



Dissertation

By

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**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL
SCIENCE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA,
NSUKKA**

**Comparative Study on Mothers' Knowledge, Attitude
and Utilization of Soyabeans and cowpeas as Food for
Young Children in Women organisation and rural**

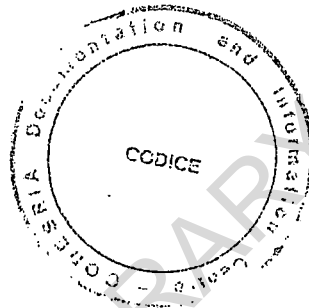
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WOMEN ORGANISATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:
AN EVALUATION OF THE BETTER LIFE FOR RURAL
WOMEN PROGRAMME IN AGUATA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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APPROVAL PAGE

Ejezie, Chinasa Ijeoma, a Post-graduate student in the Department of Political Science with Registration Number PG/M.Sc./91/12312 has satisfactorily completed the requirements for course and research work for the degree of Master of Science in Political Science (Public Administration).

The work embodied in this Project report is original and has not been submitted in part or in full for any other University.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my beloved parents, Mr. and Mrs. E.E. Ejezie who have added new dimensions to the concepts of love, understanding and inspiration.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study has been successfully carried out with the assistance of many people to whom I am very thankful. First, I am highly indebted to prof. M.S.O. Olisa who supervised this study meticulously inspite of his tight and busy schedule. My deepest appreciation goes to Mr. C.U. Okoye who was generous with his advice and materials and also to Dr. O.O. Ibeanu who put me through some problems of research, suggested the research topic and stimulated my interest in this area of study. I owe special thanks to Dr. N. Echezona for his initial encouragement and supervision reassignment.

I owe special gratitude to the friendly direction and assistance of Dr. S.A.N.D. Chidebelu and to Dr. (Mrs) M. Ikejiani-Clark for her perceptive suggestions. My special regards goes to Nnenna, Mrs Oby Ezema and her daughter Chioma for their love. I am also obliged to my brothers: Obiefuna, Jaachike and Ezuemike and also to my sisters: Chinwe, Nnedi, Amuche and Oluebube for their caring during the course of the research.

My gratitude goes to my parents, Mr. & Mrs. E.E. Ejezie and to my uncle, Mr. & Mrs. E.I. Udeh for their financial and moral assistance. Finally, my special appreciation goes to the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA) which funded the research.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAWORD	-	Association of African Women for Research and Development
ADPs	-	Agricultural Development Projects
DFRRI	-	Directorate for Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure
EPI	-	Expanded Programme on Immunisation
FAO	-	Food and Agricultural Organisation
IFAD	-	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	-	International Labour Organisation
IRD	-	Integrated Rural Development
LGA	-	Local Government Area
MAMSER	-	Mass Mobilisation for Social and Economic Reconstruction
NAFPP	-	National Agricultural Food Production Projects
NAN	-	News Agency of Nigeria
NCWS	-	National Council of Women Societies
OFN	-	Operation Feed the Nation
ORT	-	Oral Rehydration Therapy
TBAs	-	Traditional Birth Attendants
UN	-	United Nations
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VVF	-	Vesico Vaginal Fistula
WIN	-	Women in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Rural development is a social construct and a social practice - the product of a particular society's history. Fortunately for Nigeria's development, gender has become a novel issue. The feminist imperative has forced the search to answers to key questions related to rural development. First, it must be asked if the outcome envisaged is really development. Unless women and - by intimate but not previously self-evident implication - rural dwellers are unequivocally served, society itself has not been served.

The second question is closely related to the first. Because of the push to evaluate rural development programmes, it must be asked if Nigerian social reality has been taken into account in rural development schemes. The scientific accuracy of this development programme can be tested by asking whether programme objectives have been properly taken care of. Implicit in the mandate of the study is the understanding of rural development as a social process. We cannot assess this process without considering the dialectical relationship between gender and rural development. A major purpose of this study is to show how combined research on women and rural development might become the basis for future gender concerns. The study paid particular attention to the dialectical nature of rural development, a process that can either disempower

or empower rural women to engage in genuine development.

Furthermore, the study asserts that the problems new rural development policies are designed to solve are themselves frequently a social construct. Nigeria is not naturally hungry, drought stricken, short of fuel and diseased. As Doyal (1979) argued: "the diseases of under-development are not necessarily bound up with tropical conditions in the geographic or climatic sense... but must be viewed as a consequence of specific historical developments". By shifting rural development problems from the realm of the natural to the realm of historical, sociological and political analysis, we may engender a more scientific and optimistic approach to their solution. We therefore undertook to evaluate the Better Life Programme in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State, to distinguish between failures of programme and failures of theory.

PREFACE

This project report was sponsored by the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA). The study focussed on the relationship between gender and rural development in Nigeria but with special reference to Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State.

The report of the study was divided into seven chapters. Chapter I charts the introduction encompassing the statement of problem which necessitated the study, a review of related literature, the hypothesis, theoretical frame work, methodology and limitations to the study. Chapter II surveys the general conditions of women in Aguata: politics, society and economy. Chapter III explored rural development as the focus of the Better Life programme. Chapter IV focuses on the Better Life programme: An overview. Chapter V records the mechanisms of Better Life programme in Aguata. In Chapter VII we focussed on data analysis, hypothesis testing and evaluation.

It is hoped therefore that this report will be of use not only to those specialising in policy analysis but also to a more general audience of scholars and practitioners concerned with gender and rural development, and indeed, with Third World political economy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUNDS TO THE STUDY

Women organisation and rural development is a subject of great interest recently especially amongst scholars and development planners. This has been given impetus because of the fact that the Nigerian political system, since its inception has relegated women to the background in all aspects of life. A variety of natural and human resources are untapped because outside the communities themselves, there has been little or no knowledge of their existence. This is especially true in relation to women, whose control over local resources has not been sufficiently recognised¹.

Women are the invisible farmers of the world². Although they constitute about 50% of the labour force, they are excluded or even marginalised by agricultural modernisation and development plans³.

Nigeria has had so many rural development programmes but none was specifically directed to women. Examples of such programmes are the Green Revolution Programme of 1983 and the agricultural development projects, the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures

of 1986 and the Mass Mobilisation for self-reliance and Economic Reconstruction. With these establishment of DFERRI and MAMSER in 1987, quite a lot was said on how most rural development programmes have been directed at men and few at women and how women participation had never been sought because development process had always been for and by men⁴. Women like children, the disabled and the aged represent a special group of people in Nigeria as in many other parts of the developing world. Consequently, they require certain personal welfare services to enhance their contribution to contemporary Nigerian society. They need special services and social status compared with that of men. Although traditionally the conception of the status and role of women varied slightly from one part of Nigeria to another depending on the customs, religion or culture, a woman's role was largely restricted to the home where she was expected to rear children while the men were the bread winners. Although women in some localities were involving in farming, fishing, trading, and the fetching of firewood, their primary function was to rear children⁵. Men remain dominant, wield and disburse power. Despite the crucial and basic

contributions of women to the economics of the nation, their indispensable labour is unacknowledged, unpaid for and poorly taken into account in national development plans⁶.

In Nigeria as in most African countries, there are many areas in which women's rights have been trampled on. These include rights to education, rights to ownership of property, rights within marriage and above all, rights to leadership roles. A typical Nigerian woman has many faces, she may be a farmer, artisan or crafts woman or both. She may be a young adolescent with basic formal education or a full grown illiterate adult. A few of her kind may have lived in the orbit influence of a modern city but generally they live in remote villages, many of which may be totally isolated by hills and other physical features. The rural woman farmer battles with many odds in the performance of her food production activities. She may not have access to rich fertile land nor can she obtain loan to establish a large farm of her choice and hence has remained a low producer and a low income earner⁷.

It is indeed true that these rural women who produce about 80% of the food in our continent are those most

deprived of facilities for food. Deprivation such as inaccessibility to cultivable land, high yielding seedlings, credit facilities, as well as restriction of movement continue to inhibit the productive capacity and economic and social empower of our rural women⁸.

A United Nations report indicates that the world-wide women account for 60% of all work but earn only 10% of the world property. Surprisingly, women constitute more than 60% of the world population⁹. It therefore becomes necessary to offer solutions to the fundamental problems of cultural subjugation and illiteracy of the women since the poor educational background of the women reflect in their attitude to life¹⁰.

In the light of the above development, the workshop on Better Life for Rural Women by the federal government become imminent. This workshop has a special significance, because one of the hardest things in every society has been to stir women to action, that there can be no social revolution unless majority of women are mobilized¹¹. If national development is to succeed, then the re-organisation of women who constitute about 50% of the population and most of whom live in the rural areas must be reversed¹². By launching the programme, it must have been recognised that women

constitute the bulk of over 70% of the Nigerian population in the rural areas, who must be reached to ensure even development and equitable resource allocation¹³.

Better Life organisation started in 1986 when a group of about nine outstanding women led by Mrs Maryam Babangida saw to the formation of the Better Life programme. The group is known as the first lady's "think-tank" the (Maryam) group. They consist of Mrs Olu Maduka, a Lagos based engineer, Mrs Priscilla Kuye, a Lagos based lawyer, Mrs Eno Irukwa, the only female commissioner in the National Electoral Commission in the National Electoral Commission and president of the media women's association of Nigeria, Dr. Simi Johnson, a Minister in the Second Republic, Alhaja Mogaji, president of the Lagos Market Women Association, Mrs Theresa Nweke of News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Chief (Mrs) Toyin Olakurim, an industrialist and Mrs G. Taiga. They requested for input from women representative groups such as the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS), women clubs, etc. for improving the lot of rural women¹⁴.

By September 14th - 16th, 1987, the Better Life for Rural Women Programme was inaugurated by the First Lady of the nation, Mrs Maryam Babangida at the Nicon

Noga Hilton Hotel, Abuja where the first National Workshop on Better Life for Rural Women was hosted.

This involves some 2,000 rural delegates from all the local government areas. The following recommendations were made consequent upon the Abuja Workshop:

1. A bureau for women affairs should be set up where rural women could channel their problems and request for technical advice. This bureau should be under the Military Governor's Office since the president emphasis is on women in development;
2. There is need for Governors to set up craft training centres in each of the local government areas where the crafts will be assembled, assessed and improved upon to meet up commercial standards.
3. Curricula in primary schools should be oriented towards training in various skills in works of arts.
4. It would be necessary for government to give subvention to any meaningful women self-help projects to encourage such efforts¹⁵.

The Better Life programme components cover health, agriculture, education, cooperatives, social welfare and cottage industrialisation. If Better Life programme

are to fulfil these objectives, then the programme should be constantly evaluated.

It therefore becomes pertinent from the view point of public administration to evaluate the Better Life programme components to determine whether they have been fulfilled or not. This is emphasized because most rural development programmes in Nigeria lack evaluation, but evaluation is necessary to distinguish between failures of programme and failures of theory¹⁶. Also an important factor of public policy management success is periodic evaluation¹⁷.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Better Life programme was launched to tackle the myriad social, cultural, political and economic disabilities afflicting the women-folk by a society with largely male chauvinist sympathies. The Better Life programme has lasted for five years yet the impact of the programme has not been felt because the programme has not improved the lot of the rural women for whom it was designed nor has it contributed to rural development. The following questions are central to the current problems of Better Life for Rural Women programme: IS the general assumption that

the programme has not improved the conditions of the rural women universally true? To what extent has the programme contributed to rural development?

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The major purpose of this study is to present and evaluate the Better Life for Rural Women programme in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. The following specific tasks will emerge from the concerns raised by the study:

1. To determine the level of effectiveness of the programme;
2. To describe and evaluate the operational methods of the programme;
3. To examine the level of participation of rural women in the programme;
4. To ascertain projects executed under the programme;
5. To determine the contribution of the programme to rural development;
6. To determine to what extent the programme has improved the conditions of the rural women; and,
7. To derive policy implications based on the findings.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The major significance of this study is to evaluate the only rural development programme that was specifically directed to women so as to find out how and why the programme implementation fails, and what should be done to make it successful. This study will provide a means for sharper understanding of programme policy and practice and a means of transforming such policy and practice. A critical evaluation of the programme should attempt to link programme failures and the framework of knowledge in which the programme was initially embedded. Ultimately, this study will yield a document for explaining problems in policy-making and programme implementation.

1.5 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The quantity of literature on the concept of rural development, the role of women in rural development and on the Better Life Programme is so huge that no literature review can encompass. This study however presents an account of the writing that accurately represent the different schools of thought, approaches and contents comprising the literature. The literature comprises of western African and Nigerian authorship.

As the review reveals, the literature on women and rural development has become a topic of concern amongst scholars and development planners. Hence:

Miriam Dell in "United Nations Decade for Women, International exposition of Rural development" (1984) has under-scored her thesis on women participation thus:

"A community development project that does not include women from the very beginning will fail because it will not improve the total well being of all its individual members on their own terms".

Consequently,:

"All the work by women in the family enterprises and on land is given no economic value, and women are being exploited in the employment field".

In the classic statement of the United Nations on "the role of women, FAO Rural Development Newsletter", No. 5 in Rural Women in Development, (1985) argued that:

"Recognition of the vital role of women in socio-economic life both in agricultural and non-agricultural activities, in accordance with the goals of United Nations Decade for women in a prerequisite for successful rural development planning and implementation".

Judith Osuala in Women in Nigerian Economy edited by M.O. Ijere (1991) stated the United States Agency for International Development conviction that:

"to pursue a development policy without a woman in development focus would be wasteful and self-defeating".

In their own contribution, "the Association of African Women for Research and Development. The Experience of the Association of African Women for Research and Development" proceedings of a seminar held in Dakar (1982) argued that:

"Women's absence as well as presence in major concerns such as agricultural development, industrialisation and the development and transfer of technology, educational and health programmes should be included within the major analysis and not as an aside".

presently, they continue to argue that emerging development theories and strategies are faulty and incomplete to the extent that they fail to include gender as one of the major analytical categories.

Tinsley S. Foreward: In Owerholt C. et. al. Gender Roles in Development Projects: A Case Book (1985) argued that:

"one of the premises of A.I.D.'s (USAID's) women in development policy is that gender roles constitute a key variable in the socio-economic condition of any country, one that can be decisive in the success or failure of development plans".

Charleton S.E. Women in Third World Development (1984) sees women as being caught in a "triad of dependency"

whereby:

"In virtually every country of the world... women are dependent upon men in formal politics at the local, national and international levels".

