

Assessing the Impact of Government Initiatives on Reducing Poverty amongst Women at Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract:- The study examined the impact of Government Initiatives of reducing poverty amongst women in Anambra state based on a case study of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development centre. The paper focused on the activities of the centre in championing poverty reduction among women. A well-structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from randomly selected 112 trainees for the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean were used. Percentage difference was equally used to ascertain the difference in poverty status of women before and after the training. The study showed that the trainees had mean income of ₦50,405.56 and ₦151,338.89 before and after the training; mean savings before and after the training was ₦35,741.11 and ₦48,150.00; mean expenditure on household food was ₦21,266.67 and ₦38,111.11 before and after the training; mean expenditure on household health before and after the training was ₦26,000.00 and ₦28,927.78, while mean expenditure on household assets acquisition before and after the training was ₦27,811.11 and ₦55,075.00 respectively. The major challenges faced by the trainees were administrative bottlenecks and bureaucracy in the release of capital funds, late arrival of materials used for the training, among others.

Keyword:- Poverty, Savings, Asset Acquisition, Percentage Difference, Entrepreneurial Activities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty can be said to be a universal occurrence which affects nations and people differently and which afflicts people in various depths and levels at different times and different phases of existence. The level of the problem in developing countries can be said to have reached alarming proportions. Nnamani (2010), defined Poverty as a state where an individual is not able to cater adequately for his or her basic needs of food, shelter and clothing, unable to meet social and economic obligations, lacks gainful employment, skills, assets and has limited access to social and economic infrastructure such as education, health, electricity, good road network, portable water and sanitation. Babatunde, Olorunsanya and Adejola (2008) in Omoniyi (2013), asserted that about 1.2 billion people globally are living in extreme poverty, that is less than one dollar per day, and,

that reducing or combatting it has been a great concern to many countries especially Nigeria in the past few decades. Though, there have been a lot of improvements in the developed world but such cannot be said of developing countries especially in Sub-Sahara Africa.

Nigeria is a Federal Republic of 36 states and a Federal capital territory, with a population of above 190 million people as at 2017 (Worldometers, 2017). About 70% of the Nigerian population reside in the rural areas and spend their livelihoods there. One common feature of Nigerian rural areas is poverty which is on the high side. The persistence and pervasiveness of poverty in the rural areas of Nigeria remains one of the most pressing problems confronting rural governance in Nigeria today. However, in a bid to reduce the increasing rate of poverty in the country, various governments have adopted different poverty alleviation programmes. Prominently among them are National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) in 1973, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976, The Green Revolution Programme (GRP) in 1979, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1989, The Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI) in 1986, Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW) in 1987, Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) in 1986, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001, Women Development Programme (WDP) in 2000 among others. Between 2003 and 2007, the Nigerian Government implemented an economic reform programme called National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) to raise the country's standard of living through a variety of reforms including the micro economic stability, deregulation, liberalization, privatization, transparency and accountability. The United Nations also sponsored National Millennium Goals between 2000 and 2015 aimed at poverty reduction, education, gender equality and health (Wikipedia, 2017). Despite the change in the names of various programmes aimed at alleviating rural poverty and the huge amount of money government has injected into the programme, poverty rate remains high and the standard of living continue to decline (Anyebe, 2014).

Over the last decade, several works have indeed been done by different scholars to determine how poverty alleviation programmes has reduced poverty rate and improve standard of living in Nigeria. Anyebe (2014),

