

Assessing the Contributions of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to Poverty Alleviation and Community Development in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT:

Studies in the past have shown significant growth in community development and poverty alleviation in various parts of Nigeria. This explain the need for concerted efforts at rural development and poverty alleviation with implications for urban planning and regional development since government alone cannot be relied upon. The rural areas and its people have not fared well. The rural areas as a result, have continued to be backward and low in economic and social wellbeing. It could be inferred that no significant achievement can be recorded in Nigeria in terms of poverty alleviation without incorporating the NGOs. The objectives of the study therefore, are to: Assess the contributions of NGOs in poverty alleviation and community development in Adamawa State. Literature review, questionnaire and interview methods/ Focus Group Discussion were used for the study. The results indicated that: NGOs activities spread across many fields of endeavor such as: education, empowerment, health environmental care, sustainability and HIV awareness campaign, seeking social transformation and improvement in the quality of life of the people in Adamawa State. The study recommends that NGOs should seek to explore avenues for funding from donor agencies and improve efforts on advocacy and HIV awareness. The outcome of this study will elicit the necessary responses from the Government and the various stakeholders on the need to involve the NGOs as veritable tools in tackling poverty and community development in Adamawa State and

Nigeria in general.

KEYWORDS; Community development, Poverty alleviation, NGOs, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Researchers and practitioners routinely discuss the impact of Non- Governmental Organizations (NGO' s) on rural livelihoods. This has prompted the search for alternative modes and mechanisms of community development that could bring about economic development and poverty alleviation with implications for urban planning and regional development. Over the past decade, interest in poverty alleviation and community development has grown significantly in various parts of Nigeria. In Nigeria, government and community representatives view NGOs as important vehicles for community economic development and poverty alleviation.

The advent of modern societies and the development of states or nations brought to fore, the need for even development to reduce disparity and inequality which are closely associated with poverty in the spatial context (Sachs, 2015). This underscores the need for concerted efforts at rural development and poverty alleviation since government alone cannot be relied upon. From the foregoing, it could be inferred that no significant achievement can be recorded in Nigeria in terms of poverty alleviation without incorporating the NGOs to achieve overall improvement in the living standard of the vast majority who reside in the rural areas



(Yusuf, 2015). According to Wahab (2010), the rural area and the people have not fared well. The rural areas have continued to be backward and low in economic and social wellbeing. Ali (2010) also observed the concentration of investment and government expenditure in the urban areas.

Fayemi et al (2015) also acknowledge the resources that have been spent by huge governments on development and poverty alleviation without desired results, which the researchers attributed to planning without data and facts. Dhillon and Hansre (2015) observed that Non- Governmental Organizations have the knowledge, accurate information and experience about rural communities. Their knowledge of the felt-needs of rural dwellers being the domain of their main focus is clear. In the same vein, Bigsten et al (2017), and World Bank (2007) argued that Non-Governmental Organizations should be put in the fore front in the pursuance of the objectives of rural development. Government at all levels made several policies and programmes to address the problems of rural poverty and inequality. For instance; Ali (2010), Gillespie (2019), Nafiziger (2019), Narayan and Chambers (2010) X-rayed the spatial distribution of poverty and trend on a global scale. Despite these efforts, the rise in standard of living noticed in the advanced world has not trickled down favorably on the third world or developing countries as gap still exist between the haves and the have not. This phenomenon has led to constant review in approach to poverty alleviation the world over.

The World Bank has had a couple of interventions through such programmes as the World Bank Agricultural Development Projects, Empowerment National Economic and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document and recently Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to mention a few. Therefore, the objectives of the study are: i) to assess the contributions of NGOs towards poverty alleviation and community development in Adamawa state and ii) to make recommendations with a view to achieving poverty alleviation and community development in Adamawa State. Thus the study would have far reaching implications on policy makers and would be useful to academics & amp; students in research. The outcome of the study would help in the determination of the areas of support and/or partnership with donor agencies. It is hoped that the study would also serve as a guide to all agencies involved in community based poverty alleviation.

