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OGUN STATE EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PROGRAMME AND POVERTY STATUS OF DRESSMAKING SKILLS BENEFICIARIES

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ABSTRACT

Poverty, a concept with many dimensions and complexities has become a central global concern. All levels of government and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria are fully engaged in finding solutions to problems arising from poverty including Ogun State Employment Generation Programme (OGESEP). This study examined the effect of OGESEP on the poverty status of beneficiaries in dressmaking skills acquisition. A two-stage sampling procedure was used to select 49 respondents who had benefited from the OGESEP training. Primary data was collected using a well-structured questionnaire containing information on respondents' personal characteristics and other relevant variables. Data were analyzed using descriptive (frequency, percentage and mean) and inferential (t-test) statistics. Results indicate that beneficiaries had an average age of 31.2 years. Majority was female (67.3%), single (57.1%), self-sponsored (38.8%), level of involvement during the training was high among majority (53.1%). Though less than half (42.9%) of the beneficiaries were better off post training, only 36.7% had a moderately improved poverty status. There was a significant difference in the poverty status of dressmaking skills beneficiaries before and after the programme ($t=-3.660, p=0.001$). It was recommended that gains of OGESEP intervention in dressmaking skills be sustained in the state.

Keywords: OGESEP, dressmaking skills, poverty status, employment generation.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of poverty in Nigeria has been described as "widespread and severe" Central Bank of Nigeria, 2006; World Bank, 2006). Poverty has been one of the most challenging problems facing mankind today especially in developing countries like Nigeria, despite the country's vast resources. Poverty is not only a state of existence but a process with many dimensions and complexities (Khan, 2000). Available statistics also showed that about 1.2 billion people around the world live on less than a dollar a day while almost 850 million go hungry every night (United Nations Development Programme, 2008), as such it is a worldwide phenomenon.

Nigeria seems to be faced with many challenges that gave birth to poverty. These are unemployment, food crises, high crime rate, illiteracy, ignorance, inequality, malnutrition to mention a few. Unemployment on the other hand has been described as one of the serious impediments to social progress. Substantial evidences have shown that nations and individuals that had their rate of poverty reduced invest greatly in skill development and vocational training for creating jobs as well as increasing national productive capacity. Leach (2002) asserted that training and skill development cannot be over emphasized in raising the living standard of entrepreneurs. Hatten (2006) viewed training and skill development as necessary tools needed for successful career by an entrepreneur. Denga (2000) affirmed that the way forward is to equip youths with vocational skills that would provide opportunities for employment and self-reliance.

Ogun State Employment Generation Programme (OGESEP) is one of the programmes in Ogun State set up to tackle unemployment challenge in the state. OGESEP was established in 2003 by Ogun State government in Abeokuta, to train unemployed youth on various agricultural and non agricultural related vocations. Some priority areas for intervention are agricultural activities, agro allied, processing, and craftsmanship, including dressmaking, interior decoration, indigenous resist fabric production and general services. A weekly stipend of a thousand naira is given to each trainee. The form for the training is free. The training lasts for a period of three months. Thereafter, a certificate of training is offered to the graduates by the Bureau of Employment. The intervention mandate was to mobilize resources from all tiers of government in the state for economic empowerment. Resources generated are being used to spur the economic activities at the grassroots thereby promoting the wellbeing of the people and ensuring sustainability (Bureau of Employment, 2008).

Problem statement

The big challenge of the 21st century is the eradication of poverty. Virtually all countries and government agreed on the importance of eradicating poverty. Poverty is a condition of insufficient resources or income, a violation of human welfare or dignity (Adeola and Ayoade, 2012). Moreover, poverty is a state of having little or no money or other endowments and not being able to get the necessities of life (Akinyemi and Torimiro, 2008). The concept of poverty derived from long and protracted inability to generate productive resources for the purpose of generating a desired level of output in order to enhance the realization of an appreciable income. According to Kankwenda, Gregoire, Legros and Quedraogo (2000), to be able to graduate from this poverty situation, income generated must be reasonable enough to meet daily needs and must be sustainable. This would lead to sustainable human development in the end. The 2003 head count put Nigeria's population at 143 million while in 2005 Nigeria was ranked 158 in a Table of 177 countries with the lowest human development index (UNDP, 2005). Poverty in Nigeria manifest in many ways such as unemployment (resulting to high incidence of many forms of social ills such as arm robbery, political thuggery, child labour, human trafficking, prostitution, internet fraud, cultism and terrorism that is currently disturbing global and national peace), malnutrition (leading to low health standard or condition), illiteracy to mention a few (Olaosebikan, 2014).

