



# Analysis of Development Programmes as Strategies for Sustainable Economic Development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*Development Programmes are radical and structural strategies designed by government and necessary for bringing rapid and large scale improvement in the lives of the masses of poverty-stricken, malnourished and illiterate people of Nigeria towards achieving sustainable economic transformation and development of our society, especially in Ebonyi State. The study shows that the government has made several attempts in designing economic development blueprints that could eradicate poverty and speed up development in Nigeria but have failed to achieve its objective because of some perceived obstacles. The objective of the study is to examine the effect of development programs in achieving sustainable economic development in Ebonyi State while the significance of the study is to improve the welfare of Ebonyi indigenes in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). The assumptions of the study is that Nigeria cannot be proposing of becoming one of the leading twenty economies in the world by 2020, (vision20:20) when her rural areas lack the basic needs of life, the standard of living is very poor, infrastructural development has overtaken human capacity development in Ebonyi State with high degree poverty. The study was analyzed using content analytical techniques from an empirical and conceptual perspective. The study revealed that the development outcome in Nigeria especially in Ebonyi State is still very poor despite the solid critical road infrastructures in the State. The recommendation of the study is that a comprehensive reform mechanism should be adopted in diversifying the productive base of the state and enhance human capacity development.*

**Key words:** Development Programmes, Strategies, Sustainable Economic Development, Ebonyi State.

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## 1. Introduction

Development Programmes are radical and structural strategies designed by government and necessary for bringing rapid and large scale improvement in the lives of the masses of poverty stricken, malnourished and illiterate people of Nigeria towards achieving sustainable economic transformation and development of our society especially in Ebonyi State. It is a veritable tool for fighting poverty and achieving economic prosperity at the grassroots level. It was also quite imperative that since the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria, the poverty level in the country has reached an alarming proportion. The World Bank in her 2014 quarterly economic report classified Nigeria as one of the poorest country in the world and just recently Nigeria overtook India in the global poverty index where her citizens live in less than one dollar a day. Despite several rural development programmes introduced, it has been observed that the development outcomes of most rural areas in Nigeria are still very poor. The contribution of rural areas to the revenues of the governments is quite significant. It is disappointing to describe that development planning and strategies in form of development programmes, have failed to eradicate poverty and transform the lives of the rural people especially in Ebonyi State since the state was created in 1996 by the former General Sanni Abacha's Administration. The State was carved out from the old Abakaliki division of Enugu State and the old Afikpo division of Abia State sharing boundary with Benue State to the North, Enugu State to the west, Imo and Abia States to the South and Cross River State. The State capital and largest town is Abakaliki. Afikpo is the second largest town. Other towns are Edda, Onueke, Nkalagu, Uburu, Onicha, Ishiagu, Amasiri and Okposi. The state is blessed with abundant Natural resources such as Salt, lead, limestone, zinc, chippings and marble. Ebonyi State is called "the salt of the nation" for its huge salt deposit at the Uburu Salt Lake in Ohaozara local government area.

The people of Ebonyi State are predominantly farmers and traders with primitive farm tools. The main crops produced in the State are rice, yam, oil palm products, cocoa, maize, groundnut, plantain, banana, cassava, melon, sugar cane, beans, fruits and vegetables and are regarded as the food basket of Eastern Nigeria. Fishing is also carried out in Afikpo and Ohaozara local Government areas respectively.

## **2. Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to examine the performance of Development programmes as a tool for achieving sustainable economic development in Ebonyi State.

## **3. Statement of the Problem**

In recognition of Nigeria's poor performances in the economic development indices in the last twenty five years, the Federal Government of Nigeria on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1996 set up a vision 2020 Committee to develop a blueprint for transforming the country into a developed one by the year 2020. In the report on rural development, the Vision 2020 report stressed that by the year 2020, the rural people in Nigeria should enjoy a higher standard of living, good health facilities and portable water shall be available at the prescribed minimum standard. Every child of school age in the rural areas shall be in school, agricultural production would be improved and the rural families shall earn enough to afford the basic necessities of life, thereby reducing rural-urban migration. The land tenure system shall be retained to give every family access to land for habitation and economic production. Government shall invest a substantial proportion of its budget in rural development to enable the rural areas produce enough, not only for local consumption and export, but also to supply raw materials to local industries.

