

Appraisal of Rural Development Programmes in Imo State of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT Poverty is universally acknowledged as a societal menace requiring urgent attention. It is largely associated with Africans particularly those in rural areas where a large proportion of the poor are found. This paper sought to determine if government's vision in halving poverty or eradicating extreme poverty in line with the Millennium Development Goals through its numerous newly created agencies and programmes actually matches with efforts and reality on the ground in the rural communities of Imo State. The data were obtained through field observation, oral interviews, and questionnaire administration and a total of 211 households were served. The data received were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that the vision to reduce poverty is indeed there by the presence of multifarious agencies and programmes in the state, but their extent of reach is poor as 82.5% have no schemes in their community which could be said to have imparted to them or their family. Bad governance (43.1%) and corruption (37.0%) were the two greatest factors perceived by respondents as besetting the flow of expected deliverables from poverty reduction schemes. Strategies that would enable the rural poor to start benefiting significantly from those schemes were then suggested, in the light of the fact that intervention programmes are not only insufficient but do not appear to be effective. Strategies such as the empowerment and monitoring of intermediating field workers, the re-kindling of spirit of family and self-help and the employment of tripartite participation in poverty eradication should suffice.