In order to eliminate poverty, governments at various levels including non-governmental agencies provided different opportunities to enhance entrepreneurial development among the citizenry. Nigerian government focused on poverty alleviation as part of the activities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in response to increasing poverty situation thus committed lots of resources to programmes and projects aimed at alleviating poverty. In spite of government's interest in initiating programmes and projects for the improvement of the living standard of Nigerians, there has been increase in the poverty level. These alarming indicators made government to review the existing poverty alleviation scheme with a view to harmonizing and improving on them. Thus there is the need to check if the dressmaking skills acquired by the beneficiaries have improved their poverty status (economic worth).

Research objectives

The broad objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of employment generation programme on poverty status of dressmaking skills beneficiaries in Ogun State.

Specifically, this study sought to:

1. describe the personal characteristics of OGESEP beneficiaries in dressmaking skills;
2. ascertain the level of involvement of beneficiaries in dressmaking skills acquisition;
3. determine the change in the poverty status of OGESEP beneficiaries in dressmaking skills before and after the programme.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ogun State, Nigeria. Geographically, Ogun State lies between latitude 6°N and 8°N and longitude 2°E and 5°E. It is located in the southwestern rainforest zone of Nigeria. The state is bounded on the west by the Republic of Benin and on the east by Ondo State. To the north of the State are Oyo and Osun State while Lagos State and the Atlantic Ocean lie south. With the relative geographical setting of the State, it shares international boundary with the Republic of Benin particularly Idi Iroko through which it has enjoyed tremendous association with other West African countries. Ogun State serves as the entry point for goods from these countries into Nigeria, hence it is called gateway to Nigeria. Agriculture remains the mainstay of the state. The people of Ogun State are mainly farmers producing food and cash crops such as cassava, maize, melon, cocoyam, yam, cowpea, rice, cocoa, kola, oil palm, rubber, citrus, plantain, and coffee. The population for this study

included all beneficiaries of Ogun State Employment Generation Programme in dressmaking skills acquisition.

A two-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting respondents. In the first stage, purposive sampling method was used to select dressmaking skills beneficiaries (80 beneficiaries) from all the different skills acquisition of OGE GEP intervention because they were the focused beneficiaries of this study. In the second stage, snow ball method was used to reach the dressmaking skills beneficiaries as they were not located in one place. Therefore, few of them were identified and were used to locate other dressmaking skills beneficiaries. In all, a total of 49 beneficiaries (more than 50% of the beneficiaries) were eventually reached.

Primary data were collected using well-structured questionnaire. Variables measured were respondents' personal characteristics; level of involvement of beneficiaries in the dressmaking skills; and the change in poverty status of beneficiaries before and after the intervention. A list of skills taught during training was presented to the beneficiaries to know their level of involvement. This was operationalised as fully, partially and not involved and a score of 2, 1, and 0 were assigned respectively. The highest obtainable score was 40. The lowest obtainable score was zero (0). The mean score for involvement (30.1) was computed and respondents were categorized on the basis of whether they were lowly (scores < mean) or highly (scores \geq mean) involved in the enterprises during training. The change in poverty status of the beneficiaries was determined by asking the respondents to state their income, and expenditure on items such as food, drug, rent (house and shop), electricity, social event, transportation, toiletries, before and after the programme. Their poverty index before and after the programme was determined. Poverty index = (Income-expenditure)/number of household. The change in poverty index was determined. The minimum value, maximum value and the mean of the change in poverty status was also obtained. These were used to categorize the level of change in poverty status into worse off (minimum value to -0.01), moderately improved (0.01 to < mean), and better off (\geq mean to maximum value). Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, and T-test

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal characteristics of respondents