The World Bank in her 2014 quarterly economic report classified Nigeria as one of the poorest country in the world and just recently Nigeria overtook India in the global poverty index where her citizens live in less than one dollar a day. Despite several Development programmes/policies introduced, it has been observed that the development outcomes of most rural areas in Nigeria are still very poor. The contribution of rural communities to the revenues of the governments is quite significant. It is disappointing to describe that development planning and strategies in form of development programmes, have failed to eradicate poverty and transform the lives of the rural people especially in Ebonyi State since the state was created in 1996 by the former General Sanni Abacha's Administration. Most development programmes designed by the government of Nigeria are not sustainable and relevant to the actual needs of the local people.

Rural development is an integrated approach to food production, provision of physical, social and institutional infrastructures with an ultimate goal of a bringing about changes which culminate in improved standard of living of the rural population. The main concern in rural development is to bring about the modernisation of rural society through a transition from traditional isolation to integration with the nation. Intervention measures introduced by the Federal Government are targeted at the rural and urban poor in the form of provision of basic infrastructures, poverty alleviation, provision of credit facilities, and encouragement of micro-enterprises in the cities, and training programmes for the unemployed youths to enhance rural development. The rural development programmes has not really changed the face of the rural areas in Nigeria and the poverty level still very high especially in Ebonyi State.

In Ebonyi State, the present sustainable infrastructural projects are quite commendable and are designed to provide a solid base for development to take place. But very disappointing to note that there is serious lack of human capacity development and this cannot speed up development when infrastructural development does not match with human capacity development. The unemployment rate in Ebonyi State is quite alarming because jobs are not created in the state, no form of any capacity building in the state or economic development programmes designed to enhance the capacity of the indigenes. Most street hawkers and casual labourers in major cities of Nigeria (Lagos, Port Harcourt, Aba, Onitsha, Abuja and Kano etc) are indigenes of the Ebonyi State. Looking at the poverty index in Nigeria Kogi and Ebonyi States are topping the list with Ebonyi State on the lead.

## **4. Research Questions**

This research study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Is infrastructural development sustainable enough to achieve development in Ebonyi State without creation?
2. Why is the standard of living in Ebonyi State very poor?
3. In designing sustainable economic development programs in Nigeria, is Ebonyi State not part of the focal point of implementation in Nigeria?

## 5. Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Framework

Sustainable development, according to Odigbo and Adediran (2004) in a study carried out to promote rural development in Nigeria is human focused, long-term and enduring, and not a quick fix. Government has the chief role of building and financing an enduring political, social, cultural and environmental structure on which rural development can thrive, through the encouragement and recognition of the roles of cooperatives, NGOs, and private initiatives as their grass root appeals promote sustainable rural transformation/ development. The paper recommended that there is need for government to concentrate its efforts to the encouragement of private initiatives, teaching and propagation of cooperative philosophy and peaceful coexistence to the rural dwellers; as such education forms the bedrock for rural development.

International Food for Agricultural Development (IFAD 2013) reviewed and examined the objective of the NEEDS policy in Nigeria and pointed out that in line with NEEDS, the government's Commercial Agricultural Development Programme aims to strengthen food security, increase employment opportunities and boost agriculture as an engine for broad-based economic growth in the country. IFAD's support to the programme focuses on smallholder farmers and community-based poverty reduction. The main goal of NEEDS is the reduction of poverty. The government is particularly concerned about worsening rural poverty, rising unemployment rates among young people and the marginalization of women. But IFAD being an international development agency did not explain whether there is a potential effect of their intervention to quench hunger especially in Ebonyi State.

Goke (2004) in a study carried out on Rural Development programmes as growth strategies for sustainable development in contemporary Nigeria concluded that economic growth either in policy design or implementation has been accorded marginal attention because of lack of political will and inadequate resources. He further argued that the structural adjustment programme (SAP) implemented since 1986 in Nigeria, social questions appear to have dropped out of sight such that the emphasis of the adjustment programme has being on the pursuit of non inflationary economic growth and the achievement of the short to medium term (rather than long term) fiscal stability and balance of payment. But the author did not point out that SAP actually added value to the economy especially in the creation of rural development policies and programmes such as DFFRI, Rural electrification programme, Rural Banking (Community Banks now Micro Finance Banks) etc. Though SAP actually failed because there was no implementation mechanism or framework designed to achieve its objectives and that is why no part of Ebonyi State benefited from the development programmes despite being carved out from Abia and Enugu State respectively. According to Ayano, Onwe, Aturu-Aghedo (2010) said that the word 'rural' could assume economic, sociological, ethnic, racial and other dimensions; hence rural Nigeria is measured by two indices:

