BENUE STATE BETTER LIFE FOR RURAL WOMEN
A CASE OF MAKURDI AND OTUKPO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS.

BY

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A Thesis submitted to the Post-Graduate Schoolo Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of the Degree of Masters Public Administration (M.P.A.).

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DEDICATION

With thanksgiving and praises to the Omniscient God, this thesis is dedicated to my friend, Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, who is the source of my Joy, peace and life everlasting.

DECLARATION

I, ENE G. ADOLE, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my independent work and that it has not been previously submitted.

I also declare that works of other authors are fully acknowledged where appropriate.



SIGNATURE

CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled: BENUE STATE BETTER LIFE FOR RURAL WOMEN: A CASE OF MAKURDI AND OTUKPO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS by ENE G. ADOLE (MRS) meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of the Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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ABSTRACT

In the last half of this century, the attention of the world has been on key societal problems. These include the drift of young men and women from rural to urban centres, the opening up of rural centres by constructing federal roads and the provision of facilities such as electricity and pipe borne water. During this . period also, considerable attention has been focused on making women more prominent in terms of contributing to the economy and development of their countries as well as realising their political and civic right.

The Better Life Programme introduced by the Federal Government in 1987 had the laudable objective of improving the lot of the rural women through enlightenment and organized economic activities of farming, trading, handicrafts etc. Going by government accounts, the programme had reported a huge success, particularly in the areas of health, agriculture and co-operatives.

This study is aimed at finding out how much better off the rural women areafter six years of participation and gaining from the programme. The study is particularly useful in Benue State since there are no industries to employ women on any reasonable scale.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Throughout history and in all societies of the world, women have been assigned certain roles. These roles featured women as men's companions. As the Biblical Garden of Eden tells us, they are specially designed for that purpose.

The evolution of societies saw the woman as wife, mother, cook, farmer and inumerable other objectives that only serve to confine her behind the lines and to permanent drugery[1].

The Greek Conception of woman can be sumed up in the words of Socrates who saw woman as 'the greatest source of chaos and disruption in the world'. To him the woman is like the dafodil tree which outwardly looks beautiful but if sparrows eat its fruits they die unfailingly[2].

The Chinese refer to them as 'waters of Woe'[3]. This quote from the law of hinduism goes on to define the traditional role of women more succently, instructing that by a girl, a young woman or even by anaged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house. This indicates that woman is man's subordinate therefore all her actions should be subject to instruction and or approval by man.

In the Bible, the book of life, the woman is seen from the perspective of man's inseperable companion (Gen. 2:8-22). The woman is to serve as a companion and helper. The woman's piller of support comes from the man. The world that evolved out of the Garden of Edem saw no change of this disposition as man has always remained the head of the family while the woman has remained, as

a companion and confidant. Thus the society has been able to move on the wheels provided by the man and the woman. The absence of one could dislocate the entire societal set up.

These four concepts, definitions and roles of the woman give us a clear idea of how the woman and her roles have evolved over the centuries and the attendant stringent conditions imposed on her. This marginal view of women prevailed for a time, through the middle ages up to a good part of modern times women were viewed as junior partners in marriages, inconsequential in economic matters and basically less interested in politics.

In the Better Life Bulletin, it was observed that these conceptions of women began to change when a group of militant french women participated fully in the 1789 French Revolution that overthrew the otherwise powerful land owners.

In Nigeria, the story of the 14th Century Queen Amina of Zaria is well known and documented. A new role was defined for women through her bravery and exemplary leadership. It is also on record that during the colonial era, the Aba market women, armed with clubs and cudgets successfully resisted the imposition of taxes on them by the colonial masters[4]. These incidents underscore the notion that women would remain docile even when pressed to the wall.

The involvement of women in development, especially in our time has suffered greatly from the primitive conception of the role of women. In Nigeria and indeed the world over, the society feels reluctant to put women in superior positions over men. The prestidge of women in the society was low even in the face of shinning examples of isolated women who managed to get to the top.

The colonial masters had no better option for women.

In the 'Better life programme bulletine, it was observed that in a situation where the men were not better off, the colonial masters found it difficult to imagine women in any other roles than those prescribed by the unwritten traditions. So, while the men were encouraged to go to school in order to be able to read and write, western education for women was not considered necessary since the main objective of education in the colonies was to produce clerks, cooks, gardeners and gindes.[5] For this reasons, the Bulletine further noted, women if they went to school, were very few compared to their male counterparts, Nevertheless, the enrolment of girls into schools has steadily increased with the level of economic and social development which has created awareness and confered legitimacy of progress through education on every child.

Today, Nigeria, like many African countries has an incredible number of educated brilliant and articulate women. They can be found in business, commerce, and academics. It is important to note that the situation of women rising to positions hitherto reserved for men is a world wide phenomenon. These women, together with a few successful ones from various areas of human endeavour constitute a small fraction of the women population who are still ignorant and unaware of their rights and the role they could play in society other than those dictated to them by the men.

In Nigeria, though there are several women in government and business and the academics as examples, there is still the traditional reluctance of Nigerians particularly in the rural areas to send their female children to school. This situation leaves many girls untrained

and unqualified to hold public posts. This factor accounts for the relatively late arrival of the women folk on both the political scene as well as the socio-economic areas in the Nigerian polity. Many of these women live in the rural areas in villages and Hamlets.

However, in the last decade, attempts have been made to open up most of the rural areas through a net-work of roads and rural infrastructure under programmes such as Directorate for food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure, National directorate for employment, others include Directorate of Social Mobilization and Economic Recovery charged with mobilizing both men and women for the purpose of development. Thus, even the women in the villages have become aware of the changes going on around them. The problem still remains. Where and how would they fit into the socio-political changes around them. Thus the stage is set for the women's forum known as 'Better life programme for Rural women'.

The immediate antecedents of the programme are rooted in the measures adopted by the Babangida administration since its coming to power in August 1985. In this preface to the four years of Babangida administration, the president observed that, 'a number of problems had to be tackled. The inaccessible rural areas had to be reached and made attractively habitable to curb the ever increasing rural - urban migration.[6]

The 'Better life programme evolved as one of the vehicles for addressing these social problems referred to by the president. The two factors central to the programme are:-

a) the elevation of womanhood

b) the promotion of rural development.[7]

It is necessary to recall that it was only after independence in 1960 that Nigerian women were given token appointments in the public service, inspite of the fact that they competed fairly well with their male counterparts. And it was only after the first international year for women in 1985 that Nigeria began to make deliberate efforts to reckon with women in public affairs and national planning.

It was against this background that the 'Better life programme for Rural women' was initiated by the then first Lady Mrs. Maryam Babangida, in September 1987 to harness the creative energies of women for concrete and achievable goals both as individuals and as a group[8].

The three broad objectives of the programme that were agreed are:-

a) to encourage and stimulate the rural women in particular and 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 and

c) to create greater awareness among the populace about the plight of women[9].

To translate these objectives and ideas into action, the first Lady Mrs. M. Babangida took several steps. She first held a meeting with a cross section of Nigerian women who shared her thoughts on the need to change the lot of the rural women through positive and concrete measures. This meeting was well taken and

there was a general consensus as to the presence of the need. Next, in order to ascertain for herself the situation in the rural areas, she decided to undertake a fact finding tour of rural areas beginning with the Lagos State.

Recognizing that men and women were partners in progress, the first Lady convened a meeting of Directors of DFRRI, MAMSER, NDE as well as those of agencies like Health, Education, works and Housing, and information. These collaborated to convene the first workshop of the programme in Abuja from 13th to 15th September 1987 at which all the governors were represented[10].

The wives of the state governors facilitated similar workshops at the state and local government levels. In November 1987, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) held the 4th Regional Conference in Abuja to discuss the integration of women in Development and the implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the advancement of women in Africa. It was here that the foundation stone for the centre for women development was also laid in addition to launching an appeal fund for the building of the centre. Both events one would say, marked the beginning of the transformation of an idea of the Better life programme into a concrete institutional reality. Having set the example, the state governments were to direct the programme in their various states headed by the wife of the state governor.

The foundation of the Better life programme in Benue State was laid by the wife of the then governor of the state Mrs. Ijeoma Bakut, who inaugurated an adhoc committee of the programme in 1987[11]. The leadership of the state continued to change hands and so the chair manship of the programme. Thus, to date, the Better life programme in the state has had four chairpersons.

At the moment, there is a chapter of the programme in every local government area of the state. In each case, the operations of the programme are tailored to the needs of the community both in terms of the kinds of projects as well as how these projects would be managed. Thus, from the local government areas, the influence of the programme has spread to the districts, villages and ward levels with the wife of the chief executive or local government chairman in charge at every level.

The Better life programme is said to have become a house-hold slogan with aims and objectives being well known. What is not so well established at every District, village and ward level though is the level of success that can be attributed to the programme. Nigeria has had similar programmes with laudable objectives, for example MAMSER, DFRRI, NDE etc. These organizations are well intentioned with the programmes well funded. What the Nigerian public needs to know is how successful these programmes have been in terms of the achievement of the set objectives. Any viable programme if it is to achieve the desired goal, needs to be evaluated, appraised and analysed at each stage so that mistakes can be corrected and fresh goals set in line with the needs of the society. Having been in operation for seven years 1987 - 1994, the Better Life programme needs to be appraised to determine its success and to adjust its programme of activities in line with contemporary needs. This is the concern for this study. The evaluation of the Better life programme in Benue state with Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas as case study.

The programme has enjoyed wide publicity both in the mass media and among the Rural populace. Mass media reports or analysis indicate that a lot of money has been pumped into the programme by the Babangida

Administration[12]. However, many questions surround the programme, its activities and its organization. Such questions include:-

1) to what extent has the Better life programme contributed in enhancing women education.
2) Women participation in government, participation of women in rural industries other than what it used to be?
3) how true is it to say that the main beneficiaries of the programme are rural women when urban women are the organizers and officials who control the vote?
4) do the rural women have a say in the planning of the programme such as deciding on what industry they want and where to site it.
5) What is the role of the men under whom these women live?

These questions and many more are the focus of this study.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The success of any programme depends on sound planning. It also depends on available funds as well as the level of co-operation it enjoys among those who are to be affected. The 'Better Life programme is a gigantic endeavour concerning the entire nation. It therefore cannot be devoid of problems both in the areas of logistics and execution. The study is broadly aimed at examining the success of the programme in two local government areas of Benue State. Specially the study has the following objectives or aims:-

1) To examine the success or otherwise of the 'Better Life programme in Benue State with reference to Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas.

2) To determine the level of participation of Benue State rural women in the programme.

3) To evaluate the status of rural women in these local government areas of the state under the Better Life programme.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Given the level of publicity and attention accorded the Better Life programme' throughout the federation, it is important to take a hard look at its achievements after seven years of existence. This study is necessary given the amount of money so far spent from both federal and state coffers on the programme. After the intial apprehension as to the viability of the programme, just like any other programme after a few years of its take off, the euphoria is dying down and questions are being asked as to who are the beneficiaries of the programme, whether the aims are being achieved and what the future holds for the programme. A study of this type is therefore necessary to assess the negative and positive contributions of the programme to rural development for which much money has been invested.

This study is also timely as the aims of the 'Better life programme tallies with those of the programmes before it which helped to prepare the ground. These include the Directorate of food, Roads and Rural infrastructure (DFFRI), National Directorate for Employment(NDE) and MAMSER. These programmes complement each other in the area of rural development and enlightenment. There is the need to assess these programmes along the lines of their aims and objectives in order to ensure the support of the public and successive governments without which no programme can survive.

Furthermore, the public has the right to know where their money is being spent and to what effect. 'Where much is given, much is also expected' goes the saying. Accountability ought to be the watch word for any programme that wishes to succeed. The result of a study of this nature can be vital in helping government in policy formulation and implementation.

The study could also serve as a reference point for Nigerians and others who may be interested in the programme and how it was conducted in the state.

1.4 THE SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study covers the period 1987 to 1993 was the years the Better life was initiated. It later spread to all the states of the federation in the succeeding years. Benue state inclusive it is an on-going programme and so can only be appraised in terms of its performance to date.

Geographically, the study covers two local government areas of the state. Makurdi local government areas as a state capital and Otukpo local government area as a local government headquarter.

The limitation of the scope of the study to these two local government areas is due to limited resources such as time, money and materials available to the researcher. In fact, this limited scope allowed for an indebt analysis of the issues and problems.

It should also be expected that in a research of this nature, some confidential documents usually tagged 'top secrets' are inaccessible to the researcher. Also there is the tendency that some rural respondents might withhold some information or ex-aggerate others.

1.5 HYPOTHESES

The study has the following hypotheses tested.

1) That the programme has boosted local industries in the rural areas of Benue State.

2) That the achievement of the objectives of the programme is a factor of participation by the rural women.

3) That the Better life programme has substantially increased the level of awareness among rural women in Benue State.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

i) DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

For this study, data were collected from two major sources:- the primary source and the secondary source. Data from the primary source were obtained through interviews and questionnaire. There was initial contact with the officials of the programme in Benue State and Abuja headquarters of the national Women Commission Centre. The aim was to acquaint these officials with the aim of study and to solicit for their support. This was followed by the administration of the questionnaire which was the main technique. The structured interview technique was used for the rural women some of whom were illiterates. All these had to be explained to. The nature of responses centred on the nature and extent of benefit the rural women had so far derived from the services of the project as per the objectives of the programme. It sought to know the output of the various enterprises purported to have been embarked upon before and after the programme.

For the secondary source, documentary evidences were made use of.

These involved publications of the Better Life Programme, seminar papers both at the national and local levels were used, Newspapers articles, magazines and journal articles were extensively made use of.

ii) SAMPLING DESIGN

The sample chosen for this study was drawn from two local government areas of Benue State. These are Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas as indicated in the map on page 16. Makurdi local government area has (10) ten districts namely:- Makurdi, Mbabai, Mbagwen, Mbasaam, Mbawa, Nyiev, Ngorov, Kaanbe, Abinsi and Sagheve.

Otukpo local government area has (8) eight districts namely:- Otukpo, Agatu, Oglewu, Onyangede, Akpa - Otobi, Ugboju, Adoka and Ochekwu. These served as areas of study.

The questionnaire designed for this study was administered on a sample of (400) four hundred people ie 200 people drawn from each of the two local government areas under study.

To ensure representativeness of the sample drawn, the researcher adopted stratified sampling technique in both local government areas.

For Makurdi local government area, the population under study was divided into (5) five strata based on the districts constituting areas of study. Within each stratum, a random sample of 40 was taken.

In Otukpo local government area, the population was drawn based on (4) four strata, each stratum constituting (2) two districts. Within each stratum, a random sample of (50) fifty was drawn.

The choice of the two local government areas was to ensure effective coverage since both of them are directly experiencing the activities of the BLP. Also the choice was based on prior information from BLP and the rural women. More over, the state is made up of two major tribes, Idoma and Tiv. Therefore to give a fair representation, the choice of Otukpo(Idoma) and Makurdi(Tiv) is in order.