Obikezie et.al (2015), Omoniyi (2013), Onwe & Nwakamma (2015) investigated the challenges of ending rural poverty using the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) as a Government Development Programme to reduce poverty at the grassroots. Also, Maria (2015) and Ugbajah & Ugumba (2013) carried out a study on cooperative organizations and micro credit as a means of poverty alleviation and rural community development in Nigeria. They discovered that the Government Development Programmes are merged in mixed bag of limited success and continuing challenges. Presently, Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre in Anambra state, Nigeria is a new development programme for reducing poverty amongst women. The centre was created in Anambra state in 1996 under the Ministry of women affairs and social welfare. It was later renamed to Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development centre by the state Governor, Willie Obiano in year 2015 in honour of Professor Dora Akunyili, an illustrious indigene of Anambra state who died of cancer in 2014. The aim of the programme is to reduce poverty drastically amongst women and children through life improvement activities and income generation by acquisition of skills. Having been in existence for over two decades, the researchers felt the need to explore its developmental impact on women. Hence, the quest to investigate the difference in the income, savings, and household's expenditure on food, health and asset acquisitions before and after the trainings of women at the centre cannot be overemphasized.

➤ Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to assess the impact of government initiatives of reducing poverty amongst women (trainees) at the Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development centre in Anambra state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to:

- i. investigate the activities carried out at the centre on women poverty reduction,
- ii. determine the extent to which the activities carried out at the centre aided the reduction of poverty amongst the women, and
- iii. assess the challenges faced by the women (trainees) at the centre and proffer remedies.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ The Study Area

The study was carried out at Prof. Dora Akunyili women development center, Awka, Anambra State. The State comprises of 21 (Aguata, Awka North, Awka South, Anambra East, Anambra West, Anaocha, Ayamelum, Dunukofia, Ekwusigo, Idemili North, Idemili South, Ihiala, Njikoka, Nnewi North, Nnewi South, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Orumba North, Orumba South and Oyi) local government area from where all the trainees at the center cut across. The center is located in Awka South (the administrative headquarter of Anambra State) sitting on latitude; 6.2116° N and longitude; 7.0714° E.

➤ Sampling Procedure and Method of Data Collection

For in-depth observation of the study representative, a case study research was adopted. The center principal provided the list (sample frame) of graduates from inception (2001) till date (2019) according to their local government participation. For convenience and timeliness, the study collected data from two (2) local government areas (Awka North and South) due to also being the Local government with the highest number of participants. 70% of the 160 trainees from the two (2) local government areas were randomly sampled to give a sample size of 112 respondents for the study.

III. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

A descriptive statistics was used to operationalize all the construct of the study, while percentage difference was used to ascertain the significant difference in their income, savings and household expenditures on food, health and asset acquisitions. Thus, the model is explicitly stated as follows;

A. descriptive statistics model for the objectives:

$$\bar{X} = \sum \frac{FX}{n} * \frac{100}{1} \dots \dots Eqn. 1$$

Where:

\bar{X} = Mean, F = Frequency, X = Variables, n = Sample size.

B. percentage difference

$$PD = \frac{Y_2 - Y_1}{\bar{X}} * 100 \dots \dots Eqn. 2$$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{Y_2 + Y_1}{2} \dots \dots Eqn. 3$$

Where:

PD = percentage difference, Y_2 = mean income, savings, expenditure after the training at the center, Y_1 = mean income, savings, expenditure before the training at the center, \bar{X} = as earlier defined

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ Entrepreneurial Activities Executed at Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre, Awka

The entrepreneurial activities executed at Prof. Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre, Awka is presented in Table 1. Respondents were allowed multiple response to the questions asked. The Table shows that the majority (80.0%) of the trainees acquired skills on fashion designing, while 72.2%, 53.3%, 52.2% and 30.0% acquired entrepreneurial skills on catering, cosmetology, art & craft and computer skills. None of the trainees had training on stage decoration, event management, furniture making, metal work, auto mechanics, crop farming, livestock farming, fishery & aquaculture, poultry and food processing.

This implies that most of the women prefer softer skills moreso as they are urban and semi-urban dwellers. This is in agreement with Yahaya and Luka (2012) who suggested that

the trainees have been trained adequately in various skills that will eventually enable them do well in their own environment and private businesses.

