IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISE AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME (GEEP) ON POVERTY STATUS OF BENEFICIARIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

Ajah EA[1]*, Bassey NE[2], Uzoigwe AE[1],
John IB[1], Asuquo IA[1], Igiri JA[1], Ekpe DE[3,] Abumbe GT[3] and KO Itam[1]

Eucharia Agom Ajah

*Corresponding author email: ajahagom@yahoo.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2467-0274 - EA Ajah

[1]Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

[2]Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

[3]Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science, University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

In line with the sustainable development goal to end poverty in all forms, the Nigerian Government launched Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) - as a social investment programme to alleviate poverty by providing credit to petty traders to support entrepreneurship. This study assesses the impact of Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) on the poverty status of beneficiaries in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it compared the mean income before, and after accessing the loan, analysed the determinants of poverty status of the respondents in the study area, enumerated the benefits of GEEP to the respondents, and identified the challenges faced by the beneficiaries in accessing the loan. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 394 respondents who had benefitted from the programme across the eleven Local Government Areas (LGAs) that the programme covered. Data were obtained from primary source with the aid of a well-structured questionnaire, and analyzed using; frequency count, mean, Foster Greer and Thorbecke (FGT) model, paired T- test (Z), and logistic regression analysis. The results showed that, majority of the respondents were male (55.6%) with a mean age of 35 years, and had an average household size of 5 persons. The study also showed that 98.9% of the respondents were educated. The mean monthly income before GEEP support was ₦ 44,535.53, while after GEEP it was ₦54180.20. Thirty-six percent of the total respondents were poor (36%). The comparative analysis of the mean income before and after accessing the loan showed that, there was a significant difference between their mean incomes at 5% level of significance. Key variables that determined poverty status were; household size and loan amount. The main benefits of GEEP to the respondents were; increase in beneficiaries' income, and improvement in their standard of living. The major challenges faced by the respondents were; lack of appropriate means to repay loan, stressful loan procedure, and difficulty in transferring money from mobile wallet to bank. The study recommended that the loan application process should be less complex to enable quick loan application. The GEEP programme should be sustained, and allowed to have wider coverage in both rural and urban areas of the country as it has assisted a lot of small business owners' access to cheap credit.

Key words: Impact, GEEP, empowerment programme, government enterprise, poverty status

INTRODUCTION

According to contemporary estimates, quite a number of the world's population (about three billion people) dwell in poverty, with daily incomes of less than three dollars, while nearly 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty with a daily pay of less than 2.19 dollars [1]. Various empirical literatures have also reported the glaring poverty situations of numerous world populations [2, 3, 4, 5, 6]. The United Nations Development Programme and Human Development Initiative [7], in 2019 reported that about 1.3 billion people in 101 countries were living in extreme poverty. However, most of the aforementioned studies are of the opinion that the majority of those dwelling in extreme insufficiency reside in rural areas, and depend on agriculture and its associated activities as their primary sources of income. Hence, justifying the widespread priority accorded poverty reduction by international organizations as an important aspect of their developmental initiatives. Among others, in 2015, the United Nations developed the Sustainable Development Goals with its first objective aimed at globally eliminating severe hardship for all people by 2030. In line with this objective, UNDP [4] reported that to fully abolish poverty by 2030, as envisaged by this vision, 90 individuals must leave poverty every minute on the planet, 57 and 12 people in Africa and Nigeria, respectively must flee poverty every minute. Regrettably, the reverse has been the case as 9 people descend into extreme poverty every minute in both Nigeria and Congo.

Nigeria is one of the countries in West Africa with severe poverty trends and indices. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) [8], over 112 million Nigerians (or 67.1%) of the national population of 167 million lived in poverty, and small-scale farmers and petty traders dominate the Nigeria economy. As of 2018, the World Bank [3] and World Data Lab [2] reported that about 86.9 million Nigerians lived in extreme poverty. The Federal Office of Statistics FOS [9] further reported that the Nigerian economy is largely agricultural in character, and that agrarian communities bear the impact of the national poverty trend, with farmers accounting for 87%, 67% and 79% of the core poor in 1985, 1992 and 1996, respectively. United Nations Development Programme UNDP [10] also affirmed that, though Nigeria had some of the greatest economic growth rate in the world averaging 7.4%, the country continues to struggle with over 80 million Nigerians (42.4% of the entire population) living in destitution, this has grossly aggravated the country's food insecurity challenges in the face of rising population.

