

**EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON THE DEVELOPMENT LEVEL OF
IDEATO-SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF IMO
STATE (2020-2025)**

Ekelem-Chukwu Peter Osodiuru^{1*} & Chijioke Sunday Umeh²

¹Department of General Studies, School of Business and General Studies, Federal Polytechnic
Ngodo-Isuochi, Abia State, Nigeria

²Department of Public Administration, School of Business and General Studies, Federal
Polytechnic Ngodo-Isuochi, Abia State, Nigeria

*osodiurupeter@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: This paper examined the effects of poverty on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State (2020-2025). The objective was to determine ways unemployment, inefficient education system, as well as people's poor socio-economic status affect the development level of the Local Government Area. A community-level survey study was adopted. 380 respondents were randomly selected out of 159,879 persons in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. An instrument titled Poverty and Development Survey Questionnaire (PDSQ), structured in a four-point Likert format, was administered for data collection. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. The study is anchored on System Theory. It was revealed that unemployment, an inefficient education system, and people's poor socio-economic status negatively affected the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government at all levels should provide effective employment opportunities, improve the education system, and improve the people's socio-economic status to enhance the development level in the communities. It was further recommended that the government should, as a matter of urgency, emphasise the diversification of the Nigerian economy through agriculture, which will increase the GDP and per capita income of people in the rural communities, reducing poverty in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

Keywords: Poverty, Development Level, Unemployment, Education System, Socio-Economic Status

INTRODUCTION

Every country at some stage of its development has encountered some challenges. In a developing country like Nigeria, one of the challenges hindering economic development is poverty. The rate of poverty is very high in Nigeria, and it is one of the common features of third-world countries. It is worrisome that Nigeria, as a nation-state, is today neck-deep in poverty, in both material and spiritual dimensions (Alugbuo & Akpanabia, 2023). In the Nigerian context, persons or families with low income, irregular salary, whose means of livelihood stem mainly from peasant farming, petty trading, hawking, menial jobs, migrant fishing, and begging are judged to be poor (Omotola,

2025). People are said to be poor when they lack the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, etc. They are poor as they lack the resources to obtain an average diet, housing, clothing, security, and other social amenities within the average group (Ugwu, 2023). Poverty is said to be a lack of basic necessities of life; thus, the majority of Nigerians are so poor that they cannot feed well, live in good houses or obtain quality education and good medical attention. With reference to labour, unemployment occurs when all citizens who are eligible, able, and willing to work cannot find a job (Aguh, 2021).

Considering the effects of poverty, which include lack and deprivation of basic necessities of life, and in a bid to overcome poverty and reduce unemployment, the Nigerian government initiated various policies and programmes between 1986 and 2004 to alleviate it. According to Idowu (2024), these programmes include: Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), Better Life Programme (BLP), Directorate of Employment (DE), People Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Community Banks (CB), Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), aimed at ameliorating the suffering of the people by providing them employment opportunities and access to credit facilities to enable them establish their own businesses.

Also, the government of President Goodluck Jonathan implemented the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) to alleviate poverty in Nigeria. The Buhari administration, from 2016 to May 29, 2023, implemented its own poverty alleviation programme named N-power. The N-power programme covered the areas of agriculture, teaching and information technology (Ekpe, 2024). However, all the poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria (Imo state inclusive) have not been successful due to inadequate funding, lack of proper coordination and commitments, poor design and evaluation of programmes, etc; hence the programmes have not impacted positively on reducing unemployment in the country.