S/N	Vocational activities	Frequency (n= 112)	Percentage (%)
i.	Clothe making/ fashion designing	72	80.00
ii.	Catering services/Food makers (ice cream, cakes)	65	72.22
iii.	Information Technology/Computer Skills	27	30.00
iv.	Arts and Crafts (Beads making, pots, among others)	47	52.22
v.	Cosmetology (Hair making, pedicure, among others)	48	53.33
vi.	Stage decoration	0	0.00
vii.	Event Management (party, wedding, among others)	0	0.00
viii.	Wood Works/Furniture making	0	0.00
ix.	Metal works	0	0.00
x.	Auto-Mechanics	0	0.00
xi.	Crop Farming	0	0.00
xii.	Livestock Farming	0	0.00
xiii.	Fishery and Aquaculture	0	0.00
xiv.	Poultry	0	0.00
xv.	Food processing (soya bean, among others)	0	0.00

Table 1:- Distribution of trainees according to entrepreneurial skills acquired.

Source: Field Survey Data, 2019. *Multiple response.

➤ *Impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on Income status of the Trainees before and after the training*

The impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on income status of the Trainees before and after the training is presented in Table 2. The information gotten from the field work was analyzed as presented in the Table 2. Income is the value of money that an individual or business receives in exchange for providing a good or service or through investment (Okechukwu, 2015). The table shows that the majority (63.3% and 43.3%)

of the trainee’s income before and after the training ranges from ₦ 20,000 - ₦ 50,000 and ₦101,000 - ₦ 200,000 respectively. The mean average monthly income before and after the training was ₦50,405.56 and ₦151,338.89 respectively. The percentage difference in income status before and after the training was 100.1%. Thus, the training received had above 100% improvement in the income status of the trainees. This supports the work of Chukwu (2011) who assert that improved income has positive effect in reducing poverty status in the rural areas.

Sn.	Estimate of Income	Frequency (n=112)	Percentage (%)	Mean (₦)
1.	Before:			50405.56
	₦ 20,000 - ₦ 50,000	57	63.33	
	₦ 51,000 - ₦ 100,000	32	35.56	
	₦101,000 - ₦ 150,000	1	1.11	
2	₦151,000 - ₦200,000	0	0.00	151338.89
	After:			
	₦ 20,000 - ₦ 100,000	29	32.22	
	₦101,000 - ₦ 200,000	39	43.33	
	₦201,000 - ₦300,000	17	18.89	
₦ 301,000 and above	5	5.56		
	percentage difference		100.1	

Table 2:- Distribution of Trainees According to Income before and after the training.

Source: Field Survey Data, 2019.

Also, two sample z-test was used to ascertain the influence of the training at the center on the income of the women. Finding shows that the mean income of ₦50,405.56 before the training and ₦151,338.89 after the training had a standard deviation of 21,018.57 and 82,615.52 respectively. The z-value of 11.23 significant at 1% level of probability was greater than the table value of 1.96 at 5% level of probability, thus the null hypothesis was rejected and conclude that there was an improvement in their income. By

implication, their participation enhanced their income which is an indices of poverty reduction. The result is in agreement with the work of Chukwu (2011) on poverty alleviation programme that the higher the income, the better their standard of living.

The significant difference in the income of the trainee’s before and after the training is presented in table 3.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	DF	Z- cal.	Z- tab.	Decision
Initial income	₦50405.56	21018.57	178	-11.23	1.96	Reject the null hypothesis
Income after training	₦151338.89	82615.52				

Table 3: Summary of Statistical difference in income of Women before and after the training (n=90).
Source: Field Data, 2019. (*) Significant at 5% level of probability.

➤ *Impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on Savings status of the Trainees before and after the training*

The impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on savings status of the Trainees before and after the training is presented in Table 4. The Table shows that the majority (76.7% and 56.7%) of the trainees had saving between ₦5,100 - ₦10,000 and ₦21,000- ₦50,000 before and after the training respectively.