Finally, most of the rural women speak Idoma, Tiv or English. Being an Idoma by tribe, the choice of Otukpo local government area makes for easier communication with the people while maintaining a fair understanding with the Tiv language which is useful for the same purpose.

iii) DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the nature of data obtained from the questionnaire, the researcher adopted the statistical approach in analysing the data, such as calculation of percentages and the presentation of such calculated figures in tabular form. This technique was found necessary in evaluating the role of the BLP for improving incomes and the living standards of rural women in terms of their increased participation in business enterprises, level of education and awareness.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of clarity, some terms used in this study need to be explained as they are crucial to the understanding of the work.

Community: The Oxford English dictionary defines community as 'a body of people organized into political, municipal or social unity, living in the same locality with common race, or religion, or pursuit or the same cultural background. For the purpose of this study the word 'community' will be confined to the designated local government comprising of people of common identity and culture.

Education: The term 'Education' has been defined variously as 'systematic instruction, schooling, or training in preparation for life". It has to do with enlightenment leading to changes in knowledge, attitude and skills.

Rural: According to Ishaku (1989) this term means 'a relating to or constituting a tenement in the land adopted for use for agricultural. Or pastoral purpose as opposed to urban"[13]. This connotes undeveloped land usually used for purposes such as agriculture and rearing of livestock e.g. country side comprising only of villages and Hamlets.

Extension: "Extension" as used in this study refers to "extension services" such as in Agriculture. This is an information, education designed to help rural communities understand modern methods and techniques in agriculture through demonstrations, discussions e.t.c.

Family: As used in this study, this term refers to the nuclear group comprising of parents, off springs and other members of the extented family system, living together in physical, social and economic interdependence.

ABBREVIATIONS

DFFRI: Directorate for food Roads and Rural infrastructure. It is a term coined to define the agency responsible for improving rural infrastructure under the 'Babangida Regime'. It was suppose to sterm rural - urban drift. It was set up 2nd February 1986, and inaugurated by Commodore Ibitu Ukiwe - then Chief of General Staff.

BLP: Better life programme is a programme designed for and targeted towards the development of rural women. The programme was designed to sensitize women towards modern living such as politics, literacy, economic development, co-operation and personal hygiene. It was inaugurated October 1987, headed by first lady Mrs. Maryam Babangida.

MAMSER: Directorate of social mobili$_2$ation and economic Recovery. The programme was aimed at inculcating in all Nigerians the values, habits and the orientation which would lead, without coercion, to the emergence, out of our disarray of a great, self reliant, civic society in which justice etc shall hold sway.

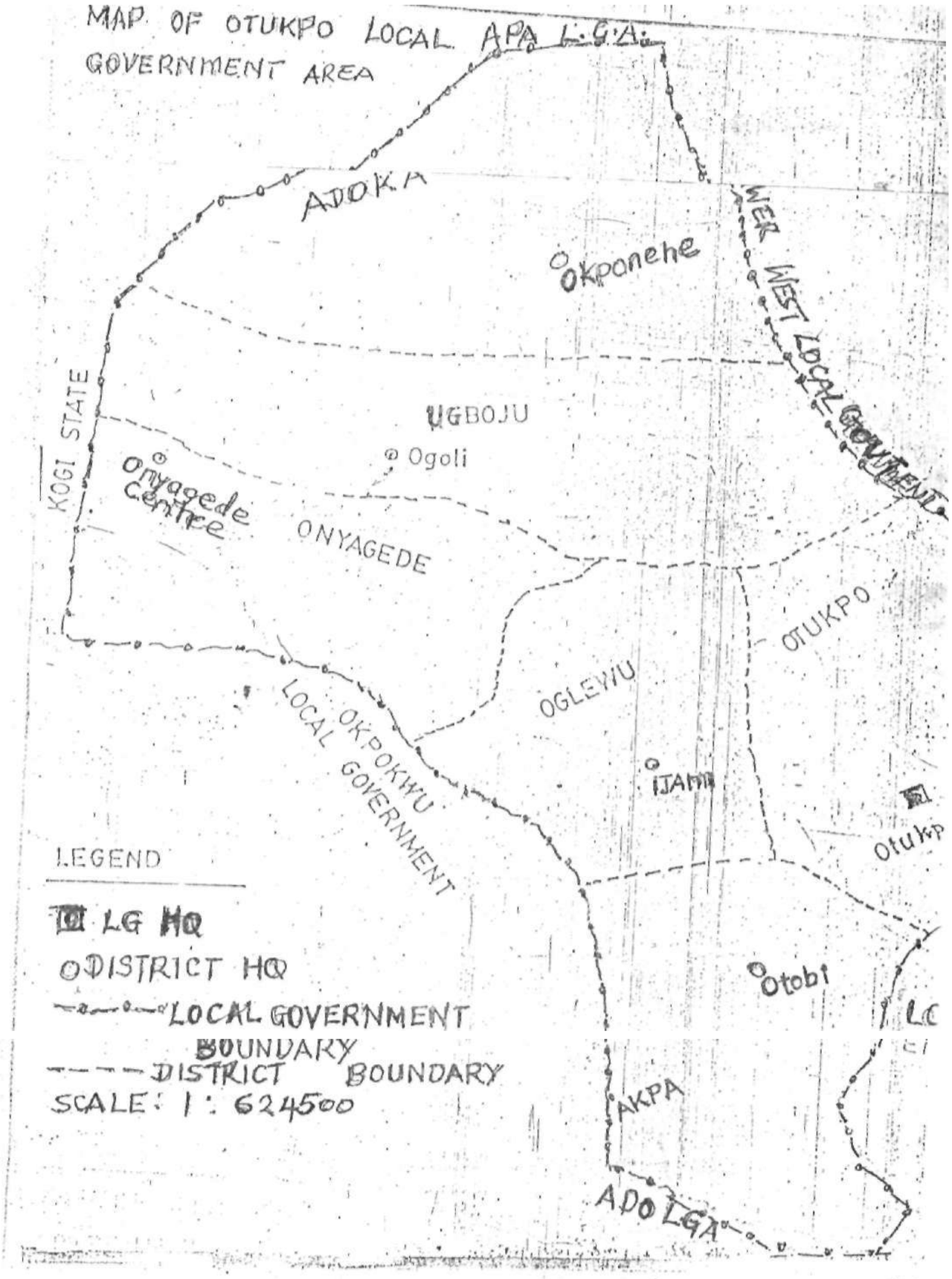
E.P.I.: This means expanded programme on immuni$_z$ation. A health extension programme of immunization against polio, whooping cough, tetanus etc.

O.R.T.: Oral Rehydration Therapy. A programme designed to educate rural women on the prevention of loss of body fluid through diarhea etc by salt, sugar and water solution.

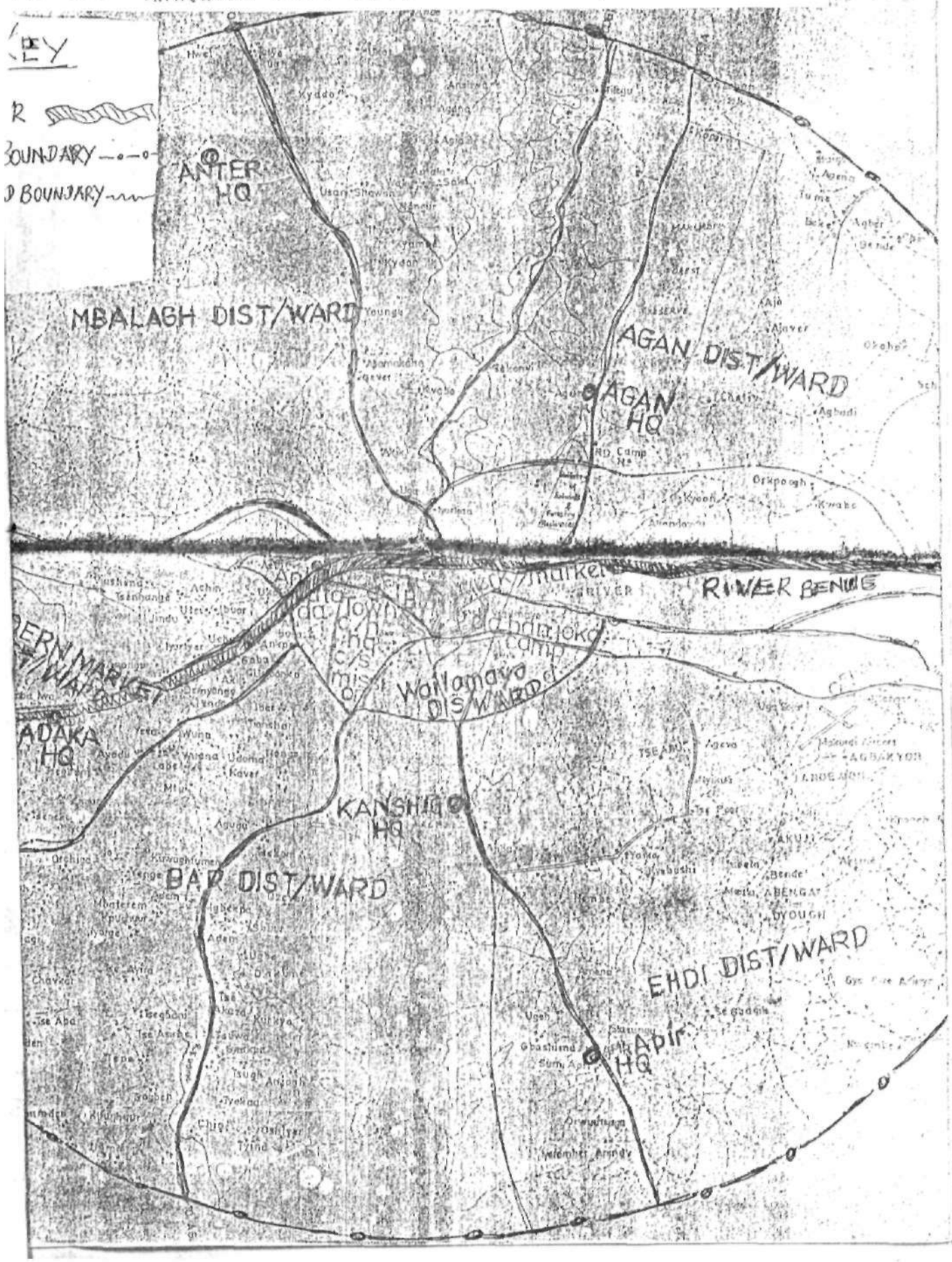
MAP OF ATIGBO LOCAL APA L.G.A.



THE MAP OF BENUE STATE SHOWING THE EIGHTEEN LOCAL


MAP OF OTUKPO LOCAL APA L.G.A.
GOVERNMENT AREA
AJOKA
Okponehe
WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT
KOGI STATE
UGBOJU
Ogoli
Onyagede Centre
ONYAGEDE
OTUKPO
OGLEVIU
IJAMI
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
OKPOKWU
Otukp
LEGEND
LG HQ
DISTRICT HQ
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
SCALE: 1: 624500
Otobi
AKPA
ADO LGA

AP OF MAKURDI LOCAL GOVT. SHOWING DIST/WARDS



FOOTNOTES

1. Sign post of a New Era
Benue State BLP in Perspective,
1990, P. 5.

2. Ibid. P.6

3. Ibid. P.6

4. Ibid. P.7

5. Ibid. P.7

6. Better Life programme for the Rural Women.
Nigeria. 1989, 1990. P.7.

7. Ibid. P.8

8. Ibid. P.8

9. Ibid. P.8

10. Ibid. P. 9-10

11. Newswatch magazine

Newswatch magazine special edition Dec. 10,
1991 P.10.

12. Ishaku Musa. The Role of women in Rural development.
New Nigeria Newspaper. P.9. 1989.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, literature examining the necessity on the establishment of various programmes for the total emancipation of women and rural women in particular and their potentials are reviewed.

According to the first Lady Mrs. M. Babangida in her address to women on how to solve problems, she stated that 'if women are developed, it means the entire nation is being developed. That women stand as a link between the family and the society. She went further to say that the family is the foundation for the establishment of social order in the society. Therefore, if the loyalty that exists in the family is transfered to the society, it is expected that there will be peace and tranquility'.[1]

Over the last two development decades, there has been much evidence to show that the situation of women in developing countries has deteriorated. However, there are several questions to be raised regarding the role of women in such development. During these past two decades, women have been considered marginal and have been treated as such.[2]

For this reason, there were many agitations by women and other associations for women's total emancipation in general and rural women in particular.

In the early seventies several European and North American women began advancing the concept of integrating women into development machineries.[3] Their work pointed out that development had actually harmed women, that many women in developing countries were worse off than before. More studies were conducted by social scientists, political

scientists and other academicians confirming these findings.

In 1975, the international women's year conference declared a decade that would concenstrate on women the world over. Since then, at national and international forums women's role in economic process has been a major component, and the race for women development was on[4].

The conference resolved that:

> Education, national/technical training were seen as essential prerequisites for women in decision making positions, allocating funding for women's projects and initiating legislation process[5].

The theory stresses that there should be educational opportunities for women and increased levels of income enjoyed by them. Accompanyin the changing role of women is the changing attitude of society as a whole towards women. There should be a trend towards greater participation of women in the labour force and growing economic importance of women in the modern society. They should also be allowe to assume an increasing active role in politics and administration and be influential in the development of public policies intended to improve the situation of women in the labour market.

The above theory was that as women were not recognized as part of the national economy, it went on,

> Sufficient opportunities should be created for women to work into the market economy. This would ensure income generation for them and a sense of self confidence to participate in the development process.[6]

In explaining the above point the conference stresses that, for women participation, policies affecting the employment of women should be designed to conform with and support the changing conceptions of the social and economic roles of men and women.

There should be need for some differential policies for women which should be recognized as the basis for public policy options, since governments increasingly wish to ensure effective equality of the sexes in employment (for women particularly).

This means that improving opportunities for education and training, for entering the labour force, for advancing, as appropriate, in their chosen occupations and careers, and for creating a better equilibrium in the distribution of roles and tasks (occupational and family obligations) between the sexes. Towards this end, development must mean that production, distribution and consumption of goods and services in the most equitable manner possible, with maximum participation of all people. For those in the developing and developed countries, it means study, consciousness raising, dialoguing and brainstorming about how people can gain control over their economics, no matter where they are. It also means that there should be feminist approach to this which require the participation of women in every step of the way.

Throughout the 1970s as women organized to fight for their rights, the development bureaucracy began to respond. International meetings made a point to mention the impact on the status of women of whatever it was that they discussed.

The United Nation's Conference on population in 1977, for example, recognized the 'close connection between the role of women and population growth'.

Especially with respect to the close correlation between rises in women's labour force participation and education, and declines in birthrates[7].