Were G.S. in the book Women and Development in Africa, Journal of Eastern African Research and Development (1985) discovered that women consider their participation in the community to be hampered by their more limited opportunities in comparison to those of men. The women argued that:

better education would improve their community involvement and enhance family health.

Mohammadi P. in the book: Women and National Planning: False Expectations, Development Seeds of Change (1984)

argued that:

"The decision-making and policy formulation is dominated by the wishes of a small group in power, the process is influenced by powerful interest groups, more often than not, unaware or indifferent to a consideration of women as participants in planning, policies and national strategies... Inequality of access to training, education, employment and also traditions have limited the number of trained women who would participate in planning".

The International Labour Organisation "Rural Development and Women in Africa", proceedings of the I.L.O.

Tripartite African Regional Seminar on Rural Development and Women (1984) opined that:

"The assumption that rural women do not accept innovation is a false assumption generated by an ideology of disdain for rural people; and it is a concrete symptom of blaming the victim. Given the precarious nature and economic insecurity of the rural poor, women are cautious rather than backward. Once convinced of the usefulness of a given innovation, rural women not only accept it but have often adopted and improved the technique".

Lewis B. in his contribution "The Role of Development Policies on Women" in Hay, M.J., Sticher S. (eds.)

African Women South of the Sahara (1977) summarises the role of women in African context as food producers.

"African women are usually the primary food producers in the country-side. Rural women typically work two to six hours per day longer than rural men".

Isley, R. in the book: Rural Development Strategies and their Health and Nutrition - Mediated Effects on Fertility; Social Science and Medicine (1984) chants four approaches to rural development, paying particular attention to the importance of community participation and improved local food production in development strategies.

The study is valuable because of its focus on structure and involvement of women and its emphasis on the health of women and children as key indicators.

International Labour Organisation, "Rural Development and Women in Africa", proceedings of the I.L.O. Tripartite African Regional Seminar on Rural Development and Women (1984) demonstrates that:

"The problems of adopting 'a project approach' to development in general and women's projects in particular are many. The 'project approach' is often reformist in character and does not plan to contribute to structural changes. It is generally top heavy in administration and has limited multiplier effect. In many instances, women's projects and programmes marginalise women's concerns instead of integrating them into the mainstream of development".

However, it was argued that the "project" approach was necessary because most national development plans and programmes are broken down in the form of projects and projects are one way of demonstrating what can be done to field level bureaucrats and implementors who may otherwise either lack the initiative to launch a programme or resist it. In addition, projects/programmes can provide poor women with opportunities to handle resources, manipulate power and make decisions, opportunities which many of them would not have in the absence of these projects.

Judith Osuala "In Enhancing Women's Economic Potential through Appropriate Technology" in Women in Nigerian Economy edited by M.O. Ijere (1991) summarises that the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa concurs with other development agencies, but emphasizes the importance of African women to the development of the continent.

"African women form an indispensable part of human resources for development. Without their contribution, the economies of African countries cannot be expected even to be maintained at their present low levels, much less advance to meet the targets, and levels which are consistently being set by African countries".

Christie C. Achebe in her contribution "Continuities, Changes and Challenges; Women's Role in Nigerian Society" in Presence Africaine (1991) opined that:

"The traditional role of mother and wife is no longer completely rewarding and is now open to question and revision".

She claims that women are demanding an expression of this limiting role and a review of the society's conceptualisation of women's capabilities within a strictly constraining boundary of the procreative function only.

Okonjo K. "Acknowledging the Existence of Women: Its Consequences" in M.O. Ijere (ed.) Women in Nigerian Economy (1991) argued that:

"Accepting that women exist in the rural areas of Nigeria and do play a crucial role in the rural and economic lives of their communities means that those problems which afflict women are of considerable interest to them to have to be addressed".

She regards true development as meaning development of human beings, ^{the} unfolding and realisation of everyone's creative potential, no matter their sex, as this would enable them to improve their material conditions of living through the use of resources available to them.

Manu T. "Collaboration and Networking", paper presented at the National Council on Women and Development (1989) argued that:

"Despite their failure to affect policy formulation and implementation to any meaningful extent, the new conceptualizations of development have drawn attention to and resulted in the re-examination of the role of rural populations in development. More importantly, they provide a framework for examining marginalised groups like small-scale farmers and women".

Judith C. Osuala "Enhancing Women's Economic Potential through Appropriate Technology" in Women in Nigerian Economy edited by M.O. Ijere (1991) argued that:

"It is becoming clear that rural women are vital producers, processors and marketers of most agricultural products in developing countries".

UNESCO "Literacy for Women": A Development Priority

(1978) summarised that:

"Women, who represent half of the world's population and two-thirds of the work, receive technology, however, applied to income-generating activities, can provide a direct source of additional revenue for rural women by which they can up-grade themselves, their families and their entire communities".

Elochukwu Amucheazi "The Indispensability of Nigerian Women in the Positive Transformation of the Rural Areas" in Women in Nigerian Economy, edited by M.O. Ijere (1991) argued that:

"It is widely accepted that the overall national development in Nigeria is largely dependent on improving the productivity and efficiency of the rural sector".

Ministry of National Planning, Guidelines for the Fourth National Development Plan, Lagos (1980) opined that:

"True development must mean the development of human beings, the unfolding and realisation of everyone's creative potential no matter their sex, as this would enable them to improve their material conditions of living through the use of resources available to them. It is a process whereby the personality of each human being is enhanced; and it is that enhanced personality, creative, organised and disciplined which is the moving force behind the socio-economic transformation of any society".

-Mabogunge Akin L. The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective (1980) argued that:

"Rural development means the solution of the problems encountered by the population in their lives in a harsh environment. It means a diagnosing for each particular those sets of factors, which should be acted upon simultaneously so as to make all of them less scarce at the same level, according to the resources available within the area, as well as those resources slated for area by the central authorities of the country".

Boesen J. Ujamma - Socialism from above, Institute of African Studies (1977) posits that:

"Rural development is the participation of people in a mutual learning experience involving themselves, their local resources, external change agents and outside resources; people cannot be developed, they can develop themselves by participation in decisions and cooperative activities which affect their well-being".

Date Bah, et. al. "Rural Women in Africa" in Africa and Technological Change: Some Issues, Labour and Society, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1981) argues that:

"It is logical that one should not think of a development cutarky exclusively for women".

He argues that although earlier attempts at rural development benefitted the men to the exclusion of women, measures calculated to integrate women in rural development should not expect much change for rural women; if the men are excluded from development projects, for men could provide the needed support and encouragement to the women especially at the initial stages, when women might lack

confidence and ability to use the innovative techniques or devices.

Also Kwame Okonjo "Acknowledging the Existence of Women: Its Consequences" in Women in Nigerian Economy edited by M.O. Ijere (1991) argued that:

"It would be necessary for the government of the federation to endeavour to disseminate information on rural women using all available and established women's groups.

Her view is that the development of the rural women by rural women should not be done in isolation of the rural men. Both should be equal partners in the developmental process to ensure maximum benefits to all.

Max Loudermilk, et. al. "Towards a Participatory Strategy for Integrated Development" in Rural Sociology: Eastern Economic Review (1973) had to say about the problem of the developing world. The journal coined the world FAMINE to describe man-made predicament of the developing world of which Nigeria is one. "F" stands for failure to develop adequate rural development policies and programme; "A" for arrogance of the urban and landed elites who perceive broad-based rural development as a threat; "M" for mismanagement of physical, economic and human resources as well as widespread official corruption; "I" for internal disorder resulting from non-representative government, which does not reach and serve rural areas;

"N" for national isolation due to the inability or lack of commitment to involve all classes of people (especially women) in the development process; and "E" for empty election pledges by those, who use rather than serve rural people.

Felicia Ekejiuba "Women in the Context of Nigerian Rural Development" in Women in Nigerian Economy, edited by M.O. Ijere (1991) opined that:

"Many of these programmes hope to train women leaders who will work for nothing in ensuring the 'trickle down' effect of development by teaching other women. Obviously therefore, special segregated projects for women are for these and many other reasons ill-advised and not practicable. Rather, equal access to projects, resources and organisational base (such as cooperatives would seem operationally ideal).

Olayiwole C. et. al. "Local Leaders and Change Agents, Perception of Women's Roles in Agricultural Activities", paper presented at 2nd Annual Women in Nigerian Conference held at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1983) argued that:

"The main objectives of rural development are to increase the per capita output and income of rural families and to check the rate of rural - urban migration by providing the rural population with basic services such as water, electricity, health, education, and job opportunities".

Elochukwu Amucheazi "The Indispensability of Nigerian Women in the Positive Transformation of the Rural Areas" in Women in Nigerian Economy, edited by M.O. Ijere (1991) opined that:

"It is clear that the objectives of the Better Life Programme are to awaken and stimulate the consciousness of women who live in the rural areas to the realities of today and to articulate them into active participation in the development projects for the improvement of their lots and that of the nation at large".

M.O. Ijere "Revised paper presented at the National Conference on the Third Anniversary of Better Life Programme" from 25 - 27 October in Bauchi (1991) argued that:

"The emergence of the Better Life Programme for Rural Women in 1987 is one of the greatest factors in Nigerian history to awaken the consciousness of the nation on the great potential of the women-folk and secondly on the need to integrate them into the socio-economic mainstream".

In his own contribution, John P. Okonkwo in his book: Better Life for Rural Women Cooperatives (1989) argued that:

"The central point of Better Life Programme is the formation of cooperative societies many of which have been formed and registered in all States including Anambra State".

In conclusion, Weitz R. "Integrated Rural Development: The Rehevot Approach", United Nations Centre for Regional Development (1981) opined that:

"the achievement of independence and the need to create a pluralistic cultural personality for Nigeria; the increased opportunities for internal trade created by the transition from an open to a closed economy; the traumatic events, leading the Nigerian civil war and its after-math; the creation of States and the attendant expansion of the infrastructure; the extension of the

vote to women in Northern Nigeria, to name only a few factors, have had their positive and negative rural differential impacts on women in the post-colonial era. It is therefore important to explore what women, as women, feel are relevant for transformation of their lives in the rural areas of Nigeria and for those development in the rural areas, which they regard have meaning for their lives".

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Management by objectives will be the conceptual framework that will be used in this study.

As popularised by Peter F. Drucker, the underlying principles behind the achievement of programme objectives is that people will work harder for goals that they have participated in setting. The assumption is that people want to satisfy some of their needs through work and that they will do so if management will provide them with a suitable environment. Amongst their desires are to perform a worthwhile task, share in group effort, share in achieving their objectives, share in the rewards of their efforts, and continued personal growth¹⁸.

Public policy implementors and Better Life management need to concentrate on their objectives to achieve goal attainment¹⁹. The purpose is that management by objectives advocates specific time-table and specific strategies. Implicit in this is the clear definition of the resources needed to attain these goals, the efforts

needed and primarily the allocation of available manpower²⁰.

Management by objectives provides an analytical tool that enables performance to be measured or at least judged²¹. Therefore, in order to ensure the establishment of objectivity in Better Life programme, we have to employ management by objectives as an evaluation technique which will be the main concern of this study.

1.7 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis posed by the study is that considering the modalities of rural development as a concept, the Better Life Programme in Aguata Local Government Area, has not achieved the goals of rural development as against its objectives as was designed by policy-makers.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The choice of technique or instrument of gathering data is a crucial element in any research. In other words, the outcome of a research is determined by the validity and reliability of the instruments used in gathering the data. Leege and Francis succinctly stated this:

"The quality of data is inextricably tied to the methods and techniques used for gathering data. No amount of sophistication with statistical manipulation can overcome deficiencies inherent in data generated by an appropriate instrument"²².

AGUATA LOCAL GOVT. AREA

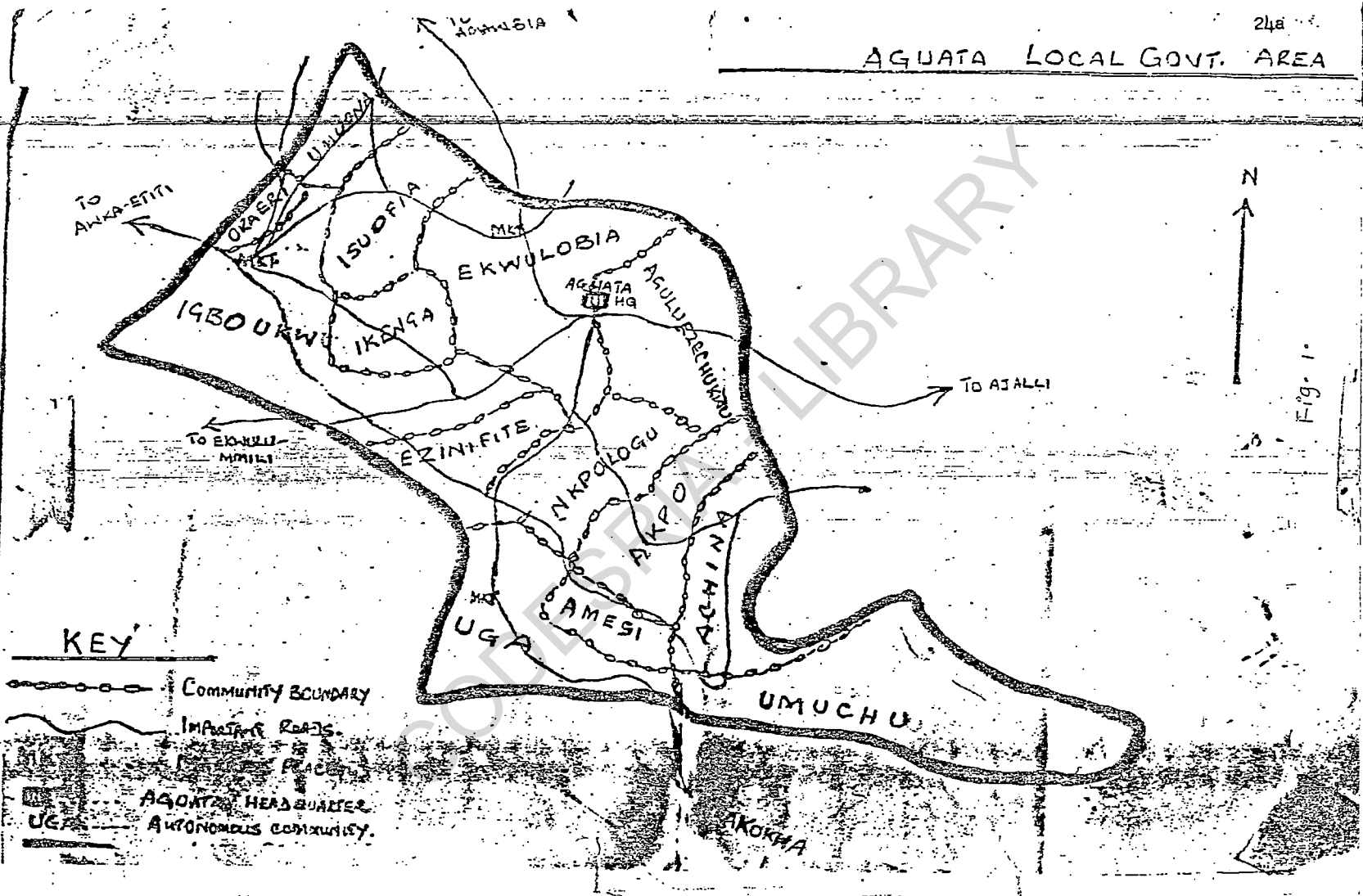






Fig. 1.