In Imo State, for example, the government of Governor Achike Udenwa (1999 – 2007) and the government of Ikedi Ohakim (2007 – 2011) adopted different poverty alleviation programmes in Imo State. In addition, the government of Governor Owelle Rochas Okorocha (2011-2019) adopted many poverty alleviation programmes, which include the Youth Must Work Programme, Community Government Council (CGC), etc. At present, the government of Governor Hope Uzodinma has also adopted many poverty alleviation programmes. The aim of these poverty alleviation programmes in the state is to reduce unemployment in the state (Osimiri, 2023). Since unemployment is the primary effect of poverty, the state government should be more pragmatic in its policy implementation for poverty alleviation. Therefore, whether the above-stated poverty alleviation programmes and policies have succeeded in reducing poverty or not, the present economic reality reveals that the unemployment rate is still very high in Imo State (Ideato-South Local Government Area inclusive), irrespective of these programmes. Hence, there is a need for the study.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, there have been poor anti-poverty measures, which include inadequate involvement of stakeholders, management, and implementation of poverty programmes and policies, giving rise to unemployment, high illiteracy levels, poor socio-economic status, etc. These have become recurring challenges to development. When poverty eradication policymakers and implementers refuse to involve critical stakeholders, the programme's goals may not be achieved. Sometimes, the leaders show poor managerial capacity or engage in corrupt practices which hinder the poverty eradication objectives.

A close observation of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State shows that the rate of development is dropping drastically. Studies such as Ubah (2020) and Aguh (2021) affirmed that the local government area is characterised by significant underdevelopment. Again, there is a dwindling rate of development in the local government area, particularly judging from the statistical analysis made of the 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023 development ratings, where dwindling progress was observed in the twenty-three (23) autonomous communities of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State (Idowu, 2024). Therefore, there is a need to identify the factors responsible for this rising poverty level in the local government area. In other words, it is for this seemingly observed recurring drop in development within the local government area that motivated the researchers to embark on this study to determine the causes of the observed low development level. Thus, this study is geared towards interrogating the effects of poverty on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the effects of poverty on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine ways unemployment affects the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.
2. To ascertain the ways an inefficient educational system affects the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.
3. To identify ways people's poor socio-economic status affects the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed for the study:

1. In what ways has unemployment affected the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State?
2. In what ways has the inefficient education system affected the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State?
3. How has people's poor socio-economic status affected the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated to guide the study.

Ho1: Unemployment has no effect on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

Ho2: Inefficient education system has no effect on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

Ho3: People's poor socio-economic status has no effect on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Concept of Poverty

Poverty is not an easy concept to define. As a concept, it does not lend itself to an easy and precise definition. Its analytical exploration is fraught with a number of difficulties, because it affects many aspects of the human conditions/situations, including physical and psychological. There is no concise and universally accepted definition of poverty. It is more easily recognised from the lenses of different groups and scholars. For example, poverty, according to Rowndree (2024), is measured by the level of total earnings that are not sufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency, like food, rent and other items. Amartya (2021), on his part, views poverty as the failure to achieve certain minimum capabilities, pointing out that lack of capabilities could be referred to as absolute poverty. According to the United Nations Development Programme - UNDP (2021), poverty is an inherent deprivation of lives that not only lack the necessities of material well-being, but also deny opportunities for having a tolerable life. It is the result of economic, political, social and environmental processes that interact with, and frequently reinforce one another in ways that exacerbate the deprivation in which poor people live. In general terms, poverty is considered from two broad perspectives: relative poverty and absolute poverty. Relative poverty is associated with experiencing deviational outcomes from expectations and irrelevant comparison of one's material position with others, mostly peers and age groups. Absolute poverty refers to a situation where an individual lacks the resources necessary to sustain themselves; such an individual lacks the basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing (Umeh, 2025).

Concept of Development and Underdevelopment

There is a liberal perspective of what development and underdevelopment are, as well as a Marxist view. According to the liberal perspective, development is the maximisation of the growth of the Gross National Product (GNP) through capital accumulation and industrialisation (Okereke & Ekpe, 2021). Michael Todaro (1987) in his book, *Development and Under-development*, highlights it as "a series of successive stages of transformation". So, for the liberal scholars, development means "The capacity of a national economy whose initial economic conditions have been more or

less static to generate and sustain an annual increase in its Gross National Product” (Okereke & Ekpe, 2021, p. 39).