As a result, women and development became an official part of development efforts in United States of America. Women in development

office was organized at the United States agency for international development and agencies ranging from the world Bank to the non-governmental private voluntary organizations began to encourage special women's programmes.[8]

Development projects had already began special programmes to involve women more in development. By the early 1970s, the economic commission for Africa of the United Nations for example, had a meeting in March 1969 entitled:- "The Regional meeting on the Role of Women in National Development.[9]

Followed by more specific meetings in Rabat and Addis Ababa during the following two years, 1973 - 1974 a number of action programmes sponsored by economic commission for Africa had begun, especially in home economics and other traditional 'women's fields'.[10]

Concurrent with these developments, was growing awareness of the impact of development on women in the United Nations. As early as November 1967, the General Assembly passed a declaration on the elimination of Discrimination against women which promoted greater 'economic

cipation of women, order to promote the integration of women in Development.[11]

By 1972, international women's year (which was originally suggested by a group of women's non governmental organizations) was proclaimed for 1975 by the General Assembly of the United Nations with three themes of 'equality, development and peace'.[12]

The declaration of the international women's year and the international women's year conference in 1975, the declaration of a women's decade and the mid decade conference on women in 1980, all focussed attention on women and development. The world plan of action for the United Nations decade for women called for:-

a) the involvement of women in the strengthening of international security and peace through participation in all relevant levels in national, inter governmental and United Nations bodies.

b) Furthering the political participation of women in National Societies at every level.

c) Strengthening educational and training programmes for women.

d) Integrating women workers into the labour force of every country at every level according to accepted international standards.

e) More equitable distributing health and nutrition services to take account of the responsibilities of women everywhere for the health and feeding of their families.

f) Increasing governmental assistance for the family unit.

g) directly involving women as the primary producers of population in the development of population programmes and other programmes affecting the quality of life of individuals of all ages in family groups and outside them, including housing and social services of every kind.[13]

The report of the world conference of the United Nations decade for women 'equality, development and peace' held in 1980 reviews the principle that girls and women (whether married or unmarried) shall be ensured an equal right with men to all types of education in school and out of school and that the quality of the education offered will be the same for both sexes.[14]

As early as 1949, the economic and Social Council requested United Nations members to:-

> 'grant women equal education rights with men and to ensure that they are afforded genuine educational opportunities'.[15]

In education, an international convention against Discrimination in education (adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 1960) has spurred efforts to widen educational opportunities for women.[16]

Free and comulsory education for everyone at least at the primary level is called for in the Universal Declaration of human Rights, and United Nations Organs have consistently urged Governments to put this right into effect.

As noted above, this principle deals directly with the right of every woman to have access to education information enabling her to space and to limit her pregnancies, although the wording cautiously refers only to 'the health and well being of families'.

According to the United Nations Assistant Secretary general for social and Humanitarian matters, he says that-

> 'the alternative must be full recognition of women's contribution to society through their integration in the total development process in all sectors'[17]

The commission on the status of women is particularly interested in the ways family planning and fertility relate to the status of women, including the extent to which family planning may help women as individuals in the exercise of their rights in the family and in the society.

Article (11) eleven of the United Nations declaration on social progress and development stresses the principle of equality of rights of men and women and that this demands.

> 'implementation in all states in accordance with the principles of the charter of the United Nations and of the universal declaration of human rights.[18]

It suggests that Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals are urged, therefore, to do all in their powers to promote the implementation of the principles contained in this declaration.

> The Assembly declared that 'it is necessary to strengthen universal recognition of the principle of the equality of men and women', in law and in fact, and that 'both legal and social measures have to be taken by member states which have not yet done so to ensure the implementation of women's rights.[19]

Above all, the international women year 1975 is a call action to governments and non governmental bodies and to the international community. The commission resolved that governments and groups should urgently take whatever measures needed to abolish discriminatory laws and practices, and to enable women from the poorest rural areas to the highest levels of government to realize their full potentials.

In the pre-colonial age, the African rural woman was to be seen, not heard. Her place was wholy in the kitchen, her position in the home was that of absolute submission, and that of her man, autocracy, no question, no complaint and no confusion. The general setting was rustic.

Ester Boserup, a contributor to 'colonialism and the forms of modernization in Africa', it brought lowered women's status while raising men's by imposing new patterns of sex roles on farming and trading, and by carrying such inequalities to the new industrial and urban and rural sectors: She advocates for:-

> 'Greater roles for women in these modern industrial work forces, greater educational opportunities to facilitate such employment'.[20]

She claimed that women's working would create opportunities for other avenues of development. She believed that when development excludes women from full participation, it denies its benefits to women and its functions farless effectively. She contends that planners should increase women's involvement and productivity in the modern sector, and provide women with the necessary education. That this will increase their status.

Another study on how women can achieve their total emancipation in their environment is by Jennie Dey.

According to her, she says that,

> 'African women traditionaliy have considerable decision making and managerial power in their spheres of food production, processing, storage, marketing and in their domestic roles of food preparation and budgeting'.[21]

She concludes and advocates for village level development associations which should offer a viable means through which resources, inputs, and services, extension and training can be delivered to woman farmers, She went further to say that separate associations may be needed for women and to accomplish this, she says:-

> 'it may be necessary to reserve some official positions for women, and to ensure that they are given training in leadership administration and financial management'.[22]

It is believed that extension and training programmes play important roles in providing technical advisory services to women farmers. These activities provide technical backstopping to rural women.

According to Food and Agriculture Organization, (FAO) improved price incentives, women co-operatives and associations and market facilities shaped to meet the needs of rural women farmers, are a precondition of production increase.[23]

A few countries in Africa and elsewhere have indeed gone further in envisioning how women might influence and be influenced by their planned socio-economic programmes. Examples of these countries are Kenya, India, Bolivia and Nigeria.

Kenya is one example in African region of a country where steps have been taken to ensure that the participation of women in National development is strengthened by various activities and institutional arrangement.

The Nairobi forward - looking strategies for the advancement of women recognized the importance of women's organizations, co-operatives, trade unions and professional associations for the attainment of national development goals. They recommended that programmes should be formulated and implemented to provide these groups with access to:-

> Credit and other financial assistance to training and extension services, and that supportive ties should be created and maintained with women's grass - roots organizations, such as self-help community development and mutual aid societies and non-governmental organizations committed to the cause of women, in order to facilitate the integration of women into mainstream development.24

The above recommendation means that women should be encouraged and be integrated to the economies of the nation, into policy - making positions, thereby improving the status of women. These organizations form a turning point in the movement to bring a new relationship between women and development, by providing the validity for a world wide movement.

According to N. Heyzer who carried out a study on the organization of rural women especially the Landless in India, he came up with the fact that there has been mushroom of non-governmental organizations for the mobilization of rural women for socio-economic

development. He stated that many of the non-governmental organizations which range from Research Centres, professional groups and women trade unions in the unorganized sector to organizations of tribal women, have an acute awareness of the causes and conditions of poverty. While they often have a love of middle - class activities they work with poor grass-roots women and involve themselves directly in issues such as access to water, energy, technology and income - producing activities, delivery of extension services, credit, training, irrigation on the part of non-governmental organizations. These organizations have specifically targeted poor rural women to raise their consciousness regarding to causes of their poverty and to organize them for collective action for its alleviation.[25]

In Bolivia, in Latin America, there is a tradition of effective organization and politization of the poor and the powerless rural women who have also been able to form organizations that defend and promote their rights.

According to Magdalene etal who carried out the study on Bolivia and the National women's organization stated that the National women's organizations in Bolivia have expanded their efforts to secure equal rights for women and to rural in particular; by increasing their political participation. They have also become involved in promoting income - generating activities and co - operatives for women. There has been a concrete effort through a development project funded by the United Nations children fund (UNICEF) to organize rural women in groups demanding that mainstream agricultural services and resources be oriented towards women as well as men. There are also successful experiences of women's non governmental organizations assisting peasant women to organize themselves for marketing their produce and to improve their living conditions by educational and self help activities.[26]

Nigeria as a developing country, did not take seriously the general emancipation of the rural women until 1985. Administrations have come and gone with little attention given to this group of people who live in abject poverty in the rural areas.

The recent conference (1985) on the integration of women in development which was held in Abuja was an attempt to implement the United Nation's declaration of a whole decade 1975 - 1985 to women. The declaration aimed at raising the standard of living of women and improving their general welfare.[27]

Following that declaration, there have been concerted efforts to improve the lives of women (both in urban and rural areas) who make up more than half of the population of this country Nigeria.

The concept of Better life as articulated by the first Lady Mrs. Bangida therefore seeks to involve the rural women in their own development from the planning stage onwards.

General B. Babangida in a conference on women, noted that:-

> There are compelling reasons why women must be integrated in the development process. First is their numerical strength, they are industrious and enterprising, they are good managers.[28]

He went on to say that no national development programmes will be meaningful and thorough if they are not fully involved. He believes that women are to be integrated on an equal footing in the on-going development process for greater efficiency.

This point finds support in the observation of the then sole administrator of Jema'a local government area in which he stated that 'Any policy that does not take into cognisance the role of women would be one sided and cannot enhance speedy development of the society.[29] He concluded that women should be involved whether urban or rural based in government activities and programmes.

More evidence of the administrator's observation was provided by Professor Banji in which he pointed out that 'the nation must be compelled to accord the rural women a pride of place. That any attempt to improve the standard of life of the rural women would positively lead to improvement of people living around them.[30]

Another observation was by Ogunduyile. He observed that, 'women especially the rural based ones as it is said, do as much as 80% of the Agricultural work. This proportion, some argue can be increased by as much as 10%. When their activities in processing, preservation, storage, preparation and even marketing are added. This situation can be alleviated as he concluded, by 'structures and paths should be created for rural women who do most of the work in small-scale agriculture and food preservation'.[31]

Therefore, it becomes imperative for government to call for a reversal on the on-going campaign for mechanization of agriculture so as to produce more food for the people and taking off much of the farming burden from women.

In his own evaluation of women on access to education, Bolaji pointed out that 'women should have access to education which in turn has changed their lifestyle, it has improved the health of these women which has dramatic effects on children and maternal mortality rate. It has improved nutrition and slow population growth.[32] In his own opinion, education has more importantly made women to become more aware of the roles they could play in the development of the nation through politics as they have come out en masse to vote and be voted for. Education of the women is the only way she can attain self-fulfilment.

In Eleanor's evaluation of the importance of women in employment, she stated that 'if the industrial development decade programme is to be successful in Nigeria, in the sense that all human resources are fully mobilized for self-reliant, growth, then planners must develop forward - looking strategies to promote the equitable participation of women in the industrial restructuring of the Nigerian economy'.[33] She concluded that this should be so because for many Nigerian women, personal income generating activities are important for their families well being and their own as an individual.

An appraisal of the activities of the Better life programme for Rural women and other non-governmental organizations shows that these organizations have opened the way for the poor in our society in the areas of health, agriculture, co-operative movements and industries, education, social welfare and political awareness. New signals have emerged which point to a new beginning, and a redirection of the individual and collective energies of our rural women. The villages are no longer the same. There have been immediate and long term solutions to the unfortunate incidence of hunger, diseases and epidemics.

According to Mrs. Maryam Babangida at the world press conference for the 5th anniversary for the Better life programme where she stated that,

> from this movement onward, the sun is rising on a new day in the lives of women in Nigeria. From this day forward we are writing a new chapter in the history of women's development not only in this country but worldwide. And today we turn the first page in that chapter.[34]

She went further to commend the administration in it's positive mass transformation of the women's movement in the country.

The evidence of this statement is the emergence of many women movements or organizations that have been formed by voluntary members of the society. Some of these organizations were established before and after the united Nations declaration of the decade for women (1975-1985).

Several of these organizations or societies have been formed by women themselves to achieve their total emanicipation and potentials Some organizations need to be mentioned hereby:-

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SOCIETIES OF NIGERIA.

This is one of such organizations which was established in 1958. The society believes that the women in Nigeria are convinced that:-

i) humanity in general, women and children in particular and the people of this Nation, and all Nations can only achieve their full spiritual, social and economic potential if all women are mobilized, United and co-ordinated in their efforts to achieve this potential.

ii) that to promote the welfare of humanity, our people and families should disseminate knowledge and provide a better life. Women living in Nigeria should come together under one umbrella irrespective of profession, trade, place or origin, age, class or creed, social standing or other distrinction in comfirmity with the motto: Service in unity.[35]

This society has branches all over the country with the following objectives:-

a) to promote the welfare and progress of women(economic and social) laying special emphasis on education and training.

b) to awaken and encourage in women the realization of their responsibilities to the community and nation.

c) to ensure by every legal means that women are given every opportunity to play their part as full responsible members of the community and nation.

d) to encourage membership of all non-political women's organizations in Nigeria.

e) to foster co-operation with other national and international bodies with similar actions.[36]

This society has helped in many ways to achieve the above objectives. It has helped in drawing the attention of Nigerians and International bodies to the problems and needs of women both in the urban and rural areas.

Emily Aig - Imoukhuede, who is the President of the society concluded that, the society is the umbrella organization for most other women's bodies. And that the organization was established because the gender problems were not effectively attended to. She pointed out that changing the lot of women is exactly what the organization is all about. That is to promote the welfare and progress of women in both urban and rural areas, laying emphasis on their education and training in various fields.[37]

WOMEN IN NIGERIA. (WIN)

Women in Nigeria is another organization with like objectives. This organization originated from the enthusiasm and interest evoked

initially by the first annual women in Nigeria Conference held in 1982. This group of dedicated women and men vowed to work increasingly for an improvement in the condition of women in Nigeria. This group also believes that:-

1) the liberation of women cannot be fully achieved outside the context of the liberation of the oppressed and poor majority of the people of Nigeria. However, there are aspects of women's oppression that we can work to alleviate.

ii) Women should therefore must organize and fight for their full social and economic rights in the family, in the work place, and in society in general as a necessary part of the continuing struggle to create and develope a just society for all.

iii) in order to do this, the women must know clearly and correctly how women's and men's lives are structured by the socio-economic and political conditions which they live.[38]

Research policy making, dissemination of information are all parts of the organization's objectives. This organization was established to see that women enjoy their fundamental human rights. It believes that majority of women especially the poor rural ones suffer exploitative and oppressive character of Nigerian society, and that they suffer additional forms of exploitation and oppression. That women therefore suffer double oppression and exploitation as members of subordinate class and as women. The society feels it necessary to fight both class exploitation and sex subordination together.

FEDERATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA

Another such organization to be appraised is the federation of muslim women association of Nigeria. (FOMWAN). This association is a religious one which has been trying to liberate the muslim women from the clutches of disease, poverty, servitude and ignorance.

According to the Kwara State president of the association, Mrs. Rabat Sanni, she told the Newswatch magazine that since majority of illiterate women in this country are muslims, the association's target has been to dispel ignorance, increase knowledge, improve health care and more importantly, ensure that the offsprings of muslim women are given both koranic and western education thereby dispelling the fear that western education would turn muslim to kafirs or unbelievers.[39]

She concluded that the association also encourages the rural women by finding markets for their products and by making water readily available to them since they use water far more than men. This she argued would increase their hygienic practices, reduce strain and drudgery and diseases. That the association in addition shall create more awareness for the women to meet and exchange ideas in a relaxed atmosphere.[40]

THE OYUN PROGRESSIVE WOMEN ASSOCIATION

In Oyun local government area of Kwara State, this is another local association which has been in the fore front of the campaign to improve the life of rural women. To a large extent, the success of the expanded programme on immunization, EPI, which led UNICEF to rank the local government areas as the best nation - wide along with Owo local government area of Ondo State, is a function of the women's association. This association by the assistance of UNICEF and by dint of hard work, the association has been able to build day

care centres in Offa and in some towns and villages. A secretariat was also built by this association at Offa. The rural women can now leave their children at the day care centres when going to farm or market. They are not charged a fee. The association has grouped women in the area into co-operative units featuring all forms of petty trades, the sole aim of which is to aid them with interest free loans. The association buys food items in periods of plenty and sells when they become scarce in the market. Members of each of the petty trade groups are encouraged to ensure they train at least two other beneficiaries who would automatically become members of the association. Because of the success of the association, the UNICEF donated garri processing plant to them and they have also benefitted from gifts from individual members of the society.[41]

Rahat Sanni pointed out the achievements of these women associations succinctly.