KEY

-  Community Boundary
-  Important Roads
-  AGUATA HEADQUARTERS
-  UGA AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY

Data for the study will be gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The study combines both interview and questionnaire techniques of data collection, but with more emphasis on the interview because of the advantages it offers the researcher. A combination of these two techniques will yield substantial data which will serve as a means of authenticating, validating and checking the reliability of each other. The interviews will combine the group and personal interview strategies. First the researcher will interview the Better Life Ppersonnel by simple random sampling and the Better Life members through cluster or area sampling. The questionnaire will try to tap information on specific issues related to the hypothesis. The breath of the interview is completed by the focus of the questionnaire. Secondary sources of data will include text-books, government documents and publications.

1.8.1 Area of Study

The researcher has chosen Aguata Local Government Area as the focus of this study. Aguata Local Government is one of the local government areas in Anambra State of Nigeria. With its headquarters at Ekwulobia the local government has 14 towns.

It is situated at the southern end of the State towards the border with Imo State and has a total area of 718km² and a population of 347,031 by 1991 census estimates. The vegetation is tropical. The climate is humid with a mean temperature of about 87^oF.

culturally it has some common language tradition and art. There are cultural features common to most parts of the local government area. The family is the basic traditional social unit with the Okpala holding the symbol of political and religious authority. The people believe in one supreme God known as "Chineke" or "Chukwu". It has many places of cultural interests to tourists. The local government is linked by road to other towns. It does not enjoy good road services. It lacks good drinking water and electricity.

Several reasons informed the choice of Aguata as the area of study. First the situation is typical of the conditions prevalent in other rural areas of Nigeria, as such a careful collection of data will be adequately to support a measure of generalisation for rural Nigeria.

secondly, the familiarity of the area to the researcher will ensure the collection of reliable data, especially by ensuring that a rapport is

quickly established between the population and the researcher. Finally, the choice of the study area helps the researcher to strictly focus on the objectives the researcher has set for the study.

1.8.2 sampling procedure

Aguata local government area is mainly a rural area. Apart from the headquarters - Ekwulobia, through random sampling, the number of communities selected is five. Since each community essentially typifies the rest, the researcher assigns them random numbers and selected Achina, Amezi, Nkpologwu, Agulueze Chukwu and Igboukwu. We allotted 70 questionnaires each to the members of Better Life organisations in the chosen communities, bringing the total to 350 questionnaires. We also administered 30 questionnaires to the Better Life officials in Aguata by using purposive random sampling method.

1.8.3 pilot study

The pilot study was carried out in two phases. The first phase was aimed at establishing the main objectives of the study. The second phase was aimed at pre-testing the questionnaire and interview schedule.

1.8.4 Analysis of Questionnaire

Information from our questionnaire was analysed by using tables, cross-tabulations and some statistics

especially percentages.

1.9 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

We encountered some constraints in the course of our study. These include:

1. Lack of cooperation among the respondents:- Women are so difficult to get in the rural areas. When located their cooperation left much to be desired.
2. Lack of relevant records for the study:- Most of the records needed were not in the Better Life Office. We managed with a few we succeeded in finding. But we recognised that if certain statistics and records were available, they would have helped in buttressing the findings.
3. Lack of mobility and transportation services:- It was very difficult to get into the hinterlands because there was no access roads, and consequently lack of transport facilities. The researcher has to trek long distances to get the respondents.

1.10 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

These are words that have a unique use in this study and are subject to several interpretations by different readers. They include:

1. Organisation is a group of people with a special purpose.
2. Rural development means the solution of problems encountered by the population in a harsh environment.
3. Evaluation aims to determine whether the project objectives set in terms of expected outputs, effects and impact are being met. This leads to an assessment of the results achieved, and lessons to be drawn for future improvement in a later phase.
4. programme means a fixed plan of a course of action and activities.
5. Administration/management. Administration refers to top executive functions of people interacting to accomplish tasks while management relates to the process of operational supervision or collectivity of those people who engage in supervision at various levels.
6. 'Goal' and 'objective' are used inter-changeably and synonymously to mean a thing or purpose aimed at.

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CHAPTER II

CONDITIONS OF WOMEN IN AGUATA: POLITICS,
SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

Although the subject matter of this study is women in Nigerian rural development, the researcher was restricted to Aguata rural women. This will enable the researcher to make an indepth study of the problem and avoid superficial treatment.

This chapter is also essential for us to appreciate the direction and degree to which Better Life Programme have changed the conditions of women in Aguata. In this way, we can more meaningfully assess the changing nature of the condition of women and the differential impact of Better Life Programme toward rural development in Aguata local government area.

2.1 WOMEN AND POLITICS

In Aguata L.G.A., women's roles are separate and distinct from those of men. Both sexes are together, yet apart. Their social, political and economic roles are separate and different, while these separate roles in the final analysis "fuse" together to form one whole.

In the political sphere, women have their own organisations, which cater for the welfare of the women-folk, which are separate and distinct from those of men.

The autonomy of the separate organisations is recognised and respected. Rarely will one find a political or social meeting of men and women unless by design - unless on rare occasions when a community festivals, village dances or disputes brings both sexes together. But even then, the sexes sit apart, usually facing each other.

In this part of Igboland where political authority was widely dispersed within each autonomous unit, women were often represented in the council of elders by their most distinguished most mature and most gifted leaders some of whom, in communities where that was the case, had taken such titles as were open to women. In the elders council, the views of such women leaders were listened to with respect and taken seriously into account when decisions were being reached¹.

But one group of women the Umuada as majority of the towns in Aguata cell them, were particularly powerful and important. They were feared by the men-folk and the women. The Umuada of a village were the women born in that village. They rarely intervened in the affairs of their village, but whenever they intervened, they did so with decisive effect. Not only do they settle disputes in the villages, they could stop wars and settle disputes between husband and wife, family and

village disputes².

Thus, in pre-colonial Nigeria, not only did women, of ability rise as the occasion demanded and permitted, to provide different kinds of leadership to their communities in peace time and in war, but many communities entrenched constitutional provisions which assured women a continuing interest and participation in politics³.

In the Igbo traditional society, there was a clear demarcation of competences so that we can talk of two parallel societies, one for men and the other for women. Here, the fundamental issues is not superiority but competences. Men were competent in their world, and the women were competent in the women's world. If for example the women disagree among themselves, the only competent court to handle the case is the one presided over the their leader who is a woman.

The society itself had very unique features: they were small autonomous units and political authority was dispersed along the following lines: "between the sexes, among lineages and kingship institutions; by age-grades; among oracle-diviners and other professional groups"⁴.

The colonial administration affected women's position in the traditional political system. The colonial

administration did not take into account the important role which women played in the traditional political system. Women did not feature in reciprocal institutions like the warrant chiefs, the court messenger and the police, the judges of the native court, and indeed any other public function. Cases previously handled by women came under the direct administration and dispensation of men⁵.

During colonial rule, women saw most of the changes introduced into politics as changes for the worst, and this blamed the British for what they considered the increased incidence of pre-mature death, growing sex immorality and rising prices. In Igboland, the tension which this created in the women led to repeated demonstrations against the colonial authorities. The first of these took place in 1925 and was known as Nwaobiara Dance or The Dancing Women Movement⁶. The message which the women spread in relay fashion throughout most of Igboland was that their god had appeared to some of them at Okigwe or so and had ordered that everybody should return to the customs and traditions of their fathers. To achieve this, people should no longer patronise European ways. They should boycott the native courts, reject European currency, deny the hands of their daughters to christians, reopen the old footpaths and use them in

place of the new main roads. Brides and foods were to revert to pre-colonial prices and girls were to go nude until they had their first babies⁷.

Shallow scholarship and colonial propaganda have presented this movement as aimed primarily at the warrant chiefs. But closer analysis reveals that it was aimed at the entire colonial structure and that it was an instance of cultural nationalism. The women were opposed to the introduction of taxation not only because it was associated with practices which the women believed undermined the moral foundations of society.

Aguata women in the post-colonial regime participated actively in the campaign of political parties of the day. Their political activities are limited to political campaigns and supporting of party candidates. Due to the high illiteracy rate of the rural women, the politicians marginalise the rural women. The rural women do not take active part in politics but are relegated to the background. The illiterate rural women were taught how to register and vote during elections, and their choice of candidates depends on certain variables like monetary inducements, and the candidate's place of origin. When finally the rural women vote, the candidate elected in the election usually is not the candidate of their choice⁸.

Aguata rural women display so much confidence and commitment that they will generally tackle issues, which the men-folk are reluctant to tackle. They have no patience with ambivalence or cowardice and will if it becomes necessary, take the bull by the horns and damn the consequences⁹.

It is amazing that the same women, who will adopt a low and subordinated profile in their homes, towards their husbands, and will defer to them in the authority and decision-making structure, often being contended with wielding "power behind the throne", i.e. using indirect and subtle means to achieve their wishes, will demonstrate so much aggressiveness and impatience when dealing with issues outside their homes and at the community level. yet, these same women are now supposed to shun the lime-light and are reluctant to feature in politics at the local and national level. Or do they really?

Available evidence shows that colonial politics failed to grant women recognition as power actors in community politics, and refused to integrate them in national politics, banishing or banning them where they were already actively participating in national politics¹⁰.

2.2 WOMEN AS MOTHERS AND NURTURERS OF CHILDREN IN SOCIETY

Women have dual roles in Aguata society. They are mothers and nurturers of children they bring into the world.

These are not easy roles to fulfil in the harsh environment in which women in Aguata find themselves. In Aguata, there is early marriage because few girls were sent to school and even when they do, their education is limited to the primary and secondary school levels. During the pre-colonial rule, girls were betrothed early in childhood by their parents. The productive female was not allowed to go to farm until eight weeks after child birth. A chimney will be erected inside the woman's room until three weeks when the Afa Agu ceremony is performed. The woman will not come out of the house until the child is seven weeks old¹¹.

The plight of women begins on the day they were born. In their childhood socialisation, the role that are taught them are stereotyped for women and they can only behave in those ways and engage in those activities which are socially sanctioned as befitting females¹².

The women learn early in life that their major goal in life is marriage and to have children and they must adopt a low and subordinate profile to their husbands. Their subordinate status is under-scored firstly by their knowledge that their husbands reserves the right to take other wives besides them and secondly by a bride-

price which puts them squarely in their place and makes it often times difficult for them to disengage from an unsatisfactory union.

One could argue that the type of socialisation a girl gets is necessary, given the very harsh conditions of existence in which women in Aguata find themselves. Without such socialisation therefore, the stability needed for the continuation of the family and group survival would not exist. But infant mortality rates of nearly 150 per thousand livebirths which have been typical of Aguata L.G.A. recently need not exist. For now, we know that the major diseases, which affect children in Aguata - dysentery, malaria, measles, whooping cough - all can be eliminated with a few public health measures and elementary education for women¹³. No matter is of greater immediacy and interest than the above to women. yet this demand has not featured highly on the agenda of any of the government of the country until the latter part of the 80s. This fact is also an indication of the seriousness with ^{which} the demands of rural women and of rural development should be taken by government of the country and their implementing agencies.

A decrease in the mortality of infants and children would lead to a rationalization of the bearing of children so that each family can have just the number of children

that it wants. It would also free women from the unnecessary burden of having children, who are destined to die soon after they are born and enable rural women especially to plan and live more meaningful lives.

2.3 WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Women education in Aguata L.G.A. from time immemorial was calculated to achieve two objectives: namely to make good house wives and mothers of women; and secondly to enable them run the affairs at home¹⁴. Functionalism was the guiding principle in women education, for immediate induction into society and for preparation for adulthood.

Women education faced considerable handicaps from the inception of modern formal education. Girls were discriminated against in favour of boys as a result of the prevailing social set up. The traditional preference for boys meant that girls were sent to school last, because of also finance, child marriages prevalent in many parts of the L.G.A. deny girls' educational opportunities. It has been estimated that 99.7% of Nigerian illiterates (1965) were women and that Nigeria had 20% more of men than women literate in the 1970s¹⁵.

2.4 RURAL WOMEN HEALTH, SOCIAL WELFARE AND ENVIRONMENT

Women and children are the most vulnerable to disease in Aguata L.G.A. The top heavy health structure means that formal medical services are outside the reach of the majority of the population. While there is no specific policy related to women, the various components of the primary health care system are directly related to women. These include nutrition, environmental sanitation, immunization, maternal and child health, family planning and the treatment of communicable diseases.

The poor women in the rural areas of Aguata continue to undertake heavy physical activity during pregnancy and resume this activity soon after the delivery of their children¹⁶. These physical stresses may result in additional foetal loss and most likely lead to reduced gestational duration and/or birth weight. There are well documented negative correlations between low birth weight and a child's growth, survival and development. Moreover, repeated miscarriages and foetal losses affect a mother's nutritional status¹⁷.

In Aguata, a major cause of maternal mortality is the low nutritional status of women which leads to anaemia, haemorrhaging during child birth and other complications. The nutritional status of women therefore has implications

for their own as well as their children's health and productivity. In this area, education is critical and the high illiteracy rates among women are alarming, when one considers that the higher their levels of schooling, the higher the nutrition of women and their levels of schooling, the higher the nutrition of women and their families.

The responsibility of women for their families' water and sanitation requirements is also another key area of health care. Two major causes of child mortality are related to poor environmental sanitation. Furthermore, several of the communicable diseases affecting both adults and children are water-borne. The numerous time-consuming tasks of women often mean that they neglect to boil drinking water because even though they know the advantages of doing so, they do not have the time and the extra fuel needed can also impose a burden. At the same time, the mere provision of safe drinking water supplies may not be enough to ensure their use, if taste and distance make existing unsafe supplies preferable¹⁸.