Correspondingly, the Marxian school sees development as encompassing growth. It emphasises that “development is not statistics about the human condition; it must be man-centred” (Okereke, 2022, p. 87). The Marxist perspective also perceives development as the qualitative improvement in the living standard of the majority, and could be measured by setting indicators such as good roads, regular supply of water, electricity, etc. Therefore, human development is seen as a prerequisite for real development. In line with this perspective, development at the individual level implies mental and academic sophistication, which will invariably catapult the society to the frontier of genuine development, shattering the shells of backwardness. For instance, human development will lead to an increase in productivity (Okereke & Ekpe, 2021). Fundamentally, Rodney's (1972) view of development in human society is a multifaceted process. According to him, at the level of the individual, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Rodney, in his widest ideology, advocates that some of these ‘factors’ are virtually moral categories which are difficult to evaluate, depending on the age in which one lives, one’s class, origins, and one’s personal code of what is right and wrong. He argues, however, that what is indisputable is that the achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied to the state of the society as a whole.

On the other hand, the term “underdevelopment” as used by Rodney (1972) in his book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, refers to a means of comparing levels of development, stressing that it is very much tied to the fact that human social development has been uneven, and from a strictly economic viewpoint, some human groups have advanced further by producing more and becoming wealthy. In his opinion, the moment that one group appears to be wealthier than others, some enquiries are bound to take place as to the reason for the difference. For example, according to him, after Britain had begun to move ahead of the rest of Europe in the 18th century, the famous British economist Adam Smith felt it was necessary to look into the causes behind the ‘wealth’ of Nations. On the contrary, to the liberal school, underdevelopment is seen in terms of “backwardness, primitive or lack of development” (Okereke, 2022, p.18). To the Bourgeois scholars, underdevelopment is not caused by any external factors; rather, it is induced by internal variables such as tradition, the customs of the people and the structures of the society. Anchoring on this ideology, Rodney (1972) argues that there is no society that is stagnant, but at some point in their progress, the development was halted because of relationships with other countries; in Africa, it was a relationship between the West and Africa in the guise of slavery, colonialism and independence.

Factors that affect the Development Level of Society

The factors affecting the development level of society cut across unemployment, a poor education system, and poor socio-economic status. These are the major factors contributing to poverty. For example, there is a strong correlation between unemployment and poverty. When people are unemployed, their basis of living crumbles (Omufum, 2024). The cost of living becomes high, and the standard of living goes down. There are many people in Nigeria who lack the opportunity of being employed. Oni (2023), on his part, contends that when people are unemployed, the source of

their livelihood depletes over time, pointing out that if the employment database shows that the unemployment indicators are long-term, then underdevelopment is possible. In order to give a clear view of the subject matter, Ikechi (2021) avers that unemployment indicates that people in the society are more likely to experience poverty, as well as poor health, noting that the number of job seekers per job opening is another indicator of the strength of the labour market. For him, it is also the ratio of unemployed persons over the employed persons. This could have inspired Ugwu (2023) to hold that unemployment induces poverty, and it tends to increase the crime rate and violence in the country. He observes that most unemployed youths resort to crimes like armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, internet fraud and other forms of fraudulent activities.

Education can play a major role in reducing poverty. According to the World Bank, education is central to development. It promotes economic growth, national productivity and innovation, values of democracy and social cohesion (Ayinde, 2025). In Imo State, the population with no education accounts for most of the poor (Idowu et al., 2021). The education system in Nigeria can be regarded as a failure compared to other countries in the world. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2022) states that everyone has the right to education. This right to education has been denied to many Nigerians, many of whom are considered a threat to society now. This deprivation of education applies more to females than males, because they are considered the inferior sex. Hence, educating them is seen as unnecessary, as they are expected to marry as early as possible. On the contrary, Okafor (2021) points out that the dwindling fortune of the education sector is due to poor funding by successive governments. Subscribing to this, Olubukola (2023) submits that there are a number of schools with a significant shortage of staff and unqualified teachers in Nigeria. However, Ugwu (2023) appears to agree, positing that educational infrastructure is an important factor in determining the quality of learning and the quality of graduates produced. He points out that most government schools in Nigeria lack adequate classrooms, projectors, computers, laboratories, and libraries.

