THE IMPACT OF RURAL PROJECTS ON JOB CREATION

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Abstract - This study was designed to investigate the impact of rural projects on job creation in Orlu Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. Five research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A well-structured multiple-choice questionnaire was used to collect relevant data from a random sample of 392 respondents in Orlu Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed using the descriptive statistics. Also, the formulated hypotheses were tested by means of correlation analysis statistical technique. Findings from the analysis revealed that rural development projects do have significant impact on job creation and thus asserts that rural projects directly or indirectly make room for creation of jobs. Therefore an effective program of action and an appropriate institutional arrangement for the execution of projects should be put in place so as to ensure successful project delivery.

Keywords - Government, Job creation, Projects, Rural development

I. INTRODUCTION

In the course of recent years, huge interests in rural infrastructure upgrades have been found out with numerous intended objectives, and varied stages of success in achieving those targets. As for physical infrastructure, one objective has essentially been to empower rural areas upgrade in water supply, roads, electricity, irrigation, and so on, to deal with obvious disparities in levels of advancement amongst urban and rural areas. A significant number of the recent rural infrastructure projects extend expressly state welfare enhancements of the poor rural as project objectives. It is far generally normal that physical infrastructural upgrades lead to financial, non-monetary, and social advantages for the poor. It was just in the wake of episodes of starvation and different ailments which tested the living state of the urban dwellers that governments took up this problem. For over a period of time now, rural development techniques have been focused at the advancement of a cutting edge area through plan of action to fertilizers, seedling improvement, irrigation and mechanization (Lacroix, 2011). Paul, Agba & Chukwurah (2014) reported that Olisa & Obiukwu (1992) observed further that it was tacitly assumed that once the national economy developed (featuring such indices as industrialization, modernized agriculture, and modern infrastructure) rural economy would automatically develop.

Projects and programmes aimed at stimulating development in the rural areas and economic growth have been over time initiated by governments and its agencies in developing nations such as Nigeria. Economic growth is fully realized when the per capita income of a nation takes an upward trend and movement, as a result of high employment rate and wealth creation strategies. Hence the government embarks on project or programmes that will create jobs for the citizens and bring down the high rate of unemployment. However, due to the gap between the rural areas and urban areas in terms of development there has been a consistent migration of people from the rural areas to the urban areas in search of jobs and employment which has further heated up the system. This therefore has given rise to campaign and crusade for grassroots development, therefore making the grass root the focal point for national development for the nation. Thus many government efforts have been geared towards rural development by initiating projects and programmes to encourage job creation.

Job creation programmes are seen as projects carryout by a government, state or a nation in order to give assistance to the population seeking employment, mostly where there is high unemployment rate. They may either concentrate on a macro economical policy in order to create a supply of employment or create more efficient means to pair employment seekers to their prospective employers. The Nigerian Government has repeatedly argued that the central programme aimed at bettering lives of rural Nigerians should focus on rural development for poverty reduction and job creation. Therefore, programmes addressing income, human capital and asset poverty had to be implemented by the government.

Rural development and poverty alleviation strategies became intrinsic features of an ecological framework which intended to supply the rural communities with an array of economic benefits and services upon which such communities depended on. These benefits include the provision of food resources, job creation and stock farming. In attempts to achieve the above, Mubangizi (2009) observed that there have been several attempts to understand and create jobs so as to reduce poverty in a country. Concerns have often centered on poverty reduction policies, the appropriate strategies that should be adopted for

poverty alleviation and the targeting mechanisms in this regard. The study seeks to identify the linkages between rural infrastructure investments and job creation in the rural area. Previously, most evaluation of projects have focused on physical outputs such as the number of health care centers constructed, the number of kilometers of roads rehabilitated and the quality of project implementation such as the level of satisfying technical specifications within a specified budgets and duration. The study attempts, among other things, to examine the impact of rural projects in job creation on the rural areas.

Statement of the Problem

The study was motivated by a desire to synthesize the impacts observed from rural infrastructure interventions projects on job creation. The rural areas of Nigeria are inhabited by the bulk of the nation's population; they serve as the base for the production of food and fiber. They are also the major source of the capital formation for the country and a principal market for domestic manufacturers (Olatunbosun, 2008). Usually, there is absence of potable water, electricity and functional feeder roads. The rural people have low purchasing power and standard of living due to lack of opportunities to create wealth and jobs. Job creation projects being the cornerstone of the Keynesian economics are projects undertaken in a nation to combat the menace of high unemployment. In Nigeria many job creation projects have been embarked upon right from independence till date in our rural areas to create opportunities and jobs to combat the high unemployment which now constitutes a national crisis through rural infrastructural projects.