2.5 WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND RURAL INDUSTRY

Agriculture is the single most important occupation among women in Aguata L.G.A. In the traditional agricultural economy, women were well protected economically.

Although they could only inherit land through their sons, they had defined use rights¹⁹. The land is therefore the basis of its existence and an understanding of the land tenure system is necessary in any inquiry into village organisation. Women do not own land. They leave their native place at marriage and henceward have definite farming rights in the village of their husbands.

The women help with hoeing and even bush cutting. The planting of the crops is traditionally her work and so is the weeding which goes on practically throughout the farming season. The men are supposed to be the chief yam owners, but some women also have their own. The women own cocoyam, cassava and banana among the staple food crops, and also the vegetables for relish. The wife is looked upon as being responsible for feeding the household, though the husband helps now and then with a few yams and helps with the entertainment of strangers²⁰.

If agriculture is the basic occupation of Aguata women, trading is the second. One might almost say that whereas they farm of necessity, they trade not only of necessity but also for pleasure. Trading is the breath of life, particularly to the women in Aguata, and the vigour with which bargaining and haggling are conducted

is evidence of the prestige attaching to successful commercial enterprise. In the pre-colonial days, the most important occupation of Igbo women after farming and trading was the making of palm oil and the preparing of palm kernels, some for consumption but most for sale in the local markets where they are bought partly for local use, but largely for export²¹.

In the traditional society, the control of the market was largely in the hands of women. Gradually with the introduction of external trade, women became less and less involved in the control of the market, especially export, such that export crops moved strongly under the control of men. Some scholars contend that this destroyed the economic independence and traditional form of social authority exercised by African women in the pre-colonial era²².

The division of farm crops as is seen till today in very few places began to vanish.

vestiges of it are still seen in various parts of Igboland where studies show that while men provide such crops as yam and maize, the women provide cocoyam, cassava, vegetables and the like. Even though the males own maize, it is planted and harvested by women. The

men own and tap the palm trees for wine, but the women own both the oil and the kernel²³.

In some areas, the men also own the oil, women, however do not harvest the palm trees because it is regarded as abomination for them to do so. Men do it for them. It is unthinkable to see a man selling vegetable spices and berries not to talk of groundnut and banana. On the other hand, women would not approach the fresh meat dealers to ask for a stall or to be a member of fresh meat sellers, but they can trade on dried meat and fish²⁴.

The incorporation of Nigeria into the world capitalist economy through the colonial enterprise was done in such a way that the rural-based economy was meant to subsidize the urban-based capitalist economy. The rural areas was meant to produce enough food to support the ever-increasing non-agricultural population which was drawn into subsistence wages. The females were then drawn into these sector not primarily as primary producers but to service the capitalist institutions and at later stages of colonial development, produce cash crops and luxury goods²⁵.

In the post-capitalist economy, few farm acreages and fewer still are engaged in cash crop production. It

must be noted however, that women's apparent invisibility in the cash crop sector is due to the fact that their contribution is often unquantified and regarded as help on a husband's or other male relative's farm²⁶. They may in fact be responsible for a good deal of the labour that goes into maintaining the farms such as weeding. In some areas when data collectors asked husbands about workers on their farms, they reported on all but their wives²⁷. Their limited access to the resources needed for cash crop farming such as hired labour, capital and large areas of land further act to exclude them from this sector. Their most important agricultural activity is therefore small-scale food farming, which is now recognised as being vital to ensuring food security in Africa, since it has been found that food production on this scale is more efficient than large-scale mechanised food production²⁸.

Not only are women responsible for the bulk of food production in Aguata, they are also responsible for most local food crop distribution from farming centres to all parts of L.G.A. Despite their importance in ensuring the production and distribution of staple food supply, women have limited access to the resources and facilities required to facilitate their performance of these vital tasks. As noted above, they tend to cultivate

small acreages, and this is partly as a result of limitations on the amounts of land available to them. Also agricultural extension services are grossly inadequate and remains a male dominated profession and extension officers direct most of their activities towards men²⁹.

In the distribution of farm produce, women are similarly constrained and most market women operate at marginal levels of profit in the face of limited capital to expand their operations and limited training³⁰. Two severe problems facing women in the distribution of food crops and in their trade are the lack of access roads and transportation and often they resort to head-loading their goods sometimes over long distances. Such frustrations and women's inability to secure and maintain economic inability are leading to rural women's gradual alienation from the land.

In Aguata, women are most often engaged in agro-based food processing and preservation activities on a small-scale. These include garri-making, maize processing and palm oil extraction. Apart from the advantage to women's households of earning or increasing incomes through such small-scale activities, it has been noted that such activities are likely to stimulate expansion of agricultural

production because of the demand for raw produce to these industries.

It must be noted that women are faced with a number of problems including limited access to credit, in spite of the recently introduced peoples Bank and improved technologies' seasonal supplies of their raw material and limited book-keeping skills. In this area as in women's farming, trading and marketing activities, they are further constrained by the need to combine their work with child-bearing and nuturing as well as their regular domestic tasks of cooking, fetching water and fuel food and other domestic duties. Women spent up to 4½ hours in Ekwulobia, where water was less accessible and located in steep valleys³¹.

In agriculture, the fact that a married women cannot own land, and the land which she farms is 'leased' to her, courtesy of her husband, who reserves the discretion to with-hold or not with-hold the 'lease' subject to certain conditions, makes the women's position tenuous. For in a situation where change is occurring and people have begun to exercise communalistic ownership of land, she cannot begin to talk about her contribution

to agriculture on a land she does not own and does not have a right over.

Therefore, the concept of rural development in Nigeria follows from the conditions of women as typified above and any rural development programme that fails to address these is bound to fail.

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CHAPTER III

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS THE FOCUS OF BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME

The central theme of Better Life for Rural Women programme is rural development. This section will highlight the various review and approaches to rural development, strategies for rural development, and approaches and programmes of rural development in Nigeria.

This perspective is essential for us to appreciate the direction and degree to which the Better Life programme has achieved rural development in Agwata.

3.1 THE MEANING OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development has been variously defined by many scholars. It is a process of not only increasing the level of per capita income in the rural areas, but also the standard of living of the rural population¹. Rural development can be seen as the condition and percentage of the labour force in agricultural sector although it transcends agriculture and includes the entire economic endeavours in the rural areas of a country².

Rural development on the other hand is an educational process which seeks to create improved opportunities for local people to satisfy their human economic and psychic needs³.

The lack of consensus as to the definition of rural development rests on the different perception by scholars of what the term 'rural' really means. Definitions that provide a working basis for mutual understanding depend some what on the point of view and trend of emphasis of the author. Scholars have variously used size, social, psychological and economic criteria in defining what they mean by the concept. The economic point of view regards it in terms of raising output, increasing population, maximising money incomes and all the things that flow from these.

Rural development is a complicated process that defies easy definition. Its complexity is attested to by the multiplicity of forms that its programmes have taken in the past and are still taking in many parts of the world today. In some places, they imply "mass education", "mass action", "rural reconstruction", "communal action", "community development and "rural nutrition"⁴. It is a set of economic and social development activities peculiar to the process of transforming the traditional sector as a whole. These set of activities require a set of planning different from those used for the modern sectors. Basically, these

activities fall within the agricultural sector. It is also a process whereby a series of changes takes place within a given rural population and locale leading to an improvement in the living conditions of the population.

Rural development is therefore a set of policies or goals with two main ends: to encourage and promote the well-being of the rural majority; and to ensure the production of a surplus of a size and nature that will enable the fulfilment of a reasonable part of those natural development requirements that are exclusively rural. It may be viewed in an integrated milieu, calling for a set of policies and projects, so designed and coordinated that it will raise and sustain the standard of living of the rural population as a whole. It implies modernisation which will bring about an increase in productive power and changes in human attitudes, replacing a sense of dependence on the natural environment with the desire and ability to influence the arrangement of that environment. It seeks to establish an economic base for the society which will generate progressively higher levels of output and living.

The goals of rural development from the human perspective can be summarised as:

- a) The satisfaction of elementary basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and health;
- b) Improving life style and quality of life of the sixty percent of the rural population through quantitative and qualitative changes;
- c) Establishment of social justice through a humanely acceptable distribution of goods and services;
- d) Freeing the individual from the uncertainties of nature through education essential for self-actualisation; and,
- e) Breaking through the marginality of rural masses through full active participation in all activities at all levels of command - research, planning and implementation (FAO of UN 1973).

These goals of rural development stress the need for total and effective mobilisation as in the pre-capitalist mode of production of all available human and natural resources to ensure that this gigantic and exalting task is carried out effectively. The focus in rural development on developing techniques and economic infrastructures - access roads, credit and such inputs as tractors, plough, fertilizers, improved seeds, insecticides designed to increase per capita output and market orientation among the rural population leads to a different set of goals of rural development. These can be summarised as:

- a) increase in per capita output and market orientation among the rural population;
- b) increase food production commensurate with the rapid population growth;
- c) ensuring equitable redistribution of aggregate income;
- d) reduction of regional inequalities in per capita income;
- e) reduction of the rate of rural - urban migration; and,
- f) gaining a practice and scientific understanding of the social and ecological environment in which rural change is to occur⁵.

Armed with what rural development entails, we can now see that it goes beyond agricultural development, hence it is not sectoral but comprehensive. Rural development must go beyond agricultural development for the ultimate achievement of a successful development programme must also depend on decisions and actions taken in other sectors of the society and the economy⁶. In this context, rural development must be viewed as inter-dependent with urban development.

3.2 STRATEGIES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategy, in common parlance means a general plan for waging a campaign to attain particular objectives. It implies a sequence of coordinated decisions and actions. In development circle, however, strategy as a concept seems to have two meanings. First, it is seen as a conscious overall plan for reaching pre-determined goals of economic growth and social change; secondly, development strategy is often seen by social and economic change actually followed and which resulted from essentially uncoordinated policies and pressures. Thus, development strategy here, is seen as a conscious plan and not merely as a prediction of the probable cause for social and economic changes in rural areas.

The goals of rural development have not been clearly defined. However, while some countries see it as a continuous increase in agricultural production and productivity per capita which will result in improving living levels and incomes of rural people, others see it as that of narrowing the gap between the incomes and opportunities of rural people on the one hand and urban population on the other. Whatever the goal, rural development can be brought about by a variety of ways only that some are narrower in scope than others. The strategies that have been mostly used in developing countries include:

Community Development Approach and Integrated Rural Development Approach⁷.

3.2.1 community development

Community development is a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and the initiative on the part of the community⁸. Community development is a process whereby the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the community, to integrate those communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress⁹.

From these two definitions, we find that community development simply entails the participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their standard of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative. It further embraces the provision by the government of technical staff and other services in a manner that will not only encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help but will also make them more effective so as to achieve a wide variety of specific improvement. The process is thus a complex one involving four elements:

1. to encourage people to analyse their local problems with a view to improving their levels of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiatives;
2. to provide technical and other services in ways which encourage initiatives, self-effort, and cooperation;
3. to consider the local community as the basic unit for planning and development; and,
4. to ensure the diffusion of the decision-making power by emphasizing the principle that those affected by community change should themselves select and manage such change¹⁰.

Community development is not concerned with only one aspect of rural life such as agriculture, business, health or education; it is concerned with total community life and needs¹¹. There are four varieties of community development, viz:

1. Multi-subject-matter extension education;
2. Aided self-help projects;
3. Developing local organisations;
4. Comprehensive regional organisations¹².

The effectiveness of community development programmes will depend to a large extent on whether or not the government encourages local planning and participants in the light of the technical possibilities brought to their attention. This is because if an atmosphere is created in which a citizen feels it a duty and privilege to contribute his own quota to the development of his own community, much more will be achieved. This is quite a lofty idea, however, its success in most developing countries is still in question. This is the reason why many protagonists of community development have begun to think of other ways in which development of the rural areas can be accelerated and the vicious cycle of poverty in these areas broken. This has thus led to the next and most recent approach - the Integrated Rural Development Approach.

3.2.2 Integrated Rural Development

This is a comprehensive strategy for improving the quality of life of rural people. Given the existing rural to urban migration problems, high birth rate, poor nutrition, low agricultural productivity in rural areas, there is thus the need for a comprehensive strategy which will take into account the social and economic needs of these rural people in the light of the national goals. Aware of this fact, the U.N. General Assembly in 1970 adopted the

resolution on the United Approach to Rural Development (UN Resolution 2618 XXV) which in concrete form, implied an integrated concept of rural development and incorporated the social, political, cultural and economic components. The term I.R.D. was coined for this concept.

I.R.D. calls for a basic and comprehensive re-orientation of development approaches in order to build institutions, strengthen the linkages among the various social groups and economic components, increase the availability and improve the distribution of resources, employment opportunities and income and motivate people through their participation in planning and execution¹³. As a concept, I.R.D. is based on the premise that the very nature of rural development and the size of the problem of promoting economic and social progress in our rural areas require that action be taken on several fronts simultaneously and not independently of each other. This implies that programmes of agriculture, education, and training, health and nutrition, rural electrification, cooperatives, water supply and road construction should not be planned and implemented in isolation and without consideration of the implication that a development programme in one area of activity might have for others.

I.R.D. involves the progression of the rural sub-systems and their interaction in a manner conducive to desired improvements in the rural system as a whole¹⁴.

This progression, has proceeded in four stages or phases.

The first phase is the phase of community development programme of the early 1950s and 1960s which the U.N. pronounced as the rural development decade. This phase constituted the very beginnings of comprehensive rural development programmes which concentrated on optional utilisation of human resources for a country's rural enterprise development. The aim was essentially to change the behaviour patterns of rural people and raise rural enterprise production and productivity.

The second phase is that of concentration of attention and effort on agricultural development. This phase began in the mid 1960s when it was realised that as the dominant enterprise in rural communities, agricultural development was of primary importance. It was felt that it could lead to a meaningful development of other sectors.

The third phase is the transition to specific rural development programmes. This is a transition from programmes aimed solely at improvement in agricultural production and productivity to programmes of sectoral development that included social aspects.

The fourth phase is that of the united approach to rural development which the United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 2681 (XXV) of 11th December, 1970 constitutes the decisive beginning. This is the Integrated Rural Development Approach.