ResearchQuestions

- 1. What are the strategies employed by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in povertyalleviation and community development in Adamawa State?
- 2. How do the community dwellers
- 3. rate the contributions of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in poverty alleviation and community development in Adamawa State?
- 4. What are the target groups of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in towards poverty alleviation and community development in Adamawa State?

The study is structured as follows: The first part deals with introduction, the second part is concerned with the literature review: which encompasses the concept of poverty, poverty alleviation, and measurement, and community development. The third part address methodological issues, while the final part of the paper presents the findings; the contribution and the strategies employed by the NGOs in the study area as well as the recommendations.

Location

Adamawa State is located in the North eastern part of Nigeria. It lies between latitude 7° 11' and 7° 30' North of the Equator and longitude 11° 14' and 11/10 East of the Greenwich Meridian. It shares boundaries with Taraba State in the south and west, to its north-west by Gombe state and Borno State to the North. Adamawa State has an international boundary with the Cameroun Republic up along its eastern side. The state covers a total land area of about 39,972 sq. km

Climate

Adamawa has a tropical climate characterized by dry and wet seasons. Local variations originate from the peculiar meteorological and geographical influence

of the area in question. The dominant features of the rainfall in Adamawa State are its seasonal character, its variability from year to year and the intensity of the rainfall or the large energy content of the rainfall and ends later October, while the dry season lasts from November to March. The average rainfall for the state is 759mm in the northern parts and 1,051mm in the southern parts around Ganye and Jada Local Government Areas.

The wettest months are August and September. The length of the rainy season averages eighty-five to ninety-two days per year. Evaporation transpiration exceeds rainfall for most



parts of the year. There is one primary rainfall peak each year. This occurs between June and September when the mean monthly rainfall is 198mm.The surface air, at the beginning of the dry season in November, is very hot. The season starts with a marked and abrupt drop in the moisture content of the surface air followed by a change in the direction of the surface winds. The relative humidity drops abruptly from eighty-two to ninetytwo per cent between June and October (average at 10a.m.) to about twenty-five to thirty-six per cent between December and March. Daily minimum temperatures normally drop more rapidly than the maximum.

Consequently, the diurnal range of temperature increases rapidly. Daily maximum screen temperatures in November may rise as high as 33°C and the minimum may fall as low as 11°C. The sky is mostly clear in November and this permits longer hours of sunshine. The average duration of sun- shine in November varies from 10.6 to 9.2 hours. The harmattan period is experienced between December and February. The season is characterized by very strong and cold desiccating and dust-laden winds. Trees shed their leaves during this period; grasses die out entirely and are burnt off. Visibility is generally reduced. The extremely dust-laden atmosphere shuts out insulation and leads to low temperatures.

The thickness of this haze and dust layer of the harmattan exceeds a height of 1500 meters. This appears like a dense fog and gives the day a dull and gloomy look. Very little direct insulation can reach the ground on such days and consequently the daily maximum temperatures become lower. Dense harmattan dust rarely lasts continuously for more than four or five days even during the peak of the harmattan season.

The frequency of occurrence of such dense harmattan dust varies from year to year. The principal characteristics of the harmattan are: (i) The generally north-easterly direction of the winds; (ii) Low atmosphere moisture content; (iv) Absence of convective type of cloud. Apart from the harmattan, the prevalent winds consist of the north-east and south-east trade winds during the dry and wet seasons respectively, Wind speeds range from 115km per day in April/May to 42km per day between August and September

Relief and Drainage

Apart from the expansive, Numan Plains, the state is characterized by undulating hills and rolling landscapes in the south and west. There are several rocky highlands in the east. The rocky hills, for instance near Demsa, Song and Numan, are normally strewn, with broken rocks and rock outcrops which render them unsuitable for arable farming.