As part of the efforts to encourage small businesses and rural farmers alleviate from poverty, by enhancing their access to funding, the Government of Nigeria

24163

(GON) (2015-2023) launched the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) in 2016 as part of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), The NSIP includes; N-power programme, National Home Grown School Feeding, and Conditional Cash Transfer. The GEEP's mission was to assist small merchants and farmers in obtaining capital for their businesses. It is a non-collateralized soft loan granted to merchants, craftsmen, and farmers with the goal of improving their living conditions via the use of Bank of Industry financing (BOI). *Tradermoni, MarketMoni,* and *FarmerMoni* are GEEP sub-programs that provide MSMEs with no-surety credit ranging from N10000 to N300000 (30USD to 900USD) as part of poverty reduction attempts. *Tradermoni* was created with small merchants and artisans from all across the nation in mind with a startup loan of N10000 (30US$), while *Marketmoni*, was intended for medium-sized enterprises such as market women, artisans, and youth/market organizations, and begins with a N50000 (150USD loan base. *Farmermoni* loan, on the other hand start at N300000 (900US$), and are aimed at farmers who utilize farm aggregators and work in agricultural clusters (Aggregators are agricultural businesses or cooperatives of growers that consolidate and distribute agricultural products). Since the campaign started in 2016, it is claimed that 5000 individuals have benefitted from GEEP [11].

However, despite the huge benefit associated with the implementation of GEEP, many rural residents still remain impoverished. Government Enterprise and Empowerment programme (GEEP), has attracted criticism, notably from economists, who claim it is too buried in secrecy, as noble as the concept may look. Others have challenged the manner of identification and payout, expressing concerns about debt recovery. Arguments have been trailing that the GEEP programme is politically motivated, and seen as a way to buy votes from voters, in some locality it is referred to as '*APC money*' [12, 13, 14]. Consequently, the introduction of the loan programme has generated mixed feelings among citizens as some people believed it is used to achieve some political motives, while others maintain the belief that it is a medium for poverty alleviation. The introduction of the scheme is also believed by some people not to have shown any significant effect on the poverty reduction level of the masses. In Cross River State, the situation is not different as it is perceived to be politically motivated and shrouded in secrecy.

Several studies have been conducted in other States and Nigeria in general to determine the effect of GEEP on business growth and development. For instance, in Lagos, Olateju [14] examined the effect of *trademoni* on business progress and profit of petty traders in Lagos state, Nigeria. Others include Akujuru and Okezie [11], Arikewuyo and Akanbi [15]. However, there is relatively few researches on the

24164

impact of GEEP among beneficiaries in Cross River State. This, coupled with the controversy surrounding the plan, necessitates more investigation and justifies this study. Based on the above, this study examined the impact of GEEP on the poverty status of Beneficiaries in Cross River State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The research was carried out in Nigeria's Cross River state. The State of Cross River is located in the tropical rainforest and spans a total area of 23,074 square kilometers. Cross River State lies within latitude 4˚ 28"and 6˚ 55" of the equator and between longitude 8˚ 00" and 9˚ 00" east of the Greenwich Meridian. It shares common boundaries with the Republic of Cameroon to the east, Benue State to the north, Ebonyi and Abia States to the west, and Akwa Ibom State and the Atlantic Ocean to the south [16]. The State population is estimated to be over 3,800,000 million persons as of 2016, with roughly 75 percent of them residing in rural areas with a population density of 110 persons per square kilometer with the population split at 50.03 percent male and 49.97 percent female.
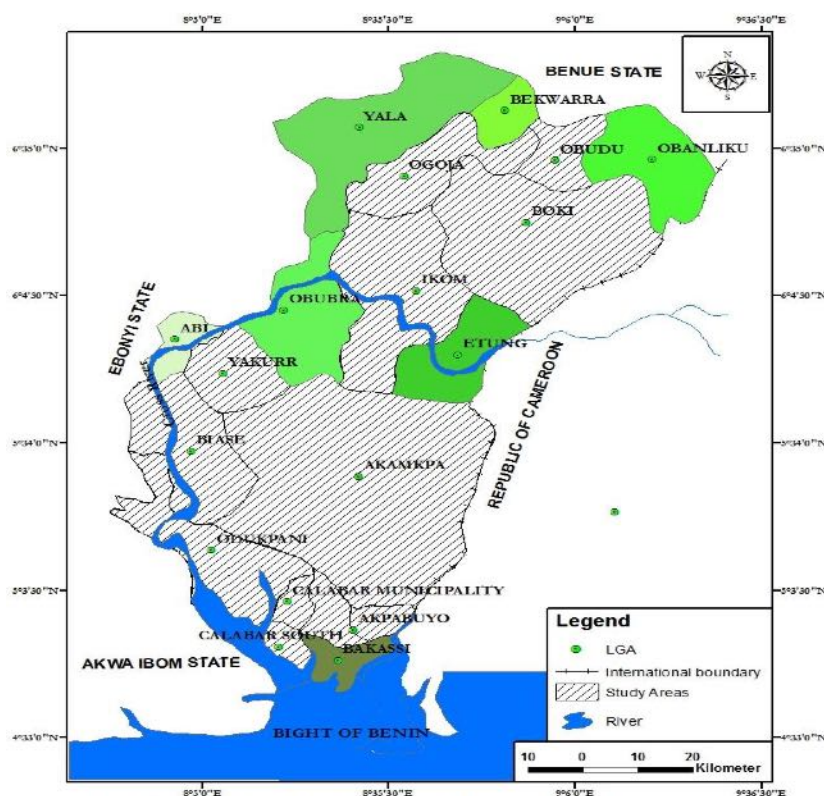