In its most recent phase, we can conceive I.R.D. as involving employment generation, even distribution of production profits, optimal distribution and trade, improvement services and social security, broader participation of rural communities in decision-making processes and better distribution, as well as optimal utilisation of resources¹⁵. This approach is therefore best defined as a consciously formulated, systematic multi-sectoral programme to attain the integration of the people in the rural areas into the mainstream of income groups in the country¹⁶. This approach focusses on mobilising human and material resources to cope with the problems in the rural areas. Involves also is the stimulation of active participation on the part of the population for whom the programme is designed as well as the development of institutions and systems that will support and sustain the approach. The latter lays emphasis on land tenure, public services, cooperatives, credit and

administrative facilities, that will facilitate effective communication at all levels.

Various types of programmes have been developed to achieve the objectives of I.R.D. These programmes have been based on three major approaches:

- a) Minimum package approach which emphasizes target groups for which projects are designed to solve specific problems;
- b) Comprehensive approach which involves national efforts in integrated programmes of areas, state and regional development and settlements.
- c) Sector-special approach which involves programmes of rural public works, education and training, credit supply, advisory services and resource development.

Similarly since the ultimate goal of national development and of I.R.D. as a part of it, is a better quality of life for every member of the society, then I.R.D. goes beyond mere increased agricultural production. It is practically an effect on human well-being and also the extent to which rural people can:

- obtain more and equal access to and better utilisation of resources, services, and employment opportunities in order to contribute to and benefit from the development process;

- to achieve a better, more equitable distribution of income and such other less easily measurable benefits of increased production as improved social security;
- improve their consumption patterns, levels of nutrition and their living conditions; and to,
- mobilise and motivate themselves together participation decision-making to influence the development process.

In order to make I.R.D. possible, government must take the necessary policy decisions, enact legislations to set the process in motion and provide the resources necessary to carry it through.

3.3 SOME PAST RURAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES ALREADY TRIED IN NIGERIA

Rural development approaches in Nigeria can be discussed under two major categories:

1. Non-Integrated Rural Development Approaches which concentrated solely on increased agricultural production and this include the NAFPP, Tree Crop Programmes, OFN, Green Revolution, etc.
2. Integrated Rural Development Approaches which aim at increased agricultural production as well as developing the rural sectors integratedly thus striving to transform both the social, economic and

political components of the rural areas.

Under this are projects like the River Basin Development Authorities, the ADPs, DFRRI, etc.

In the final analysis, these development approaches and programmes already tried in Nigeria has not transformed the rural areas. This is because rural development is the outcome of a series of quantitative and qualitative changes, occurring among a given rural population and whose converging effects indicate, in time, a rise in the standard of living and favourable changes in the way of the life of the people concerned. It does not mean isolated programmes of community development, rural animation, mass education or any other terms applied to sectoral programmes which are carried out in the rural areas or within the rural community. It means a comprehensive development of the rural area.

Then came the new dimension to rural development. The government now realised that rural development involves much more than directing capital into the agricultural sector but that development of the people is the cornerstone of meaningful rural development. There was emphasis on the mobilisation approach to rural development which involves the creation of self-sustaining local communities which by virtue of their effective organisation

and strength of their own internal momentum, are capable of solving their production and general development problems¹⁷. For meaningful development to take place, then rural women must be mobilised since they form the greater number of those in rural areas and in agricultural production. Women by nature are catalysts for the promotion and maintenance of wholesomely conceived developmental strategies. But in Nigerian situation, rural women have remained marginal to the process of rural development and in some cases have actually been disadvantaged by them¹⁸.

In view of the fact that previous rural development programmes were ^{Do not} taught to put women on the disadvantage, the Better Life for Rural Women Programme was launched in September 1987 in Abuja by Mrs Maryam Babangida who felt it was time to move ahead on the ways in which these disadvantages could be rectified.

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CHAPTER IV

THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME: AN OVERVIEW

The transformation of the rural areas of Nigeria is the main objective of Better Life Programme. Nigeria like other developing or third world countries is so obsessed with the issue of rural development that it has almost become an ideology in itself. The need to develop and to effectively control the destiny of a country and to secure for itself recognisable place in the comity of nations has made the transformation of the rural areas inevitable.

Basically, development has man as "its central focus". The ability of a people to improve on their experience through the use of the natural laws (science) and to use this understanding, to devise and improve upon the tools of productions (technology) will ultimately give rise to a specific mode of production and social relations upon which will rest a definite strategy of development.

One of the pitfalls of third world development efforts has been the divorce between the rural and urban areas; instead of viewing the society in holistic terms. For purposes of positive transformation, our policy formulators tended to bifurcate the society into the urban and rural compartments with the result that there is a hiatus

between the quality of life in the urban areas and that of the rural areas. It is this seminal contradiction that women in Nigeria have risen to challenge and consequently informed the inauguration of the Better Life for Rural Women Programme by Mrs Maryam Babangida in September, 1987.

4.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The broad objectives of the Better Life Programme were spelt out as follows:

- a) to encourage and stimulate the rural populace in general towards improving their standards of living, their families and environment;
- b) to inculcate the spirit of self-development, particularly of the rural women in the areas of education, business and recreation;
- c) to create greater awareness among the populace about the plight of women.

The specific objectives of the Programme were:

- a) to raise the social consciousness of women about their rights, as well as their social, political and economic responsibilities;
- b) to bring women together and closer for better understanding and resolution of their problems through collective action;

- c) to mobilise women for concrete activities towards achieving specific objectives, including seeking leadership roles in all spheres of national life;
- d) to stimulate and motivate women in the rural areas towards achieving a better and higher standard of life as well as to sensitize the general populace to the plight of rural women;
- e) to educate women in simple hygiene, family planning and on the importance of child-care;
- f) to enlighten women in rural areas on opportunities and facilities available to them at their local government areas;
- g) to improve and enrich family life; and,
- h) to encourage and institutionalise recreation.

4.2.1 Organisational Structure

The programme possesses a five tier organisational structure as follows:

- a) National Organising Committee with the wife of the President as Chairperson. She is assisted by a national organising Committee which comprises women from a number of core disciplines, interests and backgrounds. The 22 member committee unofficially called the "M" Team is chaired by the National Chairperson, Mrs Maryam Babangida. Membership cuts

across a wide spectrum of professions and activities which include accounting, law, the media, banking, the customs, prisons, medicine, engineering, the military, art, administration, social welfare and voluntary work. Members represent the leadership in the professions.

The body is the highest policy-making arm of the programme and is responsible for the following:

1. Designs, coordinates and supervises the implementation of the overall strategy of the programme.
2. It serves as both a think-tank and an advisory body to the National Chairperson;
3. It liaises with the States and through them to other crucial tiers of the programme. To this end, each State has a Supervisor appointed to it who is a member of national organising committee. The Supervisor monitors her State regularly through tours to inspect and evaluate projects; assess problems and examine the funding pattern. Supervisors report directly to the national chairperson.
4. The National Organising Committee liaises with groups and organisations outside the Better Life Programme particularly non-governmental organisations.

5. The Committee is charged with the responsibility of producing all national publications of Better Life.
6. It is in charge of all matters to do with the construction of the National Centre for Women's Development. It is constituted into the sub-committees of trade fair, publicity, exhibition, documentation, finance, transport, welfare and the centre for women's development.

Membership of the national organising committee is voluntary and meetings are held once in a month. Consultation meetings with the national chairperson, various State chairpersons, national organising committee and its counterpart in the States as well as key officials of the national and State commissions for women are held each quarter. At these meetings, reports on each State's activities are reviewed, analysed, assessed and graded.

- b) The State Planning Committee:- This is almost similar in composition and responsibilities to National Organising Committee and is chaired by the wife of the State Governor. It is not as large as the National Organising Committee and membership in most cases is pegged to three.

But while the national organising committee concerns itself largely with the national direction of the programme; State Committees are more involved in the day to day administration of Better Life Programme in their States. They also liaise with Better Life leaders at local government level and monitor the implementation of policies in keeping with national guidelines, but in cognisance of their own peculiar circumstances.

- c) The Local Planning Committee:- The wives of local government chairmen are chairpersons. Other members of the committee are representatives of health, education, agriculture, community development and cooperatives departments, the principal women's centre, prominent women farmers, and local government information officers.
- d) Village Coordinators at the community level;
- e) Grassroot mobilisers:- They are members of rural women's group and women's cooperatives¹.

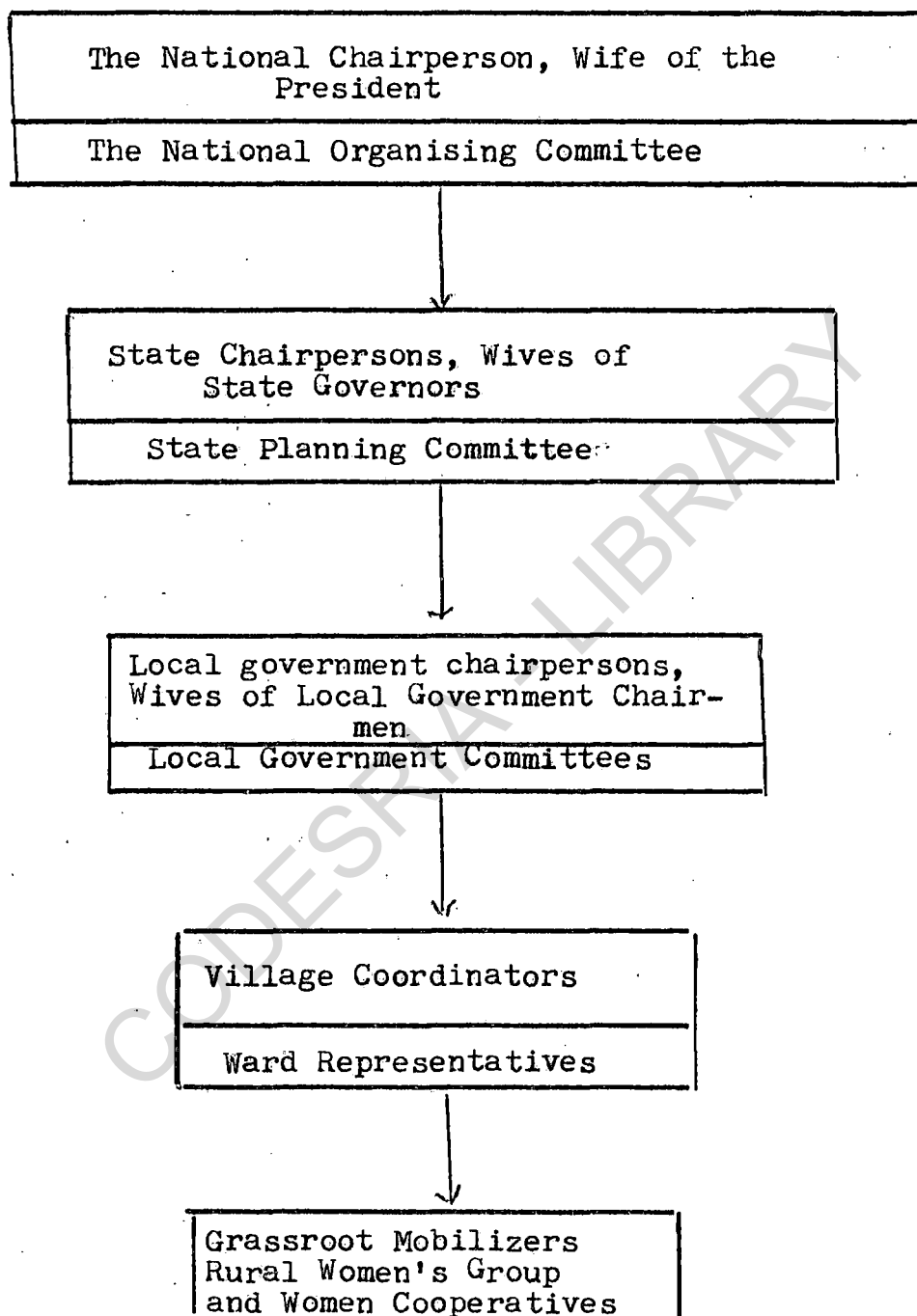
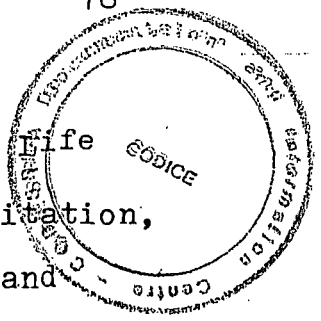


Fig. 2: Organisational Structure of Better Life for Rural Women Programme.

4.2.2 The National Commission for Women

One of the recommendations of the 1987 Abuja workshop on "Women in Rural Development" was that the government should implement a United Nations resolution marketing the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985) that member States should seek to establish a national machinery for the integration of women in national development. In recognition of appeals made by the Better Life Programme and various women organisations, the Federal Government, at the First Anniversary of Better Life in September 1988, announced the establishment of a National Commission for Women. The setting up of this Commission by the Federal Government was therefore in direct appreciation of the tireless efforts and achievements of Better Life in enhancing the status of Nigerian women.

The National Commission for Women at both Federal and State levels is governed by a board and an executive secretary. There is a Better Life Department in each Commission, consisting of human resources development, cooperatives, and a women's organisation section. Other departments are planning, research and statistics, personnel, finance and supplies².



4.3 PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

From the aims and objectives of the Better Life programme, the areas of emphasis are health/sanitation, agriculture, education, civics, social welfare and cottage industrialisation. Each area of emphasis is broken down into component activities which are undertaken in all States.

4.3.1 Health

Health they say is wealth. The Better Life health activities include primary health care services like the Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT), Expanded programme on immunisation (EPI), Running of Vesico Vaginal Fistula clinics (VVF), training of traditional birth attendants (TBAs), teaching about nutritional and family planning techniques, and establishment and running of mini-pharmacies/dispensaries.

4.3.2 Education

As part of its educational programme to develop the level of women education, the Better Life Programme has as its objective: the provision of women education like sewing, weaving, typing, secretarial studies and the organisation of adult literacy classes.

4.3.3 social welfare

The Better Life believes in the fact that in order to make a woman happy, they should provide her basic needs. This promoted the decision of Better Life programme policy-makers to embark on social welfare programmes which include visits to orphanages and people's homes, schools for the disabled and giving of gifts to the disabled, kindling the interest of philanthropists in the welfare of disadvantaged people and to work towards the abolition of retrogressive institutions, laws and attitudes towards widowhood.

4.3.4 Cottage industrialisation

The Better Life Programme intends to make considerable change on the technological know-how of women by marking out programme activities under cottage industrialisation which will provide food processing factories, cloth and raffia weaving, distilleries, rubber processing, black smithing and cotton spinning.