> Our organizations have been able to draw the attention of the nation to the needs of women, thereby addressing them, they have made women themselves aware of their problems and the possibility of solving them, they have helped to broaden the outlook and knowledge of women, and have helped to enhance their self - confidence.[42]

She concluded that their achievements are not restricted to women alone, they extend to the family and the society at large.

Although, how well these associations have succeeded in alleviating the problems of rural women has been the subject of emotional debate in the country. This study has therefore kept in mind the Better life programme for rural women in particular and how the programme has tackled the problems of the rural women.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Evaluation by all standards is a developing activity which

is usually plagued with uncertainities, especially of a methodological nature. However, Edward A. Suchman provides a good framework for evaluation based on Research principles and practice in public service and social action programmes, which this study has adopted.

Suchman's definition of evaluation seeks to clarify a number of the problems beclouding a definite definition of the term. According to him, the term evaluation consists of questions which must be answered severally and separately. He notes,

> In general, wherever we ask such questions as 'How good is a programme? what effects are we having? Is the programme working as we expected? and uses such instruments as rating sheets, appraisal forms, evaluation guides, or research design which involve comparing accomplishment before or after or in the presence or absence of a particular action, one may be said to be conducting an evaluation study. [43]

Suchman's work provides techniques that are used to determine empirically the extent to which objectives are usually being achieved, locating the impediments to the achievements of objectives and ascertaining the unforeseen effect of activities carried out to meet objectives. He perceives evaluation as a technique aimed at assessing the successful attainment of a value objective. To this end, he proposed five distrinct categories of criteria with which the success or failure of a programme may be evaluated. These are:-

1) EFFORT

This is measured in terms of the quality and quantity of activities that take place. It deals with an assessment of the amount of input or energy involved, without regard to output. It seeks to answer such question as 'what did you do? and 'How well did you do it?!

Here, the yardstick for measuring effort is based on either the capacity for effort or the effort itself. Suchman believes that

with this type of evaluation, it is possible to assume, that the specific activity is a valid means of attaining higher goals, and according to him, even while not giving key answers, it is valuable in that it indicates that at least something is being done to solve a problem." To illustrate, cited Paul's work which states that 'if figures show that an agency is inactive, it can very well be inferred that little good is being accomplished.[44]

This means that identifying and listing the activities accomplished by any programme is a way of evaluating the amount of effort or energy.

ii) PERFORMANCE

Performance in this concept is used to measure the outcome of effort, which could be favourable or unfavourable, rather than the effort itself. To do this, one requires a clear statement of objectives and such questions as would require the extent of the result in relation to immediate goals. It would also seek to find out if any change occured. If there was any change, whether it was in the expected direction or unexpected.

This is important because an organization especially a public oriented organization justifies its existence by showing proof of its existence by meeting specific objectives. This is necessary since an organization relies on public support for its existence.

Suchman notes that performance can be measured at different levels and adds that it is important for each performance - standard devised, to specify all significant modifying conditions. This, he says, is necessary because problems of rehabilitating performance ratings or standards must be taken into consideration.

iii) ADEQUACY PERFORMANCE

Usually, activity or performance is necessitated by a need. Evaluating Adequacy of performance seeks to measure the degree of effective performance in relation to the overall amount of need. In other words, the adequacy of a programme in meeting the problem it was supposed to solve is in question.

Adequacy in Suchman's view is a relative term. It depends on what goals one has set. He adds that "a measure of adequacy tells us how effective a programme has been in terms of the denominator or total needs". Thus a common denominator of adequacy consists of measuring the impact of a programme, by multiplying its rate of effectiveness by the number of people exposed to that programme.[45]

To illustrate this point, Suchman gave the example that a programme which is 50 percent effective and is applied only to 1,000 people makes an impact on only 500 people. ie

$$\frac{50}{100} \times 1{,}000$$

Similarly, a programme which is 10 percent effective, and is applied to 10,000 people has an impact on 1,000 people ie

$$\frac{10}{100} \times 10{,}000$$

He further illustrated this point with reference to the work of Bigman in evaluating the effectiveness of Religious programmes. He said:-

> In the first place, the number of persons may be so Small as to render the programme ineffective. Here, we must distinguish between effectiveness and impact. By the later term, we mean the strength of the influence upon the individuals. A programme or activity may have considerable impact, affecting markedly the thoughts and actions of those it touches. It will be necessarily

judged ineffective if it is so designed that this impact is confined to a small fraction of the group it is intended to reach and influence.[45]

iv) EFFICIENCY

This term applies to how well a method is working and whether there are better ways of attaining the same results. It therefore is concerned with the evaluation of alternative means or methods of achieving results in terms of cost ie money, time, personnel, and Public Convenience.

This means that in a sense it is the ratio between effort and performance, that is output divided by input. This means that efficiency is 'the capacity of an individual, organization, facility, operation, or activity to produce results in proportion to the effort expended.

v) PROCESS.

Suchman believes that in any organization where several activities are carried out, questions as to "why" certain things are done and 'how' they are done are unavoidable. 'Process' therefore has to do with the examination of the 'whys' and 'Hows' of of success or failure. He points out that an analysis of process can have both administrative and scientific significance, particularly where a programme is not working as expected. This is because, locating the factors responsible for failure may lead to modification of the programme, thereby making it work rather than discarding it.[46]

Suchman provides four main dimension to the analysis of process dealing with:-

a) The attributes of the programme itself=
This involves specification of the programme that make it more

or less successful. It attempts to make a diagnosis of specific causes of success or failure that are intricint in a programme. This therefore means a breakdown of the component parts of a programme to see what role each is playing towards the whole.

b) Population exposed to the programme

This is a specification of the recipients who are affected by the programme.

c) Situational context within which the programme takes place.

This involves a specification of the condition under which the programme is either a success or a failure.

d) The different kinds of effects of the programme.

This deals with specifying the effects produced by the programme and what aspects of such will be used as criteria for the final judgement.[47]

In conclusion, Suchman explains that the extent to which these criteria are included in an evaluative study will depend on the three main issues, that is, the stated objectives, the research resources available, and administrative support.

While adopting Suchman's criteria for evaluative study, the study also combines evaluation with research and make contribution to general knowledge and administrative decision making.

For the purpose of this study, emphasis was laid on the process. This not only made it possible to identify reasons for success or failure in specific areas of the programme under study, but also made it possible to arrive at a specific, rather than general conclusions and suggestions.

In applying this approach in the evaluation of the contributions of 'Better Life Programme in Benue State to the rural women general

well being, this study looks at the objectives and the activities of the Better Life Programme in Benue State. It also looks at the effects on the population exposed to these activities.

It is our view that a careful study of the contributions of the Better Life Programme to the general well being of rural women within this framework that combines evaluation with research provide a practical and objective insight into this study.

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CHAPTER THREE

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE BENUE STATE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME FOR RURAL WOMEN.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Looking at the life of the Nigerian rural woman, Wale Oladepo pointed out that, a Nigerian rural woman is like a beast of burden! He revealed that in the southern part of the country, women spend much of the time in farming whereas the men are mainly hunters and palm - wine tappers. In the Igboland, cassava planting is the women's forte, in the Northern States, women often out match men in cultivating grain farms. On top of these, the women are expected to manage the kitchen morning to evening while their husbands are smoking tobacco pipes or engaged in one village meeting or the other. By the crow of the cock at dawn, the rural woman is up again to continue her struggle against the cycle of servitude[1].

According to Achola Pala,

> 'The average rural woman has about six children whom she spends all her life and energies trying to sustain. Yet in the end, the rural woman is a bird of passage, she's often the forgotten goose that laid the golden egg'[2].

She explains further that, the rural woman is often forgotten not only by the society but even by the children and husband she laboured so seriously to sustain. As soon as she starts aging, her husband looks for a younger woman to meet his biological needs, abandoning the woman he had over used.

The rural woman has been unfairly neglected for long. In her simplistic and rustic setting, the rural woman had been

the mother behind the scene. the provider of the lush comfort in the cities. She has toiled herself to feed the nation and the industries and provide exports for government earnings, all she had always been able to get in return were no more than peanuts, hardly sufficient to finance sub-sistence level of living.[3]

It was in line with these problems facing the rural dwellers and the rural women in particular, that development of the rural areas where 70% of the country's population reside, would mean a drastic change in the rural areas.

In november 1986, the first Lady Mrs. Maryam Babangida, together with some women elites visited two rural areas of Igbologun and Ilado in Badagry local government areas of Lagos State. Located in the backyard of Lagos metropolis, the two villages, shockingly lacked modern amenities, no pipe born water, no electricity and no accessible roads. It was a trip that left a lasting impact on Mrs. Maryam Babangida and made her more determined to reach out to more rural areas, particularly the women. Quickly she sought and obtained the blessing of the AFRC and the President to promote the cause of Nigerian women within the framework of government. To achieve this, she liaised with the Directorate of food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI) and those of other relevant ministries and agencies such as Education, Agriculture, Health, Works and Housing, Information, Directorate of social mobilization(MAMSER) and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE)[4].

Between 13th - 16th September 1987, a workshop titled 'Better life programme for the Rural Women' was held in Abuja under the auspices of the first Lady. The workshop was attended by the wives of military governors, female commissioners and women drawn from all

the then 304 local government areas in the country. The agenda placed before the workshop was to discuss problems affecting rural women in Nigeria and how they can be tackled. The workshop was also to work out strategies for mobilizing rural women for development; and find out how best to maximize the productivity and effective contributions of rural women to the development of their respective communities in general and their lot in particular.[5]

This workshop marked the beginning of the Better life programme as wives of the military governors were directed at the end of the workshop to ensure the take off of the programme in their respective state.

At the state level, the wives of the state governors facilitated the workshop at the state and local government levels, with the support, assistance and guidance of the central organizing committee under the leadership of the first Lady. The central organizing committee has a number of sub committees that were set up to examine the various facets of women problems. Thus, there are sub committees for Research, project/works, Education, publicity and finance. Policies were formulated at the national level and implemented nationwide. But each community decided on their priorities and chose their projects. At the local government level, the wives of the local government chairmen headed the working groups at that level[6].

The first Lady, Mrs. M. Babangida working with selected professional and non professional members of the national organizing committee and DFRRI, mapped out campaign and mobilization programmes for the rural women in the areas of adult education, primary health-care, co-operatives and agriculture, trade, crafts, food processing

etc to enlighten the women on the facilities provided for them by Government for their self-improvement. The activities of the National Organizing Committee culminated in the hosting of the first Better life fair, which took place in Lagos from 14th to 18th September, 1988. The fair marked the first anniversary of the Better life programme and involved all states of the federation each of which exhibited its crafts, wares, and products of rural industry[7].

3.2 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF BLP

It was only during the first international year for women in 1975 that Nigeria began to make deliberate efforts to reckon with women in public affairs and national planning. It was against this background that the 'Better life programme for Rural women's was initiated by the first Lady, Mrs. Maryam Babangida in September 1987 to harness the creative energies of women for concrete and achievable goals both as individuals and as a group.

The Better life programme for Rural women was established to:

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 understandin and resolution of their problems through collective action.

c) to mobilize 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 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 on 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.[8]

The above are the aims and objectives of the programme. The Better life programme came at a time when women needed something to give them hope, confidence, self actualization and respectability, something to fill the emptiness in their lives - something through which they could come alive again. The programme has succeeded in changing generations of perceptions and conceptions about women.

The founder of Better life programme may go at the end of the administration, but the programme has to continue. It was in this line, in 1988, the then Vice President of Nigeria, Admiral Augustus Aikhomo indicated the intention of government to set up the women commission to coordinate women affairs in order to ensure the continuity of the Better life programme. The actualization of this intention came to past in 1989, when the federal government by decree No. 30 of 1989, established the National Commission for women. The Basic aims were to remove duplication of programmes and efforts, strengthen inter-agency linkages and complementarity of programmes as well as defin sectoral responsibilities to promote the general welfare of Nigerian women[9].

The Board of the National Commission was inauguarated by the then President, General Ibrahim Babangida, in June 1990. The establishment of the Commission for women and subsequent inauguration of its board was further informed by the need to give the Commission autonomy in staffing and in funding of women's programmes. Also the Better life programme was further streamlined within the framework of government and given concrete institutional reality. States were directed to establish - Directorates of women affairs.[10]

The touch light of the Better life programme is already being borne by the national commission for women. The prognosis of the Better life programme therefore could best be viewed from the perspective of the scope and operations of the National Commission for women.

Indeed the Better life for Rural women sees the establishment of the Commission as the crowning glory of its activities.

For purposes of clarity, a run down of the objectives of the Commission deserve to be mentioned here.

a) to promote the welfare of women in general.

b) to promote the full utilization of women in the development of human Resources and to bring about their acceptance as full participants in every phase of national development, with equal rights and corresponding obligation.

c) to promote responsible motherhood and maternal health of women.

d) to stimulate actions to improve women's civic, political, cultural, social and economic education.

e) to support the work of non - governmental organizations and to play a co-ordinating role between Government and

Nigerian women's organizations.

f) to encourage the sense and essence of co-operative societies and activities amongst women both in the urban and rural areas and stimulate in them creative entrepreneurship in the field of cottage industries and small-scale industries.

g) to formulate and propagate moral values within the family units and in the public generally and to establish programmes with institutions and organizations to inculcate moral education in women and children.

h) to work towards total elimination of all social and cultural practices tending to discriminate against and dehumanize womanhood.

In order to achieve the objectives stated above the commission's functions are:-

a) to formulate policies and programmes within the context of National Development plans aimed at enhancing the position and development of women in the social, economic and political context.

b) to establish bodies in the states and local Government areas for implementation of the policies and programmes of the commission.

c) to promote, develop and concretize income generation and employment through loan schemes home and cottage industries, acquisition of skill, generally for the improvement of arts and crafts, food processing and such

other vocational training of women within the context of their assessed needs and potentials.

d) to monitor and liaise with appropriate Government Ministries, Departments, non-Governmental Organizations and International Bodies including United Nations Organizations on matters concerning women and development.

e) to monitor and submit reports on
   i) women education and counselling.
   ii) health of women and children
   iii) existing legulation.

f) to ensure self-reliance enhancement of women.

g) to co-ordinate, structure and monitor the activities of women voluntary organizations and grant - aid them and evaluate their performances.

h) to generally conduct research and planning aimed at improving the status of women and the attainment of policy objectives generally in relation to women.

i) to carry out all other functions and activities of the commission as stimpulated in section 2 of the decree establishing the commission.[11]

Following the proposal to transfer the 'Better life programme' to the commission, it was considered pertinent to review the provision of the decree to include the execution of the objectives of the programme and also with a view to empowering the commission to perform its stated functions more effectively.