1. The Spatial index, indicating the percentage of the population living in rural areas, and spatial definition of rural simply means an area with low population density while urban is an area with high population density
2. The Occupational index, which shows the percentage of the labour force in agricultural occupation. Here, the economic activity in the rural sector depends directly on the exploitation of the land; it centres principally on farming, animal husbandry, poultry, fishing, forestry, food processing and cottage industry. It is estimated that agricultural activity occupies four-fifths of the rural population of Nigeria especially Ebonyi State which is their main occupation. The researcher agreed with this ideology because actually the Nigerian polity has such elements in her rural settings, but the authors failed to point out the significance of these measures to project the level at which if attained can be considered to help improve development in the rural setting. But despite this, the idea about the Spatial and Occupational index as measurements of rural development really holds in the rural development structure of Nigeria.

Development is said to be a gradual process of growth so that it becomes more advanced and improved in nature through a process of change, development as proposed by Simon and

Anam (2011) agreed that, rural development programmes can be defined as improving living standards of the low income population, residing in rural areas making the process of their development self-sustaining. Such programs are designed and implemented by:

1. Improving the living standards of the subsistence population involves mobilization and allocation of resources so as to reach a desirable balance over time between the welfare and productive services available to the subsistence rural sector.
2. Mass participation requires that resources be allocated to low income regions and classes and that the productive and social services actually reach them.
3. Making the process self-sustaining requires development of the appropriate skills and implementing capacity and the presence of institutions at the local, regional and national levels to ensure the effective use of existing resources to further foster financial and human resources for continued development of the subsistence sector. According to Ada (2013) development programme is a process whereby concerted efforts are made in order to facilitate significant increase in rural resource productivity with the central objective of enhancing rural income and increasing employment opportunities in rural communities for rural dwellers to remain in the area. Rural development is an integrated approach to food production, provision of physical, social and institutional

infrastructures with an ultimate goal of a bringing about changes which culminate in improved standard of living of rural population. Rural development also involves effecting improvement in living standards of farmers and the rural populace in general. The main concern in rural development is to bring about the modernisation of rural society through a transition from traditional isolation to integration with the nation. It constitutes a process of planned change for which the one approach or the other is adopted for improvement and or transformation of the lot of the rural populace.

The researcher is in agreement with the ideas of Anam (2011) and Ada (2013) concerning rural development and its programmes, because its aim is mostly to alleviate and create a better standard of living for the rural populace, which the authors have pointed out. Although there are several definitions of the concept of rural development, the overriding fact remains that rural development is an approach designed to raise or even change social and economic conditions of rural dwellers, in most cases the targeted group is primarily the rural poor who live in abject or absolute poverty.

According to Enemuo (2002) and Goke (2004) almost every Nigerian's regimes since independence proclaimed itself as committed to promoting rural development. This can be adduced to the fact that majority of Nigerians live in the rural areas and therefore these rural development programmes would serve to up lift the living conditions of these majorities of people. Improved rural productivity through rural programmes will also strengthen natural food security and enhance foreign exchange earnings, through local production of industrial raw materials and the exports of surplus. It will also reduce the trend in rural – urban migration. The researcher agreed with the authors but virtually all these policies and programmes failed to have a direct impact on the lives of the rural people, especially in Ebonyi State where human capacity development is seriously lacking.

The study is anchored on the Basic Resource Theory of Rural Development. The theoretical model posits that economic growth depends on the endogenous and exogenous variables. (Availability of basic natural resources within a particular area and technology). These development resources attract investment to rural areas in possession, and increase income and employment in the process. Another assumption of this theory argued that the development of these resources attracts revenues that can foster development, create investment capital to these areas and increases income and enhances employment. It also states that, the mere availability of resources in rural areas does not sufficiently guarantee a rapid development, but when the technical framework is high and rightly used in accordance with such resources, then development can take place. This theory throws light on what is obtainable in Ebonyi State, where there exists a reasonable amount of natural resources such as lead, limestone, zinc, chippings, marble and huge salt deposit at Uburu which has the potentials of attracting investment in the sectors, creates employment and speedy up development. On the other hand, the theory also assumed that when the resources are not well managed due to inadequate technology and maintenance, the rate of development begins to crumble. Ebonyi State has suffered this problem of technological neglect and the promotion of development strategies or measures of both direct and indirect forms is reduced to the barest minimum. The Basic Resource Theory of Rural Development has been criticised on the ground that not all economic growth of most places are achieved through natural resources alone, other sources of growth like man power and technology for example have helped economies that cannot boast of natural resources to develop.