The state is well drained by many rivers, most of which are seasonal. The main river is the Benue, as which rises from the highlands of the Cameroun and flows southwards to join the River Niger at Lokoja. Its major tributaries are the Gongola, Taraba and Donga. Most rivers have flat sandy, beds and steep rocky incised valley sides. They are normally flooded during the rainy season and oil becomes sandy flats during the dry season. There are no major waterfalls in Adamawa State.

Soil and Vegetation

The northern part of Adamawa State has the sub-Sudan vegetation zone marked by short grasses interspersed with short trees, while in its southern part, the northern Guinea Savannah vegetation exists. The Guinea Savannah vegetation type is a by-product of centuries of tree devastation by man and fire, and continuous attempts by the plants to adapt themselves to the climatic environment. The true vegetation of the area has for years been modified by human activities, and hence, traces of the climatic climax are difficult to come by.

The evolution of agriculture from mobile bush fallowing to fixed farming near settlements is paralleled by massive changes in the structure and composition of the vegetation. At each successive clearing, unwanted trees are cut to near ground level, but those valued for their oil, edible green leaf, fibre, fruit or browse, or merely for shade, are carefully preserved.

Among the preserved species are Butyrospermumparadoxum (shea butter or oil); Parkiaclappertonia, Tamarindusindica and Vitaxdoniana (all valued for their edible fruit); Adanoniadigitata (a multipurpose producer of edible green leaf, fibre and edible fruit): Afzeliaafricana. ptercarpuserinanous. Acacia albida. Khahasenegaas, Ficussycormorus, Daniciliaoliveri and Vitaxdoniana

Wild Life

The state is inhabited by several wild life, the most important of which are toads and rats; that are found along water courses; others include hares and rabbits. Among the reptiles are pythons, monitor lizards, snakes like cobra et cetera. The birds include egrets, king fishers, kites and guinea fowls. Most of these animals are herbivorous, while some are carnivorous. Apart from feeding on tall grass during the rainy season, the cane and giant



rats also use the grass for protection against predators.

They are mostly out at night and burrow or use burrows made by other animals. The reptiles live under the rocks and boulders and feed on the numerous insects which abound in the area. Wild life has contributed to ecological balance in the state. Their mode of life and feeding habits blend with and preserve the grassland ecosystem. Their droppings add nutrients to the soil thus making the trees thrive more.

Population and Socio-Economic Activities

Adamawa State is estimated to about 3,675,000 population. There are over 150 ethnic groups found in Adamawa State. Some of the ethnic groups include: Fulani, Bwatiye, Lunguda, Verre, Chamba, Lalla, Kwah, Waja, Bura, Fali, Yungur, Yandang, Tambo, Libo Mwana, Kilba, Viengo and many others (Adebayo; Tukur; 1997).

The people of Adamawa, are noted for its rich cultural heritage which reflects in its history, i.e. dances, dress patterns, craftsmanship, music, and her cordial relationships. The three main Islam, Christianity religions are and Traditionalism.Majority of the people in Adamawa State are farmers. Cattle rearing are also a major occupation, while village communities living on the banks of Rivers Gongola and Benue and their tributaries in the State engage in fishing and farming. Crops such as maize, rice, millet, sugar cane, cotton, groundnuts, arabica, guinea corn, tea and kola nuts are also grown successfully in the state. There are abundant deposits of mineral ore in the state such as marble, mercury, zinc, emerald, diamond, limestone, coal, tin, ruby, graphite etc

The state has a network of roads linking all parts of the country. The development of many communities in the state can be traced to the colonial era when the Germans ruled a swath of territory known as the Northern and Southern Kameruns from Dikwa in the North to Victoria (Limbe) on the Atlantic coast in the 19th century. These were however handed over, as UN Trustee Territories, to the British at the end of the first World War with the signing of the Versailles Treaty. After a series of plebiscites, the Northern Kameruns joined Nigeria to form the then Sardauna Province, and the Southern Kameruns formed a Confederation with French speaking Cameroon.