In April 1991, the commission set up a committee which reviewed the decree. The review draft is still currently being worked on by the federal Ministry of Justice.[12]

3.3 THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN.

It is important to note that the National Commission for women Decree of 1992 which repealed the National Commission for women act (cap 24b 1FN), among other things, altered the administrative structure of the National Commission, as provided in the repealed act. Specifically, it established the National Advisory Council in place of the erstwhile Board of the National Commission, created office of the Executive chairman and widened the scope and functions of the commission which now embrace the Better life programme for Rural women and children welfare programmes. Other ancilliary provisions were also made for the state and the federal capital Territory Commission for women as well as the local government women Development units.

In view of these changes in recent times, the commission has a four - tier structure including that of the federal capital territory (FCT), the National Commission for women at Abuja, is at the apex, followed by those located in the federal capital Territory the states and the local government areas in that order which are placed under the presidency, the ministers, Governors and local Government Chairman's offices respectively.

At the National level, the commission is governed by a national Advisory Council consisting of the wife of the president, as the chairperson and 14 members who represent a cross section of National interest. As the highest decision making body, the council is to advise, guide and monitor the activities of the commission on National policies and programmes pertaining to the objectives and functions of the commission and the Better life programme for Rural

women. But where situation demands, persons could be co-opted from federal ministries, Departments and other bodies to advise the council on any matter referred to them. Moreso, the council meets with the advisory councils in the states and the federal capital territory and the Executive chairperson to deliberate on issues (general or specific) relating to the commission.

The Executive chairman of the commission is the chief executive and accounting officer and is responsible for the day - to day running of the commission to design ways and means of implementing policies approved by the National Advisory Council. While the Director - General runs the affairs of the National Secretariat. She also directs and control the employees of the Commission as may be directed by the Executive chairman. Similarly, she keeps all records of the council's proceedings (ie the National Advisory Council).

Tenure of office is for a period of three years and are eligible for re-appointment for another three year period. All appointments in this respect are made by the president, commander-in-chief of the Armed forces.

To assist the Director-General in the discharge of these functions, the commission has four departments or directorates namely:- Department of planning, Research and statistics, Department of personnel management, finance and supplies, Department of Better life programme and Department of children welfare. Each of the departments is headed by a Director while the Assistant or Deputy Director takes charge of the divisions. These officers are directly under the Director-General who is responsible to the Executive chairman who is also responsible to the Advisory council.

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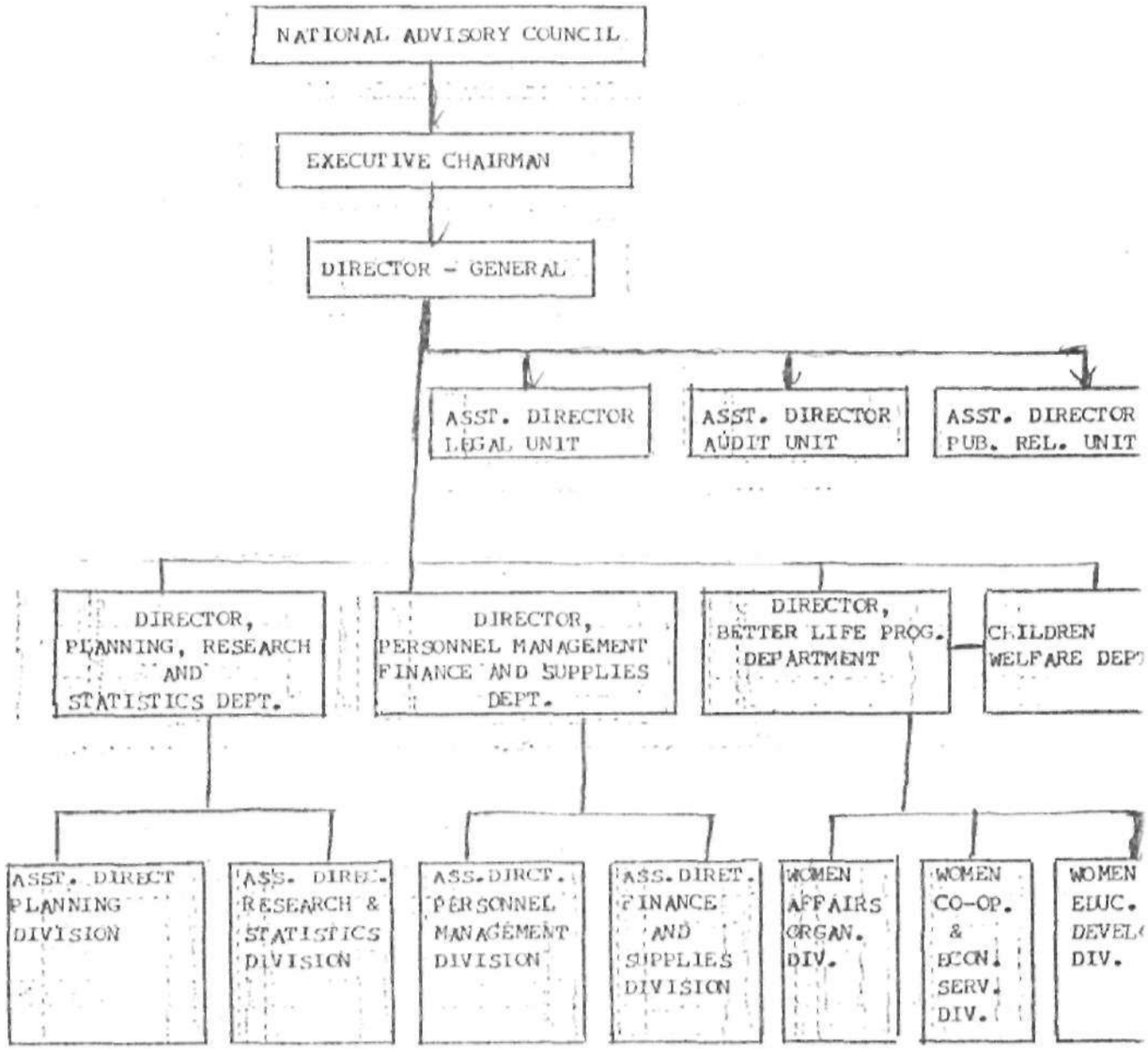
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In addition to these departments, there are three units:- legal, Audit and Public Relations units.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN



SOURCE: BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME DIARY (1991)

a) Department of Planning, Research and Statistics.

This department is responsible for planning, and research programmes, aimed at improving the status of women and the attainment of policy objectives generally in relation to women. It is further divided into two divisions, namely:- Planning Division and Research and Statistics division.

b) Department of Personnel Management, Finance and Supplies.

This is responsible for advising and providing effective financial and accounting services to support the programme and operations of the Commission. Also, it is responsible for management of staff, establishment matters and for procurement and supplies for all the departments in the commission. And it has two divisions, personnel management division and finance and supplies division.

c) Department of Better Life programme.

It is responsible for promoting programmes aimed at improving the welfare and status of women in general. In this department, there are divisions for:-

i) Women affairs Organization

ii) Women co-operatives and Economic Services

iii) Women Education and Development.

d) Department for children welfare.

As the name implies, the department takes care of activities and aimed at improving the general welfare of children.

It is pertinent to say here that the divisions in each department are to be further sub-divided into branches and sections in conformity with the Civil Service Reforms of 1988.

3.4 THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE BENUE STATE CENTRE FOR WOMEN COMMISSION.

The Benue state centre for women commission is directly under the Governor's Office. The management of the commission is vested in the women advisory board. The wife of the Governor is chairperson. The board advises the commission on the formulation of policies and on activities of the commission.

The Governor is responsible for appointing a Director General. The Director General is the head of the commission and is responsible for the day-today administration of the commission. The Director General also puts into effect the decisions, policies and approved recommendations of the commission.

The personal assistant or Secretary works with the Director General, so also is the chief legal officer who advises the commission on legal affairs. The chief Auditor is responsible for cross checking expenses and ensuring probity while the chief public relation officer is the image maker for the commission.

There are three main departments namely, planning research and statistics, personnel management, finance and supplies and the Better life programme department. Each of these departments is headed by a Director who reports to the Director General.[12]

THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS.

This department is expected to create programme ideas, collect data for the development of the programmes, work out suitable plans on achieving the goal of Better life programme. It is also the custodian of the data bank on women issues for the commission.

THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND SUPPLIES.

This is a service department, providing supporting services to the commission with regard to personnel and office management, finance and supplies.

THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME DEPARTMENT

This department is the core implementing agency for the commission for women. It operates with the following units:- Health care services, women organization, Education and Home Economics.

i) HEALTH CARE SERVICES UNIT

This unit liaise with the state ministry of health and other related bodies ensure health delivery in the rural areas. The unit works hand in hand with the state ministry of health officials also in health campaign programmes on family planning, ORT and the state's immunization exercise.

ii) WOMEN ORGANIZATION UNIT.

Women affairs and organization unit is in charge of monitoring women cottage industries to assess their progress and problems. This unit co-ordinates women activities in the local government areas as well as initiate actions to improve the level of enlightenment of women in relation to government programmes. The unit encourages women to secure farmlands within their localities to improve their standard living and it also identify market outlets for farm produce through trade fairs, state, national and international fairs.

iii) EDUCATION UNIT

This unit initiates and execute basic and post literacy programmes for identified and needy women groups in the community. It also monitor the progress of basic and post literacy programmes for women centres in the state.

iv) HOME ECONOMICS UNIT

This unit takes charge of all policy matters relating to Home economics and harmonize home economics matters with other divisions, e.g. agriculture and co-operative division of the commission which are also relevant to government bodies and other organizations including the federal government institutions.

It also takes charge of UNICEF programme on household, food security component and co-ordinate inter/intra state co-operative fairs. The unit organizes workshops and seminars for extension workers as well as initiates improvement for food processing and other vocational training.

3.5 THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOMEN DEVELOPMENT UNIT.

The local government women development unit carries out the obj objectives of the Better life programme in the local government areas. In order to ensure total grassroot participation of rural women in women development programme, the ward women Development centres are established, using women co-operative centres or women education centres as nucleus. It has some representatives of women organizations in the locality as members.

The organizational structure of the local government women Development unit is also constituted along the lines of the state commission. The wife of the local government chairman is the chairperson of the committee and it is mandated that appointment into the members must reflect the interest of the cross section of the local government.

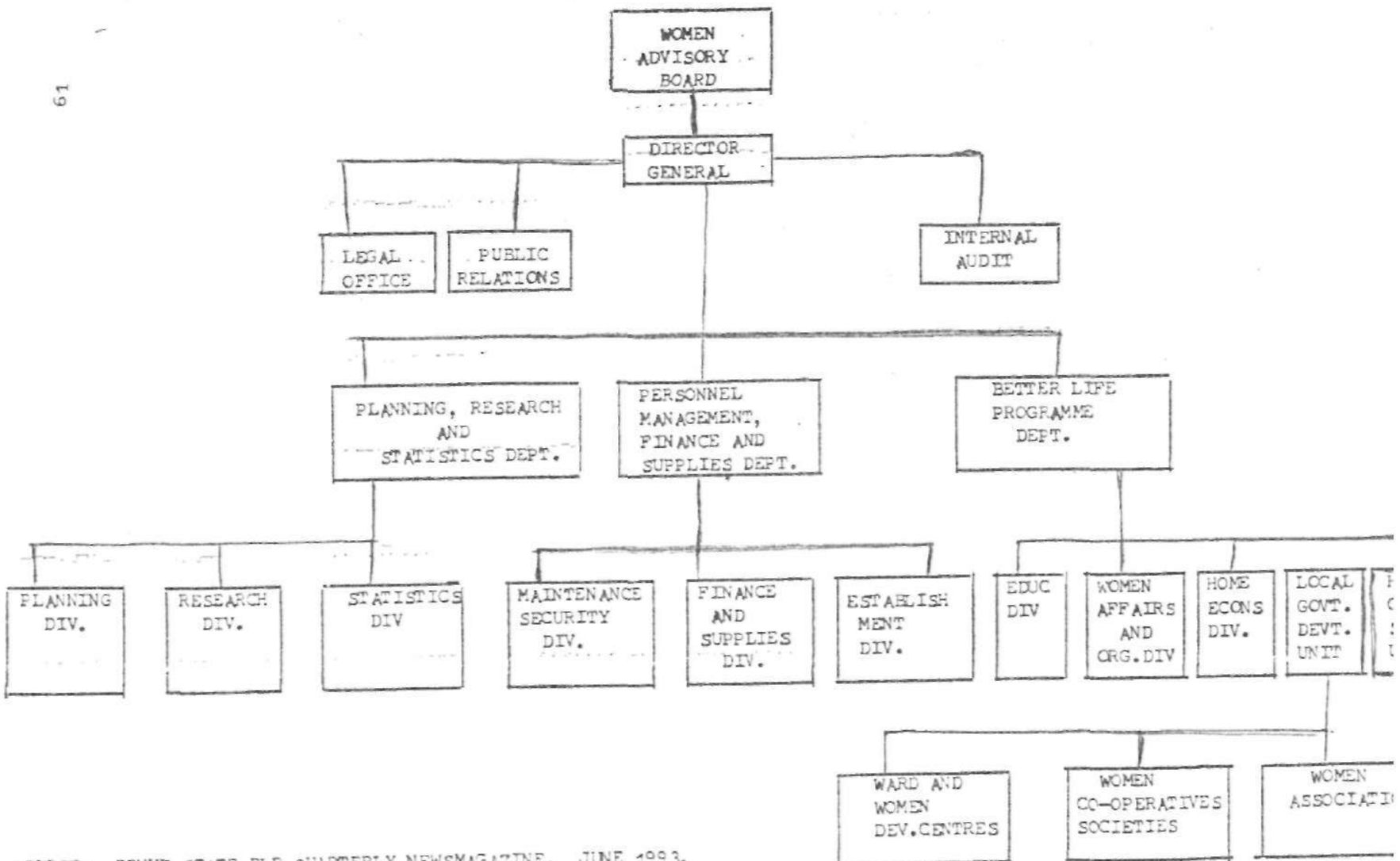
The committee's function is to advice the development unit on programmes and policies and to facilitate the work of the development unit.

The principal women development officer heads the local government women development unit as is responsible for the day-to-day running of the unit, each department that is Research/planning, finance and supplies and Better life programme is headed by a senior officer who takes responsibility for the functions of the departments and is directly responsible to the principal women development officer.