In summary, from the literatures reviewed so far by many individuals who have been affected by the poor implementation of development programmes in Nigeria and have therefore shown concern in this area of study, it was observed from the works of these various authors that the development programmes and policies are solid economic framework designed as strategies for achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria, but the policies and programmes have failed to achieve the needed objectives due to lack of implementation mechanism, lack of job creation, lack of human capacity development, poor funding, corruption, poor governance, lack of weak institutions, lack of political will and attitude of our civil servants whose mandate it is to ensure the implementation of government policies and programmes, weak governance system and weak institutions. Much study has not been done on the impact of these programmes and policies on the economic transformation of the rural areas of Ebonyi States in Nigeria which therefore created the gap of this study. The need to close this gap claims the attention of this study. The most reoccurring terms in the works reviewed were that development programmes are good strategies designed to eradicate poverty, achieve economic empowerment, development and build the capacities of the people which will speed up economic development especially in the rural areas.

It was also observed that despite the huge agricultural potentials and abundant labour force in Ebonyi State, agriculture is yet to be given top priority attention as the engine of economic growth. Several agricultural development programmes are designed to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria but Ebonyi State is yet to receive government attention. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Anchor Borrowers Programme is the CBN's economic development intervention programme designed to further revolutionize the sector and empower the rural poor in each states of the Federation. The Programme has the mandate of reducing agricultural commodity importation, reduction in the level of poverty among small holder farmers and creation of support for rural farmers to grow from subsistence to commercial production level etc as the country is characterized by remarkable agricultural potentials, crop diversity, vast lands and favorable conditions for crop growth. Reviving the sector has had serious impediment due to lack of collateral by the rural farmers to access credits from the banks even the agricultural development banks seems to have abandoned their statutory functions.

## 6. Research Methodology

The study was designed to be a descriptive study and adopted content analysis technique as a method of analysis from an empirical and conceptual perspectives. It reviewed and analysed in detail the operations and performances of these development programmes in Ebonyi State and anchored on the endogenous growth theory.

## 7. Review and Analysis of Development Programmes in Nigeria

Development Programmes are veritable tools for fighting poverty and achieving economic prosperity at the grassroots level designed by government to achieve economic transformation and sustainable economic development of our society especially in the areas of poverty alleviation, economic empowerment and several other indicators of development. Among the various economic programmes designed for rural development in Nigeria by various past and present regimes are shown in **Table 7.1**.

Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) initiated by the General Olusegun Obasanjo administration in 1976, Green Revolution by the Alhaji Shehu Shagari administration of 1983, Directorate for food, Road and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI), Rural Electrification Programme (REP), Better life programme (BLP), People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Community Banks (CB), Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), The River Basin Development Programme, initiated by the Military government of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babaginda, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) initiated by the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo regime of 1999, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was initiated under Olusegun Obasanjo administration and complemented by equivalent approaches at the state level (the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, or SEEDS) and the local level (the Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, or LEEDS) in 2003, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) which midwived the defunct OMAPADEC and more recently Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration instituted the new programme tagged Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment programme (SURE-P) and YouWIN programme and host of other economic development programmes and policies aimed at transforming the rural areas.

**Table 7.1: Showing Development Programmes for Rural Development (1972-Date)**

S/N	Rural Programmes	Year established	Target group	Nature of intervention
1	National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)	1972	Rural Farmers	To educate rural Farmers to ensure sustainable food security
2	Nigeria Agricultural and Cooperative Bank	1972	Rural Farmers	Agricultural Financing to increase production
3	War Against Indiscipline (WAI)	1983	Rural and Urban Areas	War against Indiscipline
4	Directorate for food, roads and rural infrastructures DFRRI	1986	Rural Areas	Foods, roads, rural water supply and rural electrification.
5	National Directorate of Employment (NDE)	1986	Unemployed Youths	Training Finance and guidance.
6	Better Life Programme for Rural Women (BLP)	1987	Rural Women	Rural Women Self-help and rural development programmes, skill acquisition and health Care.