Writing on poor socio-economic status, Etim and Edet (2023) aver that the poor started with a very low level of capital per person, and then find themselves trapped in poverty because the ratio of capital per person actually falls from generation to generation. The amount of capital per person declines when the population is growing faster than capital is being accumulated. They maintain that capital is accumulated in a balance of two forces, one positive and the other negative. On the positive side, capital is accumulated when households save a part of their current income, or have a part of their income taxed to finance investments by the government. On the negative side, capital is diminished, or depreciated, as a result of the passage of time, wear and tear, or the death of skilled workers, which discourages economic development in any given society. For this reason, Nwankwo (2025) asserts that low (disposable) income is an indicator of poverty because it focuses on the capacities of individuals and families to participate in society.

Etim and Edet (2023) posit that the extremely poor lack six major kinds of capital: (a) human capital health, nutrition and skills needed for each person to be economically productive (b) business capital - the machinery, facilities, motorised transport used in agriculture, industry and services (c) infrastructure - roads, power, water and sanitation, airports, seaports and telecommunication systems that are critical inputs into business productivity (d) natural capital - arable land, healthy soils, biodiversity, and well-functioning ecosystems that provide the environmental services needed

by human society (e) public institutional capital - the commercial law, judicial systems, government services and policing that underpin the peaceful and prosperous division of labour (f) knowledge capital - the scientific and technological know-how that raises productivity in business output and the promotion of physical and natural capital, and (iv) corruption - high level of corruption in Nigeria has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base in spite of her abundant natural resources. Massive corruption has been perpetuated in every sector and has permeated the entire social structure of Imo State (Oji-Okoro, 2021).

Problems of Rural Development

According to Okereke (2022, p.74), “the problems of rural development cut across agricultural development, and this perspective is essential in Africa,” Ideato-South Local Government Area inclusive. For him, the claim that agriculture in Africa has not been adequately given attention by governments is correct to a certain degree. Governments have not devoted enough proportion of the budget to agriculture and agricultural-related matters. In more specific terms, the problem includes inadequate distribution of land based on the traditional tenure system, to the extent that the rural peasants must enter into a contract with the landlord before embarking on agricultural activities in their various communities (Rowndree, 2024).

Ekpe (2021) observes that over the years, there have been inadequate health facilities and undernutrition among the people, particularly in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. He avers that “the health facilities available are not enough, adding that there is mal-nutrition, inadequacy of protein content, poor sanitation, no good system of refuse disposal, etc.,” in the local communities of the local government area under study. The people at the rural areas need basic health services to solve their health problems, for example, effective mobile clinic, which is not readily available in the local government.

Subscribing to this, Amartya (2021) posits that another problem of rural development is poor manpower development across the local government areas in Nigeria, Ideato-South Local Government Area inclusive, a situation where a large segment of government budget is supposed to be devoted to education, formal education which prepares people for higher positions rather than for clerical jobs. Education should first of all change people’s attitude and practices and bring technical skills, as well as vocational knowledge, to the rural people of Ideato-South Local Government Area.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted system theory as a theoretical framework of analysis. David Easton was regarded as the father of system theory; he is one of the most influential social scientists of the last century. His system analysis approach was an effort to provide a coherent theory of political economy. According to him, a system is a set of elements standing in interaction. A whole comprises many parts or an assembly of all parts, and it is necessary for all parts to be working. In simple social science parlance, a system is a whole or an integral with structure and interrelated parts, which all function to maintain the continuity of their existence. To him, the system theory sees society as being governed by mutually interrelated structures, which, through possessing their

unique individualised characteristics and performing special roles independently, still maintain a dynamic equilibrium between themselves for the successful maintenance of the entire system.