Fig. 1: Study Area in the Context of Cross River State

Figure 1: *Map of Cross River State showing the Study Area*

The State has Calabar as the State capital, with 18 administrative Local Government Areas (LGA). The climate of Cross River State is tropical humid, with wet and dry seasons, average temperatures ranging from fifteen degrees Celsius (15°C) to thirty degrees Celsius (30°C), and annual rainfall ranging from 1300mm to 3000mm. The economy of Cross River State is mostly agrarian, with local subsistence farmers and minor merchants trading agricultural commodities at the helm with principal crops such as cassava (*Manihot esculenta*), yam (*Dioscorea alata*), and oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*).

Source and method of data collection

Data were collected from the primary source. Well-structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was administered through well trained enumerators who were agents of the programme in the LGAs. A sample frame of 14,190 beneficiaries from the GEEP programme was obtained from the office of the State Coordinator of the Programme in Cross River State. Stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection of four hundred (400) respondents. A large percentage (83%) of its beneficiaries were individuals primarily involved in agribusinesses. The participants were 209 for *tradermoni* and 191 for *marketmoni* (see Table 1). In the course of this research only 11 LGAs were operational in GEEP activities out of the 18 LGAs and the State did not benefit from the *farmermoni* programme. Since the population size was known, the sample size was derived using the Taro Yamane method [18] as expressed below:

$$n = \frac{N}{\left[1 + N(e)^2\right]}$$

Where, n = sample size, N = population under study, e = error margin which is 0.05

$$n = \frac{14190}{\left[1 + 14190(0.05)^2\right]} \quad n = 399.87; \ n \approx 400$$

After administering the questionnaire, only 394 of the respondents filled and returned, therefore, giving a total number of 394 respondents used for the study.

Methods of data analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Apart from descriptive statistics like mean, frequency count and simple percentages, other analytical tools adopted were:

The paired t test: The paired t test was used to compare the difference in mean income before and after the implementation of the scheme.

Likert scale rating: A five-point Likert scale rating with a mean score of 3 obtained from the average of the scale number 5-1 (5+4+3 +2 +1 = 15 / 5 = 3) was used as the benchmark in evaluating the benefits of the programme on the respondents, and the challenges faced by respondents in accessing the loan.

The FGT poverty measure: Using the Foster, Greer, and Thorbecke [19] indices, which contains; the head count ratio P_0, the poverty (income) gap ratio P_1, and the poverty severity ratio P_2. The head count ratio, often known as the incidence of poverty, is one of the most basic and widely used poverty indicators. The poverty headcount is the total number of poor persons in a population, while the poverty headcount ratio (H) is the percentage of poor individuals.
The FGT poverty index is given as:

$$P_{\alpha i}(y,z) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{q} \left(\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right)^{\alpha} \tag{1}$$

Where: n = Total number of households under consideration
 q = Number of poor households (those below the poverty line)
Z = Poverty line, estimated using $\frac{2}{3}$ mean *per capita* expenditure of all households

y_i = *per capita* expenditure of the ith household

 α = poverty aversion parameter and takes on value 0, 1, 2

$\left(\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right)$ = proportion shortfall in expenditure below the poverty line.

