 17 local government areas which are grouped into five agricultural zones namely, Ogoja, Ikom, Akamkpa, Odukpani and Akpabuyo. Akamkpa was selected as the study location. Eighty respondents were randomly selected from the various training centers and administered with a questionnaire, but data for 75 respondents were available for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to involvement of participants in the schemes of the programme.

Schemes	Mean	Remarks
Youth empowerment	2.50	Involved

Capacity enhancement	2.00	Involved
Rural infrastructural development	1.28	Less involved
Social welfare	1.00	Less involved
Natural resource	0.64	Less involved
Community enlightenment	2.21	Involved
Programme For capitalization	2.00	Involved
Warm heart campaign	0.28	Less involved
The Niger fund	0.14	Less involved

Mid-point:1.50; Any mean score > 1.50 implies high involvement; while any mean score ≤ 1.50 implies less involvement.

Table 1 shows the involvement of participants in the schemes of the programme. Out of the 9 schemes identified, high involvement was recorded for 4 which include youth empowerment (mean=2.50), capacity enhancement (mean=2.00), community enlightenment (mean=2.21) and programme for capitalization (mean=2.00). However, the schemes where less involvement was recorded include rural infrastructural development (mean=1.28) social welfare (mean=1.00), natural resource development (mean=0.64), warm heart campaign (mean=0.28) and the Niger fund (mean=0.14), The implication of the finding is involvement of participants in the programme was high.

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents according to source of involvement in the programme (NAPEP)

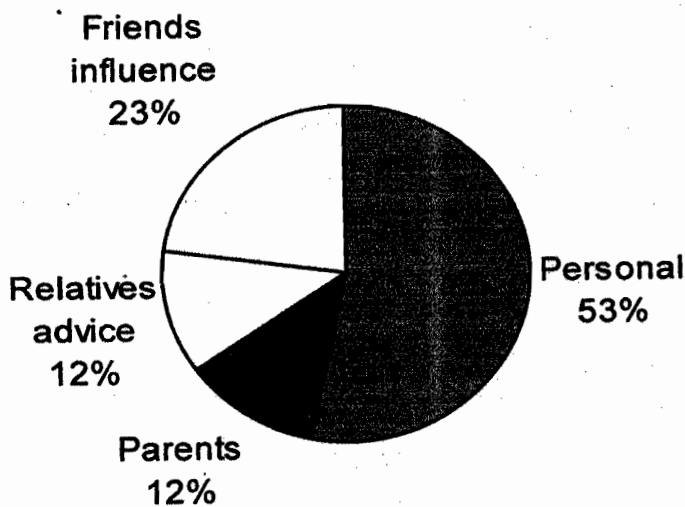


Figure 1 shows that about 53% of the respondents got involved on a personal basis, 12% got involved through parental advice, another 12% got involved through their relative advice and about 23% got involved through their friends influence. This simply implies that majority of respondents got involved on personal basis.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to reasons for joining the programme

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
To improve job prospect	18	24.0
Unemployment	27	36.0
To start up a business	12	16.0
To learn a new skill	18	24.0
Total	75	100.0

Table 18 shows that 24% participants joined programme to improve their job prospect, 36% joined due to unemployment, 16% joined to start up their business and another 24% joined to learn a new skill. This implies that majority of the respondents, joined as a result of unemployment to be employed.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to extent of involvement of participants in the sub-programmes.

Sub-programme	Mean	Remarks
Capacity acquisition	1.89	Involved
Managed attachment	1.90	Involved
Technical entrepreneur development	1.38	less Involved
Credit delivery	1.28	Less Involved
Keke NAPEP	2.53	Less Involved
Micro credit	1.38	Less Involved
Resource centres	1.22	Less Involved
Demonstration farm networks	1.60	Involved
Garbage truck and farm tractors	2.10	Involved
Rural transportation	2.10	Involved
Rural energy	2.24	Involved
Rural communication	1.38	Less Involved
Special education	1.45	Less Involved
Primary health care	2.30	Involved
Farmers empowerment	2.10	Involved
Other social services	1.40	Less Involved
Agric resources	1.34	Less Involved
Water resources	1.05	Less Involved
Solid mineral resources	1.17	Less Involved
Environmental protection	2.12	Involved
Community enlightenment	2.09	Involved
Programme for capitalization of the poor	0.70	Less Involved
Warm heart programme	1.13	Less Involved

The Niger fund	0.54	Less Involved
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Mid-point:1.50; Any mean > 1.50 implies involvement; while any mean score ≤ 1.50 implies less involvement.

Table 2 shows that involvement was high in capacity acquisition sub-programme (mean=1.89), managed attachment (mean=1.90) involvement was low in technical entrepreneur development (mean=1.38), and credit delivery (mean=1.28). also, high involvement was recorded for Keke NAPEP (mean=2.50), and involvement was low in micro credit (mean=1.38) and resource centres (mean=1.23). Demonstration farm network (mean=1.60) recorded high involvement also with garbage truck and farm tractors (mean=2.10), also rural transportation (mean=2.10), rural energy (mean=1.18) recorded low involvement while there was high involvement in rural water (mean=2.24). Also, there was low involvement in rural communication (means=1.38) and special education (mean=1.38). Involvement was high in primary health care (mean=2.30) and farmers empowerment (mean=2.10). However, involvement was low in other social services (mean=1.40), agric resources (mean=1.34), water resources (mean=1.05) and in solid mineral resources (mean=1.17), but there was high involvement in environmental protection (mean=2.12) and also community enlightenment (mean=2.09). Low involvement was recorded for programme for capitalization of the poor (mean=0.70), warm heart programme (mean=1.13) and the Niger fund (mean=0.54).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was observed that majority of the participants were highly involved in the following sub-programme, keke NAPEP, Garbage truck and farm tractors, rural transportation, rural water primary health care, farmers empowerment, environmental protection and community enlightenment and sensitization. Poverty alleviation strategy should start with the identification of the poor and their characteristics; they should be given a chance to contribute their quota in alleviating poverty. For the programme to be sustained and its objectives realized, the following suggestion should be pertinent. There should be a mechanism to assist the NAPEP graduates in securing jobs or settling down independently on their job should be put into consideration, with the aid of the Ministry of Employment. Adequate facilities and equipments should be provided at the various training centers in order to make the participation worthwhile to the participants.

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