

Factors Responsible for Drop out of Youths from the National Poverty Alleviation Programme in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined factors responsible for drop out of youths from the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) in Cross river State, Nigeria. Data for the study was collected with the aid of questionnaire administered to 16 staff of the programme in the study area. It was found that drop out rate was not as high as assumed. However reasons adduced for drop out of youths from the programme were inadequate understanding of the programme, lack of discipline, financial reason, family problems, returning to school and lack of interest. It is therefore recommended that 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. A follow-up scheme should be made for the drop-outs to ensure that all those who register and started successfully complete the programme. The training centre should be monitored more than twice a month to ensure proper management. Disbursement of fund for the programmes should be done accurately and funds should not be siphoned for personal usage, also the account balance of expense and incomes made should be drafted out monthly and reviewed regularly.

Key words: Drop out, national poverty alleviation programme, youths, facilities, factors

INTRODUCTION

Poverty eradication has since become the major focus on the more important funding agencies of the united nations organization namely UNPP and IFAD-rural poverty reduction; UNFPA-women, reproductive health and family planning; UNIFEM-women empowerment; UNICEF-children and girl-child; UNHCR-refugees and WFP-food emergencies. All countries are expected to establish a system for regularly monitoring basic indicators of poverty and human deprivation and advance in human development. Such monitoring of poverty has been going on. The World Bank has supposed poverty assessment in many countries using participatory rural appraisals. The UNDP and other NGO's and network have mounted monitoring of follow-up to the WSSP and other of global conferences. Publicizing the results through the media has generated public interest and greater political commitment. For instance, progress has been reported by 2000 in the areas of immunization (80%), polio eradication (>90%), low cost oral dehydration against diarrhea diseases, iodine deficiency, guinea worm disease, access to safe drinking water and promotion of breast feeding. Low cost and cost-effective actions were a big part of the success making it possible to achieve the goals by budge restructuring rather than making big increases in spending.

Poverty alleviation may merely involve the improvement and maintenance of the existing education, expansion of exciting municipal services in the rural areas of Nigeria and so on Olaitan *et al.* (2000). Ekong (2003) stated that the nature of poverty and strategies for its alleviation or elimination since remained the focus of rural sociological studies. Although government has shown a lot of concern over the plight of these Nigerians, by establishing programmes such as better life for rural woman, family support programmes, Directorate for food, road and rural infrastructure to mention but a few. Before today, Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was established also to take care of the beneficiary's immediate needs which does not guarantee long-life sustenance. What guarantees long-life.

The establishment of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001 was one of the first major steps taken to eradicate absolute poverty in the country. NAPEP has 2 main objectives, which are: to oversee, monitor and coordinate all relevant programmes and projects particularly of government at all levels; to periodically extend intervention projects to complement the efforts of the implementing ministries, departments and relevant parastatals throughout Nigeria (Adesope, 2006).

In rural Nigeria, broad purposes of poverty alleviation programmes may include control of arbitrary and irruptive human growth provision of training in skill to all those who need and can use skills, tackling problems of unemployment and underemployment etc. The core poverty eradication ministries and agencies are Agriculture and Rural Development; Education; Works and housing; Women Affairs and Youth Development; Industry, Science and Technology; Water Resources; Health; Power and steel; Labour and Productivity; Environment Sports and Social Development; Finance; Communication; Culture and Tourism; Solid Minerals Development; National Planning Commission (Abdullayi, 2003).

The poverty level in Cross River State Nigeria has necessitated various poverty alleviation techniques and strategies by the government. The Cross River State Government just like every other State in Nigeria establish the poverty alleviation programme in line with The Federal Government of Nigeria This is what informed the establishment of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP). It is however interesting to note that it seems the programme has not changed the poverty situation of the youths it was meant for because of the drop out rate experienced. This study therefore investigates the factors responsible for drop out of youths among the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) in Cross River State, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Calabar Municipality and in Akamkpa local government area in Cross River State. Cross River state is 7°15' and 9°30' East and is bounded in the East by united Republic of Cameroon, in the North by Benue State, in the Northwest by Ebonyi State, in the West by Abia State, Southwest by Akwa Ibom State. The state comprises of 17 local governments and these local governments are grouped into 5 agricultural zones namely, Ogoja, Ikom, Akamkpa, Odukpani and Akpabuyo.

Amongst these zones, Akamkpa was chosen as a case study, the respondents were selected from the various training centers in a random form from the locality according to the number of the members involved in the programme, but a total of eighty respondents to were administered questionnaires.