Table 1 reveals that dressmaking skills beneficiaries had the mean age of 31.2 years, with majority (63.4%) within the age bracket of 21 to 30 years. This showed that majority of the beneficiaries were active and adventurous and would probably put to practice the various skills acquired. There were more females (67.3%) than males (32.7%), majority were Christians (55.1%), had secondary school education (44.9%), implying majority of the beneficiaries were literate. Zeardon (2000) stressed that better educated members have access to any training skills on offer and are more likely to establish their enterprises. About 57.1% of the beneficiaries were single, 38.8% self-sponsored; this result contradicts Bureau of Employment Generation (2008) that the beneficiaries were sponsored by the government. 63.3% spent 12 months, 65.2% enrolled within the year 2011 to 2014, and they had a mean household size of 3.6 persons.

Respondents' level of involvement in dressmaking skills during training

Table 2 presents a list of various activities beneficiaries were taken through during the training and their level of involvement during the programme. Data indicates that a very large proportion of the respondents were fully involved in all the activities, especially in adult female garments like buba and iro (77.6%), skirt and blouse (75.3%), gown (77.6%), as well as children female garment, like iro and buba (73.5%), skirt and blouse (73.5%), gown (75.5%), trousers (63.3%). This could be due to the practical and participatory nature of teaching used by the instructors. The percentage of beneficiaries fully involved in adult male garment was about average, as seen in buba and sokoto (53.1%), agbada and sokoto (49.0%), shirt and trouser (53.1 %), suits (51.0). This may be because majority of the beneficiaries were female (67.3%) with interest in female outfits. The high level of involvement in children garment may be due to the fact that children's outfits are not time consuming, hence a lot of children's garments can be completed within a short period of time. Moreover, since children are usually small in size, the materials needed to make children's garment are small and affordable, thus making it easy for majority of the beneficiaries to be fully involved in dressmaking skills involving children's garments.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' selected personal characteristics (n=49)

Variables	Dressmaking beneficiaries F (%)
Age (years)	
≤ 20	9 (18.4)
21-30	31 (63.4)
31-40	7 (14.2)
41-50	2 (4.0)
Mean	31.2
Total	49 (100.0)
Sex	
Male	16 (32.7)
Female	33 (67.3)
Total	49 (100.0)
Religion	
Islam	15 (30.6)
Christianity	27 (55.1)
Traditional	7 (14.3)
Total	49 (100.0)
Educational level	
Primary school	4 (8.2)
Secondary school	22 (44.9)
NCE	6 (12.2)
OND	11 (22.4)
HND	3 (6.1)
BSc	3 (6.1)
Total	49 (100.0)
Marital status	
Single	28 (57.1)
Married	18 (36.7)
Separated	2 (4.1)
Widowed	1 (2.0)
Total	49 (100.0)
Household size	
1-3	30 (61.2)
Mean	3.6
Total	49 (100.0)
Sponsorship	
Parent	14 (28.6)
Guardian	7 (14.3)
Self	19 (38.8)
Government	9 (18.4)
Total	49 (100.0)
What year did you enroll for the programme?	
2003-2006	6 (12.2)
2007-2010	11 (22.4)
2011-2014	32 (65.2)
Total	49 (100.0)
How many months did you spend?	
3-5	3 (6.1)
6-8	14 (28.5)
9-11	1 (2.0)
12-14	31 (63.3)
Total	49 (100.0)

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Change in poverty status of the beneficiaries

Table 3 shows the distribution according to the level of change in poverty status of the beneficiaries in dressmaking skills. The results of the findings show that 42.9% of the beneficiaries were better off, 36.7% of the beneficiaries had a moderately improved poverty status, while 20.4% were worse off. These imply that most of the dressmaking skills beneficiaries (42%) were more self-reliant, they were also able to improve their standard of living, they could afford more nourishing meals, buy more dresses and shoes, purchase more recharge cards, attend more functions, give more gifts, rent their personal apartment; while 36.7% of the beneficiaries were averagely self-reliant, such that they still need to depend on others for survival though they could afford a little bit more of nourishing meals, buy few dresses and shoes, purchase a little additional recharge cards, spend a little more on gifts, rent very cheap apartments.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on level of involvement in dressmaking skills (n=49)