Determining the poverty index, when α = 0 in FGT, the expression becomes:

$$P_0 = (q)\left(\frac{1}{n} \right) = \frac{q}{n} = H \tag{2}$$

This is called the incidence of poverty or headcount index, which measures the proportion of the population that is poor that falls below the poverty line.
 When α = 1 in FGT, the expression becomes:

$$P_1 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i-1}^{q} \left(\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right) \tag{3}$$

This is called the Poverty Depth or Poverty Gap Index, which measures the extent to which individuals fall below the poverty line as a proportion of the poverty line.
When α = 2 in FGT, the expression becomes:

$$P_2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{q} \left(\frac{z - y_i}{z} \right)^{2} \tag{4}$$

This is called the Poverty Severity Index which measures the squares of the poverty gaps relative to the poverty line. Due to its simplicity and ease of computation, the headcount ratio is the most often used indicator of poverty [20].

Poverty line: According to the research, "this is the pre-determined and well-defined criterion of income or consumption value." The boundary was created using data on household spending. The poverty limit was set at two-thirds (2/3) of average *per capita* expenditure. The mean *per capita* household expenditure (MPCHE) was calculated by multiplying the amount spent *per capita* by the number of households surveyed.

$$Per\ capita\ \text{expenditure (PCE)} = \frac{\text{Total expenditure}}{\text{Household size}} \tag{5}$$

$$\text{Mean } per\ capita\ \text{household expenditure (MPHE)} = \frac{Per\ capita\ \text{expenditure}}{\text{Total number of household}} \tag{6}$$

Logistic Regression: The cumulative logistics distribution function was used to create the logit regression model which is a dichotomous regression model as specified below:

$$P_i = E\left(y_i = \frac{1}{x}\right) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\alpha + \beta \chi_i)}} \tag{7}$$

$$P_i = \frac{1}{1 - e^{-zi}} \tag{8}$$

Where $Z_i = B_1 X_1 + B_2 X_1 \ldots\ldots\ldots B_n X_n$

Where, p_1 is the cumulative logistics distribution function in order to obtain the value of z_i the likelihood of obtaining/observing the sample need to be formed by introducing dichotomous response variables (Y_i) such that:

$Y_i = 0$ if household is poor and 1 if otherwise

X_i = independent variables; i = 1, 2 ....6; $\propto_i$ and $\beta_i \propto_i$ and β_i are constant term and logistic coefficient for the independent variables.

The hypothesized independent variables used were as follows; with their *a priori* expectations (sign)

X_1 = sex (1 if male, and 0 if otherwise) (+/-)
X_2 = Household size (Number of people in the household) (-)
X_3 = Educational level (years of formal education) (+)
X_4 = Business Experience (years) (+/-)
X_5 = Loan amount (Naira) (+)

X_6 = Membership to association (1 if yes, 0 if otherwise) (+/-)
These variables are similar to those of Ajah & Edet [21], Etuk *et al.* [22] and
Olabode *et al.* [23].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

As depicted in Table 2, the majority of respondents were male (55.6%). The results
showed that men dominated the total number of beneficiaries, which also enables
them to contribute to the welfare of their families. A study by Ugwumba *et al.* [24]
reported that 55.6% of the beneficiaries of government credit programmes in
Nigeria were male. The age of respondents indicates that 97.7% of the
respondents fell within 20-50 years with mean age of 35 years, indicating that they
were in their economically active and productive age group. This agrees with the
findings by Ike and Uzokwe [25] who reported the same, that respondents were
within the ages of 25 and 55 years and this constituted 76% of the ages sampled.
 The results showed that a greater (52.8%) part of respondents had a household
size of 1-5 persons. The average household size was five persons. According to
previous researches, a high household size is linked to poverty [25]. According to
the survey's results, 98.9% of individuals had some form of educational experience
showing that the beneficiaries can read, and write in a useful way. Results from the
survey further showed that 63.5% of the total respondents had a monthly income of
less than ₦50000 (US$150), with an average monthly income of ₦54180.20
(US$162.54). This showed that the majority of the beneficiaries of GEEP were low-
income earners. This assertion is in line with the findings of Ike and Uzokwe [25],
which stated that over 60% of Nigeria's, earn less than $1 a day. Also, only few
beneficiaries (35.5%) were members of cooperative association, majority (51%)
had less than 5 years business experience with the general opinion that business
experience of respondents would be more efficient in order to have a greater
understanding of market conditions, and as a result, are expected to manage a
more efficient and successful business. Findings also indicated that 46.2% of the
respondents were sellers of vegetables, 21.3% of them were food stuff sellers,
21.6% were butchers, while 10.9% of the respondents were fruit sellers. This
showed that most of the beneficiaries were into petty businesses, those who
engaged in vegetables and fruits trading, their received credit was channeled into
their petty businesses. This is in line with Akujuru and Okezie [11] and Olateju [14]
who opined that beneficiaries were mostly petty traders and small business
owners.

