

CAPACITY BUILDING AND POVERTY REDUCTION AMONG RURAL WOMEN IN IDEATO SOUTH LGA, IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the impact of capacity building and poverty reduction among rural women in Ideato South LGA, Imo State, Nigeria, with a particular focus on tailoring programs. The research aimed to examine whether women's empowerment through tailoring led to financial independence, whether government-provided credit incentives improved living standards, and the extent to which skills acquisition programs reduced economic backwardness. The study adopted a survey research design, with a sample of 325 respondents selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests to test the study's hypotheses. The results revealed a significant relationship between women's empowerment through tailoring and financial independence ($\chi^2 = 7.9$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the provision of government credit incentives was found to significantly enhance the standard of living of rural women ($\chi^2 = 8.3$, $p < 0.05$). Lastly, skills acquisition programs, particularly in tailoring, were shown to have significantly reduced economic backwardness among rural women ($\chi^2 = 6.4$, $p < 0.05$). These findings suggested that capacity-building initiatives, such as tailoring programs, played a crucial role in empowering rural women and improving their socio-economic conditions.

Keywords: Capacity Building, Poverty Reduction, Rural Women, Tailoring, Women Development

INTRODUCTION

Capacity building is the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, and resources necessary to survive, adapt, and thrive in a society. It involves human resource development, institutional building, and the steps taken by a country's institutions to manage policy and program formulation, development planning, implementation, coordination, and performance monitoring and evaluation of development operations aimed at improving the standard of living of its citizens.

Capacity building is also critical to sustaining poverty reduction and discouraging over-reliance on external assistance among women, especially in rural areas. This can be achieved through various intervention programmes based on women's developmental needs (World Bank, 2017). Many multinational organisations, particularly global financial institutions worldwide, have

continued to work towards promoting interventions aimed at uplifting marginalised and less privileged women in rural societies. Their approach has been directed towards sustaining the social and economic empowerment of the target participants/beneficiaries.

Capacity building for rural women in Nigeria is expected to be achieved through education support at varying levels, Community sensitization on issues that have implications on their livelihood (occupation, family advancement, family planning methods, productivity and general well-being); promotion of appropriate technology, which enhances lives of the rural marginalised and embarking on advocacy/lobbying interventions intended for disfranchising oppressive structures, policies and laws that create hardship for rural women instead of wealth.

This study therefore investigated the impact of capacity building on poverty reduction among rural women in Ideato South Local Government Area LGA.

Statement of the problem

Despite the laudable steps taken by the federal and state governments in ensuring an improvement in the lives of the citizens, a close observation of the rural women in Ideato South LGA of Imo state seems to show that some of them are still poor. These rural women seem not to enjoy a steady electricity supply, pipe-borne water, and adequate health facilities needed to make life easy. They rely on manually operated boreholes provided by UNICEF and other NGOs, which are situated at strategic points in the villages, and these boreholes require the exertion of so much energy before water can be pumped out from them. In the same vein, these rural women find it very difficult to secure soft loans from financial institutions and, as a result, cannot raise enough capital to invest in business. Those of them who choose to build their capacity through self-help efforts such as fashion designing and hair dressing cannot afford to rent a shop, purchase sewing machines, weaving machines, or hairdressing machines required to equip their shops.

This handicap faced by rural women seems to have contributed to making them poor despite the skills that most of them have acquired through the various capacity building programmes available to them. The consequence of this handicap is that most of these women remain unemployed. While some of them engage in other work as labourers on the farms, where they are paid small amounts of money, which are not enough to take care of their feeding and general upkeep. With insufficient funds at their disposal, these women suffer various kinds of deprivation, they cannot afford to access adequate medical attention from hospitals, cannot afford three balanced meals a day, have little or no time for recreation or rest since they are compelled by their poor condition to work from morning to evening every day of the week except on Sundays and on market days,

This observation has necessitated this study in order to determine the relationship that exists between capacity building and poverty reduction among women in Ideato South LGA of Imo State.

Research questions

To what extent has the empowerment of women through tailoring led to financial independence among rural women in Ideato South LGA?

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this is to ascertain the impact of capacity building on poverty reduction among rural women in Ideato South LGA, Imo State, Nigeria.

The specific objective is:

To ascertain whether the empowerment through tailoring has led to financial independence among rural women in Ideato South LGA.