Objectives of the Study

This study is sought to ascertain

1. The level of rural project from Imo State Government and it's impact on job creation for the people of the study areas.
2. the various rural projects that can create job opportunity in Imo State.
3. the most basic rural project by the government in the past 5 years that enable job creation in the LGA.
4. the constraints associated with rural intervention projects in the development of rural Imo State.

Research Questions:

The following research questions will be answered in the course of study:

1. What is the rural project from Imo State Government and it's influence on job creation for the people of the study areas?
2. What are the various rural projects that can create job opportunity in Imo State?
3. What are the most basic rural projects that government has brought into the LGA within the past five years that created job opportunity for the youths in the LGA?
4. What are the constraints of rural intervention projects in the development of rural Imo State?

Research Hypothesis

For the purpose of the validity of the study question, the following statements of Hypotheses are made to guide the work:

H_0: The extent of rural project from Imo State Government has not significantly influenced job creation for the people of the study areas.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Materials and Procedures

This study made use of non-probability sampling methods, specifically on convenience and quota sampling methods. The study involved dwellers in Imo State singling out a case study of Orlu Local Government Area in Imo State. A sample size of three hundred and ninety two (392) respondents was used for the purpose of the study. The respondents were visited in any of their popular gathering in the communities such as community meeting, health, political, and school church gathering.

A well-structured multiple-choice questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated and subjected for reliability before usage.

The statistical tools to be used are descriptive statistics to answer the research questions while correlation (r) analysis statistical technique was used for testing of the hypotheses. The findings and consequently the conclusions were dependent on the decision rule. The rejection of the null hypothesis shall be based on the p-value as the null hypothesis is rejected if p-value<0.05.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis, the following findings were made:

Research Question 1: What is the rural project from Imo State Government and it's influence on job creation for the people of the study areas?

Q/No.	Rural development projects in the LGA has contributed in setting up of more	N	(%)	Ranking
1	Retailing shop	164	41.8	4th
2	Bottle store	56	14.3	11th
3	Grinding mill	34	8.67	15th
4	Cybercafé	111	28.3	7th

5	Supply farm produce	121	30.9	6th
6	Butchery	43	11	14th
7	Welding/ metal working	107	27.3	8th
8	Barber shop/ salon	219	55.9	3rd
9	Pub/ bar/ Night clubs	143	36.5	5th
10	Agricultural crop products	67	17.1	10th
11	Poultry	73	18.6	9th
12	Sewing	50	12.8	13th
13	Grocery	53	13.5	12th
14	Restaurant	231	58.9	2nd
15	Building Contractor/Building material seller	261	66.6	1st
16	Other	43	11	14th
	N	392		

Table I: Respondents opinion on job creation from rural project development
Source: Fieldwork (2016)

Table I showing respondents' opinion on the influence of infrastructural rural project on job creation reports that building contractors and building material sellers springed up more in the area studied followed by restaurant, barbing salon, retailing shop, pub/bar/nightclub which accounted 5th in ranking, supply of farm produce accounted 6th, then cybercafé , welding/metal working, poultry business accounting 9th, agricultural crop products, 11th type of business/job creation in the area is bottle store, grocery and sewing which formed the 12th and 13th in the ranking respectively.

Research Question 2: What are the various rural projects that can create job opportunity in Imo State?

S/No.	What are the possible basic rural projects that government can bring into the LGA that will boost job creation in the rural area	N	(%)	Ranking
1	Provision of good road network	337	86	3rd
2	Provision of constant electricity supply	321	81.9	6th
3	Provision of pipe borne water	289	73.7	7th
4	Construction/Rehabilitation of primary/secondary schools	329	83.9	4th
5	Construction/Rehabilitation of primary health centers	326	83.2	5th
6	Construction of a modern market	378	96.4	2nd
7	Construction of Industries	382	97.4	1st
	N	392		

Table II: The possible basic rural projects that government can bring into the LGA that will boost job creation in the rural area
Source: Fieldwork (2016)

Table II present respondents' view of the various the possible basic rural projects that government can bring into the LGA that will boost job creation in the rural area rating from the first are construction of industries, followed by construction of modern market, then provision of good road network, construction/Rehabilitation of primary/secondary schools, then provision of constant electricity supply as the 6th and finally the least rated is the provision of pipe borne water.