The mean monthly savings before the training was N35741.11 and N48150.00 after the training. Thus, the trainee’s savings status improved by 29.6%. The trainee’s savings culture is still very low and was not in line with Chukwu (2011) in which savings leads to improved income and at the same time reduces poverty in the lives of the participants in Suleja Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria.

Sn.	Estimate of savings	Frequency (n = 112)	Percentage (%)	Mean (N)
1	Before			
	₦2,000 - ₦5,000	0	0.00	
	₦5,100 - ₦10,000	69	76.67	35741.11
	₦11,000- ₦15,000	15	16.67	
	₦15,100 - above	6	6.67	
2	After			
	₦4,000 - ₦20,000	9	10.00	
	₦21,000- ₦50,000	51	56.67	48150.00
	₦51,000-₦100,000	27	30.00	
	₦101,000 – above	3	3.33	
	Percentage difference		29.6	

Table 4:- Distribution of Trainees According to savings before and after the training.
Source: Field Survey Data, 2019.

The significant difference in the savings of trainees before and after the training was equally analyzed from the information generated through the questionnaire using the z-test statistics at 5% level of probability. The results gotten from the analysis shows that the mean savings before the training was ₦35,741.11K and after the training was ₦48,150.00K respectively. Since the Z – calculated (1.82) is less than Z – tabulated (1.96), the implication is that we

accept the null hypothesis 2 (H0₂) that says there is no significant difference between the savings of women before and after their training at Prof. Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre. The trainees need to be educated on the importance of saving some portions of their income.

The significant difference in the savings of the trainee’s before and after the training is presented in table 5.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	DF	Z- cal.	Z- tab.	Decision
Initial savings	₦35741.11	59549.69	178	-1.82	1.96	Accept the null hypothesis
Savings after training	₦48150.00	25543.14				

Table 5:- Summary of Statistical difference in the savings of women before and after the training (n=90).Source: Field Data, 2019.
(*) Significant at 5% level of probability.

➤ *Impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on household food expenditure status of the Trainees before and after the training*

The impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on household food expenditure status of the Trainees before and after the training is presented in Table 6. The Table shows that the majority (40.0% and 38.9%) of the trainees spend between ₦11,000 - ₦20,000 and ₦5,000 - ₦30,000 before and after the training respectively. The mean expenditure on household food before and after the training was ₦21,266.67 and

₦38,111.11 respectively and the percentage difference in food expenditure status was 56.7%. It is an indication that there was an increase in their expenditure on household food as a result of the skills they received from the center. According to Nugawela (2012), expenditure on food simply means the amount of money that is spent on food consumption, Payment of cash or cash-equivalent for foods, or a charge against available funds in settlement of an obligation. Therefore, entrepreneurial training increased the food expenditure status of the trainees.

Sn.	Expenditure on food	Frequency (n=112)	Percentage (%)	Mean (₦)
1	Before			
	N5,000 – N10,000	19	21.11	
	N11,000 - N20,000	36	40.00	21266.67
	N21,000 - N30,000	14	15.56	
	N40,000 - above	18	20.00	
2	After			
	N5,000 - N30,000	35	38.89	
	N31,000 - N50,000	28	31.11	
	N51,000 - N70,000	25	27.78	38111.11
	N71,000 - above	2	2.22	
	Percentage Difference		56.7	

Table 6:- Distribution of Trainees according to the Expenditure on household food before and after the training.
Source: Field Survey Data, 2019.

The significant difference in the expenditure on household food before and after the training was analyzed using the z-test statistics at 5% level of probability. The table shows that the mean amount spent on household food before the training was ₦21,266.67K and after the training was ₦38,111.11K. Since the Z-calculated (6.93) is greater than Z-tabulated (1.96), we reject the null hypothesis. The implication of this is that significant difference exist between the expenditure on household food of the trainees before and after the training; we therefore reject the null hypothesis 3 (H0₃) that says there is no significant

difference between the expenditure on food of women before and after their training at Prof. Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre and accept the alternate hypothesis. This therefore shows that the food needs of the women and their households improved after their training at the center.