The local government women Development unit relates to women group and co-operative societies at the local level and not on individual basis because it is against the ethics of the commission, to ensure fairness, equity and justice in the distribution of services.[13]

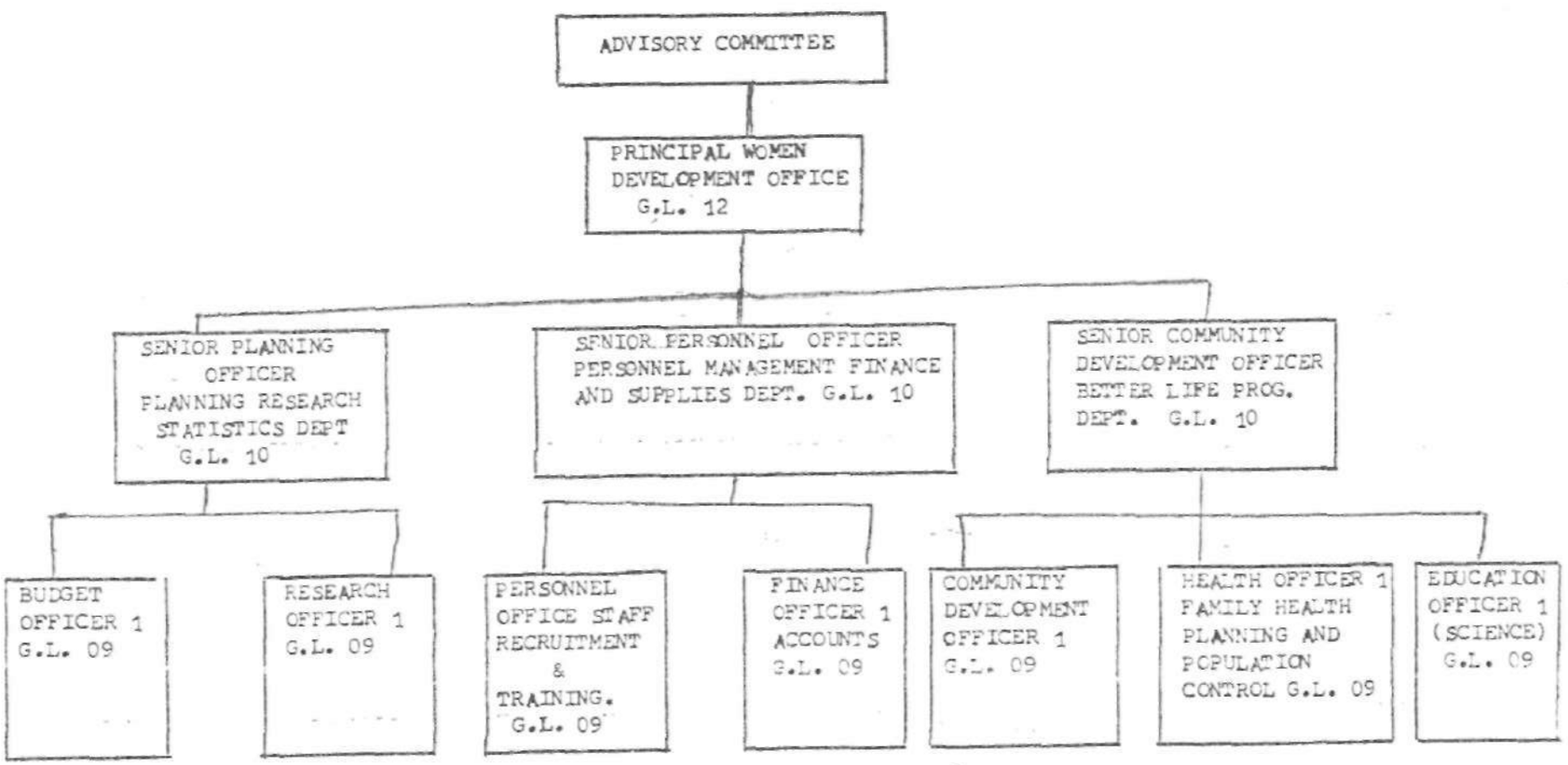
The new development has therefore institutionalized the Better life programme to ensure continuity.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BENUE STATE CENTRE FOR WOMEN COMMISSION



SOURCE: BENUE STATE BLP QUARTERLY NEWSMAGAZINE. JUNE 1993.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL WOMEN DEVELOPMENT UNIT.



SOURCE: BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME DIARY (1991).

FOOTNOTES

1. Wale Oladepo. *Rural women, living on the periphery* Newswatch magazine December 1990. P.29.

2. Achola Pala. Women in Development. A Resource guide for o ganization and Action. ISIS women's International Information and communication system. 1983. P.20.

3. *Sign Post of a new Era Benue State BLP in Perspective.* P. 11-12.

4. Better life programme for Rural women - Nigeria. 1989/ P.8

5. Ibid. P.9

6. Akwa Ibom. BLP Magazine. UFORO. A genesis of a Revolution Vol. 1 No. 1, P. 7-8.

7. Ibid. P. 10

8. BLPRW - Nigeria Op. Cit. P.9

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11. National Commission for Women Annual Report. April 1990 - October' 1991. P. 6-7

12. Ibid. P. 68.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The main concern of this chapter is to evaluate the performance of the BLP activities in Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas. This exercise is very significant given the fact that BLP as a strategy for the total emancipation of the rural woman is expected to improve on the general living standards of the rural woman and her house hold which is actually the set - goal of the structural organization of the BLP.

The achievement of the goals of the programme is assessed not so much at the level of the policy makers but the level of those for whom the policy is designed. It is only in this light that the performance of the Better Life Programe is evaluated in terms of success or failure. If successful, the living standards of the rural dwellers particularly the rural women should be seen to have substantially improved. It is only then that the programme can be said to have achieved its goals.

This chapter is therefore devoted to the analysis of the data in terms of the objectives of the programme and the hypotheses proposed in chapter one of this study. The distribution and collection of questionnaire were done in Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas of Benue State. Interviews were also conducted by the Researcher with Better Life Programme officials in both local government offices as well as the villages themselves.

The sample population consisted of four hundred (400) rural women, two hundred (200) each from the two local government areas.

The reason for this is, as the programme itself implies the rural women are the focus, the group for whom the programme is tailored.

The incidence of participation of the menfolk is minimal.

It should be noted that Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas consist of two main dialects, Tiv and Idoma but with socio-economic system. Under this system, the household practice of co-operative farming pattern where the family heads farm together with their sons was practiced. The co-operative farming system helps to promote fairly larger scale system of farming as against small parcels owned by individuals. It is an attempt to increase productivity to the benefit of all members of the household. However, with the growth of urbanization and diversification of socio-economic activities such co-operative farming systems have gradually given way. In its place are economic activities such as petty trading, small - scale industries etc while farming is done by hired hands and large scale land owners who use tractors and other farm machineries for their operations. On the main, the women are in the business of buying and selling of items such as clothes, shoes, jewellery and farm products such as yams, grains and gari. This is largely in response to a situation where products of the farm are no longer sufficient to provide adequate support for the family. Proceeds from these other training activities are used to augurment such deficiencies.

The Better Life programme was therefore expected to organize and co-ordinate these activities that were already on the ground. It was also aimed at boosting food production and small scale economic activities as well as creating awareness among rural women.

4.2.1 AWARENESS OF THE BLP IN THE AREAS UNDER STUDY.

For any programme to succeed, those to be affected must be aware of its objectives, how it affects them, and in what capacity they will be involved. The BLP is no exception. One would think that for a programme of this magnitude, the rural women who are the target group should have been well informed table 4.2.1 seeks to establish when the rural women became aware of the program, visavis their preparedness.

Table 4.2.1 Awareness of BLP in the areas under study

	Makurdi LGA Total No. of Res. 200	% 100	Otukpo LGA Total No. Resp. 200	% 100
Last 1 yr (1994)	60	30	65	32.5
Last 3 yrs(1991-1993)	110	50	160	47.5
Since 1987	40	20	40	20

Source: Survey by the Researcher 1994.

From the above table, the Better life programme was not very popular among the rural women until recently. From about 1987 to 1990, only 40 respondents representing 20% in both Makurdi and Otukpo Local government areas acknowledged their awareness of the programme. However, since 1991, there has been increased awareness of the programme. This is represented by 50% in Makurdi LGA and 47.5% in Otukpo LGA who became aware of the programme in the last two years. For the last one year 1994 in Makurdi LGA, 60 respondents

or 30% acknowledged their awareness and in Otukpo LGA, this accounts for 65 respondents representing 32.5%.

This increase in the level of awareness was either because of the constant media attention given to the programme in the state, through Radio, TV, the print media etc or through resource persons who visited the villages and had personal contact with the people overtime, now spread around. This way, even skeptics gradually became aware of the importance of the programme.

Table 4.2.2 Activities of the BLP in the areas of study

The hypothesis that the programme has boosted local industries in the rural areas of Benue state can be determined by the table below.

	Activities	Makurdi LGA	Otukpo LGA
1.	Crop farming	11	23
2.	Livestock/fish farm	4	8
3.	Women Resource Centre	1	2
4.	Vegetable Gardens	1	5
5.	Shops	–	–
6.	Markets	3	–
7.	Cottage Industries	4	22
8.	Health Clinics	1	1
9.	Social Welfare	2	–
10.	Educational projects	–	4
11.	Transport (water)	–	–
12.	Road construction	–	–
13.	Women co-operatives and widow societies.	26	70

Source: Sign post of a new era; Better life in perspective; Benue State Government. 1991.

The above table represents the activities of the BLP in Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas according to government official sources. (signpost of a new era; BLP in perspective(1991). It is necessary to reconcile this table of activities with the reality on the ground in the rural areas to ascertain their presence and impact.

Table 4.2.3 Available Activities of the BLP in your Area.

	Activities	Makurdi LGA Total No. of Resp. 200	% 100	Otukpo LGA Total No of Resp. 200	% 100
1.	Adult & Voc. Educ.	22	11	58	29
2.	Job Opportunities	73	36.3	65	32.5
3.	Health Centres	20	10	15	7.5
4.	Extension Services on farm activities	100	50	130	65
5.	Credit facilities for income generating activities. Such as selling, knitting, sewing etc.	61	30.5	95	47.5
6.	Co-operatives	120	60	141	70.5
7.	Provided room for participation in and outside workshops seminars & Public activities.	30	15	10	5
8.	Education in food and nutrition & Health Education	157	78.5	103	51.5
9.	Handicraft & sewing Centre	52	26	19	9.5
10.	Provided pipe Borne water	-	-	-	-
11.	Electricity	-	-	-	-
12	Recreation facilities	-	-	-	-
13.	Local industries	8	4	11	5.5

Source: Survey by the Researcher 1994.

One of the main aims of this study is to ascertain to what extent the BLP has contributed to the development of education among

the rural women. Table 4.2.3 indicates that a good number of women in both Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas have benefited from the Adult and vocational education programme. Of the 200, 22 respondents representing 11% in Makurdi LGA and 58 respondents representing 29% in Otukpo local government area.

As for job opportunities, 36.5% of the 200 rural women interviewed have benefited in Makurdi, while in Otukpo the figure stands at 32.5% out of 200. 40 respondents representing 20% acknowledged the presence of Health Centres in Makurdi while in Otukpo, 15 respondents representing 7.5% affirmed the presence of Health Centres.

In Makurdi LGA, 100 respondents representing 50% benefited from the farming extension services while in Otukpo LGA, 130 respondents or 65% agreed that they have benefited from the farming extension services.

As for credit facilities, 61 respondents representing 30.5% in Makurdi LGA and 95 respondents representing 47.5% in Otukpo local government area were beneficiaries.

Those who had benefited from co-operative societies or have been associated with it under the programme were 120, representing 60% in Makurdi and 141 representing 70.5% in Otukpo LGA.

As for those who admitted being provided opportunities for participation in seminars and workshops, these accounted for 30 respondents representing 15% in Makurdi LGA and only 10 respondents representing 5% in Otukpo LGA.

Education in food nutrition and health education accounted for 157 respondents representing 78.5% in Makurdi LGA while in Otukpo LGA it accounts for 103 respondents representing 51.5%

From the above, education in food nutrition and Health education is wide spread, accounting for 78.5% in Makurdi LGA and 51.5% in

Otukpo LGA. And in all it can be said that a sufficiently large number of people are aware of the activities of the BLP and have benefited from them. While the list of activities in table 4.2.3 appears impressive, table 4.2.2 is dominated by the traditional crop farming with the exception of co-operatives and widow societies. Cottage industries and other activities dominate the scene but these are hardly sufficient to be recognised as a boost. As for the activities in table 4.2.3, it will take a while for anyone to appreciate their impact. In other words, more time is needed to evaluate to what extent rural women patronize these activities.

Table 4.2.4: Job Opportunities Since the Inception of BLP

	Job Opportunities	Makurdi LGA Total No. of Resp. 200	Makurdi LGA % 100	Otukpo LGA Total No. of Resp. 200	Otukpo LGA % 100
1.	Farming	102	51	115	57.5
2.	Keeping poultry and livestock	67	35.5	45	22.5
3.	Sewing	63	31.5	27	18.5
4.	Selling food	72	36	40	20
5.	Weaving	15	7.5	21	10.5
6.	Trading	51	25.5	60	30
7.	Making soap	36	18	43	21.5
8.	Making Groundnut Oil	34	17	70	35
9.	Making soya maggi	85	42.5	89	44.5
10.	Making Garri	57	28.5	91	45.5

Source: Survey by the researcher 1994.

Table 4.2.4 above indicates that 200 respondents from each of the local government areas were asked what job opportunities they had enjoyed since the inception of the BLP.

In Makurdi LGA, 102 or 51% claimed to have enjoyed the new farming system while in Otukpo LGA this accounts for 115 out of 200 respondents representing 57.5%.

In Makurdi LGA, 67 out of 200 respondents or 33.5% enjoyed the improvement got on how to keep poultry/livestock and in Otukpo LGA this represent 45 out of 200 respondents or 22.5%.

As for sewing, 63 respondents or 31.5% in Makurdi LGA were taught how to sew while in Otukpo LGA 27 respondents or 18.5% benefited. Food selling, in Makurdi LGA, 72 respondents representing 36% have benefited while in Otukpo LGA 40 respondents or 20% did benefit.

Those who benefited under the BLP in Makurdi LGA on how to weave native clothes are 15 respondents or 7.5% while in Otukpo LGA they were 21 respondents representing 10.5%.

In Makurdi LGA, 51 respondents or 25.5% benefited under the BLP in Trading while in Otukpo LGA 60 respondents representing 30% benefited.

In Makurdi LGA, 36 respondents or 18% benefited from soap making while in Otukpo LGA 43 respondents or 21.5% did benefit. In ground nut oil making, 34 respondents or 17% claimed to have benefited in Makurdi LGA while in Otukpo LGA 70 respondents or 35% did benefit. In Makurdi LGA 85 respondents or 42.5% and 57 respondents or 28.5% claimed benefit from soya maggi and Garri making respectively, in Otukpo local government area the figure stands for 89 respondents or 44.5% and 91 respondents or 45.5% respectively who benefited.

The above analysis shows that many of the rural women whom this programme was established for have benefited from it in terms of job

opportunities. This also shows that they responded to the improvement got on job opportunities they have enjoyed from BLP. This benefit tends to enhance their income earning substantially.

If the increase in co-operative societies and cottage industries are index for determining income, then one would expect that the level of income among rural women in the state should have substantially increased. Table 4.2.5 below shows the annual income of the rural women in the two local Government areas concerned in the study.

Table 4.2.5 Annual Income

Income in(₦)	Makurdi LGA		Otukpo LGA	
	Total No. of Resp. 200	% 100	Total No. of Resp. 200	% 100
1. Less than ?,000:00	-	-	-	-
2. 2,000:00 - 3,000:00	-	-	2	1
3. 3,100:00 - 4,000:00	5	2.5	6	3
4. 4,100:00 - 5,000:00	5	2.5	8	4
5. 5,100:00 - 6,000:00	18	9	20	10
6. 6,100:00 - 7,000:00	18	9	19	9.5
7. 7,100:00 - 8,000:00	20	10	20	10
8. 8,100:00 - 9,000:00	15	7.5	25	12.5
9. 9,100:00 - 10,000:00	15	7.5	25	12.5
10. 10,100:00 - 11,000:00	40	20	30	15
11. 12,000:00 - and above	64	32	40	20
Total	200	100	200	100

Source: Survey by the Researcher. 1994.