4.3.5 cooperatives

One of the most effective vehicles for organising rural production is the cooperatives. They are not only the most organisational framework for accelerated rural development but also they are veritable instruments for

the mobilisation and sensitisation of women. To this end, the programme activities marked out under cooperatives include the registration of more cooperative societies under the auspices of the Better Life Programme, distribution of farm inputs through Better Life programme cooperatives and extension of credit facilities to rural women through cooperatives.

Under the Better Life Programme, two types of cooperative societies are common, namely: farming and multi-purpose cooperative societies.

4.3.6 Agriculture

self-sufficiency in food production is another target of Better Life programme. As part of its efforts to provide food in abundance, the Better Life programme intends to embark on input distribution, establishment of rural markets, establishment of better life shops (mainly at women multi-purpose centres), provision of extension services, development and encouragement of market gardening with a view to improving the nutrition of rural dwellers particularly in rural areas where vegetable growing has hitherto been neglected and provision of land for use by rural women in their farming activities³.

4.4 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation of projects is as important as the plan itself. Having realised this, the National Committee on Better Life programme has definite phases for implementation of:

a) Phase I - Awareness Creation:-

This involves the stimulation of rural women's interest in what Better Life Programme is all about. At the national level, a first step was taken in September, 1987 when a workshop on women in rural development was organised at Abuja. In a step-wise manner, similar awareness creating meetings were held at local government, town and village levels. The Better Life programme is fortunate to have Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) and Directorate for Social Mobilisation (MAMSER) in the task of carrying the rural masses along for implementation of government's rural development plans. Both directorates are in fact heavily relied upon by the Better Life programme, which gains from their experiences and utilises information machinery set up by them. There is heavy reliance on radio and television for disseminating information on the Better Life programme.

b) Phase II: Mobilisation and Organisation of Rural Women:-

This phase is designed to take the message of the Better Life Programme to the grassroots and every part of the nation; as well as meet the rural women face to face and inspire in them the hope for imminent solution to their problems. Initially, therefore, wives of the state Governors undertook extensive tours of rural areas to meet the urban women and acquaint themselves with their needs and problems. This strategic move also served the purpose of erasing from the minds of the women the feeling of irrelevance in government's schemes which has been one of the causes of apathy and ignorance in rural areas.

Another important move under this phase is the sending of Better Life Programme officials into villages and communities to hold discussions in varied forms both existing and created by themselves. Such fora have been successful in identifying community specific problems and needs and in generating data for Better Life programme projects planning purposes. The final step in this phase is the formation of groups (cooperative societies), project preparation and funding of chosen projects.

c) Phase III: Implementation of Identified Projects:-

The major elements of this phase include the institution of monitoring and evaluation measures at national, state, local government and village levels to smoothen the implementation of projects, the provision of fora for the exhibition, publicity and sale of products of rural industry⁴.

From the above, it can be observed that the programme aims at improving the conditions of rural women and consequently rural development. It also highlights the need to stress fuller recognition, participation, formalisation, institutionalisation and modernisation of rural women's participation in the politics, society and economy of the rural areas of Nigeria.

The success of Better Life Programme to fulfil these objectives depends also on its ability to strive to fulfil the goals of rural development on the perspectives of human and technical dimensions or put in another way quantitative and qualitative dimensions as postulated in the concept and goals of rural development as, outlined in chapter III and ultimately to produce results which are observable on the conditions of the rural women in the rural areas.

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CHAPTER V

MECHANISMS OF BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME IN AGUATA

This chapter traced the history of Better Life for Rural Women programme in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State described its operational setting and enumerated its activities as a result of our field study.

5.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME IN AGUATA

In pursuance of the guidelines for following action held in Abuja, the Anambra State Better Life programme was launched by the wife of the then Military Governor, Mrs Ngozi Omeruah. Soon after the launching, her husband was re-assigned and posted out of the state. Then in keeping with the Abuja resolution which charged the wives of all State Military Governors to lead the Better Life programme, the mantle of leadership fell on the wife of the succeeding Military Governor, Mrs May Akonobi, who translated the programme into practical reality.

In February 1988, Mrs May Akonobi inaugurated the State Planning Committees with the governor's wife as the overall Chairperson of the programme. In the initial stage of the programme, it was necessary to conduct this survey and get the required information, that the questionnaire committee, which has its members based at the university of Nigeria, Nsukka designed comprehensive questionnaire.

The committee administered the questionnaire, using a random sample of 1,879 women from 23 local government areas of the State. The questionnaire committee, based on the findings wrote a comprehensive report which serves also as a guideline. When the wife of the Anambra State Governor and the committee commenced their tour of local government areas, the scene was set for effective mobilisation of rural women. Within six months, Mrs Akonobi and her team had already toured nineteen local government areas. In the early stages of the programme, a trainee workshop was organised, where women representatives from all the local government areas of Anambra state were taught different skills and trades which they were advised to propagate in their local government areas for the benefit of women who need to engage themselves in economic projects. During their general meetings, the wives of local government chairmen, women councillors, and local women leaders were usually invited to those meetings, so that they can benefit from the lectures.

The aim of the extensive tours by the then Military Governor's wife, Mrs May Akonobi was to see things for herself, and also to mobilise the rural women for effective utilisation of available raw materials and facilities. The implementation committee toured Anambra

State to meet the local government chairmen and their wives and to identify their appointed women leaders. The Better Life programme was introduced to these groups of people who are expected to play a major role at the local government level and ultimately the chairperson of the local government Better Life programme is the local government chairman's wife.

The inauguration at Aguata was organised by the first Coordinator, Mrs Regina Okafor who handed over to the present Coordinator and chairperson.

5.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organisational structure of Better Life programme in Aguata is made up of the local government executive committee, the executive committee, the implementation committee and the general body of rural women in the local government area. The local government executive committee and the executive committee constitutes the planning committee.

The local government executive committee is headed by the chairperson who is the wife of the local government chairman. She is the leader of Better Life activities in Aguata local government area. The deputy chairperson is the wife of the deputy chairman of the local government. She assists the chairperson in

carrying out her leadership functions. The Secretary of the Better Life in Aguata is the special appointee of the chairperson. She minutes during meetings and writes the agenda.

The executive committee is made up of representatives from the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, Education, Health and Agriculture. Also trade union representatives and presidents of women town unions constitute the executive committee.

The implementation committee is to mobilise Aguata women towards achieving the goal of better quality of life for all. The implementation committee constitutes the zonal coordinators, town coordinators, publicity committee, project sub-committee and village women leaders.

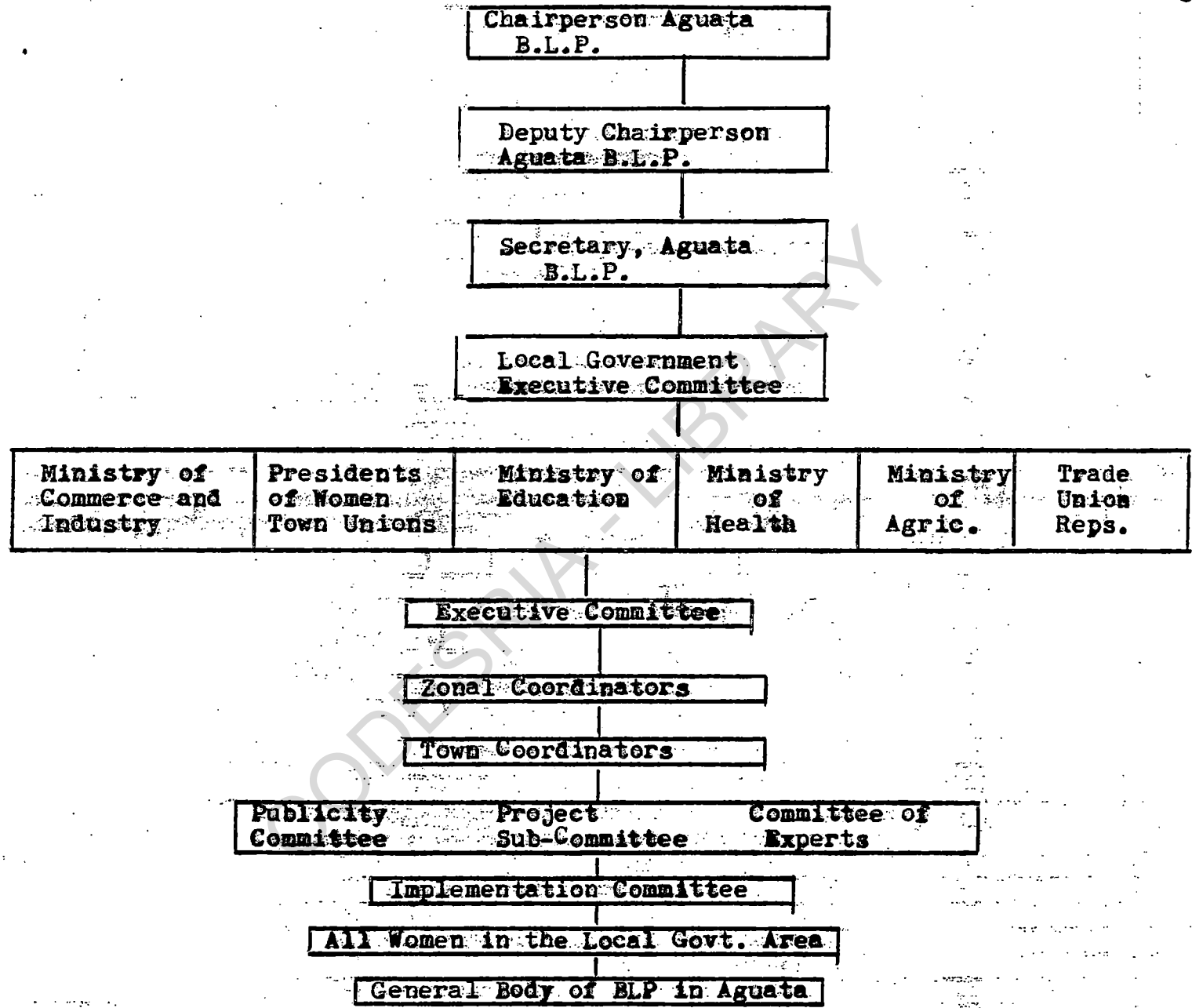


Fig. 3: Organisational Structure of Aguata Better Life for Rural Women Programme.

5.3 FINANCE AND STAFF

The source of finance for Better Life Programme is mainly from local government grants. Sometimes, there are donations from government agencies, trade unions, philanthropists and individuals. The overall financial management of Better Life Programme in Aguata is the responsibility of the chairperson.

At the moment, Better Life in Aguata does not have staff of its own. It uses staff of other government agencies especially MAMSER and DFRRI and staff from Ministries of Agriculture, Works, and Local Government.

5.4 PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OF BETTER LIFE IN AGUATA

5.4.1 Agriculture

Agriculture forms the bedrock of Better Life activities in the local government. Since the entire economic life of the local government revolves around agriculture, with farming being the major occupation. The women cultivate not only staple foods like yam, cassava and vegetables, they also engage in animal husbandry, food processing and trading.

Better Life in Aguata supplied rural women with agricultural inputs like fertilizer and improved cassava sticks so as to enable them increase food production.

5.4.2 Workshops and Seminars

A two-day workshop for rural women was held in February 1990. The objective of the workshop was to educate women on how to remove drudgery from their day-to-day activities. Lectures were given in vernacular on the following management areas:

- a) Method of local preparation of vegetables;
- b) Soya bean preparation;
- c) Extraction of milk from native goats for family consumption; and,
- d) varieties of food that can be prepared from cassava.

All these seminars were given by people from the different ministries who were invited to deliver lectures.

5.4.3 Women and Health

Better Life centres on health with emphasis on women and child health. Under the health programme, Better Life organised family planning lectures, oral rehydration therapy, home economics and nutrition classes, environmental sanitation lectures and lectures on immunization.

5.4.4 Women Groups/Cooperative Societies

Generally, the Better Life Programme in Aguata operates the cooperative societies under the Better Life

auspices. These cooperative societies produce crafts, baskets and mats. Under the cooperative societies, agricultural incentives like fertilizer and improved farm seedlings were supplied to the rural women. To help in the procurement of loans from commercial banks and the people's bank, the formation of cooperative societies made it easier. A total of six cooperative societies have been registered. They include the following:

- a) Akpo Industrial Cooperatives;
- b) Mbaraorie Achina Industrial Soap-making
- c) Amesi Multi-purpose cooperatives;
- d) Ekwulobia Thrift and Loan Scheme by Dibugo Cooperative Society.
- e) Uga Food Processing Cooperatives
- f) Aguluezechukwu Improved Cassava Sticks.

5.4.5 Small-scale Industries

Under its small-scale industries programme, Better Life established the following:

- a) Umuchu Gari Processing
- b) Anulika Gottery Igboukwa
- c) Oraeri Snail Farm.

5.4.6 Better Life Fair

The first Better Life Fair was organised in November 22nd, 1990. The theme of the fair was production.

There was a display of agricultural products like yam, cassava and cocoyam.

The second Better Life Fair in May 6, 1992 had production of goods from local materials as the theme. At the fair, there was a display of local crafts, textiles and locally-made beads.

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CHAPTER VI

DATA ANALYSIS, HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND EVALUATION

This chapter analysed the research findings from our field survey with regard to the objectives of the study. The researcher distributed 350 questionnaires to Better Life organisation members, but 300 were returned. The 30 questionnaires distributed to the Better Life officials were returned. This brings the total number of questionnaires to be used in our analysis to 330. The results of the questionnaires were first tally-stroked to get the total number of respondents on each response option. The percentage of respondents on each item was calculated. Subsequently, we presented the results in cross-tabulations. The data collected through our questionnaire played a great part in our analysis and test of hypothesis.

The researcher first analysed the data from the questionnaire for the Better Life members and later analysed the data from the questionnaires from the Better Life officials. As the analysis indicates, the results from both questionnaires were in many ways similar, thereby making the research valid and reliable. Ultimately, the hypothesis posed in the first chapter was tested; using empirical findings of our study, it was sustained.

6.1 DATA ANALYSIS

Table 6.1 shows responses from our 300 respondents to our question what is your occupation and what is the level of your educational attainment. The study reveals that 12% of the respondents were engaged in farming activities whereas 10% are engaged in trading activities. Eight percent of the respondents are housewives while 3% are civil servants. Twelve percent of the respondents had informal education like domestic science and apprenticeship. Thirteen percent of the respondents completed primary education, whilst 13% of the respondents did not. Ten percent of the respondents completed secondary education whilst 10% did not. The data analysis further reveals that 2% of the respondents attended teacher training colleges, 1% attended nursing schools, 2% of the respondents attended college of education, polytechnic and university respectively.