Monthly mean expenditure on food and non-food items

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents spend more money on food (59.1%) than on non-food items (40.9 %). This is in accordance with the findings of research by Ike and Uzokwe [25], who opined that food is a fundamental human need and availability of credit, will enable the respondents attain satisfaction and greater welfare [26].

Poverty status of the respondents

Table 4 shows the poverty status of the respondents. The mean monthly *per capita* expenditure was ₦11105.04 (US$33.31) and ₦13881.29 (US$41.64), before and after implementation of the scheme. This indicated that the mean monthly household expenditure increased by ₦2776.25 (US$8.32) due to the effect of the scheme. The poverty line which was two-third of the mean *per capita* expenditure was ₦7403.36 (US$22.21) and ₦9254.19 (US$27.76). The result further showed that the incidence of poverty among the respondents was 0.41 before, and fell to 0.36 after the scheme, implying that there was a reduction in poverty from 41% to 36%. The Poverty Gap Index which measures the level of poverty was 0.14 before and declined to 0.13 after the scheme, denoting that the number of the poorest population that lived in poverty reduced from 14% to 13% after the implementation of the scheme. Hence, the amount of income transfer needed by the poor household to get to the poverty line was ₦1037.87 (US$3.11) (that is, 0.14 of 7413.36) and ₦1203.09 (US$3.60) (0.13 of ₦19254.59). The poverty severity was 0.072 and 0.053 before and after the programme, respectively. This showed that there was a substantial disparity in the distance between the poor and the poverty line. It also shows that the percentage inequality among the poor reduced from 7.2% to 6.3% with the implementation of the programme.

This meant that the poorest 13 % of the population was living in poverty. Hence, the amount required to bring a single respondent to the poverty line was 0.13 of ₦9,254.19 (US$27.76) which was ₦1,203 (US$3.60), the amount required to bring the entire respondents to the poverty line was 36 multiplied by ₦1,203 (US$3.60) which was ₦43,308 (US$129.92). The poverty severity was 0.063. This indicated that there is a substantial disparity in the distance between the poor and the poverty line, as well as the 6.3 percent inequality among the poor. In comparison to the moderate poor, poorer families were more likely to utilize a bigger share of their credit on consumption [21]. The result showed that the administration of the scheme led to a reduction in poverty incidence, poverty gap ratio, and poverty severity. According to Ajah and Egbonyi [26], credit is a key instrument in the battle against poverty.

Determinants of poverty status of the beneficiaries

Table 5 shows the characteristics that impact respondents' poverty status in the study area. The diagnostic statistics revealed that, the included explanatory variables in the logistic model improved the model's fit, as evidenced by the chi square statistics of 371.19, which was significant at the 1% level of probability, implying that the independent variables included in the model significantly predicted the dependent variable in the logistic regression. The Pseudo R-square of roughly 0.7223, on the other hand, captured the degree of correlation between the dependent and independent variables. This number indicates that the model's explanatory variables were capable of clarifying about 72% of the determinants of poverty . As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The results showed that household size had a negative effect on their poverty status at 1% significance level. The logit effect of -.8476 indicated that, as household size decreases by a factor of -.8476, the probability of that household not being poor increases. The odds ratio of 0.4284 means that if a beneficiaries' household is increased by .4284, the likelihood of being poor will increase by -.8476. This revealed that the majority of the family members would most likely contribute less to the family's income [21, 22] .

The size of the loan had a favorable impact on their poverty status, which was statistically significant at the 1% level. With a positive logit impact of .0001346 and an odds ratio of 1.0001, recipients who received a larger loan amount had a lower chance of being poor. The odds ratio of 1.0001 suggests that increasing a beneficiary's loan by .0001346 increases their chances of not being impoverished by 1.0001. These rural poor will be able to develop their enterprises and upgrade their level of life as a result of the loans they get. This is consistent with Amsaly [27], who reported that raising the poor's income will likewise lessen their deficiency stage .

The income distribution before, and after accessing the loan showed that there were differences in the mean income for all the respondents as presented in Table 6. The comparative analysis of the mean income before and after accessing the loan by GEEP beneficiaries is presented in table 6. The paired T- test (Z) analysis was used to see whether there was a substantial difference between the mean income before, and after accessing the loan. The calculated T value was 23.3359, for the total respondents, which was greater than the tabulated T value of 1.65, hence indicating a difference in their mean income. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected at 5% level of significance.