It is evident that Ideato-South Local Government Area is a system with sub-systems. Based on the topic, system theory was used because the local government area is a system with many sub-systems. The sub-systems, on the one hand, may include the political leaders/stakeholders, community heads, public/civil servants and the youth, etc. The issue here is that if any of the sub-systems in the local government area is not effective, the entire system will be affected negatively, to the extent that there will not be remarkable development in the local government area. Therefore, the problem of poverty in Ideato-South Local Government Area (system) is serious because there is a high unemployment rate, an inefficient education system and people's poor socio-economic status, as well as a low level of federal and state government presence in the local government area. More so, Ideato-South Local Government Area has many institutions that graduate numerous youths yearly, without job opportunities to accommodate the turnout from schools. For the fact that most of the youth are not employed, there will be a high level of poverty in the local government area as a system.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised all 23 autonomous communities in the Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. 399 persons were randomly selected out of 159,879 persons in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. A questionnaire titled Poverty and Development Survey Questionnaire (PDSQ), structured in a four-point Likert format, was administered for data collection, complemented with interviews and secondary data. To ascertain the instrument's validity for the study, the researchers ensured that the questionnaire addressed the study's research questions and was reviewed by experts. This was pilot-tested, and a reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. The decision rule for interpretation of the results was that a mean score of 2.5 and above was regarded as agreed/accepted, while a score below 2.5 was regarded as disagreed/rejected.

RESULTS

Data Presentation and Analysis

It should be noted that of the 399 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 380 were properly filled out and returned, while 19 were not returned.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: In what ways has unemployment affected the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State?

Table 1: Mean Response on unemployment and development of Ideato-South Local Government Area, Imo State

N = 380

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Development can be enhanced through improved employment opportunities	175 700	110 330	55 110	40 40	1180	3.11	Agreed
2.	There is a negative relationship between unemployment and development in the local government area.	150 600	110 330	70 140	50 50	445	2.95	Agreed
3.	High unemployment can mar the development rate.	140 560	130 390	58 116	52 52	477	2.94	Agreed
4.	There are enough industries to employ the people in the rural areas.	40 160	72 216	110 220	158 158	754	1.98	Disagreed
	Grand Mean						2.75	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

Table 1 revealed that the respondents in items 1, 2, and 3, with mean scores above 2.50, agreed that unemployment affected the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area, Imo State, while only the respondents in item 4, with a mean score below 2.50, disagreed. Meanwhile, the grand mean for research question 1 is 2.75. The implication is that the majority of the respondents believe that unemployment affects the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

Research Question 2: In what ways has the inefficient education system affected the

Table 2: Mean Response on Inefficient Education System and Development Level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

N = 380

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
5.	A good education system can enhance development.	161	109	63	47	1,144	3.01	Agreed
		644	327	126	47			
6.	There are quality primary and secondary schools in the local government area.	38	81	154	107	810	2.13	Disagreed
		152	243	308	107			
7.	There are inadequate facilities in government-established schools in the L.G.A	152	1131	70	45	1,132	2.98	Agreed
		608	339	140	45			
8.	There are poor working conditions for teachers to enhance development in the education sector.	166	93	66	55	1,130	2.97	Agreed
		664	279	132	55			
	Grand Mean						2.77	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

Table 2 shows that the respondents in items 5, 7 and 8, with mean scores above 2.50, agreed that the inefficient education system affected the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State, while only the respondents in item 6, with mean scores below 2.50, disagreed. Meanwhile, the grand mean for research question 2 is 2.77. This underscores the fact that the majority of the respondents believe that an inefficient education system affects the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

Research Question 3: How has people's poor socio-economic status affected the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State?

Table 3: Mean Response on People's Socio-economic Status and Development Level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

N = 380

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
9.	There is a low cost of living in the local government area.	35	84	151	110	798	2.10	Disagreed
		140	246	302	110			
10.	Low quality of life can discourage socio-economic development.	139	131	60	50		2.94	Agreed
		556	393	120	50	1,119		
11.	Most people in the rural communities are low-income earners	170	115	54	41	1,174	3.09	Agreed
		680	345	108	41			
12.	Most people in the rural communities in the local government area are not able to register/send their children to school due to low income.	160	99	65	56	1,123	2.96	Agreed
		640	297	130	56			
	Grand Mean						2.77	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