Structured questionnaire were designed and administered to the respondents through the monitoring officers. The sampling method used in this study was the random sampling method. With the use of the list of both the staff obtained from the NAPEP Secreteriate as was provided by the Programme Manager and the monitoring

officers of the sub-programmes, a sample list was drawn. Sixteen staff of the Programme were involved in the study which formed the sample size.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using the basic descriptive statistical tools like the mean, percentages, frequency distribution tables.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of respondents according to the incidence of drop-out amongst participants. About 86% indicated that incident of drop out was high while 14% indicated otherwise. Implication of this finding is that there was drop-out from the programme.

Table 2 shows the reasons for the drop-out rate amongst the participants from the programme. Form the 9 above listed reason, 6 reasons were agreed to for the drop out which are inadequate understanding of the programme (mean = 3.07), lack of discipline (3.50), financial reason (mean = 3.85), family problems (mean = 3.35), some returning to school (mean = 4.00) and finally lack of interest (mean = 3.28).

Table 3 shows that out of the 523 participants who started the programme in 2002, 23.7% dropped out. In

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to the incidence of drop out

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	12	85.6
No	2	14.7
Total	14	100.0

Source: Field survey data, 2006

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to reasons for drop out amongst participants

Reasons	Mean	Remarks
Inadequate understanding of the programme	3.07	Agreed
Lack of discipline	3.50	Agree
Health problems	2.92	Disagree
Financial reasons	3.85	Agree
Difficulty in work	2.50	Disagree
Family problems	3.35	Agree
Some returned to school	4.00	Agree
Lack of interest	3.28	Agree
Lack of motivation	2.85	Disagree
Grand mean	3.26	

Mid point: 3.00; Any mean score > 3.00 implies agreement while any mean score ≤ 3.00 implies disagreement

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to the rate of start, drop-out and completion of participants of the programme

Years	No. of participants who registered	No. of participants who started	No. of participants who dropped-out	No. of participants who completed
2002	700	523	124 (23.7)	399 (76.3)
2003	568	496	155 (30.8)	343 (69.2)
2004	354	167	50 (29.9)	117 (70.1)
2005	702	415	190 (45.8)	225 (54.2)
Total	2324	1601	517 (100.0)	1084 (100.0)

Figures in parentheses are percentages

2003, drop-out rate was 30.8% while in 2004, it was 29.9%. However, in 2005 where the highest drop-out rate was recorded, it was 45.8%. On the other hand, a larger percentage of participants completed the programme over the 4-year period. In 2002, 76.3% completed the programme, this dropped slightly to 69.2% in 2003 and rose again to 70.1% in 2004. However, a marked decline in percentage of those who completed the programme showed that only 54.2% completed it in 2005. The total of 517 persons dropped-out while 1084 persons completed the programme and the drop-out could be as a result of the reason stated earlier.

Figure 1 shows that 21.4% of the respondents indicated that centre was monitored once a month, another 21.4% indicated once in 3 months, 50.0% indicated twice a month and 7.1% indicated once in 6 months. This implies that the training centres are monitored twice a month since majority indicated so.

Table 4 shows the frequency distribution of respondents according to whether there are monitoring officers for the training centres otherwise also for the participants activeness. The responses are as follows, 64.3% agreed while 35.7% did otherwise implying that there are monitoring officers for the training centres. From the study research, there are 18 supervisors for the training centres with 2 monitoring officers each for the training centres that is officers 1 and 2, also one supervisor could be in charge of more than one training centre most especially those that are closely related in its activity.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to the frequency of monitoring of the various schemes in the NAPEP programme. Monitoring once a

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to whether there are monitoring officers for each scheme

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	9	64.3
No	5	35.7
Total	14	100.0

Source: Field survey data, 2006

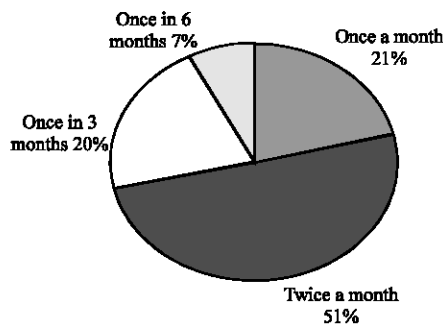


Fig. 1: Distribution of respondents according to frequency of monitoring of training centres

month was indicated by 21.4, 50.0% indicated twice a month, 14.3% indicated once in 3 months, another 14.3% indicated once in 6 months. This implies that the scheme is monitored twice a month as indicated by majority.

Table 5 shows that about 43% indicated that there is a scheme to assist in providing employment after completion of the programme, while 57% indicated otherwise. Participants who either obtained jobs in the field of participation are on a higher rate though there is no special scheme responsible for organizing employment (personal communication)

Table 6 shows that 64% indicated that individual help is used to seek employment for completed participants of the programme while about 36% indicated otherwise. The implication is that completed participants gain employment through individual help.