TABLE 6.1: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN IN THE STUDY AREA

Response Options	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Farming	35	12
Trading	30	10
Housewife	25	8
Civil servant	10	3
Domestic science/apprenticeship	35	12
Primary school completed	40	13
Primary school uncompleted	40	13
Secondary school completed	30	10
Secondary school uncompleted	30	10
Teacher training college	5	2
Nursing	3	1
College of Education	7	2
Polytechnic	5	2
University	5	2
Total	300	100

TABLE 6.2: PARTICIPATION IN BETTER LIFE ACTIVITIES

Response Options	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	160	53
No	140	47
Total	300	100

Table 6.2 reveals that 53% of the respondents attends meetings regularly while 47% does not. This lack of participation, the respondents attributed to lack of time, low morale and lack of incentive. This is in answering to the question do you attend meetings regularly? This analysis indicates that attendance of meeting is relatively commendable.

TABLE 6.3: STAGES OF PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND PROJECT PROGRAMMING

Response Options	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Project initiation	100	33
Project planning	40	14
Implementation	10	3
Evaluation	-	-
None	150	50
Total	300	100

In response to the question, at which of the following stages of decision-making do you participate?, table 6.3 shows that 33% of the respondents are involved in project initiation, 14% in project planning, 3% in implementation and none in evaluation. Fifty percent of the respondents did not take part in any of the stages. This analysis indicates that Better Life members does not participate effectively in decision-making and project programming.

TABLE 6.4: HEALTH

Response Items	Number of Respondents		Total No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents		Total percentage of Respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
a) Lectures/ démonstrations	-	-	300	-	-	100
Oral rehy- dration therapy	45	255	300	15	85	100
Vesico Vaginal Fistula	-	300	300	-	100	100
Family planning	200	100	300	67	33	100
Expanded Pro- gramme on Immunization	175	125	300	58	42	100
b) Material benefits:						
Sugar for O.R.T.	140	160	300	47	53	100
Drugs on V.V.F	-	300	300	-	100	100
Condoms for family planning	-	300	300	-	100	100

In table 6.4, in response to the question, have you benefitted from lectures/demonstrations organised by Better Life Programme?, 15% of the respondents indicated Yes on oral rehydration therapy, while 85% indicated No. Hundred percent of the respondents indicated No on Vesico Vaginal Fistula; 67% of the respondents indicated Yes on family planning while 33% indicated No. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents indicated Yes on Expanded Programme on Immunization while 42% indicated No.

In a followup question did you receive any material benefits?, 47% of the respondents indicated Yes for sugar for O.R.T., while 53% indicated No. Also 100% of the respondents indicated No for drugs on V.V.F and condoms for family planning. This analysis reveals that Better Life Programme has to put more effort in this area so as produce positive results.

TABLE 6.5: EDUCATION

Response Items	Number of Respondents		Total No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents		Total Percentage of Respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
	Weaving	-		300	300	
Typing	-	300	300	-	100	100
Secretarial studies	-	300	300	-	100	100
Adult literacy	-	300	300	-	100	100
Sewing	50	250	300	17	83	100
Soap-making	125	175	300	42	58	100

Table 6.5 reveals that 100% of the respondents indicated No to the response items of weaving, typing, secretarial studies and adult literacy. Seventeen percent of the respondents indicated Yes to sewing whilst 83% indicated No. Also 42% of the respondents indicated Yes to soap-making whilst 58% indicated No. This was in response to the question, have you been trained under the Better Life education programme in weaving, typing, secretarial studies, adult literacy, sewing and soap-making? This analysis indicates that Better Life have many grounds to cover in their education programme.

TABLE 6.6: SOCIAL WELFARE

Response Items	Number of Respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total percentage of respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Disabled	-	300	300	-	100	100
Orphanages	-	300	300	-	100	100
Old people's homes	-	300	300	-	100	100
Widows Oppression	115	185	300	38	62	100
Eliminated	-	300	300	-	100	100

Table 6.6 indicates that 100% of the respondents indicated No to the response items of disabled, orphanages and old people's homes. This was in response to the question, has the Better Life in Aguata visited and given gifts to the disabled, orphanages and old people's homes in your locality?

In a follow-up question, is there any laws, customs and practices that operate against widows in your locality?, 38% of the respondents indicated Yes while 62% indicated No. Consequently, in another subsequent question, has the Better Life in Aguata done anything to eliminate them?, 100% of the respondents indicated No. This analysis reveals that in the area of social welfare Better Life has not done anything yet.

TABLE 6.7: COTTAGE INDUSTRIALISATION

Response Items	Number of respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total Percentage of Respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
	Food processing	140		160	300	
Cloth and raffia weaving	-	300	300	-	100	100
Rubber processing	-	300	300	-	100	100
Black smithing	-	300	300	-	100	100
Cotton spinning	-	300	300	-	100	100
Distilleries	-	300	300	-	100	100

Table 6.7 reveals that 100% of the respondents indicated No to the response items of cloth and raffia weaving, rubber processing, blacksmithing, cotton spinning and distilleries.

This was in response to the question: Has the Better Life in Aguata established the following cottage industries? The table also indicates that 47% of the respondents indicated Yes to food processing while 53% indicated No. This analysis shows that Better Life in Aguata neglected cottage industrialisation activities.

TABLE 6.8: COOPERATIVES

Response Items	Number of respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total percentage of respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
	a) Cooperatives registered under Better Life	105		195	300	
b) Form of assistance received:						
Loans	15	285	300	5	95	100
Training	290	10	300	97	3	100
Technical advice	215	85	300	72	28	100
Supply of equipment	5	295	300	2	98	100
Market outlet	50	250	300	17	83	100

Table 6.8 reveals that 35% of the respondents indicated Yes while 65% indicated No. This was in response to the question: Do you have any cooperatives registered under Better Life here? In a subsequent question, did you receive any form of assistance amongst the response items above?, 5% of the respondents indicated Yes to loans, while 95% indicated No. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents replied Yes to training whilst 3% replied No. In the area of technical advice, 72% of the respondents indicated Yes while 28% indicated No. Two percent of the respondents indicated Yes to supply of equipment while 98% responded No. Finally, in the area of market outlet, 17% of the respondents indicated Yes while 83% responded No. This analysis shows that Better Life has made an impact in the registration of cooperatives, but more emphasis will be laid on provision of loans, supply of equipment and market outlet.

TABLE 6.9: AGRICULTURE

Response Items	Number of respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total percentage of respondents
	No.	Yes		Yes	No	
Fertilizer	225	75	300	75	25	100
Improved farm seedlings	205	95	300	68	32	100
Market	-	300	300	-	100	100
Better Life shops	-	300	300	-	100	100
Multi-purpose centres	-	300	300	-	100	100
Market gardening/demonstrations	99	201	300	33	67	100
Food -pre- servation/hygiene	65	235	300	22	78	100
Infant feeding	115	185	300	38	62	100
Balanced nutrition	105	195	300	35	65	100
Land provision	5	295	300	2	98	100

Table 6.9 shows that 75% of the respondents benefitted from fertilizer allocation while 25% did not. Also 68% of the respondents benefitted from the distribution of improved farm seedlings while 32% did not. This in response to the question: Have you received any agricultural inputs like fertilizer and improved farm seedlings from Better Life in Aguata? This analysis indicates that Better Life has made an impressive achievement in this area.

Consequently, in response to the question, Has the Better Life established any market, Better Life shops and multi-purpose centres here?, 100% of the respondents indicated No. This analysis reveals that Better Life should do something in this area which was left untouched. In another subsequent question, has Better Life done programmes like market gardening/demonstrations, food preservation /hygiene, infant feeding balanced nutrition here?, 22% of the respondents indicated Yes to market gardening/demonstrations while 78% indicated No. Thirty-eight of the respondents indicated Yes to infant feeding while 62% indicated No. In the area of balanced nutrition, 35% indicated Yes while 65% indicated No. Better Life achieved a little but more still remains to be done in this area.

In another follow-up question: Has the Better Life made land available to you?, 2% of the respondents indicated Yes, while 98% of the respondents indicated No. This analysis shows that Better Life still has to face the reality in this area because it is the bed-rock of all other agricultural activities.

TABLE 6.10: BENEFITS FROM BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME

Response Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	145	48
No	155	52
Total	300	100

Table 6.10 reveals that 48% of the respondents benefitted from Better Life Programme whereas 52% did not. This was in response to the question: In what ways have you benefitted from the Better Life Programme in your area?. Those respondents that answered Yes indicated that they were taught soap-making and sewing, receive improved farm seedlings and fertilizer and participated in gender solidarity especially by membership of co-operative societies. This analysis indicates that majority of Better Life members were not benefitting from the programme.

TABLE 6.11: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN OFFICIALS

Response Options	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Civil servant	7	23
Teaching	6	20
Primary school completed	3	10
Teachers Training College	5	17
University	9	30
Total	30	100

Table 6.11 indicates responses from our 30 respondents to the question: What is your occupation and what is the level of your educational attainment? Twenty-three percent of the respondents are civil servants, 20% are teaching, 10% completed primary school, 17% went to teacher training colleges and 30% attended University. This analysis shows that most of the officials are well educated and literate.

**Table 6.12: STAGES OF PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-
MAKING AND PROJECT PROGRAMMING**

Response Options	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Project initiation	15	50
Project planning	10	33
Implementation	5	17
Evaluation	-	-
Total	30	100

In response to the question: At what stage do Better Life members take part in decision-making and project programming?, table 6.12 indicates that 50% of the respondents indicated project initiation, 33% indicated project planning, 17% indicated project implementation. All the respondents indicated nothing in project evaluation.

The analysis reveals that the rate of participation of Better Life members is low, especially at the stages of planning and implementation. Better Life should make more efforts to involved members actively in all stages of decision-making and project programming because the participation of rural women is a prerequisite for rural development.

TABLE 6.13: HEALTH

Response Items	Number of respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total percentage of respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
a) Lectures/demonstrations:						
Oral rehydration therapy	25	5	30	83	17	100
Vesico Vaginal Fistula	2	28	30	7	93	100
Family planning	25	5	30	83	17	100
Expanded programme on immunization	28	2	30	93	7	100
b) Material benefits:						
Sugar for O.R.T.	5	25	30	17	83	100
Drugs on V.V.F	1	29	30	3	97	100
Condoms for family planning	-	30	30	-	100	100

In table 6.13 in response to the question: Have you organised lectures on oral rehydration therapy, vesico Vaginal Fistula, family planning and Expanded programme on Immunization?, 83% of the respondents indicated yes for O.R.T., while 17% indicated No. Seven percent of the respondents indicated Yes on V.V.F., while 93% indicated No. Eighty-three percent of the respondents indicated Yes on family planning whereas 17% indicated No. Also 93% of the respondents indicated Yes on E.P.I. while 7% indicated No. This analysis shows that the officials carried out programmes on oral rehydration therapy, family planning and Expanded programme on Immunization.

In the area of material benefits 17% of the respondents indicated Yes for sugar while 83% indicated No. Three percent of the respondents indicated Yes on drugs on V.V.F. while 97% indicated No. Hundred percent of the respondents replied No to the provision of condoms for family planning. This analysis reveals that Better Life has to provide these materials in other to complement their lectures.

TABLE 6.14: EDUCATION

Response Items	Number of respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total percentage of respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Weaving	2	28	30	7	93	100
Typing	3	27	30	10	90	100
Secretarial studies	-	30	30	-	100	100
Adult literacy	4	26	30	13	87	100
Sewing	20	10	30	67	33	100
Soap-making	15	15	30	50	50	100

In response to the question: Have you trained rural women in weaving, typing, secretarial studies, adult literacy, sewing and soap-making?, 7% of the respondents indicated Yes to weaving while 93% indicated No. Ten percent of the respondents indicated Yes to typing whereas 90% indicated No. Hundred percent of the respondents indicated No to secretarial studies. Also 13% of the respondents indicated Yes to adult literacy, while 87% indicated No. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents indicated Yes to sewing while 33% indicated No. Finally, 50% of the respondents indicated yes and No respectively on soap-making.

This analysis reveals that Better Life has done little in the area of weaving, typing, secretarial studies and adult literacy. It also indicates that sewing and soap-making were taught to rural women. Furthermore, it validates our findings in table 6.5.

TABLE 6.15: SOCIAL WELFARE

Response Items	Number of respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total percentage of respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Disabled	5	25	30	17	83	100
Orphanages	4	26	30	13	87	100
Old people's homes	5	25	30	17	83	100
Widows Oppression reduction measures	10	20	30	33	67	100

In response to the question: Have you visited and given gifts to the disabled, orphanages and old people's homes since 1987?, 17% of the respondents indicated Yes to visiting the disabled and old people's homes whilst 83% indicated No. Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated Yes to visiting orphanages while 87% indicated No. Also 33% of the respondents indicated Yes to applying reduction measures to eliminate widows oppression while 67% indicated No. This analysis reveals that Better Life achieved nothing in the area of social welfare. The results of the analysis also validates the findings in table 6.7.

TABLE 6.16: COTTAGE INDUSTRIALISATION

Response Items	Number of respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total percentage of respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Food processing	10	20	30	33	67	100
Cloth and raffia weaving	5	25	30	17	83	100
Rubber processing	-	30	30	-	100	100
Blacksmithing	-	30	30	-	100	100
Cotton spinning	-	30	30	-	100	100
Distilleries	-	30	30	-	100	100

In response to the question: Have you established any of these cottage industries in Aguata?, 100% of the respondents indicated No to rubber processing, blacksmithing, cotton spinning and distilleries. Thirty-three percent of the respondents indicated Yes to food processing while 67% indicated No. Also 17% of the respondents indicated Yes to cloth and raffia weaving while 83% of the respondents indicated No.

This analysis shows that Better Life did little or nothing in the area of cottage industrialisation. It further authenticates our findings in table 6.7.