Research Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between the empowerment of women in terms of tailoring and the financial independence of rural women in Ideato South LGA.

Significance of the study

Academic significance

The academic significance of this study lies in the fact that it will encourage critical reading and analysis, which can give rise to further research in this area of knowledge. The findings from this study can serve as a reference document for researchers and students, as well as contribute to the existing literature on the subject matter.

Practical significance

The findings from this study will guide the executive arm of government and other stakeholders to be proactive by ensuring that poverty reduction programmes in rural Nigeria work towards enhancing the well-being of women.

In this regard, this work may provide measures to address issues of women's rights to social security and investments in rural Nigeria, as well as serve as a guide for the National Planning Commission (NPC) to tackle poverty among women in rural areas across the country.

Also, it will help policymakers to formulate family-friendly policies that would ensure that rural women are properly taken care of.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of capacity building.

The World Customs Organisation— an Intergovernmental Organisation (IO) that develops standards for governing the movement of people and commodities, defines capacity building as "activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its

goals in a sustainable way (WCO, 2011). In the same vein, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) defines capacity development as the activities, approaches, strategies, and methodologies that help organizations, groups, and individuals to improve their performance, generate development benefits, and achieve their objectives (CIDA, 2013). It is the process whereby people, organisations, and society as a whole create, adapt, strengthen, and maintain capacity over time (OECD/DAC, 2016).

Capacity building is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a comprehensive approach. It involves collaboration among various stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, development agencies, and the private sector, to work together to identify capacity gaps, design appropriate interventions, mobilize resources, and monitor and evaluate the impact of capacity-building initiatives. It also involves strengthening the abilities, skills, and resources of individuals, organizations, and communities to effectively address challenges, enabling them to overcome the causes of their exclusion and suffering. One of the key aspects of capacity building is knowledge transfer. This involves sharing information, expertise, and best practices through various means such as training programs, workshops, mentoring, technical assistance, and exchange programs to enable individuals and organizations to acquire new skills and knowledge.

A central objective of capacity building for poverty reduction is Community empowerment. This involves engaging communities in decision-making processes and enabling them to identify their own needs, set priorities, and implement solutions, hence, Udombana (2020) observed that capacity building interventions work to improve the processes that go on within all Community welfare system and society as a whole.

Concept of poverty reduction

Poverty is a pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. It also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life (World Bank, 2004).

Poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family; not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living; not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness, and exclusion of individuals, households, and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it is often implied by living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water and sanitation (United Nations, 2009).

From the economic point of view, it is the low level and low building of capacity for the financial power of an individual towards meeting his (or her) basic necessities of life (Abimiku, 2014). It is a condition of life degraded by disease, illiteracy, and malnutrition in such a way as to deny its victims the basic human freedoms and necessities.

Poverty reduction is a process of refining scientific and technological knowledge, as well as efforts made to reduce poverty, diseases, ill health, political instability, economic deprivations, and hardship among people, and to provide social services to the nation (Arinze, 2019). In the same vein, the World Bank Development Report (2016) defines poverty reduction as the process of reducing the inability to attain a minimum standard of living, as well as low infant and maternal mortality rates, low child morbidity, and high primary school enrolment ratios in communities.

Poverty reduction among rural women focuses on the relationships between and amongst human beings, that is, justice, truth, fairness, and safety, especially of women's lives (Muller, 2017). Poverty reduction has many perspectives. It could be referred to as the improvement from a lack of command or control over basic consumption needs to an appreciable level; that is, a situation of reducing the inadequate level of consumption, giving rise to insufficient food, Clothing, and shelter (Osita-Njoku & Chikere, 2015).

Poverty has economic, social, and political ramifications. The poor are materially deprived, socially alienated, and politically excommunicated. Poverty, as a lack of access to basic needs/goods, is essentially an economic or consumption-oriented issue. Thus, the poor are conceived as those individuals or households in a particular society, incapable of purchasing a specified basket of basic goods and services. Basic goods, as used here, include food, shelter, water, healthcare, access to productive resources, such as education, working skills, and tools, as well as political and civil rights to participate in decisions concerning socio-economic conditions (Antai & Anam, 2014). It is generally agreed that in conceptualizing poverty, low income or low consumption is a defining characteristic.