The significant difference in the expenditure on food of the women before and after the training is presented in table 7.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	DF	Z- cal.	Z- tab.	Decision
Initial spending on food	₦21266.67	13106.14	178	-6.93	1.96	Reject the null hypothesis
Expenditure on food after training	₦38111.11	18977.04				

Table 7:- Summary of Statistical difference on food expenditure of the women before and after the training (n = 90).
Source: Field Data, 2019. (*) Significant at 5% level of probability.

➤ *Impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on household health expenditure status of the Trainees before and after the training*

The impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on household food expenditure status of the Trainees before and after the training is presented in Table 8. The Table shows that the majority (41.1% and

43.3%) spends N20,000- N30,000 and N31,000- N50,000 before and after the training respectively. The mean monthly expenditure on health before and after the training was ₦26,000.00 and ₦28,927.78 respectively and the percentage difference was 10.7%. There was a slight difference in expenditure on household health as a result of the entrepreneurial training received.

Sn.	Expenditure on health	Frequency (n=112)	Percentage (%)	Mean (₦)
1	Before			
	< N20,000	34	37.78	
	N20,000- N30,000	37	41.11	26000.00
	N31,000– N45,000	15	16.67	
	N50,000 – above	4	4.44	
2	After			
	N5,000 - N30,000	9	10.00	
	N31,000- N50,000	39	43.33	
	N51,000- N75,000	18	20.00	28927.78
	N75,100 – above	24	26.67	
	Percentage Difference		10.7	

Table 8:- Distribution of Trainees According to Expenditure on household health before and after the training.
Source: Field Survey Data, 2019.

The significant difference in expenditure on health before and after the training was analyzed using the z-test statistics at 5% level of probability. The table shows that the mean amount spent on family health before the training was ₦26,000.00 and after the training was ₦28,927.78. Since the Z-calculated (1.43) is less than Z-tabulated (1.96), we accept the null hypothesis and reject alternate hypothesis. The implication of this is that significant difference does not exist between the expenditure on health of the trainees and

their households before and after the training. We therefore accept hypothesis 4 that says there is no significant difference between the expenditure on health of women before and after their training at Prof. Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre.

The significant difference on household health expenditure of the trainees before and after the training is presented in table 9.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	DF	Z- cal.	Z- tab.	Decision
Initial spending on health	₦26000.00	6936.71	178	-1.43	1.96	Accept the null hypothesis
Spending on health after training	₦28927.78	18213.86				

Table 9:- Summary of Statistical Difference on health expenditure of women before and after the training (n=90).

Source: Field Data, 2019. (*) Significant at 5% level of probability.

➤ *Impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on household health expenditure status of the Trainees before and after the training*

The impact of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre on household asset acquisition status of the Trainees before and after the training is presented in Table 10.

The Table shows that the majority (41.1% and 43.3%) of the trainees asset acquisition before and after the training

ranges from N20,000 - N39,000 and N31,000 - N50,000 respectively. The mean household assets acquisition by the women before and after the training was ₦27,811.11 and ₦55,075.00 respectively and the percentage difference was 98.0%. By implications, the trainee’s participation in the center enhanced their acquisition of household assets. This is in line with Ntalwila, Mrisha, Mwakatobe and Kohi (2017) who assert that the trainings received has contributed significantly in household assets acquisition of the participants.

Sn.	Expenditure on asset	Frequency (n=112)	Percentage (%)	Mean (₦)
1	Before			
	< N20,000	34	37.78	
	N20,000 - N39,000	37	41.11	27811.11
	N40,000 - N59,000	15	16.67	
	N60,000 – above	4	4.44	
2	After			
	₦5,000 - ₦30,000	9	10.00	
	₦31,000 - ₦50,000	39	43.33	
	₦51,000 - ₦75,000	18	20.00	55075.00
	₦75,100 – above	24	26.67	
	Percentage Difference		98.0	

Table 10: Distribution of Trainees According to Household Assets before and after the Training.

