**THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVENRMENT IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA (A STUDY OF UYO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, AKWA IBOM STATE)**

**ABSTRACT**

The study was on the role of local government on Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria . A case study of Uyo Local Government Area Akwa Ibom State. The study was aimed at identifying poverty alleviation strategies and programmes at local government; to assess the impact of these strategies and programmes on poverty alleviation and to identifying problems confronting local government strategies and programmes in poverty reduction. In administering data, the random sampling method was used, and the main research instrument was questionnaire for data collection. The study employs descriptive, investigative and analytical approach by using descriptive statistical tools (means and simple percentages) and the hypotheses was tested using chi-square (X2). It was discovered that local government plays a vital role by adopting strategies and programmes of poverty alleviation, and there is significant relations between problems confronting local government strategies and programmes and poverty alleviation. In conclusion, it is quite necessary to formulate policies and programmes guided by the constitution to counter poverty through meaningful developmental strategies. It is therefore recommended among others that the governments under its programmes should include plans for creating jobs, provision of basic amenities, strengthening the skill base, protecting the vulnerable; and there is need to alleviate corruption of which the anti-corruption agencies should be revitalized for them to be active again.

**TABLE OF CONTENT**

Cover page = = = = = = = = = i

Title page = = = = = = = = = = ii

Certification = = = = = = = = = iii

Dedication = = = = = = = = = iv

Acknowledgement = = = = = = = = v-vi

Abstract = = = = = = = = = = vii

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Background of the Study = = = = = = 1-4

1.2 Historical Background = = = = = = 5-6

1.3 Statement of the Problem = = = = = = 6-7

1.4 Objectives of the Study = = = = = = 7

1.5 Research Questions = = = = = = = 7-8

1.6 Significance of the Study = = = = = = 8-9

1.7 Delimitation/Scope of the Study = = = = 9-10

1.8 Limitation of the Study = = = = = = 10

1.9 Definition of Terms = = = = = = = 11

**CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

2.1 Introduction = = = = = = = = 13

2.2 Overview of Public Relations = = = = = 13-17

2.3 Methods Tools and Tactics of Public Relations = = 17-18

2.3.1 Tools = = = = = = = = = 18-19

2.3.2 Targeting Publics = = = = = = = 20

2.3.3 Lobby Groups = = = = = = = = 20

2.4 Goals and steps in a public relations campaign = = 22-23

2.4.1 Steps in a public relations campaign = = = = 23-24

2.5 Areas of the public relations = = = = = 25-26

2.6 theoretical framework = = = = = = 26-27

**CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOS**

3.1 Introduction = = = = = = = = 28

3.2 Research Design = = = = = = = 29

3.3 Area of the Study = = = = = = = 29

3.4 Sample size and sampling techniques = = = 30

3.5 Description of measuring instrument = = = 30

3.6 Validation of instrument = = = = = = 30

3.7 Method of data analysis = = = = = = 31

**CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING**

4.1 Introduction = = = = = = = = 32

4.2 Data presentation = = = = = = = 32-35

4.3 Discussion of findings = = = = = = 35-42

**CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 Introduction = = = = = = = = 43

5.2 Summary of findings = = = = = = = 43-45

5.3 Conclusion = = = = = = = = 45-47

5.3 Recommendations = = = = = = = 48

References

Appendix

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Although the menace of ravaging poverty and poor condition of rural development is not peculiar to Nigeria and indeed, the developing nations, the incidences have however, been more profound in this part of the world compared to other regions. World bank observed over two decades ago, that poverty in the developing countries is on the rise and this has not significantly abated up to date especially in Nigeria. in fact, millions of people across the country endure lives of abject poverty.

Poverty is a state of not having enough of the basic need. It is a state of deprivation from the basic necessities of life. it means not having enough of the amenities and resources needed for sustainable or comfortable living (Chikere, 2008). Poverty alleviation is undoubtedly one of the highest ranking issues in the national strategies of many less developed countries, of which every tiers of government in Nigeria is tailored with the programmes of all aviating it especially local government areas as citadels for grassroots development.

The invaluable role of the local government is anchored on the attendant development it brings nearer to the people. Rural development integrates the people into plans and programmes of government in alleviation of poverty. In Nigeria, the local government has historically provided services of importance to its citizens both in rural local governments which is now a subject of public concern as a result of increasing rate of poverty among the people of Uyo local government. In the simplest languages, local government means management of the local affairs by the people of a locality. It enjoys an autonomous status, which entitles it to take certain legislation, administration and financial decision through under the conditions and within the limits of law. Agba Kobo and Ogbonna, 2004, defines local government from legal perspective, they see it as a political administration unit that is empowered by law to administer a specific locality.

Poverty is a global phenomenon. Although, the developed countries have their fair share of the problem, in the developing countries. Poverty level has been on the increase. It is both present in urban has been on the increase. It is both present in urban and rural areas (World Bank, 2007). But, it is more pervasive in rural area because of its characteristic. Infact, the poverty level in Uyo local government area can best be described as in “flammable” sequel to this, there is no other development issues that poses a fundamental challenge to policy makers in local government as endemic as poverty. The provision of basic activities such as roads, education, health, pipe-borne water or portable water, housing, electricity services among others dictate the condition of lives in the rural area. but local government driven initatites that contributes, marginalized groups, and other slum dweller (whose access to national poverty alleviation programme is generally constrained depriving them of the opportunities they need to pursue their own self improvement will empower them to achieve economics security and social including (Chikere, 2008).