Research Question 3: What are the most basic rural projects that government has brought into the LGA within the past five years that created job opportunity for the youths in the LGA?

S/No.	What are the most basic rural projects that government has brought into the LGA within the past five years that created job opportunity for the youths in the LGA	N	(%)	Rank
1	Provision of good road network	213	54	4th
2	Provision of constant electricity supply	365	93	2nd
3	Provision of pipe borne water	38	10	6th
4	Construction/Rehabilitation of primary/secondary schools	378	96	1st
5	Construction/Rehabilitation of primary health centers	312	80	3rd
6	Construction of a modern market	45	11	5th
7	Construction of Industries	11	3	7th
	N	392		

Table III: the most basic rural projects that government has brought into the LGA within the past five years that created job opportunity for the youths in the LGA

Table III reports the most basic rural projects that government has brought into the LGA within the past five years that created job opportunity for the youths in the LGA. The most basic rural projects that government has brought into the LGA within the past five years that created job opportunity for the youths in the LGA, rating from the 1st was construction/rehabilitation of primary/secondary schools, followed by provision of constant electricity supply, the 3rd in the ranking reported construction/rehabilitation of primary health centers then provision of good road network reporting the 4th among all the basic rural projects that government has brought into the LGA within the past five years as the result account 54.34% of the respondents. The least

most basic rural projects that government has brought into the LGA within the past five years that created job opportunity for the youths in the LGA was the construction of industries which was rated the 7th, followed by provision of pipe borne water as the 6th, then construction of a modern market as the 5th. The respondents further rated governments' effort on rural developmental projects in the LGA in the last 5 years as low (39.8%) followed by 26.79% reported very low, then 17.09% that reported medium. While only 10.97% reported very high, then 5.36% that reported high.

Research Question 4: What are the constraints of rural intervention projects in the development of rural Imo State?

S/No	The constraints of infrastructural rural intervention projects in the development of rural Imo State	N	(%)	Rank
1	bad road network	254	64.8	2nd
2	inadequate constant electricity supply	213	54.3	3rd
3	inadequate pipe borne water	198	50.5	4th
4	no government project to keep the neighbourhood lively	321	81.9	1st
5	no close primary health centers	111	28.3	5th
	N	392	100	

Table IV: Constraints of infrastructural rural intervention projects in the development of rural Imo State
Source: Fieldwork (2016)

The most rated constraints associated with infrastructural rural intervention projects in the development of rural Imo State is that 'no government project is available to keep the neighbourhood lively (81.89%)'; followed by 'bad road network has been the case (64.796%)'; then inadequate constant electricity supply (54.34%); inadequate pipe borne water (50.51%) and finally and the least rated is the fact that there is no close primary health centers accounting 28.32% of the entire respondents that participated in the survey.

$H_{0:1}$: The infrastructural rural project from Imo State Government has not significantly influenced job creation for the people of the study areas.

Item	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value	Strength of Effect	Report
Infrastructural rural project Job creation	0.624	0.000	Positive and a strong influence	Significant

Table V: The rural project from Imo State Government and job creation for the people of the study areas

The result in Table V has reported that the infrastructural rural project from Imo State Government has significantly influenced job creation for the people of the study areas. As the result account a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.624 and a p-value (0.000) < 0.05 confidence level, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis and the alternative accepted. The result has further shown that rural project from Imo State Government has a strong, positive and significant influenced on job creation in the study area with a correlation coefficient of 0.624.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Based on the data presentation and analysis, with the use of simple percentage to find the proportionate ratio of the variables under question, including the findings, the study showed that:

1. Rural development projects have a significant impact on job creation
2. Rural projects from Imo State Government significantly have affected the development of the rural areas.
3. Rural projects directly or indirectly make room for the creation of jobs for the unemployed.
4. Rural projects as at last five years ago have positively impacted on the creation of jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings in this study, we recommend that there should be: Increase funding/ more rural projects designed for local governments; Increased involvement of NGO's and corporate bodies; Perceptual study of rural infrastructural facilities and Effective monitoring and control of ongoing projects.

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