7	People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN)	1989	Underprivileged in urban & rural areas	Encouraging savings & credit facilities.
8	Community Banks (CB)	1990	Rural residents, micro-enterprises in urban areas	Banking facilities
9	Family Support programme (FSP)	1994	Families, rural areas	Health care delivery, child welfare, youth development, etc.
10	Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)	1997	Rural areas	Credit facilities to support the establishment of cottage industries.
11	Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP)		Rural Areas	Sustainable Food Security, increase employment opportunities and boost agriculture production.
12	National Poverty Eradication programme (NAPEP)	1999	Unemployed Youths in Urban & Rural areas	Credit facilities for transportation, health care delivery & skill Acquisition
13	Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)		Urban, Rural areas and unemployed youths	Skill acquisition, infrastructural development, Urban and Rural development programmes
14	National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS)	1999	Urban and Rural areas	Economic empowerment and poverty reduction
15	National Health Insurance Scheme	2004	The entire economy	To provide easy access to health services with convenience
16	Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Development Strategy (SURE-P)	2012	Urban, Rural areas and Unemployed youths	Skill acquisition and infrastructural Development
17	YouWIN programme	2012	Unemployed youths	Youth employment and Poverty alleviation.
18	N-Power	2015	Youths	Youth Empowerment
19	Home Grown Feeding programmes	2018	Primary School Children	Poverty Alleviation
20	Social Investment Programmes	2018	Youths	Youth Empowerment

Source: Library Search by the author, 2020

For Operation Feed Nation (OFN), the objectives includes self-sufficiency in food production, attracting unemployed youths from the urban to the rural areas, creating employment opportunities for young school leavers, provide better income for farmers, encourage professionals into farming, reduce demand for foreign exchange and thereby enhancing the value of the Naira among other objectives although the above objectives were clear but it was not really implemented. For example, a government that wanted to enhance food production and achieve self-sufficiency could not provide enough fertilizers and insecticides to reach the rural farmers and train personnel's for agricultural extension services where local farmers could be educated on modern techniques of farming. The idea of attracting unemployed youths from the urban areas did not materialize because the period of

implementation coincided with an increased growth in construction industry, where these youths easily got salaried employment. The States and Local governments lacked the necessary training programmes for modern farming system making it impossible for the farmers to get acquainted with the planned process of this policy. The lack of training means that human resources will be inadequate. Finally, this programme failed because project planners lacked the necessary imagination and motivation to see it through, coupled with the fact that enough extension workers are needed to supervise the farmers, which the planners failed to provide. In a nutshell, our human resources were neglected and natural resources put to waste due to corruption.

The Green Revolution objectives which was similar to that of OFN also failed to materialize because the Green Revolution was met with some formidable constraints. For instance, the programme was bedevilled by official red-tapism and excessive bureaucracy. Loans were not released on time and when released, it was already off-session. There were no collaterals for funds released and unfortunately, most of those who got loans were city dwellers who camouflaged as farmers. The loans received were then pumped into non-agricultural projects or plainly wasted in ostentations living by politicians

DFRRI and Rural Electrification Programmes are components of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) initiated in 1986. First, it was the first implemented national integrated rural development program, second, it possessed the first national machinery for the effective planning, co-ordination and implementation of rural development programmes. And lastly, it was a multifaceted and in fact a most integrated programme, involving infrastructures, grassroots development and mobilization, housing, health, industries, education and agriculture

The objectives of the programmes include, the need to enhance national capacity for food sufficiency and self-reliance; integrate the rural sector into the national political and economic processes, need to reduce rural-urban migration; need for assistance and economic activity in the form of industries and amenities in the interest of equitable development and the need for assistance and economic activity in the form of industries and amenities in the living standard of the rural citizenry. All these objectives, it must be noted tallied with the past objectives of both OFN and Green Revolution. But the programmes being components of the popular Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) failed because of policy inconsistency, change of government and lack of implementation mechanism.

The National Poverty Eradication Programme initiated by the Obasanjo regime after his assumption of office in 1999 is like the previous ones targeted at the under privilege in the society especially the rural poor. The main objectives were skill acquisition and economic empowerment. The programme was hijacked by the ruling People's Democratic Party stalwarts and is been used as a political patronage, mostly in favour of the urban dwellers instead of the rural poor that actually needed it.