The World Bank Report (2017) identified several causes of poverty in Africa, including a slow economic growth rate, inappropriate macroeconomic policies, and deficiencies in the labour market, resulting in limited job growth and massive unemployment opportunities, as well as low productivity, especially for women. Others are low wages in the informal sector, inflation, and a lag in human resources development. Between 1980 and 1992, the average poverty incidence in Nigeria increased from 0.28 to 0.43. By 1996, the situation had worsened to an average of 0.66 (which implied, at the time, that out of every 100 Nigerians, 66 were living below the poverty line) (Putman, 2000), as cited in Antai & Anam (2014). This increasing level of poverty in the Country was despite all the efforts implemented by ministries and agencies established by the government to fight poverty.

Government Initiatives and Poverty Reduction among Rural Women in Ideato South LGA

Like most developing nations, several Nigerian governments have implemented policy measures aimed at reducing poverty. One such policy measure is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme, as well as the constitution of the Ahmed Joda Panel in 1999 and the Ango Abdullahi Committee. 2000. The immediate concern of the Panel/Committee was the streamlining and rationalization of existing poverty alleviation institutions, and the coordinated implementation and monitoring of relevant schemes and programmes. These culminated in the introduction of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) early in 2001 and the establishment of the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC).

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was introduced by the Government of President Olusegun Obasanjo for the benefit of the poor people in Nigeria, including the rural women in Ideato South LGA. This Programme aims to provide basic necessities to hitherto neglected people, particularly in the rural areas; restore economic independence and confidence; foster wealth creation and provide employment and income generation through various activities. The poverty reduction programme under NAPEP can be classified into four, namely Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) which dealt with capacity acquisition, mandatory attachment, productivity improvement, credit delivery, technology and development and enterprise promotion; Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS) which dealt with the provision of potable and irrigation water, transport (rural and urban), rural energy and power support; Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS) which dealt with special education, primary healthcare services, establishment and maintenance of recreational centres, public awareness facilities, youth and students hostels development, environmental protection facilities, food security provisions, micro and macro credits delivery, rural telecommunications facilities, provision of mass transit, and maintenance culture and Natural Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS) which dealt with harnessing of agricultural, water, solid mineral resources, conservation of land and space particularly for convenient and effective utilization by small scale operators and the immediate community.

Another policy measure introduced by the Nigerian government aimed at poverty reduction is the implementation of an economic reform program called the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). The purpose of the NEEDS was to raise the country's standard of living through a variety of reforms, including macroeconomic stability, deregulation, liberalization, privatization, transparency, and accountability. The NEEDS addressed basic deficiencies, such as the lack of freshwater for household use and irrigation, unreliable power supplies, decaying infrastructure, impediments to private enterprise, and corruption. The government hoped that the NEEDS would create 7 million new jobs, diversify the economy, boost non-energy exports, increase industrial capacity utilization, and improve agricultural productivity. A related initiative on the state level is the State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS).

According to Odion (2009), cited in Anger (2010), programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), which was launched in the 1970s, existed in the past to address the problems of poverty. Other efforts made by past governments include the establishment of the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life Programme (BLP), the Peoples' Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Family Support programme (FSP), and Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP). DFRRI was established in 1986 to construct feeder roads, provide rural water supply, and rural electrification for the rural areas.

The NDE was also established in 1986 to provide training, finance, and guidance for unemployed youths and it consists of four main programmes: the Vocational Skills Development Programme, the Special Public Works Programme, the Small-Scale Enterprises Programme, and the Agriculture Employment Programme, the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure, which supports mainly rural infrastructure projects.

BLP, on the other hand, came into being in 1987 to provide empowerment, self-help, and rural development programmes, skills acquisition, and healthcare for rural women. The PBN was established in 1989 to encourage savings and credit facilities for the underprivileged in urban and rural areas, while Community Banks were established in 1990 to operate banking facilities for rural residents and micro enterprises in urban areas. The FSP came on board in 1994 to provide healthcare delivery, child welfare, youth development, etc. FEAP and its state variants (SEAP) were established to provide credit facilities that support the development of cottage industries in rural areas.

Empowerment of rural women and poverty reduction

The term empowerment refers to concerted measures geared towards improving the level of self-reliance and determination in people and in communities in order to enhance their own authority in protecting their common interests in a responsible way. Empowerment as action refers both to the process of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which enables them to overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to recognize and eventually to use their resources and chances.