They are 21 local government areas in the state namely: Fufore, Ganye, Gombi, Guyuk, Hong, Jada, Shelleng, Demsa, Madagali, Maiha, Mayo-Belwa, Michika, Mubi, Numan, Song, Yola, Mubi-South, Jimeta, Girei, Toungo and Lamurde.

Tourism

Adamawa State is well noted for a rich cultural heritage which is reflected in its past history, craftmanship, music and dances, dress patterns and hospitality.

Festivals such as the Njuwa Fishing Festival which holds at Lake Njuwa in Yola town and the Yinagu fishing festival at Michika attract people within and outside the state

from the month of March through May each year. Other tourist attractions in the state are Koma hills, three sister rocks (Song Local Government) and Kiri Dam near Guyuk.

II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Community development has a long history. It dates back to the early time when man discovered fire and farming techniques. All efforts at improving on his live and living could be referred to as community development. Therefore, the advancement of the well-being of the individual, the society and political economy could be referred to as community development. Accordingly, a review of relevant literature is important in understanding the issues involved, in this regard.

Wakili (2013) assessed the effects of Empowerment Local and Environmental Management Programme (LEEMP) on rural community development in Adamawa State. His study assessed the socio- economic status of some of the beneficiary communities in nine (9) Local Government Areas of the State. Thirty (30) communities were selected using simple random sampling technique. Data was collected using the instrument of questionnaire, oral interview, observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Descriptive statistics, chi-square and student - ttest were used to analyse the data. The findings by Wakili (2013)revealed appreciable an improvement in the quality of life of the people after LEEMP intervention in water supply, health, education, roads and others.

Jegede, Kehinde, Akanbi, and Hammid (2011) carried out an empirical investigation of the impact of micro-finance on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The study established an empirical relationship between Micro-finance loan disbursement and poverty alleviation. The relationship was tested by employing Chi-Square test, f- Test and t-test. The finding revealed a significant difference between people who used Microfinance institution and those who do not use them. However, Micro-finance dwells on financial support while Non-Governmental Organizations



are encompassing. Therefore the impact of microfinance is narrowed as compared to Nongovernmental Organization which is a broader framework to alleviating poverty and its dreadful hold. Iheanacho (2012) recommended an integrated approach to rural development in Nigeria, concluding that this may lead to sustainable development especially when the grass root is fully involved or mobilized. Iheanacho (2012) failed to explain the method and procedure for articulating the consciousness of the people at the community level considering that other integrated approaches like Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRI) and River Basin Development Authority (RBDA) have failed. As a result, the search for an alternative leverage that could result to poverty alleviation and community development, becomes more desirable, if not urgent which underscores the importance of this study.

Udensi, Udoh, Daasi, and Igbara, (2012) examined the level and extent to which community leaders contribute towards community development projects in Bola Local government area, Cross River State. They selected a total of 150 community leaders through Multi-stage Sampling

Techniques. Udensi, et al. (2012) used Frequency Count, Arithmetic Mean and Weight Mean Value, to realize the objectives of their study. They discovered that leadership position was not an exclusive preserve of a particular sex, age group, marital or educational status. Their study indicated that the duration of residence of community leaders is a significant factor in the success of the community development project in the study area. Udensi, et al. (2012) recommended that experience and participation in community development should aid the choice of leaders of community development efforts. This is obviously an informative discovery that could benefit the choices of leader in such endeavor including the Non- Governmental approach.