Better life programme (BLP), Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme were all created by the military government whose objectives were to empower rural women and better their ugly lives but later turned out to be a conduit pipe from which billions of naira were siphoned from the government coffers to private accounts abroad by the so called unconstitutional First Ladies in Nigeria and avenue where close associates of the first ladies empowered themselves in the urban areas.

Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN) was also established by the Military government in order to stimulate production and bring Banking to the rural areas but failed due to high level corruption. Shortly after Peoples Bank failed, Community Banks came on board with the same objective mentioned above but lacked the capacity to do rural banking business and now transformed into microfinance Banks .

The Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP) was established to enhance food production but was stalled by lack of fund, enlightenment and training of personnel to assist farmers in large scale production. The only area of noticeable impact was the integrated rural development programme through the introduction of DFRRI and the Rural Electrification Programme by Babangida military regime which were components of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), one of the best economic policy ever designed in Nigeria though later failed as usual. This was because DFRRI and REP were a multifaceted, multi-pronged comprehensive programme comprising various strategies for the betterment of the rural communities as enunciated by the comprehensive approach to rural development.

Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) which midwifed the defunct OMAPADEC and Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment programme (SURE-P) are on course with the objectives of developing the Niger Delta region and other parts of the country but recently there are accusations of high level fraud and contract over invoicing in the both regional programmes.

YouWIN programme was aimed at creating youth employment and alleviating poverty. The programme with a mandate to create 80,000 -110,000 jobs within 3 years. But the policy was hijacked by politicians and has gone into extinction since the initiator left office.

The National economic empowerment and development strategy (NEEDS) was targeted at reducing poverty in both urban and rural Nigeria. The government is particularly concerned about worsening rural poverty, lack of economic infrastructures, rising unemployment rates among young people and the marginalization of women. The government recognizes, as well, the importance of empowering people to design and manage their own development activities but the policy failed to achieve its clear objectives due to weak governance; social conflict; limited technological innovations that hinder productivity; environmental degradation

which aggravates poverty by reducing the natural resource base; and the debilitating effects of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and the Ebola Virus. (See Goke 2004, IFAD, 2013).

Government policy priorities are only remotely related to human situation concerns, notably poverty with little emphasis on education, workers welfare which is components of development as witnessed by the incessant industrial crisis between the Nigeria Labour Congress, Academic Staff Union of Universities, Nigeria Medical Association etc and the Federal Government of Nigeria. Whether these programmes are orthodox or one of the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes, the minimum conditions for poverty alleviation with growth to materialize would emphasis labour intensive activities and improved access of the rural poor to social services, most especially human capital development. The rural development policy thrust should therefore, move simultaneously on two parallel tracks, namely economic reforms and effective investment in human capital development.

The Skills Acquisition Programme drawn from the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) from the year 2000-2004, it is observed that it has helped to develop the skills of a good number of people who are not even up to 50% of the area, this rural development scheme has not actually met the target in which it is meant to achieve. The reason is because it is highly carried out by self-serving personals, or not adequately distributed to the core rural dwellers who make up the locality, thereby creating a politicization avenue for creative schemes.

The Rural Empowerment Programme in 2005 that was aimed to improve agricultural production in cassava, cocoa, timber, amongst others, failed drastically in supply of mechanization and fertilizers- whereas most peasant farmers in Ebonyi State did not even benefit from the programme let alone the various skills empowerment programmes created and initiated by the various First Lady of Ebonyi State. Despite the budgetary allocations for such programmes and projects and with huge agricultural potentials, there all ended up without empowering the rural poor.

During the first plan period, 1962-1968, Nigeria's priority was in agriculture with about 14 percent budgetary allocation. During this period, agricultural productivity was considered synonymous with Rural Development. Therefore, the state and agriculture in the post-colonial Nigeria cannot be separated from colonialism, but as an integral, connected and extended policy. Peasant farmers, during this period were further squeezed to produce cash crops, at the expense of the subsistence crops, for export. This essentially reinforced the dependency and neo-colonial position of the Nigeria state on International capital. The researcher agreed with this idea; based on the fact that prior to the colonial era, the societies that existed in the Nigerian State had her own traditional and indigenous way of improving structures that developed her own society at a measurable extent. The fact is that, the indigenous development structure of the Nigerian polity has equally been as old as human creation, this is because Man in his capacity has his own way of providing elements that better his existence and daily activities; at such, rural development in Nigeria builds on this capacity of individual need to develop from one level to another. This can be seen as a framework for rural development prior to colonialism, after which development took another new route fashioned in a foreign style.