In the past, some private individuals, government officials, and NGOs have taken steps to ensure that some rural women in Ideato South LGA are empowered financially to start businesses, while others are provided with the opportunity to acquire skills. Following the UN declaration of 1975 – 1985 as the “Decade for Women”, Mrs. Maryam Babangida launched the Better Life Programme (BLP) in 1987 (Arum, 2008). Its objectives were to empower rural women economically, socially, and politically.

Subsequent First Ladies have taken a cue from this and have initiated various programmes ranging from women's empowerment, children's emancipation, and poverty alleviation. Hence, Mrs. Turai Yar Adua, the First Lady of Nigeria from 2007 till 2011, also launched programmes to empower women. The First Lady's interests were in the issues of public health and the enhancement of the welfare of the disadvantaged. As part of her efforts towards realizing this, the First Lady signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston, Texas (Daily Triumph, 2008).

The Centre was to help Nigerian Women suffering from Cancer. Also, through her efforts, the Federal Government has developed an Integrated Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (IMNCH) strategy to strengthen the health system towards realizing some aspects of the Millennium Development Goals. The determination of Nigeria's First Lady to enhance and promote the living conditions of Nigerian Women and Children led her to launch a pet project, which she tagged “Women and Youth Empowerment Foundation (WAFOT) (Vanguard, 17 February 2009). The First Lady also directed the wives of State Governors to tailor their pet projects towards issues relating to poverty alleviation, women's education, and empowerment of rural women.

The 30% Affirmative Action policy, aimed at benefiting women, is another initiative introduced by the Nigerian government to reduce poverty among women, not just in rural areas, but across the entire nation. The Federal Government, under President Jonathan, made conscious and positive

efforts to take appropriate measures to reflect a significant percentage of women in governance. For instance, the administration took off in 2011 with the appointment of 13 female Cabinet Ministers, five female Special Advisers, 10 female Ambassadors, 16 female Judges of the Court of Appeal; 11 female Permanent Secretaries, 16 female Judges of the Federal High Court, three female Judges of the Supreme Court, six female Judges of the National Industrial Court; a female Acting President, Court of Appeal and The Chief Justice of the Federation as female. By doing so, the President has fulfilled his campaign promises by increasing the number of women in decision-making positions to an unprecedented level (Iheuwu, 2013). These appointments strengthened the argument that during Jonathan's administration, Nigerian women attained the highest level of participation in the nation's social, political, and economic life (Calebs, 2014).

President Jonathan's Transformation Agenda contains a National Gender Policy, which is mainstreamed into all aspects of government planning and development. A major component of that policy is women's empowerment in politics. Here, there has been a remarkable success in the creation of awareness on the participation of women in politics. Not only has a Political Trust Fund been established to provide support to women aspirants willing to participate in general elections, but a database of women political aspirants has also been created.

The implementation of Jonathan's Gender Policy has also resulted in an increase in women's representation in Government, from 10% in 2011 to over 33% in 2013, with the appointment of 13 female Ministers out of 42, representing 31%, and 4 Special Advisers out of 18, representing 23%. These appointments have set the stage for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target number three, on Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment (Calebs, 2014).

In 2013, Imo state embarked on poverty alleviation programmes, introduced by the then Imo state First Lady, Mrs. Nkechinyere Okorocha, who built a skills acquisition and empowerment centre where unemployed youths will be tutored and empowered on vocational skills such as fashion designing, cosmetology, catering, hair dressing, and computer training, in order to become self-reliant.

Notwithstanding its laudable objectives, the present incidence of poverty in Ideato South LGA in Imo State can lead to the conclusion that the past poverty alleviation programmes have not achieved much. Inadequate infrastructural facilities still characterize rural areas. Evidence is in the persistence of rural poverty, resulting from lack of access to education, health facilities, portable water, electricity, good roads, and so on. The consequences are low literacy level and poor health standards due to undernourishment and diseases, as well as low economic productivity (Antai & Anam, 2014). This step taken by the former Imo state First Lady was captured by Anderson (2015) when he posited that poverty alleviation programmes are structural measures or schemes and organized events put in place to reduce the suffering and hardship of people, especially for the poor or less privileged ones. Olu, Ajao, and Fani (2022) stated that the empowerment of rural women could help in reducing poverty in Nigeria. For them, women are the hallmark of development in every nation.