Benefits of GEEP to the respondents

The results showed the benefits of GEEP to the respondents as presented in Table 7. The result revealed that the programme had benefited them in some ways, with an increase in income being ranked first (4.55), followed by offsetting of debts, while the least was business expansion being ranked 4th. In recent years, empowerment programs for the poor have become topical issues in the global development agenda. In Nigeria, the *tradermoni and marketmoni* are forms of such programmes that are given to petty traders and artisans in Nigeria. Mushunje [28] asserted that, empowerment programme is a way of providing short term assistance to individuals and households during shocks. The results obtained from this study showed that men dominated the total number of beneficiaries. This may be linked to their role in contributing to the welfare of their families. World Bank [29], acknowledged that public intervention can help individuals, family, communities to better manage risk, and assist people at the bottom of the pyramid.

Challenges encountered by the respondents in accessing the loan

Table 8 shows that the most prevalent issue faced by all respondents in the research area was a lack of suitable means to repay the loan, which was ranked first (4.89), followed by time spent in traveling to apply for loan, strenuous loan procedures, difficulty in transferring money from mobile wallet to bank account, amongst others. Likewise, Akujuru [30], in his study on '*tradermoni* scheme of Buhari Administration in Nigeria' reported that poor disbursement strategy, stressful loan procedures, time consumed in traveling to apply for loan, were the challenges respondents faced when accessing formal loans. This concurs with Nwosu & Ochu [31], Olateju [14] and Akujuru [30] who reported that increased income and business expansion, reduction in loan disbursement bottlenecks will benefit beneficiaries accessing loans as well as loan repayment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) scheme was necessary for Nigerians considering the high rate of poverty in the country. This social investment program assisted in alleviating poverty by providing credit to petty traders to support entrepreneurship. The mean monthly income of the beneficiaries rose from ₦44535.53 to ₦54180.20 (US$133.60 to US$162.54) after the scheme was implemented, while the poverty incidence among the beneficiaries dropped to an extent. However, the beneficiaries were constrained by lack of appropriate means to repay the loan. In addition, the procedures of procurement of the loan were quite strenuous.

Based on the outcome of this research, the following suggestions were made:

I.   Early credit distribution to respondents should be promoted in order to fulfill high credit demand periods.

II.   Proper channels for loan repayment should be created to enable beneficiaries repay their loans in order to access higher loans.

III. The loan application process should be less complex to quicken the application process.

IV.   Customer care lines should be put in place for beneficiaries to access when they have difficulty during loan application.

V.   Households should have manageable family sizes they can adequately cater for.

VI.   The GEEP program should be sustained and expanded in both rural and urban areas of the country, as it has aided many small business owners in obtaining low-cost credit.

Table 1: Distribution of sampled beneficiaries according to Local Government Areas (N= 400)

LGAs	Beneficiaries	Actual sample size	Number of beneficiaries for Tradermoni	Number of beneficiaries for Marketmoni
Calabar south	4,060	114	60	54
Calabar municipality	3,021	85	45	40
Akpabuyo	1,264	36	19	17
Odukpani	906	26	14	12
Akamkpa	782	22	11	11
Ikom	918	26	14	12
Ogoja	1291	36	19	17
Obudu	216	6	3	3
Yakurr	719	20	9	11
Biase	806	23	12	11
Boki	207	6	3	3
Total	**14,190**	**400**	**209**	**191**

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 2: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
N= 394		
Gender		
Male	219	55.6
Female	175	44.4
Total	394	100
Age		
<20	4	1.0
21-30	123	31.2
31-40	154	39.1
41-50	108	27.4
>50	5	1.26
Mean = 35		
Household size		
1-5	208	52.8
6-10	145	36.8
>11	41	10.4
Total	394	100
Mean = 5		
Education		
No formal education	4	1.0
FSLC	53	13.4
SSCE	233	59.1
NCE/NURSING	62	15.73
HND/BSC	42	10.6
Business Experience (Years)		
1-5	202	51.0
6-10	145	37.0
>11	47	12.0
Total	394	100
Mean = 6 years		

Monthly Income (thousands)		
1-50	233	59.14
51-100	96	24.37
101-150	65	16.49
Mean = 54,180.20		
Membership to association		
Belong to association	256	65.0
Non-association	138	35.5
Types of Agribusinesses		
Vegetables sellers	182	46.2
Food stuffs dealers	84	21.3
Butchers	85	21.6
Fruit dealers	43	10.9