Activities	Not involved	Partially involved	Fully involved
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Adult female garment			
Buba and iro	5 (10.2)	6 (12.2)	38 (77.6)
Skirt and blouse	5 (10.2)	7 (14.3)	37 (75.3)
Boubou	7 (14.3)	9 (18.4)	33 (67.3)
Gown	5 (10.2)	6 (12.2)	38 (77.6)
Trousers	6 (12.2)	11 (22.4)	32 (65.3)
Suits	8 (16.3)	13 (26.5)	28 (57.1)
Children female garment			
Buba and iro	8 (16.3)	8 (16.3)	36 (73.5)
Skirt and blouse	7 (14.3)	6 (12.2)	36 (73.5)
Gown	7 (14.3)	5 (10.2)	37 (75.5)
Trousers	8 (16.3)	10 (20.4)	31 (63.3)
Suits	11 (22.4)	10 (20.4)	28 (57.1)
Adult male garments			
Buba and sokoto	12 (24.5)	11 (22.4)	26 (53.1)
Agbada and sokoto	12 (24.5)	13 (26.5)	24 (49.0)
Gbariye and sokoto	13 (26.5)	12 (24.5)	24 (49.0)
Shirt and trouser	12 (24.5)	11 (22.4)	26 (53.1)
Suits	13 (26.5)	11 (22.4)	25 (51.0)
Children male garment			
Buba and sokoto	16 (32.7)	5 (10.2)	28 (57.1)
Dansiki and sokoto	18 (36.7)	4 (8.2)	27 (55.1)
Shirt and trouser	13 (26.5)	7 (14.3)	29 (59.2)
Suits	13 (26.5)	5 (10.2)	31 (63.3)

Source: Field survey, 2015.

However, about a quarter (20.4%) of the beneficiaries were not self-reliant after the training, their standard of living was not improved. Most of them still borrow and beg for money in order to make ends meet. These corroborate Akinyemiju and Torimiro (2008) who emphasised that poverty is a condition of having little or no money or other endowments and not being able to get the necessities of life. According to Kankwenda et al (2000), to be able to graduate from this poverty situation, income generated must be reasonable enough to meet daily needs and must be sustainable. This would lead to sustainable human development in the end. However, these respondents were not able

to attain this, thus they are classified as worse off after training. This may be because their level of involvement during training was very low; hence they were not able to utilize the necessary dressmaking skills after the intervention to make garments that would fetch them enough money to improve their standard of living and ensure a sustainable livelihood.

Table 3: Distribution of dressmaking respondents according to their level of change in poverty status

Change in poverty status score	F (%)	Dressmaking respondents	
		SD	
Worse off (-81400.0 to -0.01)	10 (20.4)		
Moderately improved (0.01 to 22782.00)	18 (36.7)	22783.3	43577.72
Better off (22783.0 to 198800.00)	21 (42.9)		
Total	49 (100.0)		

Source: Field survey, 2015.

T-test of difference of beneficiaries' poverty status before and after the intervention

Table 4 reveals that there was a significant difference in the poverty status (economic worth) of dressmaking skills beneficiaries before and after the programme. ($t=-3.660$, $p = 0.001$). A programme is beneficial when there is an improvement in status. The dressmaking skills acquired equipped the beneficiaries to exploit the wealth creating opportunities in dressmaking. This ensured economic self-reliance (entrepreneurship); sustainable livelihood with beneficiaries having opportunities for self-employment, job creation, enhanced income, capacity for insightful thinking, creative abilities as well as opportunities for career advancement. Also, the dressmaking skills acquired enabled them to be professionals, well sought after which was not so before the dressmaking skills were acquired. In all, the dressmaking skills intervention impacted on those beneficiaries that stuck with it after the training

Table 4: Difference in poverty status of the beneficiaries before and after the programme

Poverty status before and after programme	N	t-value	DF	p-value	Remark	Decision
Dressmaking skills	49	-3.660	48	0.001	S	Reject H_0

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most dressmaking skills beneficiaries were mostly youth, female and self-sponsored. Level of involvement was high among more than half of the respondents and most were better off after the intervention. It is recommended that the gain of OGEGERP be sustained by the state.

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