Poverty has many causes, all of which reinforce one another, one sources of poverty is the lack of basic services; such as clean water, education and health care; another is lack of assets, such as land, tools, credit, and supportive network. A third is lack of income, including food, shelter, clothing and empowerment (political power, confidence and dignity). But local government has been saddled with the responsibility of alleviating poverty at the grassroots. rather, the fight to alleviate poverty started some decades ago, it seems that the various strategies and programmes adopted by Uyo local government are yet to achieve the desired result of alleviating poverty. This study assess the role of local government on poverty alleviation in Nigeria.

**1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Poverty praised a serious concern to every society, developed or under-developed. Countries of the world come out with several strategies and programmes to combat poverty. However, the issues of poverty keep raising its ugly face, especially in developing countries.

Poverty humiliates and dehumanizes its victim. it effect is worrisome, it makes people compromise on moral values or abandon these values completely, it creates frustration, loss of meaningful life, purpose and living something to live for and disbursement about morality. In other words, poverty retards development, growth and industrialization in uyo local government. the many strands of poverty intertwine and pull people into down spiral. Because tackling one factor may not be enough to lift people out of poverty, an effective poverty alleviating strategy must attack poverty on the all fronts at the same time. But, these are abysmal on assessing Uyo local government of its role I n alleviating poverty.

Then! Does Uyo local government plays any pivotal role in alleviating poverty? Does the people of Uyo local government felt any impact on the strategies and programmes on poverty alleviation? These and many more form the bases of this study and to offer suggestions on poverty alleviation programmes embark upon in Uyo local government area.

**1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of this work are to:

1. Assess the role of local government on poverty alleviation in Nigeria
2. Identify poverty alleviation strategies and programmes at uyo local government
3. assess the impact of these strategies and programmes on poverty alleviation
4. Identify problems facing local government strategies and programmes in poverty reduction.
5. Offer suggestions on poverty alleviation.

**1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In line with the objectives of the study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. Does Uyo local government plays any role in alleviating poverty?
2. What are the poverty alleviation strategies and programme at the local government?
3. Does the strategies and programmes on poverty alleviation have any impact on the people of uyo local government?
4. What are the problems facing local government strategies and programmes in poverty reduction?
5. In what ways can poverty be alleviated?

**1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

In the course of the study, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

**Ho**: There is no significant relationship between local government and poverty alleviation in Nigeria

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**Ho**: There is no significant relationship between problems confronting local government strategies and programmes and poverty alleviation.

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**1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will be significant in the following ways:

* It will help government at all levels to take proactive measures and strategies to stamp-out poverty in Nigeria.
* It will help to strengthen local governments capacity in grassroots management and development
* It will help to strengthen existing programmes and strategies for eliminating or alleviating poverty.
* The study will also help people to realize their potentials, build self-confidence and live life of dignity and fulfillment. it will free people from poverty, ignorance, filth, deprivation and exploitation.
* It will institute participatory urbans process that give a voice in decision making to poor and marginalized populations
* It will help to foster citizenship and social inclusion.
* It will make government to change ways of doing things by provision of adequate access to roads, drainage, transport, electricity which are essential to integrate peripheral and marginalized settlements in the urban grid, fabric and economy.
* It will promote local development to include the necessity of opening up employment and income generation opportunities to impoverished populations
* It will shade more light on optimum/efficient utilization of resources that will build a wall against poverty
* The study would serve as a research and reference materials to other researchers in this areas or related field of study.

**1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study is on the role of local government in poverty alleviation of Nigeria of which Uyo local government had been chosen as a case study. the study thus focused only on the recognizable issues that were attributed to poverty alleviation in Nigeria, and as a role played by local government.

**1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In the course of conducting the research, the following constraints places some impediments on the extent of work carried out:

* Inadequate financial resources to more around for data collection, typing and photocopying etc
* Time constraints, inadequate time for this study for instance, given the time frame within which to submit this work
* **Materials Paucity**: In the course of this study, the researcher was confronted with challenges of sufficient blue-print of materials needed or required to fast-track the work. The sensitivity of the work and death of reference materials invariably delayed the research.

Nevertheless, these did not hamper the full completion or success of the work.

**1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

1. **Poverty**: It is a state of not having enough of the basic need like portable water, good sanitation educational opportunities, health care system, electricity and many others.
2. **Political Freedom**: The opportunities that the people have to determine who should govern them and on what principles.
3. **Economic facilities:** The opportunities to fully utilize economic resources for the purpose of consumption or production or exchange to fast track development
4. **Social opportunities:** The arrangement that a society makes for education,health care and other basic special services, which influence the individual substantive freedom to live better.
5. **Protective security:** A social safety-net needed for preventing the affected population from being reduced to abject misery, and in some cases even starvation to death.
6. **Alleviation**: Strategies to ameliorate or wipe and endemic problem bedeviling the society
7. **local government:** It is the third tier level of government created for the purpose of efficient and effective administration of locality
8. **MDGs:** Mellium development goals.