David, Edebo, and Ladi (2010) examined the role of community based association in rural development. The study identifies membership dues, registration fees and donations from members as sources of funding to the community based association. David et al.. (2010) selected a total of one hundred (100) members of the association using simple random sampling techniques. Their findings showed that the association carried out many development projects such as the building of postal agency, health centers as well as supply of educational materials which is a contribution to community development in-spite of some identified challenges like inadequate funding. Their study posits that community based association were also involved in conflict resolutions within the members and the community as well. Their study further reveals that given more support in the forms of favorable policies, good governance, the community based associations and other cohesive, vibrant and trust worthy groups could reduce poverty and under development in the rural as well as urban areas.

The belief that government alone can provide facilities and services to its citizens makes it difficult to see the contributions of NGOs in poverty alleviation and community development. Besides, little attention is given in the literature to the activities of the NGOs. As a result, scanty literature is available in this regard. Accordingly, an investigation into the activities and contributions of NGOs in poverty alleviation and community development presents an interesting opportunity for research in order to enable us hold the NGOs to standard.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Three approaches were used for the study; literature review, questionnaire and interview methods. These were complemented by published and unpublished works sourced from agencies like the ministry for youths and Sports, Ministry for women affairs and social development, community development records, magazines, journals, etc. However, a pilot study was first undertaken. The pilot survey enables the identification of the existing development oriented Non-Developmental Organizations (NGOs), of the study area and the validation of the research instrument for the main survey.The questionnaire was subjected to construct validity. Construct validity according to Trachim (2006) refers to the degree to which inferences can legitimately be made from the operationalizations of the study to the theoretical constructs on which they were based. To achieve this, the initial questionnaire was given to some 5 project managers of the NGOs for their inputs. This aided some level of adjustments for face and content validity, for proper re-structure and remodeling of the questionnaire and to identify the factors noted in the literature review for a more reliable result. Some words were substituted and more lucid ones adopted e.g the "projects" of the NGOs was substituted with contributions because some NGOs revealed their results were not tangible. The pilot study revealed that there are sixty- one (61) registered NGOs in Adamawa State, out of which (21) NGOs, representing (34.4%) were selected using Systematic Random Sampling



technique. The (21) NGOs sampled in Adamawa were selected using a Systematic Random Sampling from the total population of registered NGOs that have poverty alleviation and community development as their area of interest as enshrined in their project document.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses data obtained from the Questionnaire and interview.

Educational Status of the Respondents

On the educational status of the community dwellers, 208 respondents had formal education (52%) while 192 (48%) respondents had non-formal education. This indicates that the educational status of the formal and the in- formal groups is almost of the same proportion. This result underscores the importance members of the community attached to education in the scheme of things and awareness of contemporary issues with respect to poverty alleviation and community development.

OccupationalStatusoftheRespondents

Majority of the respondents 232 are arable farmers (i.e 58%). However, 72 respondents were traders (18%), 60civil servants (15%), while 36 respondents (9%) depend on other means of livelihood such as blacksmithing, traditional barbing, Islamic scholars, tanning, water vending, mat and cap making. The statistics indicated thattraditional local skills are still in contribution to livelihood of the community dwellers. However, the studyrevealed that only one sampled NGO was involved in training to improve rural farming techniques and otheragriculturalrelatedendeavours.

The implication is that more NGOs are needed in the study area because the bulk of the livelihood of thecommunities relies on agriculture. The NGOs could be involved in the areas of modern farming and livestocktechniques, skill acquisition and trade to further diversify the economy. In addition, the existing NGOs have aresponsibilitytoimproveoncapacitybuildingofthefa rmersinthe communities.

Targeted Groups for Poverty Alleviation and Community Development by the NGOs

The interview and questionnaire revealed that, the youth, rural dwellers and women groups were the most targeted by the NGOs in poverty alleviation and community development efforts. The result confirmed that most NGOs are established as voluntary groups whose mandate includes providing succor to the vulnerable and the poor in the society/communities.