This table shows that in both Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas, there is a similar trend in the pattern of income. In both local government areas, those with income ranging from ₦12,000 and above are 32% and 20% for Makurdi and Otukpo respectively. This is followed by those with income of ₦10,100 - ₦11,00.00 which in Makurdi LGA is 20% while in Otukpo LGA they account for 15%. This is followed by those with income of ₦9,100.00 - ₦10,00.00 accounting for 7.5% in Makurdi LGA and 12.5% in Otukpo LGA. This group is followed by those with incomes of ₦7,100.00 - ₦8,000.00 which is 10% in both Makurdi and Otukpo Local government areas. 9% in Makurdi LGA and 9.5% in Otukpo LGA earn between ₦6,100.00 - ₦7,00.00. In Makurdi LGA 9% earn between ₦5,100.00 and ₦6,00.00 while in Otukpo LGA for the same figure it is 10%. 2.5% earn between ₦4,100.00 and ₦5,000.00 in Makurdi LGA, in Otukpo LGA it is 4%. For those with incomes of ₦3,100.00 - ₦4,000.00 in Makurdi LGA it is 2.5% while in Otukpo LGA it is 3%. Under 3,000.00 the figure is 1% in Otukpo LGA while in Makurdi LGA is 0%.

The table indicates clearly that 28.5% of respondents earn reasonable incomes of ₦7,000.00 and above per annum.

The income range remains relatively low going by current standards. An income of ₦7,000.00 annually in the face of current inflationary trends cannot be said to be substantial. An annual income of between ₦15,000 - 20,000 annually would have been more like it. This indicates that the BLP needs to do more, perhaps by making loans more liberal and involving government in the buying of produce from the rural women.

The hypothesis that the achievement of the objectives of the programme is a factor of participation by the rural women is examined in the light of the information on tables 4.2.3 and 4.2.4. In table 4.2.3 the array of activities enumerated indicate the expected level of participation. This does not necessarily make the programme popular because of difficulties such as inadequate funds, lack of facilities such as access roads and resource persons. In table 4.2.4, the bulk of respondents who acknowledged having benefitted from job opportunities fell back on poultry as it is traditional to most homes. Further investigation by the researcher revealed that only a few of them had poultry farms.

Table 4.2.6 below seeks to find out areas of activities which might have witnessed improvement and how popular were they among the rural women.

Table 4.2.6 What technology and extension services has the Better Life Programme provided to improve your on-farm and off-farm activities?

Technology & Extension Services provided.	Makurdi LGA Total No. of Resp. 200	%	Otukpo LGA Total No. of Resp. 200	%
1. Tractor	106	53	60	30
2. Fertilizer	120	60	28	14
3. Credit facilities	102	51	102	51
4. Maize sheller	35	17.5	10	5
5. Seeds	80	40	50	25
6. Rice Processing machines	150	75	170	85
7. Soya oil extracting machine	51	25.5	25	12.5
8. Storage Equipment	-	-	-	-
9. Extension agent(Home Economists)	65	32.5	51	25.5
10. Cassava processing machine	110	52	140	70

Source: Survey by the Research. 1994.

The era of the oil boom of the 70s weakened the agricultural sector as it witnessed the drift of young men and women into urban centres in search of greener pastures. The rural areas, therefore lost a great deal of the labour force. However, with the down turn of the economy, it dawned on government to mobilize the rural areas to increase their income by improved farming methods, encouraging small scale industries and developing raw materials. This focus was to increase awareness among rural women to become contributors to the national economy.

The table above shows that seeds distribution is fairly wide spread as 80 out of 200 respondents representing 40% in Makurdi LGA and 50 respondents or 25 percent in Otukpo LGA responded to have benefited from it. 150 respondents or 75 percent in Makurdi LGA and 170 respondents or 85% also benefited from processing machines. Soya oil extraction is relatively new in the state but 51 respondents or 25.5 percent in Makurdi LGA and 25 respondents or 2.5% responded and benefited from the technology.

The area of storage facilities remains a major problem as far as this programme is concerned. No respondents in both Makurdi and Otukpo Local government areas have benefited because of non availability of such facility under BLP. Extension services in Home Economics accounts for 65 out of 200 respondents or 32.5% in Makurdi LGA and 51 respondents representing 25.5 percent in Otukpo LGA. This is the services that teach basic hygiene, food preservation and processing techniques. Cassava processing enjoys a large patronage both in Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas representing 55% and 70% respectively. This is not surprising as the state is naturally

a good producer of tubers. From the respondents, it can be argued that the BLP in the State made an appreciable effort in initiating grass-root industries with good patronage.

The table above represents the services of the BLP in this regard. In Makurdi LGA, 106 benefited from the tractor hiring services at subsidized rates. 60 percent in Makurdi LGA and 39% respondents in Otukpo LGA benefited from the fertilizer distribution scheme. Credit facilities accounted for 51% in Makurdi LGA and 51% in Otukpo LGA. The credits were interest free. Maize sheller, only 17.5% in Makurdi LGA and 5% in Otukpo LGA said they benefited. This is perhaps because grains do not contribute to the main stable food in the state.

From the above analysis, the data shows that the second hypothesis is partially upheld. The rural women in Benue State under the BLP as indicated by the data, have benefited in the areas of credit facilities, seeds, tractors, fertilizer which has enhanced their large scale farming hence increase in their income level. Maize shellers, Rice processing machines, soya oil extractors and cassava processing machines can be said to have a partial success in the State.

4.2.7 Achievement of BLP in the study area

Activities	Makurdi LGA			Otukpo LGA		
	Succe-sful	Not Succ-esful	Unde-cided	Succ-essful	Not Succ-essful	Unde-cided
1. Co-operatives	186	14		171	19	2
2. Credit facilities	130	30	20	185	5	-
3. Adult Education	29	50	121	195	15	5
4. Craft Centre	95	10	95	111	11	-
5. Fertilizer distribution	115	15	70	170	25	10
6. Health Centres	190	-	5	38	87	23
7. Storage facilities	15	3	-	34	103	-
8. Epi Programme	151	61	-	182	71	18
9. Vocational Education	86	-	-	53	-	-
10. Shopping Centre	-	12	18	6	153	-
11. Milling machines	22	88	-	39	139	18
12. Collage industries	15	-	-	7	129	12

Source: Survey by the Researcher 1994.

130 respondents representing 65. % responded that they had gotten credit facilities and considered it successful in Makurdi LGA. In Otukpo, 185 respondents representing 92.5% saw it as successful. Through the intervention of the BLP, the women were able to benefit from the interest free loans being disbursed by the Peoples Bank. Only 30 respondents re[illegible] 15% and 5 respondents representing 2.5% rated it unsuccessful.

29 respondents representing 17.5% and 195 representing 97.5%

in Makurdi and Otukpo respectively thought of the adult literary programme as a success. 50 respondents representing 25% and 15 representing 7.5% in Makurdi LGA and Otukpo LGA respectively said it was a failure. 121 respondents representing 60.5% and 5 representing 2.5 in Makurdi and Otukpo respectively were undecided. Features of the Adult Education Programme under the BLP in addition to reading and writing included lectures on family planning. However, according to Adamu (1991) this aspect did not catch on very well with the women as a result of religious and political objections.

95 respondents representing 47.5% and 111 representing 55.5% in Makurdi and Otukpo respectively regarded the performance of craft centres under the BLP as successful. However, 10 respondents representing 5% and 11 representing 5.5% in Makurdi and Otukpo LGAs respectively did not see it as a success. 95 respondents representing 42.5% in Makurdi LGA were undecided. This suggests that more work needs to be done to open up more craft centres in addition to making the existing ones more viable.

On fertilizer distribution, 115 respondents representing 57.8% and 170 representing 85% in Makurdi and Otukpo LGA respectively rated the programme as successful while 15 respondents representing 7.5% and 25 representing 12.5% in Makurdi and Otukpo respectively rated it as unsuccessful. To respondents representing 35% and 10 representing 5% in Makurdi and Otukpo LGA respectively were undecided.

On Health Centres 190 out of 200 respondents representing 95% and 38 representing 19% in Makurdi and Otukpo respectively said it was successful while 87 respondents representing 48.5% in Otukpo LGA thought it was not a success. 5 respondents representing 2.5% and 10 representing 5% in Makurdi and Otukpo LGAs respectively were undecided.

This comfirms the assertion that the EPI programme was intensified under the BLP for the prevention of diseases such as tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, whooping cough, cholera and measles Alkali (1989). These were common aflictions among children and so the programme found it easy to gain popularity.

Provision of storage facilities under this programme was not very successful as only 15 respondents representing 7.5% and 34 representing 17% in Makurdi and Otukpo LGAs respectively said it was successful. In Otukpo LGA, 105 respondents representing 52.5% rated it unsuccessful.

In the two LGAs, no one rated shopping centres as successful in Makurdi while in Otukpo it was a mere 3%. Perhaps non was established in Makurdi under this programme.

Milling machines attracted 22 respondents representing 11% and 39 representing 19.5% in Makurdi and Otukpo LGAs who said it was a success. 88 respondents representing 44% and 139 representing 69.5% in Makurdi and Otukpo respectively said it was not successful. This would be partially because grain do not constitute the stable food in the state.

Cottage Industries recorded 15 respondents representing 7.5% and 7 respondents representing 3.5% in Makurdi and Otukpo LGAs respectively. These said it was a success. However, 125 respondents representing 62.5% in Otukpo LGA said it was not successful.

With this statistics, one could conclude that in the two local Government Areas under study the BLP has been a success in the areas of co-operatives, credit facilities, Health Centres, fertilizer distribution, and EPI programmes, craft centres. Areas of weakness include adult education, vocational education. Storage facilities, shopping centres, milling machines and cottage industries are rated unsucessful.

From the perspective of the rural women in the two local Government Areas coupled, the BLP appears to have been a success in some specific areas and a failure in others. This becomes apparent when these activities are examined in the light of responses from respondents. For co-operatives, 186 respondents representing 93% and 171 representing 85% in Makurdi and Otukpo respectively said it was successful. Only 14 respondents representing 7% and 19 representing 9.5% in Makurdi and Otukpo LGAs respectively said it was not successful. This rate of success could be attributed to the formation of more co-operative societies from which a good number of them benefitted in terms of loans. In Otukpo, however, 19 respondents representing 9.5% saw it as unsuccessful. This indicates that Makurdi LGA which enjoys urban influence seems to have an advantage in terms of co-operative societies and loans facilities.

Adamu (1992) observed that the idea of co-operatives exclusively for and by rural women was highted during the meeting of the wives of the state administrators who were the chairmen of the BLP in their respective states, she reported that the idea was given elaborate coverage followed by explanation on the merits and demerits.

Going by the responses of respondents so far, as seen in the previous tables the programmes of the BLP has spread substantially. One wonders whether this can be a test for enlightenment, one of the objectives of the programme. Enlightenment creates awareness in various dimension, politics, contribution to issues affecting the community and the world around as well as dispelling ignorance in the areas of health care and personal hygiene. So far, the tables show that the BLP enjoys considerable patronage from the rural women in all the activities under it. However, determining the level of success

in real terms would need further study at a later date.

Table 4.2.8 seeks to find out the level of confidence the rural women have been able to establish as a result of the activities of the BLP in terms of contributing to discussions on issues around them.

Table 4.2.8 With the BLP available in your area, can you now go out for the following?

	Makurdi LGA		Otukpo LGA	
	Total No. of Resp. 200	% 100	Total No of Resp. 200	% 100
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Seminar	62	31	51	25.5
Workshop	101	50.5	97	48.5
Conference	20	10	15	7.5
Not opportuned	17	8.5	37	18.5

Source: Survey by the Researcher. 1994

The above table is designed to test the level of confidence of respondents to contribute to discussion on issues. In Makurdi LGA, 62 respondents out of 200 or 31 percent claimed to have gone for seminars while in Otukpo LGA 51 out of 200 respondents or 25.5 percent attended seminar. In Makurdi LGA, 101 out of 200 respondents or 50.5% have gone for workshops while in Otukpo LGA 97 out of 200 respondents or 48.5% attended workshop. 20 respondents or 10 percent attended conference in Makurdi LGA while in Otukpo LGA 15 respondents or 7.5 percent went for conference. In Makurdi LGA, 17 respondents or 8.5 percent claimed that they had no opportunity to attend while in Otukpo LGA 37 respondents or 18.5 percent never had the opportunity to attend seminar, workshop and conference.

This analysis shows that the third hypothesis that the Better Life Programme has substantially increased the level of awareness among rural women in Benue State has been proved right. The Data on the on the above table shows that in Makurdi LGA, only about 17 respondents representing 8.5 percent of the 200 rural women did not attend seminar, workshop and conference while in Otukpo LGA, 37 respondents representing 18.5% did not. This shows that majority of respondents have had the opportunity to attend seminars and workshops, or at least understand what these terms mean and have confidence they would be able to if given the opportunity. This development is an indication of increased level of awareness among the rural women. It must be noted also that some of these conferences were organised by and participants sponsored by the BLP.

SUMMARY

The BLP is a programme designed to improve the lot of rural women by exposing them to life supporting activities which could make them fit better into modern society. Activities under the programme included trading activities, co-operatives with the added advantage of borrowing facilities, farming techniques with input such as tractors and fertilizer, health care and personal hygiene with emphasis on child care. Others included sewing, pottery, mat making and other forms of handicraft.

From the responses of the women, opinions are divided as to whether the rural women are substantially better of now economically than prior to the BLP. The income table is a test for the situations. Most of the women still earn below poverty level. What they earn is hardly enough to sustain a family for half the year.

As for participation, most of the women had to participate. The question is how meaningfully did they participate? How much of their ideas were injected into the programms to make them partners in the programme. The programme therefore could be said to have pulled the crowd because it was hoped that during these hard times, such a move by Government was a welcome development. The fact that many of the projects have now disappeared testifies to the absence of personal commitment by the women and the apparent lack of enabling Government policies to sustain the programme.

Awareness is usually gradual and dependent on factors such as education, exposure and opportunities. All these have financial implication. For this reason, the level of awareness among the rural women who are largely illitrates could be very limited in scope indeed. However, awareness in terms of co-operation, formation of guilds for artisans and joint sales of products proved useful as can be seen in the study. So also discussion on health issues and communicable diseases among children. Beyond these it remains to be seen how effectively the rural woman can contribute effectively on intellectual issues such as political parties, and current affairs.

FOOTNOTES

1. Adamu S. Better Life for rural women beyond 1992. Paper presented in Kwara State, 1992.

2. Alkali A: Guidelines for the Establishment of Organizing Committees on BLP strategies for 1989, Kwara State.

3. Mustapha B. An appeal for the Kaduna State govt. to fund the BLP during a workshop in Kaduna State. 1990.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 CONCLUSION

This study set out to evaluate the performances of the Better life programme in Makurdi and Otukpo local government areas of Benue State.