Source: Field Survey Data, 2019.

The significant difference on expenditure of household assets before and after the training was analyzed using the z-test statistics at 5% level of probability. The table shows that the mean amount spent on household assets before the training was ₦27,811.11 and after the training was ₦55,075.00. Since the Z-calculated (9.39) is greater than Z-tabulated (1.96), we therefore reject the null hypothesis that says there is no significant difference between the expenditure on household assets of women before and after their training at Prof. Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre, and accept the alternate hypothesis. We conclude

that there was an improvement in their household assets. By implications, their participation in the centre enhanced their acquisition of household assets. This is in line with Ntalwila, Mrisha, Mwakatobe and Kohi (2017) that the trainings received has contributed significantly in household assets acquisition of the participants.

The significant difference in expenditure on household assets of the trainees before and after the training is presented in table 11.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	DF	Z- cal.	Z- tab.	Decision
Initial spending on household assets	₦27811.11	16131.23	178	-9.39	1.96	Reject the null hypothesis
Spending on household assets after training	₦55075.00	22328.57				

Table 11: Summary of Statistical difference on expenditure of household assets of women before and after the training (n=90).

Source: Field Data, 2019. (*) Significant at 5% level of probability.

➤ *Challenges Faced by the Trainees of Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre*

The setback faced by the trainees of the centre is presented in table 12. The Table shows that the majority (88.9%) of them are faced with Non-availability of state of art skill acquisition equipment (88.89%), late arrival of materials used for the training (85.56%), administrative bottlenecks and bureaucracy in the release of capital funds

(81.11%), poor provision of information to the trainees (73.33%), poor funding of the programme (72.22%), inadequate training and retraining of participants (65.56%) and poor programme coordination (65.56%). According to Anyebe (2014), inadequate funding, administrative bottlenecks, poor provision of information among others are the major challenges faced by government development programme when eliminating poverty.

Sn.	Challenges	Frequency (n=112)	Percentage (%)
i.	Lack of awareness of the programme	45	50.00
ii.	Administrative bottlenecks and bureaucracy in release of capital funds	73	81.11
iii.	Late arrival of materials used for the training	77	85.56
iv.	Inadequate training and retraining of participants	59	65.56
v.	Poor Programme Coordination	59	65.56
vi.	Non availability of state of art skill acquisition equipment	80	88.89
vii.	Poor funding of the programme	65	72.22
viii.	Weak post monitoring of settled participants	37	41.11
ix.	Poor knowledge/skill of the Prof. Dora Akunyili women development centre officials	10	11.11
x.	Poor commitment on the programme by the officials	5	5.56
xi.	Poor provision of information to the trainees	66	73.33

Table 12: Distribution of Trainees According to Challenges Existing.

Source: Field Survey Data, 2019. *Multiple Response was recorded.

V. CONCLUSION

Poverty is a critical issue in developing countries which Nigeria belongs to. The vulnerability of rural poor household is more on female headed households, therefore necessitating the need to intensify efforts to building the capacity of women in order to build their economic capacity aimed at alleviating poverty from amongst them (women) especially in the rural areas. Therefore, the study on assessing the government initiatives of reducing poverty amongst women in Anambra state, Nigeria through Professor Dora Akunyili Women Development Centre, Awka cannot be overemphasized. Ideally, equipping the women with entrepreneurial skills such as clothe making/fashion designing, catering services/Food makers (Ice cream, cakes) and information technology/computer skills among others have shown to have significantly improve the women's income, savings, expenditure on; household food, health and asset acquisition by 100.1%, 29.7%, 56.7%, 10.7% and 98.0% respectively. Thus, the choice of the study was properly thought off. Though, policy makers need to carefully look into the following grey areas identified in the study (non-availability of state of art skill acquisition equipment, late arrival of materials used for the training, administrative bottlenecks and bureaucracy in release of capital funds, poor provision of information to the trainees and poor funding of the programme).

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