Table 7 shows that 21% indicated that the ministry of employment, labour and productivity assist to find employment for the completed participants while about 79% indicated otherwise. The implication of this findings is that the Ministry doesn't get placement for the participants.

Table 8 shows that about 14% indicated that the programme is adequately funded by the government while about 86% indicated otherwise implying that the

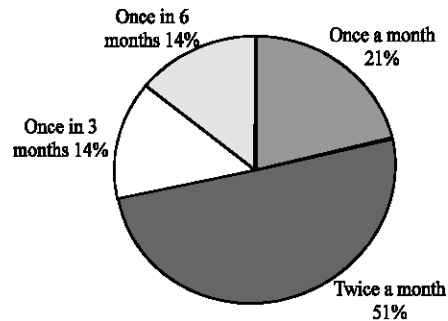


Fig. 2: Distribution of respondents according to frequency of monitoring of the various schemes
Source: Field survey data, 2006

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to whether there is a scheme to assist the completed participants gain employment

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	6	42.9
No	8	57.1
Total	14	100.0

Source: Field survey data, 2006

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to individual help from supervisors or management of the NAPEP programme to employment for completed participants

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	9	64.3
No	5	35.7
Total	14	100.0

Source: Field survey data, 2006

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to assistance from ministry of employment, labour and productivity

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	3	21.4
No	11	78.6
Total	14	100.0

Source: Field survey data, 2006

Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to adequate funding of the programme (NAPEP)

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	2	14.3
No	12	85.7
Total	14	100.0

Source: Field survey data, 2006

Table 9: Distribution of respondents according to whether there are other Poverty alleviation programmes in the state

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	13	92.9
No	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

Source: Field survey data, 2006

programme is inadequately funded. According to Abdullahi (2002) the programme is mainly internally funded but supported by external sources. Such internal funds are sourced by the Budg allocation; Education Tax Fund (ETF), Funds Recovered from Treasury Looters (FRTL), Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) and the Withholding Tax on Contracts (WHTC).

Table 9 shows that about 93% indicated that there are other poverty alleviation programme in cross river state while 7% indicated otherwise. This implies that there are other programmes in the state established also for poverty alleviation. From the research study, the other poverty alleviation programmes are as follows: People Empowerment Programme Initiative (PEPI); Poverty Reduction Agency (PRA); Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC); Enterprise Nigerian Limited headed by the wife of the state governor Mrs. Onari Duke; MPP6; OICI. (NAPEP secretariat, Cross River State 2001).

DISCUSSION

There was minimal drop-out from the NAPEP programme as a result of some stated reasons; of which out of 9 stated reasons, 6 reasons were agreed by majority of the respondents such reasons are: Inadequate understanding of the programme. It is possible that the management did not give thorough orientation to elaborately explain what the programme was aimed at. Another reason identified for drop out was lack of discipline which may have been as a result of unstated rules to be followed in the programme which may have led to the nonchalant attitude of the participants. Financial reason was also identified. This reason obviously cannot

be overruled, because without funds money budgets made may most times not be actualized. According to NCEMA (2002) lack of funds results to poverty which hinders life progress and most likely the growth of a place, person, state, etc. Family problems indicated as a reason for drop out is very vital. Family is the most universal and indispensable social institution, it is a basic unit with multi-dimensional functions, just a personal problem is enough to set one off balance moreso a family problem, maybe the problems encountered in the family were beyond control thereby resulting to drop-out. A school is a place where highly institutionalized chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education system takes place according to Nnadi and Amaechi (2004) some participants may have decided to go back to school or even start school during the course of the programme. Lack of interest (mean = 3.28) as indicated for drop-out may be as a result of the programme not being attractive and challenging to the participants because most times what interest people about a thing is how creative, challenging and motivating it is.

Considering the rate of drop-out and that of completion of the participants from 2002 to 2005, its recorded that out of 1601 participants who started the programme, 517 persons dropped-out and 1084 persons completed the programme. There was a remarkable drop-out rate in 2005 which may have been as a result of insufficient facilities for the participants to use actively or as a result of any of the stated reasons for drop-out.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study showed that drop out rate was minimal among youths in the programme because of the following reasons: Inadequate understanding of the programme, lack of discipline, financial reason, family problems, returning to school and lack of interest. Based on the findings of the study it is recommended that 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. A follow-up scheme should be made for the drop-outs to ensure that all those who register and started successfully complete the programme. The training centre should be monitored more than twice a month to ensure proper management. Disbursement of fund for the programmes should be done accurately and funds should not be siphoned for personal usage, also the account balance of expense and incomes made should be drafted out monthly and reviewed regularly.

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