In chapter one, the role of women in society through the ages was examined against the background of beliefs and conceptions that helped to subjugate women. This was followed by the 'emerging era' of women education, the influence of programmes like DEFFRI, NDE, MAMSER etc which was suposed to help open up the rural area, giving it a new lease of life. More importantly, the influence of the Better life programme, the central issue of the study. The researcher discussed the aims of the Better life programme, its role in rural development and the expected achievement. Problems for the study were also identified and hypotheses were set out as a working guide for use throughout the course of this study.

Instruments of inquiry such as library source, interviews questionnaire and personal observations were employed.

Chapter two dealt with the review of related literature and theoretical framework. The chapter looked at various movements and development strategies centred around women, particularly rural women. A country - by - country survey of delibrate attempts in the third world was conducted including India, Kenya, Bolivia among others. These countries viewed rural development as a strategy for development. The study concluded the chapter with a survey of women organizations in Nigeria which, as it were, prepared the ground

The study also found that, of the various programmes under the BLP, co-operative societies were most popular, existing in almost every district. It was discovered that the possibility of loans, fertilizer and other incentives were basic to the popularity of these co-operative societies.

The observations above do not clearly lead one to conclude that the BLP has succeeded in its objective of improving the lot of the rural women, rather can one conclude that it has failed. This is because of the numerous problems and setbacks observed both in Makurdi and Otukpo Local Governments Areas which substantially affected the success of the programme.

The first of these problems was the lack of funds to implement some of the activities under the programme. The survey in Makurdi and Otukpo LGAs echoed it as a real problem. One wonders what happened to the millions of naira voted for the programme. This situation lends support to the accusation that some of the money meant for the programme ended up in private pockets. This notion is supported by Mustapha (1990) who stated that the idea of the BLP was good but that the problem lay with the implementers some of whom were only there to fill their pockets.[1]

The next problem was in the area of subject matter specialists to work among the rural women. Realising that the activities are many and varied, part of the initial planning should have included resource persons in the various fields of health, agriculture, co-operatives, marketing etc. Since some of these fields are specialised they require that the personel be specifically trained with the objectives in mind.

The third problem which was conspicous transportation. This was so because, a good numner of the feeder roads are still

seasonal. Some of the better ones have fallen into disrepair. Thus there was difficulty in contacting the state head quarters at the appropriate time. This led to delays in the delivery of vital materials and personel coupled with this, the rural women had problem transporting farm produce to collection centres. Some of these produce such as melon, tomatoes and fruits such as mangoes are perishable. These most often perish before they reach the collection centres.

The fourth problem was that of communication gap between the resource persons and the rural women. This is to be expected since most of the rural women were uneducated. In some cases, there was suspicion as to the real intension of government, for example, when a farmer who is used to growing his vegetables and selling them on his own is now told to bring them to collection centres for sale. Or where a craftsman has been enjoying the monopoly of his craft in his environment and he is told to join a guild to popularise such a craft. There are bound to be misgivings at the outset. Such doubts and mistrust will only disappear overtime, when real advantages in terms of more revenue become apparent.

The fifth problem was the reluctance of resource persons to go to rural areas to enhance the activities of the programme. Usually the reason for this is attributed to social amenities such as electricity and pipe borne water in addition to general appathy towards rural dwelling by some urban based resource persons.

The problem of inadequate formal education to fully comprehend the objectives of the BLP was in evidence throughout the study. In both Makurdi and Otukpo LGAs this was seen to a factor militating against participation in the activities of the BLP in the rural areas.

This means that they played merely nominal roles.

This analysis goes to show that although laudable as the programme of the BLP was, it was nevertheless beset by problem and setbacks, which, from all indications, appear to be a result of lack of foresight, lack of proper planning and greed.

Going by the observations above, can we say that the BLP has succeeded in its mission of improving the lot of rural women? While the answer is not a categorical 'yes', it is certainly not a 'no'. As the first hypothesis sets out to test, the boosting of local Industries in the rural areas of Benue State can be said to be a partial success. A number of local industries were set up in the localities. However, in many cases it was existing industries that got a renewed emphasis and some financial backing. These include agriculture, cloth weaving and poultry. Agriculture has always been on the ground and need injection of money and input such as fertilizer. The BLP therefore provided the avenue for loans and fertilizer through co-operatives which was indeed the new concept introduced. Weaving got the new boost in organized sales, and credit facilities to procure cotton yarn. Some limited number of machines like looms for weaving, tractors for farming, machines for processing oil etc were provided by the BLP. For these reasons, rural industries got a partial measure of success. However, it must be noted that very few entirely new industries were set up in the Local Government under study. This hypothesis therefore is partially upheld as local industries had a considerable attention paid to their crafts and other business activities.

The second hypothesis examined the achievement of the BLP programme as a factor of participation by the rural women.

This hypothesis is only partially upheld. This is so because, while many women may be said to have participated, many of the rural women could only partially because of the problems earlier enumerated namely; high rate of illiteracy leading to low comprehension, lack of trained resource persons in the interior of the villages, lack of access roads etc. These factors constituted major problems for the rural women. The hypothesis is therefore only partially upheld.

The third hypothesis tested the level of awareness among rural women in Benue State as a result of the erstwhile of the Better life Programme. This hypothesis is upheld to some degree because there is noticeable increase in awareness in some areas while in others the situation has remained the same. For example, rural women in Otukpo now know more about banking and the credit or loans they can get. There is more co-operation among artisans in terms of exchange of ideas and strategies to boost their trade. However, in the area of personal hygiene and general health, the situation remains largely unchanged due to the high medical cost and lack of a sustained deliberate effort to 'provide back-up programs to sustain the initial effort.

Generally, the study revealed that rural women were only involved at the tail end of the ladder. From the state through the local Government officials and district and wards, the course of the programme was directed, narrowed and depleted of funds. At the end, only very little money is left for the intended projects. The rural women are therefore not responsible for the programmes as they neither controlled the funds nor were they a party to the drawing up of the programmes of the BLP.

In conclusion therefore, one can argue that although the BLP has not failed in its bid to improve the lot of rural women, it

however has not succeeded in its aims and objectives. A lot more needs to be done. Officials need to be more honest, rural women need to be more involved while priorities have to be clearly defined and set out and other incentives were basic to the popularity of these co-operative societies.

It is gratifying that health education and food nutrition enjoyed a good percentage. This aspect is particularly important in view of the various health hazards that abound in the villages.

It was also discovered that although awareness had been created and the areas of food processing, poultry and farming techniques, no real benefits had been enjoyed in terms of sustained cash flow. An enabling policy seems necessary for any long term growth in these endeavours.

5.2 RECOMMENDATION

From the data presentation and analysis in the previous chapter, we observe that the rural women and in general the rural dwellers have a lot of problems. They lack basic essentials of life, are largely ignorant about many things including basic health care and economic activities that characterise modern living. The idea of the programme "Better life for Rural women" therefore was a welcome one. However, as we have observed, the programme was beset with several problems of administration and poor foresight.

The first problem we observed is that of communication through which the aims and objectives of the programme would be communicated to the grassroots. We observed that it took three years, 1987 - 1990 before enough information on the programme got to the grassroots where it is most needed. The campaign for a programme of this importance

should go beyond Radio and TV broadcasts. It calls for intensive personal contact with the rural women. It needs personnel - experts in working with rural women. This will need thorough logistics including vehicles, film shows, workshops, seminars, small group discussions etc. These experts should be resident in the various zones within their jurisdiction for sustained information dissemination.

A major problem militating against the success of the programme is illiteracy. Many of the rural women are illitrates. They are therefore not fully capable of realizing the objectives of the programme. It is recommended that the programme should focus more on adult illiteracy. It is a lot easier to communicate with a literate audience than it is to communicate with an illiterate one. More over, it has been observed that a literate person is more confident and thus is more likely to exploit more of his potentials.

Critics of the programmes accuse the organizers of greed and insincerity, for example, they claim that in most cases, fertilizers and chemicals do not reach their intended destination, (the rural women) this has to be checked. There should be a monitoring team to ensure that these items get to their intended users.

The same goes for funds meant for the programme. This is often diverted to private accounts. If any organization is to succeed, there has to be a system of accountability, as a way of maintaining checks and balances. Individuals chosen for this type of role should be men and women of proven integrity and when chosen, should be monitored closely. Otherwise no amount of funds will be sufficient for the programme.

From our investigation, it became obvious that even the idea of giving loans through the co-operatives became a matter of "whom you know" rather than merit. A liberalized loan system which could

act as an incentive was the idea at the on set of the programme. It is said that the officials capitalized on the illiteracy and ignorance of the rural women, sometimes extorting money from them before loans are given. The government should look into a situation like this otherwise the programme will not last.

Again, the attitude of non-involvement of the rural women in the planning and implementing of the programme has not made it possible for exchange of ideas between the officials of the BLP and the rural women, that would make it possible for them to identify their actual needs and aspirations.

In the light of the above, it is recommended that structure be evolved at local level to allow participation of the rural women in planning and implementation of the programme has not made it possible for exchange of ideas between the officials of the BLP and the rural women, that would make it possible for them to identify their actual needs and aspirations.

From indications, it is clear that those who benefit from the programme most are the educated women located in urban centres e.g. wives of state governors and other state organizers of the programme. A programme of this nature requires selfless service, dedication and determination. Since rural women are the target, it is recommended that they remain at the centre of affairs rather than at the end of the road. Thus leaders of the programme could be chosen from rural

organizations like age groups, farming groups etc which have the backing of the grassroot.

It is recommended also that the emerging sister programme. "The family support programme", should borrow a leaf from the mistakes of the 'Better life programme; to make sure that the programmes earmarked for implementation by the BLP be put into effect instead of abandoning them. In the light of this, it is recommended that funds be disbursed to the appropriate personnel of the 'family support programme'; for the execution of these programmes before embarking on new ones.

In conclusion, it is believed that if these recommendations are noted and put into effect by the programme, its impact on the living standard of the rural women will be greatly felt by not only the rural women themselves, but by their entire household and environment.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mustapha B. An appeal for the Kaduna State government to fund the BLP during a workshop in Kaduna State. 1990.

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Questionnaire on the evalu[illegible] of social life programme for Rural Women in Mkurdi and Otukpo Local Government Areas of Benue State.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

1. Name of Village: .....

2. Local Government: .....

(Tick any of the following where applicable)

☐ Mkurdi Local Government Area

☐ Otukpo Local Government Area.

3. Sex:

☐ Female

☐ Male

4. AGE:

☐ 18 - 25

☐ 26 - 35

☐ 36 - 45

☐ 46 - 55

☐ 56 and Above .....

5. Marital Status:

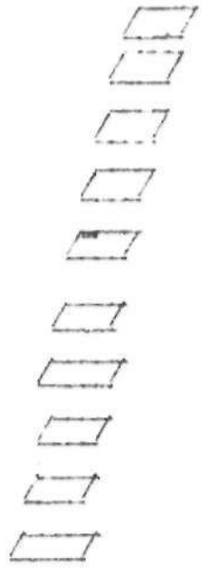
☐ Married

☐ Single

☐ Divorced

☐ Widow

6. Education:



- No formal Education
- Primary Education
- Secondary Education
- Teacher Training Education
- Adult Education
- Ordinary Diploma
- Nigeria Certificate
- Nursing Education
- Higher Diploma
- University Education (Degree)

7. What is your approximate annual income from your occupation?

- Less than one Thousand Naira (₦1,000.00)
- ₦1,000 - ₦2,000.00
- ₦2,001 - ₦3,000.00
- ₦3,001 - ₦4,000.00
- ₦4,001 - ₦5,000.00
- ₦5,001 - ₦6,000.00
- ₦6,001 - ₦7,000.00
- ₦7,001 - ₦8,000.00
- ₦8,001 - ₦9,000.00
- ₦9,001 - ₦10,000.00
- ₦10,000 and above

8. Have you any child?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. If yes, number of children

☐ 1 - 3

☐ 4 - 6

☐ 7 and above

SECTION B

10. Is Better Life Programme available in your Area?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. If yes, for how long?

☐ Last year

☐ Two years

☐ Since its inception in 1987

12. Tick the available activities of the Better Life Programme in your area.

(i) ☐ Adult Education

(ii) ☐ Provided Job opportunities

(iii) ☐ Health Centres

(iv) ☐ provided extension services on farm activities like land preparation, planting, weeding etc.

(v) ☐ Provided Credit facilities for income generating activities like:

(Pick as many as possible)

(vi) ☐ Selling

(vii) ☐ Knitting

(viii) ☐ Sewing

(ix) ☐ Poultry Feeding

(x) ☐ Food

14. With the Better Life Programme available in your Area, Can you now go out for

- ▱ Seminar
- ▱ Workshop
- ▱ Conference

15. What technology and extension delivery services has Better Life Programme provided to perform for your OA - Farm and Off - Farm activities?

(Tick as many as possible)

- ▱ Tractor
- ▱ Fertilizer
- ▱ Credit facilities
- ▱ Maize Sheller
- ▱ Seeds
- ▱ Rice Processing Machine
- ▱ Soya oil extracting machine
- ▱ Storage equipment
- ▱ Extension agent (Home Economist)
- ▱ Cassava Shellers

Others (Please mention) .....

.....

16. What Adult Education has the Better life Programme provided? (Tick as many as possible)

- ▱ Education on food and Nutrition
- ▱ Education on child care
- ▱ Education on craft like:

(i) Sewing

(ii) Tie and Die

(iii) .....

(xi) ☐ Small provisions

Others (Please specify)

.....

.....

☐ Formed Cooperatives

☐ Provided room for participation in and outside workshops, seminars and public activities.

☐ Education in Food and Nutrition and Health Education.

☐ Handcraft and sewing centre

☐ Provided Water

☐ Provided Electricity

☐ Recreation facilities

Others (Please Mention)

.....

.....

13. What job opportunity have you enjoyed since the inception of the Better Life Programme in your Area?

(Tick as many as possible)

☐ Farming

☐ Keeping Poultry

☐ Sewing

☐ Selling Food

☐ Weaving

☐ Trading

☐ Making Soap

☐ Making Groundnut oil

☐ Making Palm Kernel

Others (Please Specify) .....

.....

- ▱ Soap making
- ▱ Pomade Making
- ▱ Mak Soya Meat
- ▱ Taking Care of livestocks
- ▱ How to apply fertiliser on crops
- ▱ Child spacing(family planning)

17. Is the Programme only for the Elites?

- ▱ Yes
- ▱ No

18. If yes, in what ways?

.....

.....

19. If No, give Reasons

.....

SECTION C

20. What will you consider have been the greatest achievement of the Better Life Programme in your area since its inception?

Rank them in this order:

	Very Much	Few	More
(a) Co-operatives			
(b) Credit Facilities			
(c) Adult Education			
(d) Crafts Centre			
(e) Fertilizer Distribution			
(f) Health Centres			
(g) Storage Facilities			
(h) E.P.I. Clinics			
(i) Shopping Centres			
(j) Vocational Education			

21. What problems and set backs has the Better Life Programme experienced in your area?

- ☐ Lack of Women Co-operative
- ☐ Funding
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Lack of subject matter specialists
- ☐ Lack of communication between Resource Personnel and the people or the rural women.
- ☐ Lack of formal education

Others (Please mention) .....

.....