TABLE 6.17: COOPERATIVES

Response Items	Number of respondents		Total No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents		Total percentage of respondents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
a) Number of co-operatives registered under Better Life	15	15	30	50	50	100
b) Forms of assistance given to them:						
Loans	7	23	30	23	77	100
Training	20	10	30	67	33	100
Technical advice	10	20	30	33	67	100
Supply of equipment	5	25	30	17	83	100
Market outlet	5	25	30	17	83	100

In response to the question: Have you established any cooperative societies under Better Life since 1987?, 50% of the respondents indicated Yes and No respectively. This reveals that Better Life is active in the formation and registration of cooperatives. In a follow-up question: What types of assistance did you provide these cooperatives amongst the following: loans, training, supply of equipment, technical advice and market outlet?, 23% of the respondents indicated Yes to loans while 77% indicated No. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents indicated Yes to training whereas 33% indicated No. Also 33% of the respondents indicated Yes to technical advice while 67% indicated No. Finally, 17% of the respondents indicated Yes to supply of equipment and market outlet while 83% of the respondents indicated No to both items.

This analysis reveals that efforts should be made to provide loans, training, supply of equipment and market outlet for the cooperatives. The results of the analysis further validates our findings in table 6.8.

TABLE 6.18: AGRICULTURE

Response Items	No. of Res-pondents		Total No. of res-pondents	percentage of Respondents		Total percentage of respon-dents
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Fertilizer	30	-	30	100	-	100
Improved farm seedlings	30	-	30	100	-	100
Market	5	25	30	17	83	100
Better life shops	5	25	30	17	83	100
Multi-purpose centres	5	25	30	17	83	100
Market gardening/ demonstrations	10	20	30	33	67	100
Food preservation/ hygiene	18	12	30	60	40	100
Infant feeding	19	11	30	63	37	100
Balanced nutrition	15	15	30	50	50	100
Land provision	5	25	30	17	83	100

In response to the question: Have you distributed agricultural inputs like fertilizer and improved farm seedlings to rural women?, 100% of the respondents indicated yes for fertilizer and improved farm seedlings. This analysis reveals that Better Life achieved its objectives in this field. In a subsequent question Have you established any market, Better Life shops and multi-purpose centres in Aguata?, 17% of the respondents indicated yes for all, while 83% indicated No for all the items. The findings shows that Better Life has done little or nothing in this area. In another follow-up question, has the Better Life in Aguata embarked on market gardening demonstrations, food preservation /hygiene, infant feeding and balanced nutrition?, 33% of the respondents indicated yes for food preservation while 67% indicated No. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated yes on food preservation/hygiene while 40% indicated No. Also 63% of the respondents indicated yes on infant feeding while 37% indicated No.

Finally, 50% of the respondents indicated yes and No respectively for balanced nutrition. This findings reveals that Better Life in Aguata has achieved a lot in this area of analysis.

In another subsequent question: has the Better Life provided land to the rural women for agricultural activities?, 17% of the respondents indicated yes while 83% indicated No. This analysis shows that Better Life has to face the reality of this programme because all other agricultural activities depends on land. This analysis validates our findings in table 6.9.

In summary, based on the results of our data analysis, it was obvious that the Better Life programme in Aguata has not achieved most of its programme objectives as was initially formulated by its policy-makers.

6.2 HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND EVALUATION

Better Life programme and Rural Development

The researcher has summarised the responses of the questionnaire items with statistical figures and cross tabulations. In the process of doing this, the hypothesis of the study was tested and upheld. Also, by applying content analysis to the findings from our research, our hypothesis was confirmed because, if rural development can be evaluated on the basis of the satisfaction of

elementary basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and health; improving the life style and quality of life of the sixty percent of the rural population through quantitative and qualitative change; establishment of social justice through a humanely acceptable distribution of goods and services; freeing the individual from the uncertainties of nature through education essential for self-actualisation; breaking through the marginality of rural masses through full active participation in all activities at all levels of command - research, planning and implementation; increase in per capita output and market orientation among the rural population; increased food production commensurate with the rapid population growth; ensuring equitable distribution of equitable income; reduction of regional inequalities in per capita income; reduction in the rate of rural - urban migration; and gaining a practice and scientific understanding of the social and ecological environment in which rural change is to occur¹, then the Better Life programme has not achieved the goals of rural development, because the lives of the women in the rural area of Aguata were not any better than it was before.

rural development is therefore a set of policies with two main ends; to encourage and promote the well being of the rural majority and to ensure the production of a surplus of a size and nature that will enable the fulfilment of a reasonable part of those natural development that are exclusively rural.

REFERENCE

1. Felicia Ekejiuba: "Women in the context of Nigerian Rural Development, (ed.) in Women in Nigerian Economy (1991). Acena Publishers Ltd., p. 92.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to present and evaluate the Better Life for Rural Women programme in Aguata, to draw lessons from successful experience, to strengthen on-going projects and stimulate the initiation of new ones. Women's issues are central and not peripheral to development. The struggle for equality is not a struggle between women and men, it is a struggle to change social structures and attitudes (ILO, 1985).

7.1 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Better Life programme in Aguata has made a considerable impact on the social, economic and political life of the rural women. One concrete achievement of Better Life programme is its demonstrated ability to develop the rural areas in the local government. The awareness and consciousness sustained by the programme has increased gender solidarity. It has brought into focus opportunities which exist for the growth, development and advancement of women. It has sensitised policy planners on the role of women in the socio-economic development of the local government.

It is now the symbol and expression of the aspirations of all women to full social, political and economic emancipation. It has increased women's sense of unity and drawn attention to their relatively disadvantaged status within the society. For this and other reasons, the Better Life programme in Aguata Local Government has quickened the pace of women in the march to rural development.

The study also indicated that the Better Life programme in Aguata were faced by several problems that hindered them from effective operations.

There is no doubt that any programme in a developing society which lacks a basic support structure is bound to face problems. Better Life programme in Aguata lacks basic organisational management and leadership core. The Better Life should therefore train a core of management leaders who can be entrusted with the management of women, materials and money for the programme. This core will serve as the trainer of trainees, accountants, managers, auditors and supervisors of cooperative societies. The core will also train women leaders.

Aguata local government area is such a vast local government area that to travel from one area to another demands tremendous expenditure in time and resources.

The programme is hampered by lack of vehicles and other means of transportation. Interaction, discussion, and informal exchange between rural women and the officials have not been satisfactory. As a matter of urgency, transport facilities must be improved for almost all the towns in the local government. Community coordinators should ensure effective interaction with the women for effective mobilisation.

Lack of basic amenities such as access roads and other facilities essential for integrated rural development hindered success and also slowed down the pace of work. The Better Life would ensure that whenever there is a project, agencies like MAMSER, DFERRI, health and education ministries would complement its work by providing basic amenities.

Also one area affected by bureaucratic bottlenecks has been the registration of women cooperatives. Certain cultural beliefs concerning women's position in society have been translated in some areas into bureaucratic delay for official recognition of female cooperatives. The National Commission should therefore develop a coordination time-table for female cooperatives registration to ensure the removal of administrative difficulties. This will also be applied to other government agencies which were previously involved in

women's programmes and have in some cases adopted a confrontational stance by actually viewing Better Life programme as an octopus whose tentacles are poised to envelop them. A re-definition of areas to be covered and sectors for cooperation would go a long way towards easing tension and solving administrative ambiguities.

Lack of well articulated funding system and shortage of funds, have hindered effective implementation and created half-finished projects, therefore funding must be better structured and improved within the local government. The overall objectives of Better Life should be the guiding factor in execution. Grants should be tied to specific project and not offered on general guidelines. Improved funding would facilitate smoother project-control. Local government should structure their programmes within their funding system, with specific annual budgetary allocations tied to clearly defined projects. This would ensure availability of auditing facilities.

Better Life in Aguata does not have any permanent staff at the local government. The Programme always borrows staff from DFRRI, MAMSER and other ministries. This results to clash of interests and delays in

programme implementation. The local government should therefore establish a department of Better Life and Women Affairs which will be entrusted with carrying out Better Life activities.

Finally, Better Life Programme in Aguata should embark on research and investigation to provide gender disegrated data on the conditions and problems of women in the rural areas and their role in rural development. The process of data collection, collation and storage on these activities and programmes of Better Life should be stepped up. Such data is essential in order to understand the critical dimensions of women's contributions and their potential which would guide planners on how the programme could be improved.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

The symbiosis which exists between rural development and women development is now an incontrovertible fact throughout Nigeria, and there is growing consensus that there can be no true "people development" without "women development" since they after all facilitate rural development and consequently national development.

As Maryam Babangida succinctly puts it:

"We (women) represent not only half of the world's wisdom, strength, labour force and intelligence but also half of its demands.... Women are but the other side of the coin to national development and human development2".

The Better Life programme is the realisation of a dream by its founder, Mrs Maryam Babangida to improve the lives of Nigeria's rural women, and by extension their families, communities, and this nation's people.

Although it started modestly, the programme has grown in leaps and bounds. But at the centre of its achievements and prospects lies the key concern as to whether the lives of Nigeria's rural women are any better than they were five years ago. And while the programme is yet to be felt in Aguata local government and other rural areas of Nigeria, within the context of its goals, its failures are indeed profound.

The programme in theory is well formulated, but there are shortcomings in its implementation. Despite these shortcomings, it is the hope of the researcher that if the aforewritten policy options are adopted, the Better Life for Rural Women programme could be the best solution to rural development problems in Nigeria, especially with regards to women development.

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Department of Political Science
School of Post Graduate Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Dear Madam,

I am a post-graduate student of the above-named institution conducting a research on the topic:
Women Organisational and Rural Development in Nigeria:
An Evaluation of the Better Life Programme in Aguata
Local Government Area of Anambra State.

This is strictly for academic purpose and the questionnaire is intended to generate data for the study.

I sincerely appeal to you to help me complete the following questionnaire to the best of your knowledge. Information given will be treated in absolute confidence.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Chinasa I. Ejezie (Miss).

- a) Initiation of a particular issue _____
- b) Decision-making with regard to the issue _____
- c) Implementation of such a decision _____
- d) Evaluation _____
- e) None of the above _____

7. Have you benefitted from lectures/demonstrations organised by Better Life on oral rehydration therapy, Expanded programme on Immunization, vesico vaginal Fistula and family planning?

yes

NO

8. Did you receive any material benefits like sugar for O.R.T., vaccination on EPI, drugs/treatments and references on V.V.F and condoms for family planning?

yes

NO

9. Have you been trained under the Better Life education programme in weaving, typing, secretarial studies, adult literacy, sewing and soap-making?

yes

NO

10. Has the Better Life in Aguata visited and given gifts to the disabled, orphanages and old people's homes in your locality?

yes

NO

11. Is there any customs, laws and practices in your area that operate the widows?

yes

NO

12. Has the Better Life in Aguata done anything to eliminate them?

yes

No

13. Has Better Life established any of these coagcottage industries here?

Types	Response Option		Location
	Yes	No	
a) Food processing			
b) Cloth and raffia weaving			
c) Rubber processing			
d) Blacksmithing			
e) Cotton spinning			
f) Distilleries			

14. Do you have any cooperatives registered under Better Life here?

yes

NO

15. Did you receive assistance from the Better Life in Aguata amongst the following?

Form of Assistance	Response Option	
	Yes	No
a) Loans		
b) Training		
c) Technical advice		
d) Supply of equipment		
e) Market outlet		

16. Have you received any agricultural inputs like fertilizer and improved farm seedlings from Better life?

Yes

No

17. Has the Better Life in Aguata established any market, Better Life shops or multi-purpose centres here?

Yes

No

18. Which of the following programmes: market gardening demonstrations, food preparations/hygiene, infant feeding and balanced nutrition was done here?

19. Has the Better Life in Aguata made land available to you?

yes

No

20. Have you benefitted from the Better Life programme? If Yes, in what ways?

yes

No

21. please, write in the space provided any other impressions you may have about Better Life programme in Aguata and your suggestions for improving their performance:

B: QUESTIONNAIRE ON BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME IN AGUATA
FOR THE BETTER LIFE OFFICIALS

1. Where do you hail from? - - - - -
2. What is your occupation? - - - - -
3. What is the level of your educational attainment?
 - a) Domestic science/apprenticeship _____
 - b) primary school uncompleted _____
 - c) primary school completed _____
 - d) secondary school uncompleted _____
 - e) secondary school completed _____
 - f) teacher training college _____
 - g) Nursing school _____
 - h) College of education _____
 - i) polytechnic _____
 - j) University _____
4. What post do you have in the Better Life organisation? _____
5. At what stage do Better Life members take part in decision-making and project programming?
 - a) Initiation of a particular issue _____
 - b) Decision-making with regard to the issue _____
 - c) Implementation of such a decision _____
 - d) Evaluation _____

6. Have you organised lectures/demonstrations on oral rehydration therapy, expanded programme on immunization, vesico vagina fistula and family planning? State which:

7. Which of the following material benefits did you provide?

- a) Sugar for O.R.T.
 b) vaccinations on E.P.I.
 c) treatments/drugs/references on V.V.F; and
 d) condoms for family planning, state which:

8. Have you trained rural women in weaving, typing, secretarial studies, adult literacy, sewing and soap-making? State which

yes

NO

9. Have you visited and given gifts to the disabled, orphanages and old people's homes? State which:

10. Have you taken any measures to eliminate laws, customs and practices that operate against widows in Aguata?

yes

NO

11. Have you established any of these cottage industries in Aguata?

Type	Response Options		Location
	yes	No	
a) Food processing			
b) Cloth and raffia weaving			
c) Distilleries			
d) Rubber processing			
e) Blacksmithing			
f) Cotton spinning			

12. Have you registered cooperative societies since 1987? If yes, state location and year of formation and registration:

Yes

No

13. What types of assistance did you provide these cooperatives amongst the following?

Form of Assistance	Response Options	
	yes	No
a) Loans		
b) Training		
c) Supply of equipment		
d) Technical advice		
e) Market outlet		

14. Have you distributed agricultural inputs like fertilizer and improved farm seedlings to rural women in Aguata?

Yes

No

15. Have you established any market, Better life shops or multi-purpose centres in Aguata? Indicate which?

Yes

No

16. Has the Better Life in Aguata embarked on market gardening demonstrations, food preservation/ hygiene, infant feeding and balanced nutrition lectures? State which:

17. Has the Better Life in Aguata provided land to the rural women for agricultural activities?

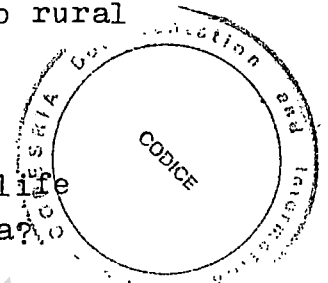
Yes

No

18. In what ways have the rural women benefitted from the Better Life programme in Aguata local government area? -----

19. What are the problems encountered by the Better Life programme in Aguata Local Government Area?

20. please write in the space provided any other impressions you may have about the programme and Your suggestions for improving its performance:



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