Theoretical framework

The researcher adopted the Structural theory of poverty for this study. The reason why the Structural theory of poverty will be adopted for this study is that the incidence of poverty among most of the rural women in Ideato South LGA has been observed to be the result of failed government policies and programmes. Poverty among the rural women in that area is caused by deprivation experienced by them due to lack of basic social amenities and infrastructures such as steady electricity supply, pipe-borne water, and adequate health facilities, and provision of credit incentives required to restore their economic independence and improve their standard of living.

It is the responsibility of the government to provide basic social amenities and infrastructure in the rural areas. When this is achieved, life will become easier for rural women, allowing them to engage in a variety of socio-economic activities with minimal stress. For instance, if there is pipe-borne water in my community, Ntueke, the rural women there who engage in processing fermented cassava, fermented corn, bean cake, and animal husbandry will not have to exert so much energy in pumping out water from the manual bore holes. Similarly, if the government had ensured that rural women had access to soft loans from government-owned financial institutions, the women would have used such funds to improve their standard of living. For instance, a rural woman who undergoes skills acquisition training in fashion designing needs money to purchase a sewing machine, a weaving machine, an electric pressing iron, tables, chairs, etc.

METHODOLOGY

Scope of the Study

This study will focus on the evaluation of capacity building and poverty reduction programmes as they affect women's socio-economic opportunities in Ideato South LGA of Imo State, Nigeria. The study will focus on the twenty-three communities that make up the LGA.

Research Design

The research design for this work is a survey research design. Survey research design means the investigation of the opinion, behaviour, or other manifestations of a group by questioning them. The researcher adopted the survey research design because of its flexibility to permit the use of a variety of data collection techniques. Also, survey research design sensitizes the researchers to potential problems that were originally unknown.

Area of the study.

Ideato South is a Local Government Area in Imo State, South-eastern Nigeria., with a total of 23 autonomous communities. The area has its headquarters in the town of Dikenafai, the source of Orashi River. Ideato South has an area of 88 km² and a population of 159,879 at the 2006 census. The postal code of the area is 475.

The people of Ideato South are primarily farmers, cultivating both cash and food crops. Their cash crops include oil palm, raffia palm, groundnut, melon, cotton, cocoa, and rubber, while the food crops encompass yams, cassava, cocoyam, breadfruit, and three-leaf yam. In addition to farming, they are also active traders. The cultural custodians, such as the Ezes, Nzes, Ozo titleholders, and Durunzes, play specific roles in preserving and promoting their traditions. A notable institution in the area is the Eastern Palm University, originally established by Governor Rochas Okorocha and recently renamed K. O. Mbadiwe University. It is the second state university after Imo State University and is located in Ogboko, Ideato South. The indigenes and residents of Ideato South are predominantly adherents of Catholicism and Anglicanism.

There are 23 autonomous communities in Ideato South LGA. These are Nneato Ogwugwu, Isiekenesi, Dikenafai, Dimagu, Okohia, and Umuaghobe autonomous communities. Others include Awalla, Umuakam, Umuago, Umuobom Umuezedike Duruahurunwa, Umucheke, Umumaisiaku, Amanator, Umueshi, Ntueke, Okohia, Umuchima, Ugbele, Umulewe, and Ogwume, Umuezealla-Ogboko, and Ogboko autonomous community.

Population and Sample Size

The population of women in Ideato South LGA is 200,080 (Population projection 2024). The researcher chose a sample of 325 respondents using the Yaro Yamane Formula.

Sampling Technique

The researcher employed both simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Using the simple random sampling method, five communities were selected from a total of twenty-three communities within Ideato South Local Government Area (LGA). This involved writing the names of all the communities on individual pieces of paper, folding them, and then shuffling and drawing five at random. The purposive sampling technique was used to select only women within these communities, specifically targeting female respondents relevant to the study. To identify the respondents, the researcher visited fifty households in each of the four selected communities and administered questionnaires to women present during the visit, ensuring that the sample accurately reflected the female population in the area.