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 3: Monthly food and non-food expenditure of the respondents after GEEP

Expenditure	Food Expenditure (₦)	Percentage (%)	Non-Food Expenditure (₦)	Percentage (%)
Total	34,170.23	59.1%	23,608.90	40.9%

Source: Data analysis, 2021

Table 4: Poverty status of beneficiaries

All beneficiaries	Before accessing loan	After accessing loan
Headcount Index (P_0)	0.41	0.36
Poverty Gap Index (P_1)	0 .14	0.13
Poverty severity (P_2)	0 .072	0.063
Mean monthly *per capita* Household expenditure	11,105.04	13,881.29
Poverty line 2/3 of MPCHE	7,403.36	9,254.19

Source: Data analysis, 2021

Table 5: Logistic regression results showing the determinants of poverty (N = 394)

Independent variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	Odds ratio EXP(B)	P>|Z|
Sex	.4648372	.4522235	1.03	1.5918	0.304
HHS	-.8476149	.1211409	-7.00	0.4284	0.000***
Education	.0416117	.0691574	0.60	1.0425	0.547
BizEX	-.0588402	.048156	-1.22	0.9428	0.222
MAS	.2596588	.4523316	0.57	1.2965	0.566
Loan amount	.0001364	.0000235	5.80	1.0001	0.000***
_Constant	2.537281	1.121646	2.26	12.6452	0.024**
Log likelihood =	-71.364829				
chi square =	371.19***				
Prob > chi ^{2} =	0.0000				
Pseudo R^2 =	0.7223				

Source: Data analysis, 2021
Note: *** = significance at 1% level . ** = significance at 5 % level
HHS = household size BizEXP = business experience MAS = Membership of association

Table 6: Comparative analysis of the mean income before and after accessing the loan

	All beneficiaries		Tradermoni beneficiaries		Marketmoni beneficiaries	
	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before
Mean	55,548.22	44,438.58	49,546.8	39,637.44	61,926.7	49,541.36
Variance	2.23E+09	1.43E+09	1.99E+09	1.27E+09	2.42E+09	1.55E+09
Observations	394	394	203	203	191	191
Df	393		202		190	
t Stat	23.33588		15.8334		17.37965	
t Critical one-tail	1.64874		1.6524		1.6529	

Source: Data analysis, 2021

Table 7: Benefits of GEEP to the beneficiaries

Benefit	Cumulative Scores	Mean	Rank
Increased income	1794	4.55	1st
Business Expansion	1674	4.25	4th
Offsetting debts	1749	4.44	2nd
Improved standard of living	1706	4.33	3rd

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

SA= strongly agreed 5
A= agreed 4
UD= undecided 3
D= disagree 2
SD= strongly disagree 1
Weighted mean= 3.00

Table 8: Distribution of respondents based on challenges faced in accessing loan

Challenges	Cumulative scores	Mean	Rank
Lack of appropriate means to repay loan	1924	4.89	1st
Time consuming in travelling to apply for loan	1798	4.56	2nd
Stressful loan procedure	1790	4.53	3rd
Difficulty in transferring money from mobile wallet to bank	1647	4.18	4th
Poor mobile network	1413	3.59	5th
Some agents are fraudulent	1379	3.50	6th
Poor disbursement strategy	1351	3.43	7th
Inability to access money without agents help	1346	3.42	8th
Lack of agents	1293	3.28	9th
Lack of customer care services	1261	3.20	10th

Source: Field Survey, 2021

SA= Strongly agreed 5
A= agreed 4
UD= undecided 3
D= disagree 2
SD= Strongly disagree 1
Weighted mean= 3.00

REFERENCES

1. **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).** Human development report, New York: Oxford, Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Programme. 2015.

2. **World Data Lab**. The Percentage of Nigerians Living in Extreme Poverty could increase by 2030. Retrieved from World Poverty Clock: https://worldpoverty.io/blog/index.php 2019 *Accessed March 2022.*

3. **World Bank.** World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking poverty. New York: Oxford University Press. 2018.

4. **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).** Human development report, New York: Oxford, Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Programme. 2019.

5. **Abiodun A, Amao AO, Olawatuson EM and CO Farayola** Analysis of poverty status among small Holder Arable farm households in South Western Nigeria. *International Journal of Agriculture and Earth Science*, 2020; **6 (2**).