N-Power was established in 2015 by the Mohammadu Buahri led government to be build the capacities of the unemployed youths and further boost their productive skills. The programme received holistic attention in the country and had a national spread as most people in the country had the opportunities of participating in the programme. In Ebonyi State most people were engaged but the major issue that confronted the programmes was the issue of accessing the website. It was so clustered that the software was not properly developed to accommodate the large traffic on the website and that actually denied most Nigerians the opportunity of accessing the scheme.

Home Grown feeding programmes was initiated to quench hunger among school Children. The programmes was a conduit pipe designed by the government to syphon money into personal pockets by those in power and their cronies close to the corridors of political party in power. The Government claimed to have spent 22billion naira to feed school children in Nigeria in 2018, whereas the budget of the Federal Ministry of Education was only 10billion naira in 2018. The question is, what is the rational of wasting money on frivolities instead of spending wisely to develop the educational capacities of her citizens. Government should have used such huge allocation to sub sized education in Nigeria. Make primary to secondary school free of tuition and reduce the cost of higher education. In this case most Nigerian Children hawking in major cities in Nigeria who had no opportunities of going to school will have smiles put on their faces. In Ebonyi State, the Federal government claimed to have spent over 2billion naira in feeding school children in Ebonyi State and few other states but no single school in village (Uburu in Ohaozara LGA) ever benefited from the programme.

General assessment of all the development programmes shows that it has not really achieved the objectives of alleviating poverty and improving a manageable element of development in some rural areas of Nigeria especially in Ebonyi State.

The development planning and strategies of the rural communities in the modern Nigerian state has become a thing which most people describe as a deliberate action to foster underdevelopment in the rural setting. In line with this, the local governments still suffer the problem of inadequacy in rural development schemes and implementation, rural area in Ebonyi State are not left out in this case. The local government itself can foster development in the rural setting, but when they are not granted full autonomy as a third tier government, it is believed that their level of efficiency will drop and the level of service rendered to the people will be



minimized to the barest minimum, this is a major problem in the Nigerian rural development setting today and has seriously affected Ebonyi State from moving forward. These problems have not only weakened the development nature of the rural setting but have also reduced the development statue of the country at large.

In summary, the review and analysis of all the development programmes targeted at the rural areas in Nigeria especially in Ebonyi State is far from reality as the young State with huge economic potentials has not felt the impact of some of these development programmes except the Sustainable Development Goals (MDG) which is an intervention programme from foreign development partners designed for the provision of potable water and building of markets stalls for the rural poor. Even the defunct DFFRI projects and rural electrification programmes initiated by the former Military government had no potential effect in the young State.

## **8. Necessary and Sufficient Condition for achieving Sustainable Development in Rural Areas of Nigeria.**

Development is a very difficult concept in which various government agencies, United Nations, Donor agencies and development partners etc have labored and invested huge sums of money in trying to find out ways of addressing development challenges especially in third world countries. Development is the structural transformation of an economy into a high level of industrialization, higher standard of living, high per capital income per head, low level of poverty and unemployment among other indicators of development.

Tunde (2012) argued that Development has many dimensions and as indicated above, it is connected to improvements in human capacity, living standards and overall societal well-being. For a nation to attain development, its social, economic & political institutions must be in tandem with the Sustainable Development Goals (S DGs). Within this framework, Nigeria is rated one of the less developing countries with slow progress in education, gender equality, income equality, employment generation, wealth creation and poverty.

According to AC-Ogbonna (2014) he said that no nation or society can achieve a meaningful economic development when her people lack the relevant knowledge and skills to productively manipulate their environment in order to achieve the basic needs of life. No society can develop without trust on government. Properly articulated, formulated and implemented programs and policies in Ebonyi State would bring the desired changes needed in achieving the sustainable development goals. This was the approach adopted by the Asia continent now regarded as the **ASEAN TIGERS** (such as Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong) etc. in becoming the industrial giants of the world. The author added that in Ebonyi State, there is a widespread poverty and illiteracy in the land characterized as twin evils of development. This was confirmed by the World Bank quarterly review of the Performance of the World Economies when Nigeria and few other countries in Africa and Asia were classified as the poorest countries in the world.(World Bank 2014).