ContributionsofNon-GovernmentalOrganizations (NGOs) towards PovertyAlleviationCommunityDevelopmentinAdamawa State

Respondents were asked toassess the contributions of NGOs towards poverty alleviation and community development in Adamawa State.

and community development in Adamawa State. Studies shows the various contributions of the twenty one (21) sampled NGOs in Adamawa State located in thirty four (34) sites which comprised: advocacy, mobilization, participation, partnership, networking, skillacquisition, peereducation and self helped programmes/projects. The contributions of the NGOs in various programmes, the strategies employed and the targeted groups were derived from the inventory sheets and records of the NGOs.

Distribution of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) by Local Government Areas in Adamawa State

Observation of the records of the sampled NGOs in the study area also revealed that their activities and contributions are more prominent in the southern senatorial zone of Adamawa State which comprised: Demsa, Mayo Belwa, Numan and Ganve Local Government Areas (LGAs). This may not be un-connected with early missionary activities and settlement in these communities. This implies the skewed distribution of the NGOs in this regard. The proliferation of the NGOs in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Adamawa State We also have more NGOs in the Northern Senatorial Zone, which is also connected with the effects of the insurgency attacked to the Northern zone, these Local Government Areas are as follows Madagali, Maiha, Mubi North, Mubi South and Michika.

Strategies Employed by Non-Govermental Oganisations NGOs in Poverty Alleviation and Community Development in Adamawa State strategies employed by the NGOs

towards poverty alleviation and community development in the study area. From the studies, it can be seen that the following strategies are mostly employed by the NGOs; advocacy, mobilization, participation, partnership, networking, skill acquisition, peer- education and self-helped. The NGOs could use one or a combination of these strategies in a number of ways depending on the challenge or task at hand to be accomplished.

V. CONCLUSION

This study had set out to assess the contributions of Non-Governmental Organizations



(NGOs) in poverty alleviation and community developmen t in Adamawa State. One of the interesting revelations of this study is that majority of people in the community dwellers interviewed stated that they wait for the Government to initiate or implement poverty alleviation programmes, projects, aimed at community development. The implication of this finding is that the community dwellers in the study area (of Adamawa State) need attitudinal changes necessary for self reliance. This will discourage reliance on Government to provide basic necessities to cushion the effects of poverty and enhance community development which could impact on urban planning and regional development initiatives. The findings also revealed a combination of strategies employed by the NGOs in poverty alleviation and community development which includes: advocacy, mobilization, skill acquisition, donations, participation, partnership, peer education and networking, advancement of the right of the child, women, disabled, urban and rural poor. However, the NGOs efforts on advocacy and HIV awareness were encouraging, considering the responsed of cases of HIV in southern senatorial zone, where the NGOs have the most presence. of Thus. distribution NGOs' activities (contributions) was spread across Adamawa State with greater number located in Adamawa Central and Southern Senatorial zone: The community dwellers also rated the contributions of the NGOs in poverty alleviation and community development in Adamawa State as very high. This implies high level of awareness and lack of significant government presence in the communities. This outcome also agreed with the general tendencies for NGOs to impact positively in NGOs' activities as identified in the literature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the outcome of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1. Majority of the stakeholders among the NGOs surveyed considered the strategies outlined by the NGOstowards poverty alleviation and community development as adequate; they however opined that there isroom for improvement. The study recommends that wealthy individuals and corporate groups in Nigeriashould improve ontheirsupporttothe NGOs.
- The Governmental 2. Non Organizations (NGOs)should consolidate and improve on the level ofachievement of their relative programmes and projects towards poverty community development. alleviation and Inparticular, the NGOsshouldimprovetheir

effortsonadvocacyandHIVawareness.

3. Efforts should be put in place by Adamawa State Government in collaboration with the NGOs to explore theuse of local resources and relevant technology that have the capacity to alleviate poverty and enhancecommunitydevelopment.Accordingly, Geographers,EducationistsandUrbanPlannersa ndRegionalDevelopment experts should key into the strategies for poverty alleviation and community development inorder toimprove ontheirservicesandoutput.

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