Method of Data Collection

During the course of this research, the researcher will utilize both primary and secondary sources to gather data. The primary source used for data collection in this study is the questionnaire, while the secondary sources will include previous research, books, journals, newspaper publications, official reports, and documents from government agencies. Questionnaires will be administered to the women chosen as the sample population.

Method of Data Analysis

The data will be presented using simple percentages and tables. Hypotheses will be tested employing the Chi-square statistical method, selected for its efficacy in determining relationships between variables within the study.

Reliability of Instrument

A preliminary pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability of the research questionnaire. This pilot involved administering the questionnaire to a sample of 20 respondents from Ntueke community. Following data collection, the responses will be analysed for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Sex	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
Male	141	43.7
Female	182	56.3
Total	323	100

Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
15 -20	88	27.2
21-26	71	22
27-32	64	19.8
33-38	61	18.9
39 and above	39	12.1
Total	323	100

Table 3: Women empowerment (tailoring) and financial independence among rural women

Questions		SA	A	SD	D	Total sample	%
1	The availability of basic infrastructure helps improve the standard of living for rural women.	169 (52.3)	154 (47.7)	16(4.9)	18(5.6)	323	100

2	Credit incentives by the government can go a long way in improving the living standard of rural women.	171	152	15(4.6)	19(5.9)	323	100
		52.9	47.0				
3	The provision of social amenities by the government has led to an improvement in the standard of living of rural women.	165	158	20	14	323	100
		51.1	48.9	6.2	4.3		
4	There is a substantial improvement in the standard of living of rural women when they are provided with social amenities, basic infrastructure, and credit incentives.	185	110	21	7	323	100
		57.3	34.0	6.5	2.2		
5	Provision of good roads, potable water, affordable healthcare, constant electricity, and functional educational programmes can lead to poverty reduction in rural areas	111	184	25	3	323	100
		34.4	57	7.7	0.9		

Testing of hypothesis one

Hypothesis one states that there is a significant relationship between the empowerment of women in terms of tailoring and the financial independence of rural women in Ideato South LGA.

To test this hypothesis, the responses of the respondents in items 1, 3, and 4, as represented in Table 3, were used.

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis for Empowerment of women in terms of tailoring and financial independence of rural women

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	16	18	169	154	323B1
3	20	14	165	158	323B2
4	185	110	21	7	323B3
Total	221A1	142A2	355A3	319A4	969

Table 5: Data for hypothesis one

O	E	(O - E)	(O - E) ² /E
221	73.7	147.7	0.2
142	47.3	94.7	1.4
355	118.3	33	0.5
319	106.3	212.7	0.4
221	73.7	147.3	0.2
142	47.3	68.3	1.4
355	118.3	33	5
319	106.3	33	4
221	77.3	9	0.2

142	47.3	32.7	1.3
355	118.3	22	0.3
319	106.3	21	0.4
Total			7.9

The table above is a 4 x 2 contingency table, hence the degrees of freedom:

$$(df) = (C - 1) (R - 1)$$

$$(df) = (4 - 1) (2 - 1)$$

$$df = 3 \times 1 = 3$$

Thus, $df = 3$.

The table value of X^2 at a significance level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 3 is 7.815. The calculated value of $x^2 = 7.9$. Since the calculated value of X^2 is higher than the table value of X^2 , we therefore accept the alternate hypothesis, which states that there is a significant relationship between empowerment of women in terms of tailoring and financial empowerment.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the study carried out on capacity building and poverty reduction among rural women in Ideato South LGA, we found that a significant relationship exists between the empowerment of women in terms of tailoring and their financial independence in rural areas. This aligns with Anderson (2015), who suggests that poverty alleviation programs are structural measures or schemes, as well as organized events, put in place to reduce the suffering and hardship of people, especially the poor or less privileged. This also conforms with item 4 in Table 3, where 57.3 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that there is substantial improvement in the standard of living of rural women when they are provided with social amenities, basic infrastructures, and credit incentives. Also, the majority of interviewed respondents were of the opinion that empowerment of women in terms of tailoring has led to financial independence of rural women.

Recommendations

Based on the research carried out on capacity building and poverty reduction of rural women in Ideato South LGA, the following recommendations were made:

1. More women should be encouraged to participate in the development of their various communities through effective capacity building of rural women.
2. More women should be encouraged to acquire more skills, especially in tailoring, which would make them strong advocates of poverty reduction

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