6. **Gweshengwem B, Hassan NH and HMN Maricar** Perception of the language and meaning of poverty in Brunel Daruccelani. *Journal of Asian and African studies*. 2020; 1-18. http://journals.sagepub.com/d *Accessed March 2022.*

7. **United Nations Development Programme and Human Development Initiative**. Global multi-dimensional poverty index 2019. Illuminating inequalities, United Nation Development Programme and Human Development. New York: Oxford, Oxford University Press 2019.

8. **National Bureau of Statistics.** Poverty profile for Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria. 2016.

9. **Federal Office of Statistics (FOS).** Poverty and agricultural sector in Nigeria. Abuja Nigeria: Federal Office of Statistics. 2019.

10. **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).** Human development report. New York: Oxford, Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Programme. 2019.

11.   **Akujuru CA and N Okezie** Public policy and economic empowerment: A study of the tradermoni scheme of the Buhari Administration in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration,* 2019; **7(3**): 1-28.

12.   **Uwaleke U** Tweaking Tradermoni for better outcomes. Punch. 2019. https://punchng.com/tweaking-tradermoni-scheme-for-better-outcomes *Accessed May 2022.*

13.   **Odiase V** The tradermoni empowerment scheme of Nigeria. 2020. https://socialprotection.org/discover/blog/tradermoni-empowerment-scheme-nigeria. *Accessed March 2022.*

14.   **Olateju AO** The impact of Tradermoni on business growth and profit of Petty Traders in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies,* 2021; **4(1):** 329-336.

15.   **Arikewuyo AI and SM Akanbi** An assessment of tradermoni empowerment scheme in Nigeria from the Islamic perspective: A case study of women beneficiaries at the mandate market, Ilorin*. Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2020; 5(2*): 66-74.

16.   **CR-SEEDS.** Cross River State Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy Document. CR-SEEDS 2005-2010.

17.   **Yamane T** Statistics, an introductory analysis, 2nd Ed., New York: Harper and Row. 1967.

18.   **Fields GS** Should Poverty and Inequality Measures Be Combined? In Poverty, Inequality and Development: Essays in Honor of Erik Thorbecke (A. de Javry and R. Kanbur, eds.), Kluwer Academic Publishers. 2005.

19.   **Foster JE, Greer JE and A Thorbecke** Class of Decomposable Poverty Measures. Econometrica, 1984; **52**: 761-766.

20.   **Ajah EA and UF Edet** Determinants of poverty status among fluted pumpkin farmers in Onna Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, *Nigeria. Journal of Agriculture, Forestry and Environment,* 2018; **3(1):** 204-215.

21.   **Etuk E and CA Angba** Determinants of poverty status of fish vendor households in lower Cross River Basin, Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, 2015; 6(14).*

22. **Olabode PO, Akintoye VA and AS Kazeem** Determinants of poverty level in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2015; **8(1).**

23. **Ugwumba CO, Omojola JT and EN Azifuaku** Credit access and repayment by Farmers' beneficiaries of microfinance banks' loans in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental Science, Computer Science and Engineering and Technology* (JECET), 2014; **3(4):** 1733-1741.

24. **Ike PC and UN Uzokwe** Estimation of poverty among rural farming households in Delta State, Nigeria. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*, 2015; (**11**):86-93.

25. **Ajah EA and LB Egbonyi** Analysis of micro-credit as a tool for poverty reduction among female head farmers in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. *Merit Research Journal of Business and Management,* 2017**; *5*(2**): 041-051.

26. **Amsaly M** Impact of smallholder farmers' agricultural commercialization on rural households' poverty in Jimma Zone Western Ethiopia. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics,* 2016*;* **149**: 23-31.

27. **Mushunje MT** Social Protection for female farmers in Zimbabwe within the context of HIV and AIDS. Paper presented at Southern African Social Protection Experts Network (SASPEN) International Conference, Johannesburg, 16–17 September. 2013. http://www. saspen.org/conferences/informal2013/Paper_ Mushunje_FES-SASPEN-16SEP2013-INT-CONFSP4IE.pdf *Accessed May 2023.*

28. **World Bank.** World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking poverty. New York: Oxford University Press. 2018.

29. **Akujuru CA and N Okezie** Public policy and economic empowerment: A study of tradermoni schemes of the Buhari Administration in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration, 2019;* **7(3):** 1-28.

30. **Nwosu CP and ER Ochu** Small and medium enterprise financing in Nigeria: Benefits, challenges and way forward. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 2017; **8(20**): 178-189.