Development indeed, is a process by which country improves its capacity to meet the needs of its citizens such as the basic needs of life like food, shelter, clothing, education, defence, leisure etc. An improved capacity to do these things is usually manifested in the occurrence of some positive changes in the country such as reduction in unemployment, reduction in economic inequality, reduction in the level of poverty, increase in the output of goods and services, a reduction in the level of illiteracy, a rise in the level of social consciousness and political participation among others. These are some time referred to as the components or indicators of development.

## **9. Summary of Findings**

A critical evaluation of the various development programmes and policies in Nigeria, revealed that a wide vacuum exist in Ebonyi State with respect to sustainable development programmes and development of the state. Therefore the major findings are:

1. It was observed that since Ebonyi State was created in 1996, poverty has remained a major problem confronting the state.
2. Another major problem confronting Ebonyi State is the absence of certain critical infrastructures such as portable water and rural electrifications. The present rural electrification programs especially street lighting is politically motivated and hijacked by politicians for personal gain as the source of power for those street lights are from a high voltage generating set.
3. It was also observed that the present government in Ebonyi State invested heavily in critical and solid road infrastructures across in all the nooks and crannies of the State that has no rival in comparison with any state in Nigeria, but human capacity development in the state is very poor. Most indigenes of the state cannot afford to send their children to school due to high cost of accessing secondary and higher education with poor facilities and infrastructures.

4. Despite the huge agricultural potentials in the state which is the major occupation of Ebonyi State, the agricultural sector in the state is yet to be fully optimized as most of the rural farmers do not have adequate training and knowledge of modern techniques in agricultural production.
5. The study observed that despite the level of educational development in the state, scientific knowledge, scientific consciousness and technology is still very low.
6. The researcher also observed that, every administration that comes to power Nigeria must initiate and establish one form of rural development programme or the other that will speak for such administration and such programmes goes into extinction as soon as the government is out of power. There is no comprehensive development blue print that could guarantee continuity and drive home any programme initiated by the predecessors. Such action affects development.
7. There is lack of job creation in the state. This has seriously led to the high poverty and unemployment rate facing the state. Despite government availability of some development programmes in the state.
8. The study observed that the state is blessed with abundant human and natural resources which have remained untapped.

## **10. Policy Recommendations**

To achieve sustainable development in Ebonyi State, the following strategies should be adopted in the state.

1. Government should assume a commanding height in creating jobs and fighting poverty in the in the state to further boost the economic capacities of her citizens.
2. Government should subsidize education and health care services to her citizens so as to further enhance the human capacity development of her citizens to become scientifically conscious and knowledgeable about the modern technology. This will enhance their productive capacity and technological ingenuity.
3. Government should aggressively enhance the capacities of the workforce in Ebonyi State through periodic seminars, conferences, workshops, trainings and retraining of staff in the State in order to enhance their productive capacities in the state.
4. Having provided the needed critical road infrastructure as an enabling environment for development in the state, government should create other basic needs of life such as portable water supply, stable and uninterrupted power supply, adequate security of lives, and property of her citizens to compliment and accelerate the speed of development in Ebonyi State.
5. Government should develop and implement skill acquisition programmes that could increase the productive capacity, earning opportunities and Social programmes targeted for the rural poor in the state.
6. Government should exploit and expropriate the abundant natural resources in the state by attracting foreign investors into the state so as to ensure increased productivity in the various sectors especially the agricultural sector which is the backbone of the state economy.

## **11. Conclusion**

In as much as infrastructural development and human capacity development are techniques of measuring development, a growth process that is employment-centered, provision of the basic needs of life, rural integrated development, agricultural development and engineered by massive investment in human capital development should be aggressively pursued. Investment in human capital means improvements in education and training, skills acquisition, health and nutrition. All these reinforce one another and collectively influence the pace of growth with equity, while also helping to break the vicious circle of poverty in the state. There are, therefore, strong complementarities between growth, poverty reduction, and human capital. In the seamless web of interrelations among the components of human capital, education plays the central role. Emphasis should therefore be placed on the educational component of capital development. Education covers all schooling, both formal and informal, and may well be considered in terms of both investment and consumption.

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