Table 3 revealed that the respondents in items 10, 11 and 12, with mean scores above 2.50, agreed that people's poor socio-economic status affected the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State, while only the respondents in item 9, with a mean score below 2.50, disagreed. Meanwhile, the grand mean for research question 3 is 2.77. This implies that the majority of the respondents believe that an individual's poor socio-economic status affects the development level in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the results from Table 1, it could be seen that unemployment had an effect on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State, which is in line with the alternative hypothesis earlier postulated. This indicates, therefore, that unemployment has effects on the development level of the local government area. Further assessment showed that a good number of the youth were unemployed, which gave rise to social vices, ushering in underdevelopment in the local government area. This finding is in consonance with Ugwu (2023), who held that unemployment induces poverty, and it tends to increase the crime rate and violence

in the country. He observed that most unemployed youths resort to crimes like armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, internet fraud and other forms of fraudulent activities. The finding is consistent with Oni (2023), who agreed that when people are unemployed, the source of their livelihood depletes over time, adding that if the employment database shows that the unemployment indicators are long-term, then underdevelopment is possible. Corroborating the result, Ikechi (2021) averred that unemployment indicates that people in the society are more likely to experience poverty, as well as poor health, pointing out that the number of job seekers per job opening is another indicator of the strength of the labour market. For him, it is also the ratio of unemployed persons over the employed persons.

The test of hypothesis two revealed that the inefficient education system had an effect on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State, which is in tandem with the alternative hypothesis earlier postulated. Evidence showed that a poor education system had effects on the development level of the local government area. Further assessment indicated that insufficient infrastructure in the education sector undermined development in the local government area. This finding is in conformity with Ugwu (2023), who posited that educational infrastructure is an important factor determining the quality of learning and graduates being turned out. He pointed out that there are inadequate classrooms, projectors, computers, laboratories and libraries in most government schools in Nigeria. Additional findings suggested that the standard of the education system so far is not enough to trigger remarkable development in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. In support of the finding, Okafor (2021) observed that the dwindling fortune of the education sector is due to poor funding by successive governments. Subscribing to this, Olubukola (2023) submitted that there are a number of schools with a significant shortage of staff and unqualified teachers in Nigeria.

The test of hypothesis three indicated that people's poor socio-economic status had an effect on the development level of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. This is in line with the alternative hypothesis earlier postulated, which showed that poor people's socio-economic status has effects on the development of Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. Further assessment revealed that the level of people's socio-economic status was not high enough; therefore, it stemmed the tide of development in Ideato-South Local Government Area of Imo State. This finding is in consonance with Etim & Edet (2023), who averred that the poor started with a very low level of capital per person, and then find themselves trapped in poverty because the ratio of capital per person actually falls from generation to generation. The amount of capital per person, according to them, declines when the population is growing faster than capital is being accumulated. Corroborating the result, Nwankwo (2025) submitted that low (disposable) income is an indicator of poverty because it focuses on the capacities of individuals and families to participate in society.

Conclusion

It has been worthwhile analysing poverty and development in Ideato- South Local Government Area of Imo State. Unemployment is one of the reasons for underdevelopment in most communities. There is a strong correlation between unemployment and poverty. When people are unemployed, their source of income drains over time. The cost of living becomes high and the

standard of living goes down. There are many people in Imo State who lack the opportunity of being employed.

Many graduates in rural communities wander the streets without any reasonable means of earning a living. Employment in Nigeria is usually not based on merit but depends on how connected you are. This leaves many highly qualified people in poverty. Any organisation that refuses to embrace developmental trends will remain unproductive and therefore may collapse or lose its validity, including Ideato-South Local Government Area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government/political stakeholders should create more job opportunities with effective employment procedures devoid of favouritism, tribalism and political consideration to reduce unemployment. Again, poverty alleviation programmes should be directed towards addressing unemployment to reduce poverty.
2. The government should adopt an effective education system capable of regularly monitoring the system to ensure strict compliance with standards. This is because education is central to economic growth/development, national productivity and innovation in the system.
3. The government at all levels should intensify efforts and provide greater support for the private sector through diversified sources of financing small-scale businesses/agriculture in the rural communities. This is crucial to add value to their socio-economic status, and by extension, enhance development in the local government area.

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